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Coalition Overkill™

By Kevin Siembieda & Bill Coffin



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Dedication from Bill Coffin

To Kevin and Maryann Siembieda, whose graciousness has been the light of my career.

To my brothers Tom and Frank Coffin, whose daring adventures in aircar thievery were one of my first great forays into role-playing.

To my other brothers Jay Pascale and James Nugent, who have shared more adventures with me than I can count.

And finally, to my princess Allison, who as I write this carries our unborn child. Now more than ever, you both mean the world to me.

Dedication from Kevin Siembieda

To lasting peace, tolerance and understanding. Our differences make us stronger, provided we can embrace them.

The cover: John Zeleznik presents a Coalition invasion on the town of Hillcrest, home of the *Great Purple Mage*. CS troops hope to capture the notorious Ley Line Walker and obliterate the town. Meanwhile, the Mage and his students struggle to save as many innocent townsfolk as they can.

First Printing — August, 2000

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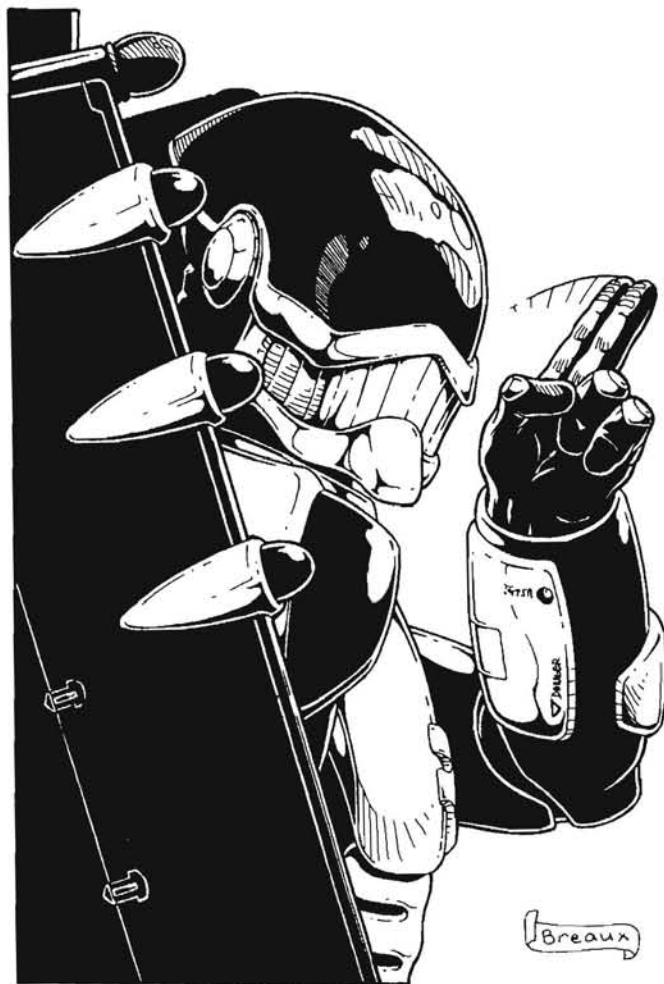
Rifts® Coalition Wars™ Two: CS Overkill is published by Palladium Books Inc., 12455 Universal Drive, Taylor, MI 48180. Printed in the USA.

Palladium Books® Presents:

Rifts® Coalition Wars™

Siege on Tolkeen™: Chapter Two

COALITION OVERKILL™



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Special Thanks to Bill Coffin for some great villains, adventures, and ideas, I couldn't have gotten this book out on time without him. Kent Burles for inspiring the Daemonix with his artwork and Wayne, Freddie, Scott, Ramon, Mike and all my artists who breathe life into my world and enchant my imagination. Last but not least, to Maryann, Alex, Steve, Wayne and the rest of the Palladium Conjurers.

— Kevin Siembieda, 2000

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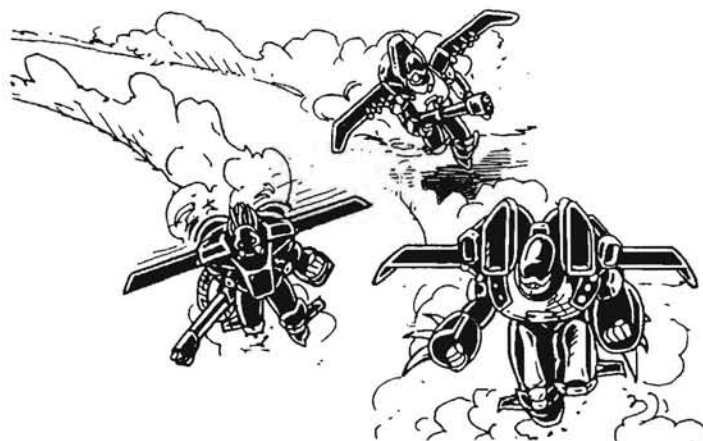
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Siege on Tolkeen Chapter Two:

Coalition Overkill™

"The dogs of war have been unleashed, and there is no calling them back, now. God help the people of Tolkeen."

— The words of Erin Tarn

A clash of Titans

By Kevin Siembieda & Bill Coffin

Over the last five years, the Coalition has mobilized an incredible amount of manpower and material to make real its dreams of continental conquest, the destruction of magic users everywhere, and the annihilation of the alien people and monsters who have come to inhabit the Earth since the Coming of the Rifts.

For the Coalition, their *Crusade for Humanity* is nothing less than an all-out drive to secure a safe place for humanity's next generation. Reclaiming the wilderness and pushing back the forces of magic are less a military objective than a reality obsessively and relentlessly pursued by the bulk of Coalition society. It is something approaching a religious fervor, a *jihad*, this drive of the Coalition to expand its borders and see its enemies driven before them. On many levels, this burning desire for conquest and hyper-aggressive xenophobia are integral parts of Coalition society, and define them every bit as much as their love for technology and lack of personal freedoms.

Until now, this formula has worked for the Coalition — defeat an enemy, consolidate your forces, replenish, and build further, find another enemy, and repeat the cycle. Since 12 P.A., when the Coalition defeated the **Federation of Magic**, this has been the pattern of the society, and it has worked because during that time, the Coalition shrewdly never picked a fight it could not finish. There is a reason why the Coalition did not attack Tolkeen sooner, or pursue the Federation of Magic further, nor besieged Lazlo, and that is that the Coalition simply was never strong enough to be 100% certain that it could achieve any of those objectives. As long as there remained any serious chance of defeat, the Coalition found a reason *not* to attack such targets and kept its focus on patrolling its borders. A campaign of containment and pacification rather than all-out war, squashing small bands of rebels, and maintaining a forceful presence throughout the center of North America. The Coalition is a totalitarian society, and the only thing that makes it work is its citizens believe that they are better off living under a harsh militocracy than a kinder, gentler form of government. The reason why the citizens have not questioned their way of life is because their mighty military has never failed them; not yet, anyway. Oh, there have been some gaffs such as the *Juicer Uprising*, but with a near-total lock on information, the Coalition easily turned that fiasco into a public relations coup. However, if there were to be a major military defeat, such as losing an en-

tire war, that would definitely get back to the common folk in every level of CS society. And on some level, the Coalition government would begin to question if facing such a loss is really worth it.

The moment the people begin to question the wisdom and power of their leaders and begin to wonder about their motives, actions and philosophies, is the moment those same leaders begin to lose control over the people. The moment they lose control, the very foundation of the Coalition's military society begins to crumble. The Coalition High Command can not let that happen, and while they are on watch, they will do everything — *everything* — in their power to prevent that.

Which brings us to Tolkeen.

After years of buildup, intelligence gathering, preparation and posturing, the Coalition has finally declared open war upon Tolkeen, and massive Battle Groups have swept into the small Kingdom from the south, while dedicated insurgency groups have waged a guerilla war all along the rest of Tolkeen's borders. The Coalition has amassed nearly a million combat troops and support personnel for this crusade, as well as provided an unprecedented array of military hardware for the cause. Entire field armies of Skelebots, companies of robots and power armor troops, joined by phalanxes of the mightiest air and ground vehicles the CS armories can produce have been mobilized for the first time in history.

One would think, with such a mind-boggling array of firepower, that the Coalition would simply plow through Tolkeen in a matter of days, reach Tolkeen city and burn it down with little difficulty. In their hearts, this is what many planners behind the Siege on Tolkeen thought and hoped would happen. The Coalition knew Tolkeen was formidable and had been preparing for war for years, but really, how much resistance could they possibly put up to the invincible Coalition war machine?

Plenty, it turns out. Enough, in fact, to stop the Coalition cold not long after they pressed against Tolkeen's borders. The Tolkeen Defenders inflicted heavy losses to just about every element of the various invasion groups. Though the fighting has really only just begun, already the Coalition forces in Tolkeen are running low of spare parts, ammunition, and fresh bodies. The dead and wounded are flying home to Chi-Town in such numbers that the Ministry of Information is finding it impossible to conceal news of so many casualties. At every encounter, the Coalition faces unacceptable losses, with the best kill ratio ever achieved being one Tolkeenite for every slain Coalition soldier. In most cases, however, that ratio is more like 3:1, 4:1, or 5:1 in favor of Tolkeen. And that is just in open combat. The kill ratios for when Tolkeen forces ambush Coalition forces (as they do with astonishing frequency and lethality) are simply too high for most officers to quote to their superiors without fearing for their command, and their lives.



Coalition Military High Command had expected this sort of defense in Tolkeen's towns and cities, where their fortified defenses, ley line nexuses, and other factors gave the Tolkeen defenders a natural advantage. But Coalition troops are being defeated *everywhere*, in towns, the country, along roads, even in areas thought to be previously pacified. After an initial surge of unopposed progress, the Tolkeenite counterattack has hit so hard and so ferociously that some commanders wonder if the Coalition can even come back from such a strong initial resistance. Nobody within the Coalition expected the kind of carnage they are experiencing, and even where invasion forces do score a victory, its merits are quickly drowned out in a wave of blood from the slain troops of a dozen failed offensives.

The changing tide

In the first months of war, the Coalition troops have been frightened, unsure of themselves and easily spooked by the wonders and horrors of magic. Combat is different, the enemy unpredictable and everything seems overwhelming. The enemy, even the human spell casters, seem mysterious and monstrous. The supernatural forces and magic at the Tolkeenites' command are more than a match for the "pea shooters" and advanced war machines of the Coalition soldiers. Many CS troops feel lost, even doomed, pitted against an enemy that defies logic and shatters the boundaries of the natural world.

Overwhelmed and disoriented during the first months of combat, Coalition troops were easily routed, divided and vexed on every front. For each CS triumph there were two or three losses. For every Tolkeen defender slain the enemy claimed two CS soldiers or a dozen Skelebots. When the Coalition Army successfully won a position, shortly thereafter the enemy would reclaim it, or if the CS troops managed to hold it, the cost was high. Worse, the loss of life and hardware has been terrible. Thousands of human and Dog Boy troops perished in the initial conflagration of the war as both sides clashed in a fury of biblical proportions. The much vaunted Skelebots — the robot legions of the Coalition States known to swarm and overwhelm most enemies — were crushed like ants beneath the feet of a giant. Hundreds of thousands were lost before Coalition commanders called them back and began to reformulate their strategies and tactics.

This inauspicious beginning has shocked both the Coalition High Command and independent observers alike. Nobody (except the Tolkeenites themselves) expected the Tolkeen Defenders to thwart the mighty Coalition Army for more than a few weeks. Many felt (some still do) that the fall of Tolkeen was a foregone conclusion. Now, people are not so sure. Several months into the conflict, the Coalition Army remains stalled at the border. The CS can claim to have moved forward several miles and survived everything the enemy has thus far thrown at them (all true), but "surviving" is a far cry from winning. This has not been the easy sweep and purge the CS and most people predicted. It is a bloodbath, and the Coalition Army is stymied. For the first time in its illustrious history, the Coalition war machine looks vulnerable, and many begin to wonder if, indeed, the States have finally met their match.

In fairness to the Coalition, this initial outcome is to be expected. Without question the Coalition States are the unequalled military power on the continent with a long history of success

and conquest. Thus the Army entered the war too full of itself. The Coalition Military was flush with decades of success in many, much smaller, isolated battles against practitioners of magic and demon hordes that never truly challenged its military might. Being bolstered by the power of their newly refurbished and impressive Coalition Army, and strengthened by pacts with *Northern Gun* and the *Manistique Imperium*, only made the Coalition (from Generals to grunts) all the more confident. Overconfident. As a result, the Coalition's military experts and tacticians barely considered the fact that despite isolated and contained clashes with the reviled **Federation of Magic**, the Coalition Military had *never* faced an "entrenched" magic wielding army of this magnitude or preparedness. The siege on Tolkeen is war on a scale the CS has never conducted in its entire history. Nor has the Coalition ever faced such a well organized and diverse enemy with so many D-Bees, dragons and supernatural beings, from demons and Elementals to creatures of magic. Additionally, conventional "augmented troops" such as *Juicers*, *Crazies*, *Headhunters*, *Cyber-Knights*, *power armor troops* and *mercenaries* have joined the Tolkeen defenders, providing the enemy with conventional military capabilities as well as powerful magic weapons and spell casting.

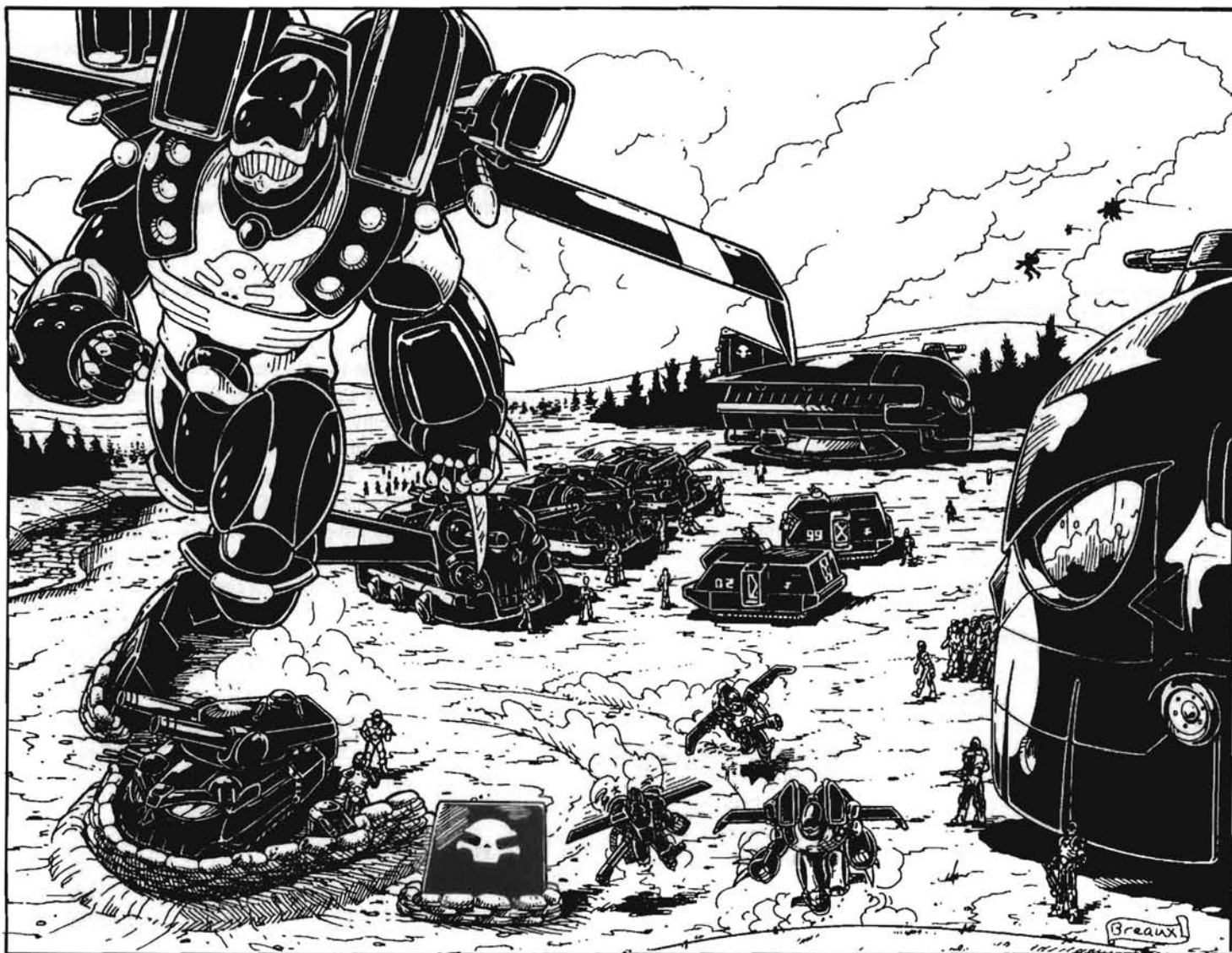
The fact is, the majority of the Coalition troops are (or at least were) "green" — inexperienced — in fighting magic wielding opponents, particularly in mass combat. The soldiers in the field were simply not prepared for what to expect. Consequently, when faced with the impossible, magical and demonic, the Coalition Army panicked, stumbled, suffered high casualties, folded and retreated to its border positions.

What went wrong?

So much preparation. So much work. And in the blink of an eye, Tolkeen is shaping up to be the worst military disaster in the Coalition's proud history. How could this have happened? What did the Coalition do wrong? After all, it seems hardly likely that the Coalition Army would be seriously impeded, much less stopped cold, by Tolkeen's defenders. The CS has a much larger army, its soldiers receive some of the best training in the world, and the Coalition forces sport state-of-the-art military hardware. Somehow, all of this still was not enough to prevent Tolkeen's defenders from winning most of their battles so far. Factoring out flukes and terrain or battlefield circumstances that heavily favored Tolkeen from the start, there remain a number of problems which account for the Coalition's poor performance so far.

Invasion Bloat. The Coalition invasion force is simply HUGE. Commanding nearly a million personnel, nearly another half million Skelebots, and a vast array of hardware places unbelievable logistical demands upon the Military High Command. A Command whose only experience with a fighting force this size is the ongoing war in Free Quebec. Judging by how rough things are shaping up there, the fight against the Coalition's Canadian adversaries is providing High Command with little to work with regarding Tolkeen.

Initially, the Tolkeen Invasion moved smoothly, in part because the deployment and initial invasion were planned out to the tiniest detail. As long as nothing upset this plan, everything went by the numbers. However, the first rule in war is that nothing ever goes as planned, and the real test of a force's prepara-



tions is how they endure under fire. Once Tolkeen counterattacked, the Coalition's invasion plans fell apart.

The unexpected lethality of Tolkeen's assaults and use of magic, rendered many of the Coalition backup tactical plans useless, leaving large numbers of troops in the field without a clue regarding how to accomplish their mission. Where this was felt the most was in logistics — the supply of troops in the field. For a high-tech mechanized fighting force such as the Coalition Army, the road to defeat is not paved so much with dead soldiers, but with a lack of spare parts and supplies. All machines break down and take damage in battle. Without the means to repair the damage, otherwise operable war machines become crippled and diminished. As all hell broke loose along the front, battle damage could not be repaired fast enough, spare parts shipments began failing to arrive where and when they were needed, and a complete breakdown ensued. Similar problems arose with food shipments, munitions shipments, and other vital wartime ordinance. Without the supplies to go on, front-line troops began running short of everything, and their combat efficiency ground to a halt.

Tolkeen's soldiers, on the other hand, operated in smaller units, had established better supply lines and often relied on their own, innate magical abilities, in addition to machines. This all gave the average Tolkeen battle group much better front-line endurance and support.

Over-Specialization. In large part, the Coalition's war effort relies on its technology and the pilots who control it. There are those Coalition soldiers, agents and allies who may command psychic powers and cybernetic or chemical augmentation, but in essence the Coalition remains a technological fighting force. This serves them best when fighting other technological armies, such as Free Quebec, where the balance of power relies not so much on individual fighting skills (although those do play a part) but in mass combat and *production*, the ability to replenish your fighting force. Mechanized wars ultimately come down to pure attrition, and the loser is the one who first loses the ability to continue to make more troops, armor, weapons and fighting vehicles.

This common factor does not quite work in Tolkeen, where a good deal of the enemy's power comes from supernatural and mystical "creatures" summoned to do battle and volunteers from across the Megaverse, two effectively *limitless* resources. More importantly, the Coalition's invasion force is essentially dedicated to a single kind of fighting — overwhelming the enemy by brute strength, superior firepower, speed and the weight of numbers. Under certain circumstances, this approach works, and works well, but when Tolkeen can neutralize those circumstances, the Coalition Army suffers because it is "over-specialized" when it comes to fighting a full-blown war against magical opponents. In this sense, Tolkeen has discov-

ered a very large Achilles' Heel on their enemy, and their exploitation of it explains a lot of the Coalition's frustration and ineffectiveness. For the CS, their trials in Tolkeen are an evolutionary challenge to their style of waging war. To succeed, they must adapt and change the way they think about combat, let alone how they fight it. If CS forces can not do that, then the Coalition must resign itself to defeat and perhaps, extinction.

Arrogance and Overconfidence. The Coalition's first defeat in Tolkeen occurred before the Siege ever got underway, and it foretold of problems that now haunt the Coalition. Operation Fullbore (better known as *Chalk's Folly*) was the result of a foolhardy assault upon Tolkeen led by a rash General who grossly underestimated Tolkeen's fighting abilities. As a result, he led an entire field army into the jaws of death. By the time the short battle was over, his troops were almost entirely destroyed and Tolkeen had scarcely been touched. The attack spurred the Coalition High Command to seriously increase its presence in Tolkeen, which, in part, is why such a mammoth invasion force is fighting the war today. However, the lesson the Coalition has yet to learn is about the danger of arrogance.

Fullbore was a disaster because it failed to account for Tolkeen's greatest resources and area of expertise, "magic." It also failed in anticipating the "unexpected." The invading force was so cock-sure of itself that it failed to have in place any realistic contingency plans or fall-back positions. Once the enemy had routed them, the battle was lost and the troops were massacred. The overall military operation is failing because of the same thing. Although the Coalition Military High Command had seriously beefed up its invasion force, it still never really stopped to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy. Nor did it consider what a battle that pitted technology against equally powerful magic would truly entail. In short, the Coalition invasion force was overconfident and unprepared. When faced with the unexpected forces of magic, the troops panicked, the lines buckled and the armed forces were in disarray. Once splintered and lost to chaos, it was easy for the smaller, better prepared and more mobile Tolkeen forces to wreak havoc on discombobulated Coalition troops. The rest, as they say, is history.

Tolkeen's King Creed and Warlord Scard knew actually anticipated this, and put everything their forces had into fronting a strong initial defense that utilized unexpected magic and mayhem. They knew if they could demoralize and divide the Coalition troops that they could repel them. Furthermore, they had hoped that when faced with magic power, strange forces and horrific casualties early on, it might make the Coalition States reconsider and back off entirely. At worst it would stall the entire war effort and give the Kingdom a shot at holding out indefinitely. The odd thing is, the Coalition knew of this strategy, thanks to its many spies within Tolkeen. It had fairly accurate data on the number of Tolkeen's forces, as well as the basic capabilities of many of its troops and war machines. Even with all that, however, the front-line troops did not anticipate what it would be like fighting mystic forces on this scale, and the Coalition High Command failed to recognize Tolkeen's potential power. This was the result, in large part, of the prevailing sense of Coalition superiority and commanders sneering at the mere suggestion that these weak, inferior warriors could stand against them. When they did, and did so convincingly, Coalition troops had to deal with not only magical forces beyond their compre-

hension, but the fact that the invincible Coalition Army was being beaten by inferior D-Bees and sorcerers. The disbelief, panic and chaos that ensued is beyond words. Arrogance, yet again, proved to be the Coalition's undoing.

Panic and Desertion. The Coalition army maintains some of the best disciplined and highly motivated soldiers in the world. Part of it comes from the Coalition being the Coalition — in a society as strict as this one, it stands to reason that their soldiers would be kept under especially tight control.

The other, more practical reason for strict discipline is that it keeps a unit together under the rigors of battle. War has a way of shattering even the strongest resolve, and of making the bravest warrior want to throw down his weapons and run for safety. Under conditions as harsh as mass combat, everybody learns where their will to fight ends and their will to survive at any cost begins. For your average person, even born and raised in a world as harsh as Rifts Earth, it does not take much to push somebody over the line into "survival mode." There are only two things that really make that line harder to cross. One of those is experience; the more one is exposed to battle, the more one is able to shut out its horrors and fight on despite the urge to run away. The other is discipline; the more one is trained to consider mission parameters over personal desires, the more one can ignore adversity and succeed in spite of it. On the battlefields of Tolkeen, the Coalition is lacking in both of these things, but not for a lack of trying.

The Coalition has sent a vast number of new recruits to Tolkeen, largely because many of the army's veterans were sent to Free Quebec, where the fighting flared up before the invasion of Tolkeen was launched. Moreover, casualties at Tolkeen were always expected to be relatively high, so half the army is composed of volunteers recruited from the desperate masses of the 'Burbs who languish there in the hopes of gaining CS citizenship. The bulk of the CS fighters at Tolkeen simply do not have the experience, training and mental preparedness they need to shake off the kind of punishment the Tolkeenites are able to rain down on them. Many of these soldiers had never even seen real combat other than a few border patrols and minor skirmishes, let alone stood face to face against demons or dealt with magic spells. The pure shock and horror that came with the reality of full-scale, magic-based warfare left many Coalition front-liners thunderstruck. The rest panicked, broke ranks and fled. The lucky ones got away and regrouped. The unfortunate ones were struck down where they stood or while they fled. Casualties were astronomic.

That the Coalition has managed to keep its forces together this far stems purely from the strict discipline it has imposed upon its soldiers. Even under fire, the average Coalition trooper dares not disobey orders, initially because he is a zealot who believes in his nation's cause. Secondly, because he fears what will happen to him if he elects to defy orders. Battlefield insubordination is an offense punishable by death. Coalition officers can and do execute deserters on the spot, even if under heavy fire from the enemy. Thus, Coalition soldiers find the strength to follow their leaders under any circumstances, even if it means certain death. However, if casualties mount, and the level of officers killed in action is very high, combat units may suddenly find themselves without any kind of leadership. Whenever this happens, chaos and widespread desertion may result.

Sometimes this takes the form of entire units defecting to the enemy, preferring time in a Tolkeen prison to certain death on the battlefield. Sometimes units go AWOL and try to escape into the Dakotas or elsewhere. Other times units simply abandon their posts in hasty retreat. And sometimes, units just lock up, afraid to go on fighting, afraid to return to the rear, afraid to do much of anything except wait and hope that the war somehow forgets them.

The demoralization of their troops, perhaps more than any other aspect of the Coalition's initial defeat with Tolkeen, has really surprised Coalition Military High Command. They never thought for a moment that morale would be so quickly and severely injured. Cultural indoctrination is so great in the Coalition States that it seemed impossible for Coalition soldiers to fall prey to psychological warfare. But then again, the CS has never engaged in this type of a war, where advanced, high-tech troops were bombarded by magical forces beyond their understanding, and outside the parameters of war they were expecting. The fact that entire divisions disintegrated before the mystic maelstrom of the enemy is even more troubling than the unacceptable numbers of dead and wounded.



The Coalition Strikes Back

A video-letter from Sergeant Deon Canton

"Hey Baby, sorry it's been so long since my last vid-letter. Things have been crazy and when we weren't fighting, I was kinda down and I didn't want you to see me like that. I wanted to send you and the kids my smilin' face, you know.

"Fighting has intensified and we've done our share of butt kicking. There's so many D-Bees and monsters and such that sometimes I feel like I'm fighting a million miles away on some alien planet. That's actually kinda funny, 'cuz they call us monsters. Yeah, monsters callin' us monsters. That's a good one.

"I gotta tell you, Baby, things have changed. Once we all got over ... I don't know ... our initial shock, maybe — we wuz all pretty green at the start — everything got better. We're more confident, know what to expect from the enemy and we're even able to sniff 'em out half the time. Not like a Dog Boy, you know, like playin' a hunch. We've all gotten pretty damn good at playing our hunches. And we don't take chances, 'specially with D-Bees.

"I got myself promoted after the battle of ..."

— CENSORED by the CS Military for security reasons —

"All in all we did okay. My bionic hand ain't nothing, and Command promises I'll get a flesh and blood Bio-System when my tour of duty is over. Like I said, it didn't even hurt when I lost it the way I did, and I've never been healthier and in better spirits. Hell, it earned me a medal, a promotion — and that means better pay, Baby — and my boys call me a hero! It's gonna be alright.

"I can't tell you where I've been or where I'm going, but we've been cleaning out D-Bees and monsters like hornets' nests. The rest of the Battalion has even nicknamed our platoon *The Exterminators*. Cool, huh? They are everywhere, you know. D-Bees I mean. I never realized how many kinds there was. Baby, they're just crawling all over this countryside, damn demons and spell casters too. The damn Tolkien's been throwin' some new hellish creatures at us lately ..."

— CENSORED by the CS Military for security reasons —

"Gotta stay alert constantly, but me and the boys do a good job watching each others' backs. Got ten new recruits joining the platoon since ..."

— CENSORED by the CS Military for security reasons —

"... four of them Dog Boys cuz ..."

— CENSORED by the CS Military for security reasons —

"I'll be Squad Leader and help break them in to country operations. I gotta teach 'em right if they expect to last in the bush. Gotta teach them to trust their instincts. Not to hesitate. Show no mercy. Not to them. Not to them frickin' D-Bee scum, demons and spell casters. Don't take no shit. Don't give nobody outside of a uniform benefit of the doubt, and shoot first or be fried by magic fire. Don't think about these ... these 'creatures' as human or as having feelings, cuz they don't. They're all just vermin ... and worse. They need to be exterminated so god fearing humans can live in peace. When I think about you and kids, Baby, well, that's what keeps me going. And knowing that what we're doin' out here is making a better, safer world for you an' them. It makes it all worthwhile. But I'll tell you what, even if I was single an' had no kids, I'd still be out here. After all that I've seen, nothing could keep me away. These ... these hellspawned 'things' need to die. They don't belong here, and if they won't leave then we'll just have to exterminate their asses.

"Hey, I hope I don't sound too harsh, Baby. I'm tired is all. Out here, it's, you know, kill or be killed. But don't worry about me, I've gotten real good at ki ... um ... doin' what needs to be done. I'm a survivor, Baby. That's what they all call me, a survivor. Even the Major says so.

"I love you Yvon. I love you so much. Please never doubt that.

Tell Jason and Michelle I love them too. Give 'em both a big hug and kiss for me. Bye for now.

— Sergeant Deon Canton, February 10, 106 P.A.

Unfortunately for the Tolkeen Defenders, the initial period of surprise and inexperience is coming to an end. As CS troops regroup and reorganize, new strategies and tactics to anticipate and counter magic are being formulated. Perhaps more importantly, the average Coalition soldier is filled with a new respect for and understanding of the enemy. This is actually a bad thing



for the Tolkeen Defense Force, because it means the CS troops proceed with caution and no longer rush headlong into ambushes and traps. Nor do they give the enemy the benefit of the doubt or regard them as inferior combatants. Coalition soldiers now respect (and to some degree, fear) the Tolkeenites as powerful, cunning and treacherous opponents. A foe one is NEVER to underestimate or take for granted.

This has instilled the CS troops with a new resolve to utterly destroy the Kingdom of Tolkeen, and all of her citizens, allies and supporters along with it. From the soldiers' point of view, enough is enough! No more being afraid. No more hesitation. They may have had their hats handed to them in the first few rounds of the war, but they are not going to slink home with their tails between their legs as losers. In a body-bag maybe, but not as cowards or the defeated. If the Tolkeens Defenders want no-holds-barred war, they will have it! It's time to kill or be killed! Winner takes all. Fear and uncertainty are replaced by hate and grim determination. The soldiers in the field now accept what the High Command had secretly feared, this will be a long and bloody war. Many will lose their lives, but it is a price they are now ready to pay.

This acceptance of the situation has turned the unsuspecting, boastful and soft CS troops into determined combatants with realistic expectations, and bent on winning and revenge. They understand this enemy will not be intimidated and run. They understand the Tolkeen Defenders are ready to stand, fight and die for their cause. And, despite their many differences, they recognize that the Tolkeen Defenders are willing to do anything

to win, and that Coalition soldiers must show the same unbending resolve if they expect to defeat them.

One third party observer has reported that, "A sort of mania sweeps over the Coalition troops. As if the earlier defeats, embarrassments and bloodshed have unleashed some *inner demon* that had, until recently, lain dormant, locked away deep within their human psyche. A demon that now released, relentlessly battles to decimate its enemy."

The people of Tolkeen (not just its fighting force) have been demonized by the CS to the point that they are too are viewed as heartless, inhuman monsters not worthy of even the slightest bit of mercy or compassion. They are to be killed without hesitation or remorse. This is a war, the Coalition troops believe, where one can not discriminate between civilian and warrior, child and demon. One must kill or be killed. To hesitate or show mercy translates into weakness, and is to make oneself vulnerable to attack and jeopardize his entire unit. Besides, these aren't "real people." They are inhuman monsters invading the Earth, and as such, need to be repelled or exterminated by any means necessary. The average Coalition grunt has little use for a crying Tolkeen civilian, and probably won't mind killing a few to make a point to the others to keep their heads down and their mouths shut, lest they want to check out, too.

From the horrifying perspective of the average CS soldier assigned to the Tolkeen front, the "eradication" (i.e. slaughter and mass murder) of every last D-Bee, monster and weaver of magic has become a crusade. Each man, woman or child they kill makes the world a safer place for humans. It removes one more potential enemy of humankind. Most see with renewed clarity that the Coalition States is truly the last bastion of humankind in North America, and the soldiers who fight on her behalf, heroes. Their opponents? A disease — no, a plague. A plague that needs to be wiped off the face of the Earth. The fact that this "plague" happens to be *sentient beings* is said only to make the war all the more tragic. However, that last sentiment is part of the "official" position to justify CS aggression and soften the Coalition's open campaign of genocide. Most Coalition soldiers could care less about the fact that the "pestilence" they fight is actually "people." They show no mercy, they kill without hesitation or guilt, because they really see the enemy as a vile disease that needs to be exterminated. Soldiers are often heard saying vile, despicable things about D-Bees, Tolkeen's warriors and mages, and those who stand with them. The following sentiment can be heard being voiced throughout the war-front as well as among the citizenry of the Coalition States: "Stinking D-Bees and sorcerers. They don't belong here. They aren't wanted, and we mean to send them back to wherever they came from. Those who put up a fight, we'll gladly send to their grave. This is *our* world! Our home! It's not like we aren't giving these aliens and monsters a choice. Leave or die. That's fair. They don't belong here!

"Some folks say these inhuman freaks aren't invaders or monsters, but refugees from another world. But I ask you, if they aren't 'invaders' let them go someplace else. Why are they forcing themselves on us? Wizards claim the Rifts lead to thousands, even millions of different worlds. So why don't the D-Bees and monsters get the hell off ours and go someplace else? Someplace where they're wanted or that isn't already occupied. I'll tell you why, 'cuz they *ARE* invaders! They don't want to go any place else, because they want the Earth for themselves! Well, they can't have it, not if we have anything to say



about it! It's as simple as that. Anybody who can't see that is a fool, possessed, a D-Bee-lover or magic-freak who should go with them if they know what's good for them. 'Cuz anyone, and I mean anyone, who gets between them and us is gonna die. And I for one am not gonna shed no tears for them. Are you?

"As for spell weavers, anybody who'd seen what I have seen on the Tolkeen front wouldn't question for one minute that magic is evil and doesn't belong in the hands of men. No god fearing man, woman or child should have anything to do with it. And those who do? Believe me, brother, when I tell you they are as bad as any D-Bee. Worse! And ten times more dangerous. Mix magic with D-Bees and your beggin' for trouble. I say to any human who won't accept science or follow human tradition like the rest of us:

"We don't need you! Follow your D-Bee buddies and demonic masters to some other world, you damned traitors! We don't need or want your kind. Get out and good riddance. Stay, and you die."

Such sentiment runs rampant among the Coalition troops, the horrors of war hardening their hearts more than ever before. This has turned many soldiers into killing machines whose souls have no room for compassion. So it is, they gun down every non-Coalition individual they encounter behind enemy lines. The rationale is based on simple logic and self-preservation: Anybody caught behind enemy lines falls into one of four categories, 1) an inhuman monster/D-Bee, 2) practitioner of magic, 3) a traitor to humankind, or 4) some poor slob who happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. Numbers 1-3 are all scum to be terminated with extreme prejudice. As for number

four, the individual should have known better in the first place. He took his chances for whatever reason and lost. It happens. Besides, better safe than sorry.

There was a time when the CS and its soldiers were satisfied with chasing enemies of the States away, publicly crushing them and trumpeting the Coalition's (and humanity's) superiority. Not any more.

At the Tolkeen front, nothing short of complete genocide is acceptable to the invading Coalition Army. This has led to extreme *overkill*, where CS troops fight like men possessed, towns and cities are turned into rubble, farms torched and the enemy slaughtered — even when they try to surrender or flee. Retreating enemy forces are hunted and put down like mad dogs. Worse, there is no distinction made between warrior and innocent, all nonhumans and practitioners of magic are gunned down, including women and children. Few prisoners are taken unless they are needed for interrogation, extortion, a trap, or other sinister purpose. However torture is frowned upon. Not for any humanitarian reason, but because it keeps a deadly and potentially dangerous individual alive longer than necessary. "Don't take chances, kill or be killed," is the credo of the front-line Coalition troops — which is a death sentence for anybody caught behind enemy lines who can not prove their allegiance and loyalty to the CS. This is especially true at "hot zones" where the fighting is most intense, however, exceptions are made everywhere.

Sometimes *human* mercenaries, adventurers and refugees are spared, provided they agree to flee the war zone, never to return, or to join the CS as scouts and freelance agents (this is usually

reserved for those believed to be trustworthy). Likewise, known CS sympathizers, bounty hunters, and select traders, merchants, woodsmen, and civilians (sometimes entire communities) who seem to genuinely welcome and support Coalition forces may also be spared and allowed to continue to go about their business, or serve the CS troops. This exception may also be extended to informers, unallied adventurers, mercenaries, vagabonds and locals (D-Bees among them) who win the favor of one of the current, local Coalition commanders or units in the area. In some cases, D-Bee children are kept as gophers, servants or entertainers and treated like "pets." However, most Coalition Officers frown upon this, for the little urchins may secretly serve other masters as spies and turn against their keepers.

The quality of mercy ...

Not all Coalition soldiers are combat-numbered zombies or mad dog-killers bent on genocide. Some (at least 25-30%) will show mercy and compassion to the enemy whenever it is reasonable, and they think they can get away with it. This may be something as little as giving a D-Bee prisoner (or sorcerer) a blanket, cup of water, food or medical treatment, to showing a captive some measure of respect and/or kindness, refraining from torture and even letting obviously innocent people go (particularly women and children). Such kindness is often done in secret, when the majority who have (at least temporarily) lost their humanity are not looking.

Getting caught treating a nonhuman or practitioner of magic with kindness is a serious offense punishable by one or all of the following "official" sanctions: reprimand, loss of pay, harsh work-duty, demotion (reduction of rank and/or loss of duty) and, occasionally, dishonorable discharge.

Unofficially, the "D-Bee lover," "fool" or "traitor" is likely to face ridicule by his comrades, be shunned, suffer pranks, beatings and mistreatment, and, depending on the circumstances and possible repercussions of his actions, be given the most dangerous or foul assignments, and may even get himself killed by one or more of his fellow soldiers. The only way to get out from under this umbrella of ostracization and hatred, is to prove oneself "repentant" and trustworthy by one's actions; i.e. take the punishment and ridicule without lashing back and doing something (probably numerous things) to help, protect and save the other soldiers in the unit. With time, the incident *may* be forgotten and written of as a momentary lapse in judgement. However, the other soldiers in the unit are likely to *test* "traitors" and "D-Bee lovers" by making them do bad things to innocent D-Bees.

Any soldier found "willfully" helping the enemy escape (even a child) is subject to *court-martial*. If found guilty, he is branded a traitor (something that will disgrace and haunt the individual's family for generations), be stripped of his rank, and either face life in prison or, more likely, public execution as a "traitor to the Coalition States and all of humankind!" However, in the field, many a soldier accused of such a traitorous act is either killed outright by the squad commander, has an "accident" ("Now, how did that fusion block get into Corporal Freedman's hover jeep?"), or get's himself caught in "friendly fire." In the alternative, to spare the "traitor's" family the disgrace, he may be allowed to commit suicide or be executed by a member of the squad, but the incident attributed to an enemy attack, thus allow-

ing the "traitor" to die with dignity without any blemish on his military record (just another tragedy of war). This special treatment is usually afforded to only the most well liked and respected members of the unit. Those who were never much liked are cheerfully taken prisoner and handed over for court-martial, or taken out back and shot.

Authors' Notes

This book might come as a bit of a shock to die-hard Coalition fans, because it will *not* paint a very pretty picture of our boys in black. In fact, for the most part, **Coalition Overkill** is all about how the Coalition is the bad guy, the aggressor, the oppressor. After all, is it really so hard to believe? Sometimes, folks lose sight of this, perhaps because the Coalition employs such a dazzling array of technology that from a playing standpoint, it's easy to forget that the CS espouses many of the things we have grown to detest in modern society — xenophobia, totalitarianism, overt racism, and genocide. What makes the Coalition tolerable, even heroic under certain circumstances, is that they really *do* have serious enemies to contend with, not the least of which are the hordes of monsters, supernatural horrors, and evil magic users stalking the land. Moreover, not all people living in the Coalition States or serving in its military are evil or bigots. The CS is a civilization of diverse people and to assume "all" CS citizens are fanatics and bad guys is to do exactly what the Coalition does to others, generalize, vilify and prey on people's fears and misconceptions.

Unfortunately, the Coalition has taken their fear and hatred and used them to help fuel their war machine and justify their actions. People are so afraid of D-Bees and magic, and the CS military is so voracious, that they seek to destroy anything that even resembles a threat. Thus, we have the Coalition War: Siege on Tolkeen, a vicious campaign of utter destruction that pits the Coalition against a much smaller, weaker power that has never overtly challenged the CS or made moves against it. Certain individuals within Tolkeen may have, but the nation as a whole has never sought conflict with its massive, technologically powerful neighbor, which makes the Coalition's aggression all the more questionable, its heroics all the more hollow.

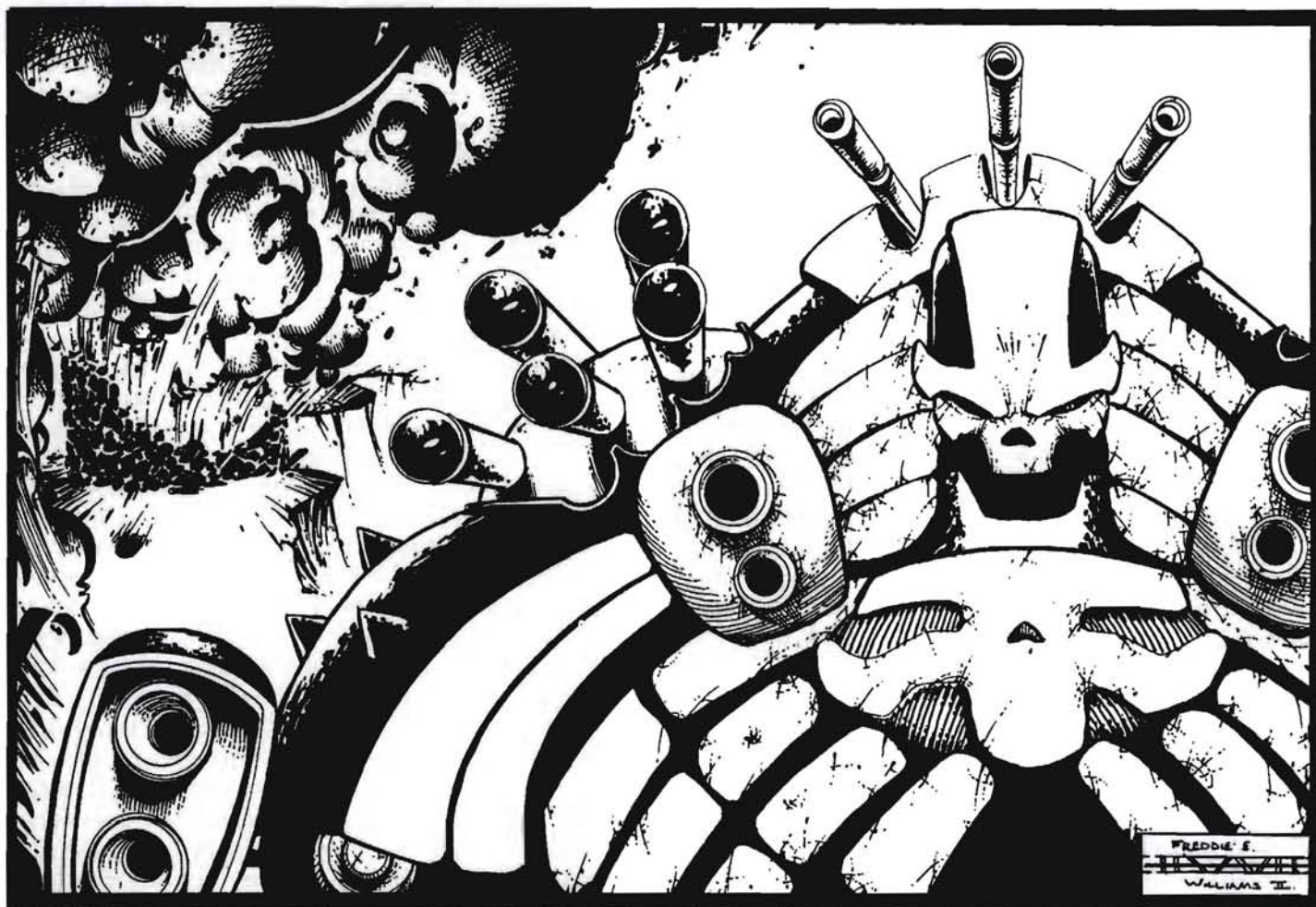
In time we will also examine the corrupt nature of the Tolkeen forces, for they too are hardly paragons of virtue. Like the Coalition soldiers they battle, most of the individuals fighting for Tolkeen are good, decent people who have been manipulated into war by their amoral and corrupt leadership. Of course, one could argue that ultimately, a society's citizens are responsible for the actions of their leaders, but that is a philosophical debate perhaps best left for discussion between G.M.s and their players as they decide who is right and who is wrong in this landmark conflict between magic and machinery.

For now, our mission in **Siege on Tolkeen 2: Coalition Overkill** is to show that as far as the Coalition's invasion of Tolkeen is concerned, not all causes are noble, not all crusades are just, and not all wars are black and white. In fact, most aren't. The Siege on Tolkeen is one such war, where the line between good and evil is continually muddled by actions on both sides of the conflict. Where right and wrong often depends only on one's point of view, and where despite all the killing and the posturing, the simple truth of this conflict is that caught in the crossfire are thousands upon thousands of innocent people who

are guilty only of wanting to live out their lives in relative peace and quiet. They are the real victims of this war, and in playing it out, we should not forget it.

The Coalition is hardly the first army in history to act this way, and judging by the tragic condition of Rifts Earth, they shall not be the last. But one thing is for certain: the utterly callous and perhaps evil behavior displayed *en masse* by the Coalition during the Tolkeen campaign will definitely carry strong repercussions. From the High Command to the lowliest grunt, the Coalition shall learn that there is a price to be paid for cruelty and genocide. A *steep* price, indeed.

Hopefully, as the smoke clears from the battlefields of Tolkeen, the soldiers of the Coalition will recognize their crimes and strive to prevent them as their society soldiers on into the future.



A Rising Evil

The Siege on Tolkeen's disastrous start has sent shock waves through virtually every level of Coalition command, from field lieutenants all the way to the High Command and Emperor Prosek. Virtually nobody in the Coalition leadership expected things would go like *this*, and certainly not right at the invasion's onset! Already, a number of heads have rolled (figuratively more than literally, but still, this *is* the Coalition we are talking about) over the Tolkeen debacle, and many more are soon to follow as nearly everybody involved finds somebody

else in the army to blame for Tolkeen's successes and the Coalition's unacceptable losses.

While the current command stays paralyzed by mutual finger-pointing and shock, a powerful and insidious clique of ambitious officers have risen up to take over many of the positions previously held by officers deposed by their mishandling of the Tolkeen invasion. These newcomers, known collectively as the *Second Wave*, have very clear ideas for how the war in Tolkeen can be salvaged. Nearly all of them entail mass murder, destroy-

ing entire innocent populations, establishing what amount to concentration camps, and perhaps even launching a D-Bee holocaust, not unlike the horrors that unfolded beneath the pre-Rifts Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler! These ideas have been organized into two sweeping initiatives envisioned by the Second Wave's *de facto* leader, **General Micander Drogue**. Drogue's vision of how to regain control of the Tolkeen offensive includes **Operation Hardball**, which plans to decimate Tolkeen's civilian populace, and **Operation Spoilsport**, a campaign to insert hundreds of Special Forces teams, spies, saboteurs and assassins behind enemy lines. Together, these plans shall advance General Drogue's and the like-minded Second Wavers' sick vision of genocide against Tolkeen, and eventually, every other group of people living outside the Coalition States.

What gives the Second Wave so much strength is that their views, while viciously extreme and indeed repellent to many other Coalition officers, speak to the feelings of most front-line Coalition troops currently in the field at Tolkeen. Many of these soldiers are tired, frustrated and angry. They have been enduring extraordinarily stressful conditions for weeks and months. Day after day, they face more misery and death all because of the perceived ineptitude of their initial leaders and the magical and supernatural forces they were unprepared to face. It has only recently been explained to them that Tolkeen's unique magic defenses prevent missile bombardment (many had questioned why the Coalition had not simply nuked Tolkeen). Likewise, it has been disclosed that the eggheads at Lone Star can't whip up a tailor made virus that kills only D-Bees, because there are too many different races, not to mention a slew of supernatural and magical creatures impervious to disease. Besides, unleashing any "biological agent" into a war zone always runs the risk of killing one's own men, and nobody wants to see a new plague released into the world. There were enough plagues after the Great Cataclysm to last a thousand lifetimes, so nobody likes that idea. So it is, that the grunts, officers, robot and power armor pilots, along with Special Forces and those who make up the military infrastructure, accept that the Siege on Tolkeen will be a "trench war" fought and won by the infantry. In an ironic way, many CS soldiers see this as only fitting. After all, this is (as the CS sees things) "humanity's war against the inhuman," so it is only right and just that "men" fight and die to push the enemy from their homelands.

At first glance, the virulent and hateful policies of the Second Wave might seem like just the sort of attitude the Coalition States would be looking for, especially in light of its initial failures. Would it not need soldiers and officers willing to do whatever it takes to achieve victory? Should not any means be used to ensure that the *Crusade for Humanity* proceeds unhindered? That the enemies of the Coalition be reduced to rubble, their ashes scattered on the wind?

The problem is, while much of the Coalition's leadership is evil enough to support the openly genocidal strategies of the Second Wave, there are those who recoil from them. Genocide is perhaps the most heinous atrocity humanity has proven itself capable of committing. That the Coalition Military, an institution that prides itself on the glory of combat and the honor taken from defeating a worthy foe, would resort to such barbaric methods as concentration camps, civilian pacification programs (i.e. mass slaughter) and tactical strikes on civilian settlements and non-military targets outside the immediate sphere of con-

flict is enough to give numerous Coalition officers a serious moment of pause. For if the Coalition resorts to such savagery, then doesn't it lower itself to the same kind of monstrous behavior it sees in its enemies? Doesn't it rob itself of the very nobility it is trying to preserve? Isn't it committing the same kind of foul crimes being perpetrated by the villains and monsters who now roam most of the world?

Some say yes, the Coalition would be lowering itself to the same repugnant level it opposes. To that end, the words of pre-Rifts philosopher *Friedrich Nietzsche* (a favorite among more intellectual Coalition brass) comes to mind: "When fighting monsters, one must take care not to become a monster. For when you look into the mirror the mirror stares right back." As a result, when push comes to shove, there is a substantial element within the Coalition that simply will *not* willingly take part in outright genocide nor the torture or butchery of innocent women and children, be they inhuman or not. There is always a price to pay for victory, but there is also a line many CS Officers (and the soldiers in the ranks) will not cross, and this is it. From their point of view, they agree the offensive in Tolkeen is in trouble, but that hardly means the war is over or that the Coalition can not break through this initial wall of resistance and carry on. The measures proposed by the Second Wave are the acts of desperate or hate-filled monsters and cowards who are too afraid to fight an armed enemy, so they attack helpless civilians instead. There is no honor in victory achieved this way. This does not show the superiority of humanity, or the courage and fighting skills of the Coalition Army. This is merely the act of a mindless horde brutalizing the weak, which any common thug can do. No, the Coalition is made of better stuff than that, and although it strives to one day destroy all that is inhuman and contaminated by magic, it shall do so the right way, the honorable way, a way that generations to come will be proud to look back upon as the path taken by true heroes. Regrettably, this is a sentiment that is rapidly becoming irrelevant.

Naturally, these opposing views have divided the Army and the forces deployed at Tolkeen, pretty much down the middle. The Second Wave (and many of the field troops who have already suffered at the hands of the enemy) hardly sees things this way. To them, this kind of "mock chivalry" is the very reason why the Tolkeen Battle Groups got themselves in this mess. Look at the Coalition strategies going into Tolkeen — capture and hold civilian settlements. Destroy Tolkeen's ability to make war. Cut off the enemy's mobility. What kind of objectives are these? Especially when the prevalent use of magic and the supernatural makes conventional warfare obsolete?! This is *pin-prick warfare* at its least useful. Tolkeen is a vast swarm of deadly, magic wielding insects too numerous and resilient to kill one by one. To defeat them, the Second Wave insists, one must defeat *all* of them, and to that end, harsher measures are required. Things like concentration camps and mass slaughter to keep the Tolkeen "civvies" from aiding and abetting Tolkeen militants. Every house must be blasted and bombed into rubble to destroy the hiding places of demons and enemy strike forces, as well as war production facilities. (Hey, it's common knowledge that every Tolkeen household is a miniature Techno-Wizard factory, right? Or conceals magic circles used to summon forth demons and monsters from the very pits of hell!) A merciless scorched earth campaign is the only way to take away Tolkeen's hiding places and resources. Mass "purges" (the

Second Wavers try to avoid words like "slaughter," "massacre," "genocide" and "mass extermination") is the only way to eliminate Tolkeen's most precious resource, its people. As for the sentiment that women and children should be spared, the Second Wavers claim the Coalition Army can't afford to be that merciful. Every man, woman and child in Tolkeen has the potential to be a "living weapon" of magical might or a demon in disguise. In the least, they are supporters, sympathizers, and sorcerers in training or pawns of demonic fiends from alien worlds. Better to "eliminate" them now, than risk more human lives and the success of the war later. And in the long run, the Coalition States can not afford to lose this war. Something must be done.

Personally, Emperor Prosek does not particularly care for the brazen and outspoken nature of officers who lead the Second Wave, Nor does he like their scorched earth plans and strategies, fearing it appears to be too "desperate" and a bit "heavy handed." He appreciates what they are striving for, but would prefer it if they were at least a little more subtle about it. Such extremism makes the troops more difficult to control, and places further strain on the Propaganda wing, as it makes sure the public only learns what it is supposed to learn about the Tolkeen offensive.

Still, something must be done, and the members of this so-called Second Wave seem to be the people with a clear vision. Despite the misgivings of some of his senior officers (who had best watch their tongues, lest they find themselves leading a charge into Tolkeen), Emperor Prosek is willing to give the Second Wave its chance, and see what a genocidal approach can do

to soften Tolkeen up. After all, it's only a community of magic-users and D-Bees. It's not like they deserve any real human consideration.

To this end, Prosek has named **General Micander Drogue** Special Liaison Commander of all Tolkeen Operations. While the individual Generals running each of the field armies will (for the moment) retain control of their commands, General Drogue will have the powers to issue new directives, mandate special operations (such as his scorched earth campaign), suggest new strategies, and even requisition whatever manpower and materials he deems necessary to Special Covert Operations that answer directly to him, and him alone. This is all done to further the war effort in Tolkeen and bring about a lasting and total victory for the Coalition States.

Secretly, this development makes many Coalition officers sick to their stomachs, even those who lean toward the General's extreme views. General Drogue is a man well known for his mental instability, sadistic nature, and purely evil personality. Whatever he has in mind for Tolkeen is perhaps worse than even what the average Coalition patriot feels the renegade kingdom deserves. Despite this disgust, however, most of these officers also are staunch human supremacists who lack the spine to oppose their Emperor, even if the person he has put in charge is a diabolical mad-man. Although many of them may not be asked to participate in the atrocities General Drogue will instigate and encourage, they know all about them, so in not resisting, they give their silent consent. In the generations to come, when Coalition citizens look back on the horrors their society



perpetrated against the Kingdom of Tolkeen, the real blame shall not rest with Micander Drogue or even Emperor Prosek. It shall rest with the "Silent Legion," the thousands upon thousands of otherwise good (or at least, less evil) soldiers who saw the holocaust happening before their very eyes, yet chose to do nothing about it.

Even in a world as overrun by monsters and villains as Rifts Earth is, there still remain heroes and champions of light who battle for freedom, justice and righteousness for all, living proof that goodness has not fled the planet (although it may seem like it sometimes). And as long as there are those who strive to be good and do what is right, even though they may fail, they shall always be present wherever evil rears its ugly head. Whether or not those forces choose to fight that evil is another story. For in this world, evil can only win when left unchallenged.

General Micander Drogue

Micander was born into a family of privilege on the upper levels of Chi-Town. His early life was one marked by luxury, rank and status. He went to an exclusive pre-military academy while his parents enjoyed their position as members of an elite military-industrial venture. As far as the young man could tell, the rest of the real world lived like him. Those who did not were lesser people who got stuck with lousy lives because somehow, they deserved it. Raised on a steady diet of Coalition indoctrination, human supremacy, and outright hate culture, Micander soon learned that people exactly like him were the cream or the crop, destined to rule the world simply because it was not meant for the vast majority, who were, by definition, lesser stock.

Not long after Micander's ninth birthday, he was in for a rude shock. His parents' military-industrial company turned out to be riddled with moles from Free Quebec, numerous rebel groups, and even a few deep cover agents from Tolkeen! The company, which was a leading weapons research and manufacturing combine, was shut down immediately because of the scandal. Nearly everyone on the board of directors and upper management were arrested and tried for treason. A number of them were executed. Those who had serious connections, like Micander's parents, used the last of their waning political power to have themselves spared. Most would consider Micander's folks to have gotten off easy. Although stripped of social rank and privilege, their home and possessions seized by the state, and demoted to the lowest ranks of the city, they were allowed to live and retain their CS citizenship. Cast to the bottom of the heap, if they wanted to return to the high society they so adored, they would have to work their way up to get there.

This development crushed Micander and his parents. The first months were especially rough on them, as they had few skills or the tough exterior to survive on the "scummy underside" of Chi-Town. Worse, every lowly citizen seemed to know about the scandal and their past life, and took great relish in chiding them about it. Before long, Micander's mother had turned to prostitution, and his father was a burned-out alcoholic and drug addict. By the time Micander was twelve, his mother had committed suicide, and his father had simply vanished. The boy was left all alone.

Of the three fallen Drogues, only Micander showed any survival instinct. Branded the offspring of traitors or fools, he became a City Rat calling himself "Scrape," known as much for his utter hatred of just about everybody, as for his long record of violent, anti-social behavior. Those who knew him would say that Scrape seemed to hold the whole world responsible for why he was stuck in the grimy bottom of Chi-Town. There was little telling who or what would become the boy's next object of wrath. Scrape was fond of slashing people as they slept, especially drunks and streetwalkers, and he was known to occasionally sneak up to the next level or two purely for the thrill of defying the authorities and causing trouble.

By the time he turned sixteen, "Scrape" had made himself a major name on the mean streets of Chi-Town as the leader of a gang of murderous thugs and thieves who made their money hacking the limbs off cyborgs and selling them to Body-Chop-Shops. However, "Scrape's" career as a street kingpin came to a screeching crash when Chi-Town police finally caught up with him and he was sentenced to either death or expulsion from Chi-Town. It was his choice. The rebellious lad was going to pick death, because in his own words, he would "rather die than spend one minute scumming with every God-forsaken loser outside trying to claw their way into Chi-Town." For some reason, this outburst captured the attention of the legal officer overseeing Micander Drogue's processing, and he called a few friends in military recruiting. Micander's self-appointed execution was delayed, and before he knew it, he was undergoing a battery of intelligence exams and psychological profiles. His mix of intelligence, violent behavior, obsessive hatred of anything associated with inhumanity, and deep-seated love for the Coalition itself (if not for all of its citizens) made him a good candidate for the military.

He sailed through basic training and found himself handling security patrols in the 'Burbs, a duty he relished. Predictably, Private Drogue routinely beat, tortured and executed anybody who crossed him in the 'Burbs, earning him the moniker, "The Headsman." Although disciplined a few times for assaulting other soldiers (ostensibly for minute infractions), his record remained otherwise spotless, and he rose in rank quickly. He handled numerous mini-campaigns along the Coalition's southern and eastern borders, fighting with distinction against the *Pecos Empire* and the *Federation of Magic* — including several small, off-the-record forays deep into enemy territory with impressive results. All the while, though, Captain Drogue never forgot the shame his family had experienced, a shame he was convinced occurred only because of the numerous spies and traitors who "framed" his parent's. While his meteoric rise in rank was nice, it was only a stepping stone toward Micander's real dream: To one day command the kind of power needed to begin purging the planet of all those who failed to make the Coalition grade for purity and to extract his private vengeance against a world that always seemed to be in conflict with him. That meant anybody who practiced magic, anybody not from this world, and pretty much anybody opposed in the least bit to any aspect of the Coalition government. Captain Drogue's "hit list" would be long indeed, but he had time, and he was more than willing to wait for the right moment. Which is now — forty years exactly since his parents fall from grace and his rise to the rank of *Four-Stripe General* in the Coalition Army. At last, the time for redemption is at hand for the Drogue family name, and it is the Kingdom of Tolkeen who will suffer for it.

Over the course of his long and distinguished military career, General Droque has gathered a flock of like-minded villains who wish only to completely eradicate those of "impure" genetic stock (i.e., magic users, mutants, D-Bees and all nonhumans). Many of these simpatico individuals have served under him at one time or another and have since moved on to their own commands, which have, in turn, become virtual training and recruiting centers for other genocidal inclined soldiers. Despite the attack dog loyalty of his twisted disciples, General Droque trusts none of them, and routinely sets them at each other's throats in cruel tests of loyalty and favor. The degradations he inflicts upon his subordinates range from mere brutality to outright physical and psychological torture. All in a day's work for this, one of the Coalition's most sinister and patently evil individuals. A man who has a heart of darkness and a head full of bad wiring. A warrior who, for all intents and purposes, has been given the Kingdom of Tolkeen to make his own personal war zone.

Despite his questionable mental stability, the General is a brilliant man and natural leader. He has a photographic memory, and can recall the name and face of virtually ever soldier who has served directly beneath him. Those who ascribe to his way of thinking are filed away as his own personal "disciples," and are the first individuals he will recruit for his Special Forces units assigned to carry out his various doomsday plans for Tolkeen. Chief among these underlings are his top cronies and confidants, **Lt. General Nikoto Galva** and **Lt. General Kira Moss**.

General Micander Droque

Race: Human

Alignment: Diabolic

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 17, M.A.: 21, P.S.: 15, P.P.: 14, P.E.: 14, P.B.: 14, Spd: 20

Hit Points: 45, **S.D.C.:** 45.

Weight: 190 lbs (85.5 kg); **Height:** Six feet, two inches (1.88 m).

Age: 49

P.P.E.: 7

Disposition: Droque maintains a hard, cool exterior that rarely betrays the boundless rage he feels inside. He is an eternally angry, violent and bitter man who seeks to vent his feelings on the enemies of the Coalition States, namely practitioners of magic and D-Bees. Around humans, he can be fairly polite, but the evil presence he exudes is undeniable and unnerving. He always seems to be sizing people up and quaking with controlled rage. His words, even when softly spoken, often drip with venom or sarcasm. Equally undeniable is his condescension towards anybody he feels is unworthy of his time ... which is pretty much anybody who does not share his views and revere him as a hero and genius. This includes most of those he outranks, and even the Military High Command and the Emperor himself. Naturally General Droque keeps his feelings of superiority well hidden when dealing personally with Emperor Prosek and other top ranking authorities. The only man he half-way respects is Colonel Joseph Prosek II, Head of Propaganda, whom he suspects is a kindred spirit, and perhaps even his equal.

General Droque has achieved his rank through focused determination, high risks, ruthlessness and sheer force of will. According to him, this is his destiny.

Experience Level: 10th level Technical Officer.

Skills of Note: Literacy (95%), Basic Math (98%), Radio: Basic (98%), Running, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, Cryptography (70%), Radio: Scramblers (80%), Surveillance Systems (75%), T.V./Video (61%), Laser (75%), Pilot Airplane (86%), Pilot Automobile (98%), Pilot Jet Packs (78%), Navigation (95%), Read Sensory Equipment (75%), and Weapon Systems (85%).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic

Attacks Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to damage, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with punch.

Other Combat Info: Kick: 1D6, Critical Strike on natural 19-20, Body Flip: 1D6 plus victim loses initiative and one attack

Weapons of Note: His favorite sidearms are a C-20 Laser Pistol and a pair of (Dog Boy style) Vibro-Claws.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip. Extra Ammo: 3 long E-Clips.

Vibro-Claws: 3D4 M.D. per strike.

CA-4 Standard "Dead Boy" Armor: Armor: Head/Helmet: 70 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 80 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 100 M.D.C.

Other Equipment: Varies as necessary. As a four stripe General, Droque rarely ever sees front-line combat. Instead he calls



the shots, making strategies, and issuing orders. However, as a General, he has access to whatever equipment, weapons, vehicles and manpower he may require, including Special Forces, CS Juicers, Cyborgs, Commandos, Rangers, power armor and robots.

Other CS Leaders

At the onset of the invasion, there were two basic kinds of officers within the Coalition battle groups: those who realized that Tolkeen was an enemy not to be trifled with, and those who wrote Tolkeen's victories off as the flukes of an otherwise unworthy enemy.

At the beginning of the offensive, the Coalition's command structure was overwhelmingly populated by officers of the second type who unbeknownst to them were doomed to defeat, capture and death. Those of the first type would in time become the invasion force's new heroes — resourceful, cold, calculating leaders whose understanding of their enemy could enable them to turn the faltering offensive around and drive the Coalition legions to victory. The only way those able officers would gain command, however, was by replacing their narrow-minded superiors as they fell in combat. This "shaking out" process was inevitable, and it should spell triumph for the Coalition Army in their war against Tolkeen. However, it created a new line of leaders who are merciless, craven killers willing to immolate the enemy and do anything to win. If left unchecked, their legacy may reshape the Coalition Army into something more horrible than anyone has ever seen.

The following are a few notable Coalition Front-liners, many top brass leading the charge. These and other characters are provided as potential Non-Player Characters (NPCs), villains and sources for adventure.

General Jericho Holmes

Renowned for his military skills, sheer bravery, and his grim sense of battlefield honor, General Holmes enjoys more loyalty and admiration from his troops than most other Coalition top brass. Holmes made a name for himself over twenty years ago when he participated in a now-legendary battle along the western Iowa border. According to the stories, Holmes was a young lieutenant at the time and the platoon commander for a tiny outpost in the middle of nowhere. One of Holmes' Rangers returned from a scouting patrol with grim news: a force of some 300 bandits, Headhunters, sorcerers and D-Bees were heading straight for the outpost! Outnumbered nearly ten to one and with no means of surviving a prolonged siege, and unable to call for reinforcements, the platoon was doomed. His men knew this and began to gather their gear to make a run for it. The lieutenant looked on with disgust but made no effort to stop his retreating troops. He merely gathered all of their discarded weapons and ammunition and piled it next to him as he took a position on one of the outpost's gunnery towers. When his men implored him to come with them, Lt. Holmes reportedly answered, "The Coalition has given me the solemn duty of protecting my homeland. Who am I to shirk such an honor?"

Apparently, the young lieutenant's words had a delayed effect on some of his troops. Moved by their commander's bravery, they decided after about a day's travel to return to the base and retrieve what was left of him to take home to his family. For him to make such a noble sacrifice, the least they could do was make sure his body got a decent burial back in Chi-Town. When the soldiers returned to the outpost, they did not find a dead Lieutenant Holmes, instead, they found a mountain of dead bandits, destroyed vehicles and power armor. The ground was pockmarked with still smoking craters, and the walls of the outpost had been riddled with laser and rail gun fire. As the troops cautiously entered the compound, they found Lt. Holmes kneeling on top of a pile of corpses, his vibro-sword still humming in his clenched fist. Breathing hard, Lt. Holmes looked up at his returning soldiers and remarked, "It's been a long night," and collapsed.

The astonished soldiers surveyed the scene of destruction. Indeed, Holmes had engaged the entire force on his own! A number of well placed booby traps had managed to catch at least half of the invading force and Lt. Holmes, somehow, miraculously stemmed the tide of the rest. He was badly wounded and nearly died, but was brought back to a regional base and fully recovered soon thereafter. When asked to describe what happened, he modestly said that he just, "threw everything I had at them and somehow came out on top." The Coalition propaganda machine had a field day with this. Throughout history, there have always been cases of a single soldier pulling off an unbelievable feat of combat through a mixture of skill, circumstance and luck. It had been a while since the Coalition had one of these, but now Holmes was their man. A solid and humble servant of the Coalition, he was the perfect "poster boy" for everything the common foot soldier could aspire to be.

For his exceptional bravery and single-handedly destroying over 230 enemy personnel (the rest fled in retreat), Holmes was awarded the *Imperial Medal of Honor*, promoted to captain, and given his choice of assignments. Captain Holmes asked to be reassigned to Iowa, where he assembled a small field unit of hardened troops and conducted a highly successful series of raids against the bandit lords of the region, wiping them out and ensuring the safety of the Western Iowa border for the next ten years.

Since then, Holmes has been promoted numerous times for his gallantry and brilliant leadership. He has participated in covert actions against the Pecos Empire, Federation of Magic, the Kingdom of Tolkeen, and the Xiticix. He has led and took part in dozens of peacekeeping operations within Coalition territory as well as along its western and northern borders. He has also served extensively in the Chi-Town 'Burbs, organizing and carrying out numerous "sweep and clear" operations to rid the foothills of Chi-Town of any and all lawless elements encountered.

In addition to the Imperial Medal of Honor, General Holmes has also won three *Iron Stars*, a *Crimson Heart* (with two gold stripes), the *CS Cross for Bravery*, the *Joseph Prosek Medal for Valor*, the *Distinguished Service Medallion*, and a *special commendation* from Emperor Prosek himself to commemorate his 30th anniversary of serving the Coalition Military. In addition to these decorations, General Holmes is on the short list to ascend to the Military High Command as soon as a position opens up. Until then, he remains one of the most revered field commanders on active duty, and his presence in the Tolkeen offensive has

given the troops deployed to that action a tremendous boost in morale.

It is not just General Holmes' 1,000+ enemy kills that makes him such an icon of bravery and soldiering excellence. It is that despite his remarkable achievements, he has never been anything more than a "simple Grunt." A relatively average foot soldier whose service has been exemplified by endless courage and unwavering devotion to upholding the empire to which he so proudly belongs. He possesses an infectious spirit and a genuine talent for inspiring others, not to mention a keen mind for military strategy, small- and large-unit tactics, and an overall sense for how to triumph under any conditions. He is the soldier's soldier, and the infantry of the Coalition love him for it.

As a General, Holmes now commands an entire field army in the Tolkeen offensive. His broad directives are to pave the way to the City of Tolkeen's outer walls and to lead the first assault upon that besieged city-state. Holmes knows his job will be a difficult one, which is probably why it was assigned to him. The Coalition has no desire to monkey around in Tolkeen. It wants a swift and decisive victory as soon as possible. If any one general can help bring that to pass, it is General Jericho Holmes.

Personally, Holmes is a severe, unsmiling man who is all work and no play. He has no family, no friends (but plenty of admirers) and no real life outside of his job. He is a military machine whose only concern is completing his mission, furthering the glory of the Coalition States, and ridding the world of D-Bees.

The General is a dyed-in-the-wool human supremacist who views all D-Bees as dangerous vermin who must be pushed back to the ends of the Earth. Just as one can not afford to let a city become overrun by rats, so must the Coalition cleanse itself of any non-humans who have come through the Rifts. Despite this outlook, General Holmes is *not* a cruel or sinister man. He is not particularly bent on genocide and would rather banish D-Bees from Coalition territory than kill them. To the General's point of view, slaying D-Bees unnecessarily will only prompt their friends and children to take revenge on the Coalition, furthering lasting and escalating hostilities. If the vermin are willing to move away from human territory, then so be it. Mission accomplished. Those who resist such banishment or who pose an open threat to the CS, however, must be destroyed, no questions asked. The General's first and only aim is to secure greater peace and prosperity for the Coalition, and if showing mercy to those who have earned it helps bring that about, then so much the better.

Part of this mentality stems from General Holmes' true warrior nature. Although a little too old (and frankly, too important) to be sent on combat operations, the General deeply misses the glory and danger of fighting. During his younger days, he often would spare the lives of opponents he deemed worthy of mercy, and on more than one occasion, this show of honor saved his life. To this day, there are at least a dozen high-ranking mages (and it is said, even a dragon or two) who owe their lives to General Holmes, and will return the favor if the General is in their clutches. Such is the legacy of one of the Coalition's great superpatriots, a man of uncompromising principle and courage, a pillar of strength in the campaign that might change the face of the Coalition forever.

Unfortunately, men like the great Jericho Holmes are in short supply, and many of those rising in the ranks around him are monsters. Men without any sense of honor or justice. Soldiers bent on winning at all costs and devoid of mercy. Warriors who see nothing wrong with wholesale slaughter or genocide. In fact, many revel in such barbarism. This will inevitably create friction between the noble General Holmes and other leaders on the war front (many of whom think General Holmes' *antiquated* sense of honor and approach to war are holding them back).

General Jericho Holmes

Race: Human

Alignment: Aberrant

Attributes: I.Q.: 11, M.E.: 17, M.A.: 25, P.S.: 18, P.P.: 19, P.E.: 18, P.B.: 12, Spd: 14

Hit Points: 67, S.D.C.: 50

Height: Six feet, three inches (1.9 m). **Weight:** 200 lbs (90.8 kg).

Age: 50 (looks 40).

P.P.E.: 10

Experience Level: 10th level Coalition Grunt.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (98%), Pilot Hovercraft (98%), Pilot Tank & APC (90%), Pilot Robots and Power Armor (86%), Pilot Jet Packs (82%), Robot Combat: Basic, Read Sensory Equipment (90%), Weapon Systems (98%), Body Building, Boxing, Wrestling, Swimming, Climbing (95%/85%), Running, Demolitions (98%), Demolitions Disposal (98%), First Aid (95%), Basic Electronics (80%), Land Navigation (76%), Prowl (75%), SCUBA (85%), Cryptography (65%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Knife (+2 to throw, +1 to strike, +3 to parry), W.P. Sword (+3 to strike and parry), W.P. Heavy, W.P. Sub-Machinegun, W.P. Automatic and Semi-Automatic Rifles.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert

Attacks Per Melee: 7

Combat Bonuses: +4 to strike, +6 to parry/dodge, +7 to damage, +2 to pull punch, +4 to roll with punch/fall/impact, 84% likelihood to evoke a sense of trust or intimidation, +1 to save vs psionic attacks and insanity, +2 to save vs magic, +2 to save vs poison and disease, and (due to his experience) +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Other Combat Info: Paired weapons (all), pin/incapacitate: 18-20, crush/squeeze: 1D4, knockout: natural 20, critical strike: 18-20, judo throw: 1D6 plus lose initiative and one attack per melee.

Typical Weapons:

CP-50 Dragonfire: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple-blast burst. Micro-fusion grenades, fired from the underbarrel grenade launcher, do 6D6 M.D. to a 12 feet/3.6 m diameter blast area. Rate of Fire: Laser fires single shots or triple bursts equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Grenade launcher fires single shots or bursts of four. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m) for laser, 1,200 feet (365 m) for grenade launcher. Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip and 12 grenades in grenade launcher. **Note:** Holmes will only carry this weapon when entering a truly "hot" combat zone. Otherwise, he will not carry such heavy weaponry, as it seems unfitting for an officer of his stature to do so.

CP-30 Laser Pulse Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D4 per single blast or 4D6 per triple-blast burst. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand

to hand attacks per melee round. **Range:** 600 feet (183 m). **Payload:** 30 laser shots per long E-Clip. **Note:** This weapon was given to Holmes as a gift by Emperor Prosek on Holmes' 30th anniversary. The weapon is specially engraved along the barrel ("Duty. Courage. Honor.") and is Holmes' prize possession. He carries it with him at all times.

C-5 Pump Pistol: **Mega-Damage:** 4D6, **Rate of Fire:** Standard; see Modern Weapon Proficiency section. **Range:** 800 feet (244 m). **Payload:** 5 rounds, loaded manually one round at a time. A speed loader will load all five rounds in four seconds (one melee action). **Note:** Holmes has owned this weapon for years and considers it another valuable. He only carries it when entering combat zones, however.

Extra Ammo: Holmes typically carries two extra long E-clips on his CP-30 gunbelt. When carrying other weaponry, he usually carries enough spare ammunition for three or four reloads per weapon.

Vibro-Swords (2): **Mega-Damage:** 2D6 each. Like a samurai of old, Holmes *always* wears a pair of thin Vibro-Swords at his waist. This is something of a trademark for him. Although it looks unconventional, High Command has no problem with it. Indeed, many junior soldiers seeking to emulate their hero have also taken to wearing paired Vibro-Swords, although for most they are more ornamental than functional since most Dead Boys lack the skill to wield both weapons at once.

Other Equipment: When in the field, Holmes carries a standard field pack: four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight. Holmes' aides stopped trying long ago to carry the General's gear for him. As a famous and important CS General, he can *get* just about anything he needs or desires for himself, and his clout extends to keeping the supplies for his troops coming without interruption.

Body Armor: CA-4 Standard "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 70 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 80 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 100 M.D.C.

Bionics: Bio-Systems and plastic surgery have been used to repair battle damage on several occasions. In addition to a few internal organ replacements, the general has a bionic lung with air filtration system and internal oxygen tank, a sensor hand with fingerjack and the usual features, gyro-compass, clock calendar, and laser finger (1D4 M.D., 300 foot/91.5 m range; 6 blasts).

Lt. Gen. Kira Moss

Stark and severe, Kira Moss is a fanatical ideologue who will do *anything* if she thinks it advances the Coalition philosophy of human supremacy. Clinically schizophrenic and a manic depressive, Moss is known as the "Black Widow" and "Spider Queen." This comes from her notorious habit of seducing men under her command, using them (for a few days, weeks, or months), and then having them transferred to the most hazardous duty she can find. For some reason, she is always able to find fresh meat who don't know about her despite the large body of rumors in the mill. Secretly, Moss lusts after *General Drogue*

and swears that one day she shall have him, even if it means destroying herself in the process. She is obsessed with him and will do literally *anything*, including commit suicide on the spot, at his command.

Her bizarre personal situation aside, Moss has proven herself to be a capable soldier and commander, having extensive infantry and power armor experience. She has led and participated in numerous raids, rescues, and peacekeeping (read: search and destroy) missions, largely in the Magic Zone and along Tolkeen's southwestern border. Prior to Drogue's involvement with the invasion of Tolkeen, Moss was working hard at getting transferred to this theater to get out of serving in the war in Free Quebec. While she loves combat, she does not relish the thought of fighting another group of humans, especially the Free Quebecois, who in many ways are kindred spirits of the Coalition States. When she was called for duty in Tolkeen, she leapt at the opportunity, both to harass D-Bees and vile practitioners of magic as well as to reunite with her idol, General Drogue. Since then, she has been Drogue's attack dog, the officer he sends for brutal, vicious, fast operations designed more for psychological impact than real military value.

Little is known about Moss's past, which is the way she prefers it. Many different conflicting rumors about her make it impossible to separate fact from fiction, but this much is generally agreed upon: Her parents were not Coalition citizens, she spent much of her childhood in the 'Burbs, and was given citizenship only after capturing and turning in a notorious D-Bee criminal known as *Tungsten Tom*.

Lt. Gen. Kira Moss

Race: Human

Alignment: Miscreant

Attributes: I.Q.: 14, M.E.: 10, M.A.: 13, P.S.: 20, P.P.: 18, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 18, Spd: 31

Hit Points: 59, S.D.C.: 43

Height: Five feet, eleven inches (1.8 m). **Weight:** 160 lbs (72.6 kg).

Age: 34

P.P.E.: 6

Disposition: Cold-hearted, methodical and merciless in just about everything she does. She has an iciness about her that scares even the toughest combat veterans. Basically, she is a vicious disciple of General Drogue who revels in the thought of mechanized combat and sees combat robots as the ultimate evolution of the human killing machine. She is all for genocide and a scorched earth campaign, and gladly orchestrates attacks and raids that will inflict horror and (hopefully) trauma and demoralization upon the enemy.

Experience Level: 9th level Special Forces Commando.

Skills of Note: Basic Math (98%), Radio: Basic (98%), Radio: Scramblers (85%), Land Navigation (78%), Intelligence (74%), Streetwise (68%), Lore: Demon/Monster (76%), Pilot: Jet Pack (84%), Pilot: Robots & Power Armor (98%), Pilot: Robot Combat Elite: Special Forces SAMAS, Wilderness Survival (78%), Climbing (95%/85%), Prowl (80%), Running, Boxing, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Heavy.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Commando

Attacks Per Melee: 7

Combat Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +4 to strike, +9 to parry and

dodge, +7 to damage, +2 to pull punch, +5 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 vs Horror Factor, +10% vs coma/death, and +3 to save vs poison and magic.

Other Combat Info: Knockout/stun on a natural 20, body flip/throw (+2), paired weapons, body block/tackle, backward sweep kick, disarm (+1), automatic body flip (+1), kick: 2D6, automatic dodge (+1), critical body flip/throw, jump kick, death blow 18-20

CP-29 Hellfire Plasma Cannon: Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 per single blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to the hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 1,400 feet (610 m). Payload: 8 per laser energy canister.

C-20 Laser Pulse Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per blast. Rate of Fire: Standard. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 21 laser shots per standard E-Clip, 30 with a long clip.

Vibro-Sword (1): Mega-Damage: 2D6.

Grenades: Four flash/stun grenades, two smoke, four fragmentation and two plasma carried in a satchel.

Extra Ammo: Six standard and 10 long E-Clips.

Other Field Equipment: Two flares, binoculars, RMK and IRMSS robot medical kits, pocket computer, survival knife (2D4 S.D.C.), utility belt, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, canteen.

Body Armor: CA-6EX Heavy "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 100 M.D.C., Arms: 100 M.D.C. each, Legs: 120 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 200 M.D.C. Bonuses: +8 P.S., +14 Spd, +10 feet (3 m) to length of leaps, reduces rate of fatigue by 50%.

Bionics: Clock calendar, gyro-compass, radar detector, oxygen cell (lung implant) and a multi-optic eye.

Lt. General Ian Shrike

Born to military technicians in Chi-Town, Ian Shrike has spent his entire life in the presence of the Coalition war machine. As a child, he grew up around the tech bases and heavy combat machinery for which the Coalition is infamous. By the time he was ten, he could practically field qualify in any standard Coalition small arm. On his sixteenth birthday, Shrike was fast tracked into Officer's Training, already on his way to a long and perhaps glorious military career.

A mere life of crusading for the Emperor would not be enough for the young, diabolical Shrike. When the boy was six, he secretly murdered his baby brother in a fit of jealousy. Having gotten away with that heinous crime, the child quickly learned that by hurting others he could get whatever he wanted. Using guile and betrayal, he spent his youth turning friends on each other, ruining people's reputations, and committing innumerable acts of blackmail and extortion against anyone he desired. As he entered military service, Shrike was already an accomplished blackmailer and murderer, having slain over ten of his peers, acquaintances, or rivals, and on two occasions, perfect strangers because they provoked his ire. The net result of all of this bloodshed and manipulation was to whet his monstrous appetite for more. More power. More influence. More ability to crush anyone underfoot. Shrike would not be satisfied until the world was his playground, and joining the Coalition Military seemed the best way to achieve that.

Shrike's natural aptitude for deception, betrayal and a host of other dirty tricks made him a natural for Military Specialist ser-

vice, a role at which he excelled. Gathering intelligence on the Coalition's enemies (and allies), Shrike contributed in a big way to the various ongoing war efforts of the day. However, his work was all behind the scenes, and offered little potential for glory or rapid promotion. This suited Shrike not at all, and he soon took to gathering dirty little secrets on his superior officers. This enabled him to leverage for himself many undeserved commendations, promotions and bonuses, and before long, the villain was well on his way up the command hierarchy. By 42 years old, Shrike was a General — fairly young by Coalition standards, and in charge of intelligence-gathering for the Tolkeen offensive.

For any other officer, handling the Intel aspect of the Siege on Tolkeen would be a great honor and a terrific career opportunity, but for Shrike, it was but another stepping stone on his endless quest for power. With a supreme bird's eye view of all Coalition operations in Tolkeen, Shrike is in a unique position to review all of the secrets and information that the Coalition has gleaned from its Tolkeenite foes. Although Shrike passes along most of the top-secret material to his superiors in the Military High Command, he does keep some bits of information to himself — things which he plans to exploit for his purposes alone.

Chief among these are a number of leads on a mysterious group known as **The Vanguard**. A group of combat mages who secretly support the Coalition! They are the bastard offspring of the Coalition States, cast away when the Coalition itself was fairly young. When the CS fought the Federation of Magic in 12 P.A., the Coalition still experimented with the practice of magic and included mages in the military. During the anti-magic hysteria that swept the CS after the Federation was defeated, all magic-using Coalition troops were either banished, arrested or killed. Those who got away clean formed a secret society — The Vanguard — and kept up a guerilla war against the Coalition's enemies. The Vanguard lives a nomadic life, and its numbers are small — perhaps no more than a few hundred people, tops. They mirror the Coalition culture in all aspects except concerning magic, which they see no problem with. The Vanguard longs to somehow reconcile with the Coalition and to openly help it fight Tolkeen, but it knows that such a dream is folly. They have instead resigned themselves to a life of isolation from their motherland, locked in an eternal struggle against the Rifts and the monsters they bring into this world.

Ian Shrike wants very much to master the mystic arts. He has thought about joining the Rifts Control Study Group but figured that would be too confined an avenue to pursue. No, he wants to learn the mightiest spellcraft directly from the source, so that he may command powers the likes of which his Coalition brethren can only dream about. To that end, Shrike is actively engaged in locating The Vanguard, hopefully making contact with them, and somehow joining their ranks or recruiting them as his own secret cadre of warriors.

Aside from this, Lt. Gen. Shrike also hopes to use his Intelligence access to maintain a personal search for some of Tolkeen's greatest artifacts, such as The Mobius, Poor Yorick, and the Nine Rings of Elder. With items such as these, Shrike believes, he could carve a piece of the world out for himself and become a true king.

Until then, however, the madman plays it cool in his role as Intel Director for the Tolkeen theater. Any junior officer who

discovers what Shrike is really up to usually ends up having an unfortunate firearms accident or gets mysteriously transferred to a suicide mission deep within Tolkeen territory. Anyone who rivals Shrike in his position as Intel Director at Tolkeen might only have their reputation ruined by false and salacious rumors and planted evidence. To Shrike, it all is just part of the job of grabbing as much as he can from whomever he can so he might achieve ultimate power.

One day, *all* shall grovel at his feet. The lords of Tolkeen, that simpering fool, Emperor Prosek, and anyone else who dares oppose him. Yes, they shall all bow before him.

General Ian Shrike

Race: Human

Alignment: Miscreant

Attributes: I.Q.: 24, M.E.: 12, M.A.: 20, P.S.: 12, P.P.: 11, P.E.: 13, P.B.: 15, Spd: 10

Hit Points: 55, S.D.C.: 24

Height: Six feet (1.8 m). **Weight:** 170 lbs (77 kg).

Age: 44

P.P.E.: 4

Experience Level: 10th level Military Specialist.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (98%), Literacy (98%), Computer Operation (98%), Intelligence (98%), Pilot Hovercraft (98%), Robot Combat: Elite, Read Sensory Equipment (98%), Weapon Systems (98%), Cryptography (95%), Radio: Scramblers (98%), Surveillance Systems (98%), Basic Electronics (95%), Detect Concealment (95%), Forgery (90%), Intelligence (92%), Pick Locks (98%), Pick Pockets (98%),

Computer Operation (95%), Computer Programming (85%), Running, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Combat Bonuses (includes bionic bonuses): +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to parry, +4 to dodge, +3 to damage, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, 60% likelihood of evoking trust or intimidation (+5% when being intimidating).

Other Combat Info: Kick attack: 1D6, critical strike: 18-20, paired weapons (all), judo-style body throw: 1D6 plus lose initiative and one melee attack.

Weapons:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

An old C-18 Laser Pulse Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D4 per single blast or 4D6 per triple-blast burst. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 10 laser shots per standard E-Clip, 20 from a long. **Note:** Shrike considers the weapon something of a "good luck" charm; he's owned it since enlisting in the army.

Vibro-Knife: Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Neural Mace: Damage: Incapacitates one's opponent by stunning him. It can also kill when used as a bludgeon against S.D.C. opponents. See page 205 of the **Rifts® RPG** for complete details.

Extra Ammo: Usually keeps six reloads for each weapon.

Other Equipment: Shrike rarely ventures out into the field any-



more — he prefers to have unwitting third parties and expendable goons do his work for him. However, should he come very close to contacting The Vanguard or locating an artifact of Tolkeen, he probably *will* go out into the field. In such a case, he will probably take with him a standard field pack: four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight.

Note: He has access to every sort of surveillance camera, listening and recording device and equipment one can imagine. These he uses to “leverage” his rivals, superiors and targets for blackmail. He also manipulates select Intel Officers under his charge to unwittingly help him in his escapades.

Body Armor: CA-4 Standard “Dead Boy” Armor: Head/Helmet: 70 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 80 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 100 M.D.C.

Bionics: Bionic ear with amplified hearing and universal headjack, clock calendar, one multi-optic eye, and one optic nerve video implant in the other. He also has a Type AA Cyber-Disguise system.

Mercenary Major Ghillie Cordoba

A dangerous and borderline Rogue Scientist, Major Cordoba is as brilliant as he is unstable. He heads the lead Rift Control Study Group (RCSG) operation at Tolkeen to study the supernatural forces and ley line powers deployed by Tolkeen’s forces. It is his team’s job to get a better understanding of them and develop countermeasures.

Doctor Cordoba has longed for revenge against Tolkeen for decades. When he was a teenager his father ran off with a D-Bee seductress and sorcerer, joined her gang and part of preyed upon the people of the Chi-Town ‘Burbs for years as the notorious bandit group, the *Street Raiders*. Young Ghille hated his father for deserting them, the D-Bee bitch who lured him away and everything associated with them, including their D-Bee gang and their exploits. Being outlandish criminals, Ghille could never escape hearing about the gang’s exploits, as they were constantly on the streets as well as reported on the news. His father, now calling himself the *Nightlord*, had become almost as notorious as his magic weaving mistress, *Shelandra the Bold*, the gang’s founder and leader. This was like grinding salt into an open wound that would never heal. Every day, Ghille prayed that the CS would capture his father, if not the entire gang, so he could enjoy their public execution. Before NTSET or Psi-Net agents could bring the criminals to justice, they fled to Tolkeen from which the woman who stole his father had originated. Ghille, now a man in his twenties and a techno-whiz, vowed someday he’d hurt his father the way he had hurt him and his family. The Coalition’s siege on Tolkeen has finally given him this chance.

Caught as a young Rogue Scientist by the CS, a sharp NTSET agent saw potential in the lad and rather than turn him in for his crimes, handed him over to a mercenary group he and his team frequently worked with. This actually suited Ghille very well and he blossomed into a brilliant mechanic and mercenary “scientist” (a fine distinction between the criminal Rouge

Scientists that the CS is willing to accept, although with some trepidation). His long years of excellent service and fanatical human supremacist beliefs have made his Coalition masters trust him implicitly and think of him almost as one of their own.

Now in Tolkeen he does what he can to thwart their efforts and help the Coalition win the war. However, he also has his own personal agenda: to locate and cause the destruction of his father and his gang of bandits. *Shelandra the Bold* and her *Nightlord* have joined the Tolkeen defenders and regularly ambush and raid CS troops. Shelandra is a master of Ley Line Magic (Miscreant, 11th level Ley Line Walker) and the Nightlord is always at her side, so the odds of them eventually crossing paths with Major Cordoba and his team researching ley lines are pretty good. With any luck, he hopes to be able to cut his father’s throat, personally.

Major Ghillie Cordoba

Race: Human

Alignment: Diabolic, although completely loyal to the CS.

Attributes: I.Q.: 29, M.E.: 25, M.A.: 10, P.S.: 14, P.P.: 10, P.E.: 13, P.B.: 12, Spd: 11

Hit Points: 30, S.D.C.: 50

Height: Six feet (1.8 m). **Weight:** 130 lbs. (59 kg).

Age: 39

P.P.E.: 12

Disposition: Nervous and intense, always focusing on some deep thought or complex equation. His life is his work, and his work is his life. His only real emotions outside of his smoldering hatred for his father and his mistress (the urge to pay them back is obsessive) are his hatred and revulsion toward all D-Bees and practitioners of magic. Thus, he is delighted to take part in their defeat and extermination. He sees General Drogue as a visionary and would welcome the chance to help devise a systematic and efficient means to wage genocide.

Experience Level: 7th level Rogue Scientist and amateur builder and inventor; effectively an RCSG Scientist and enjoys the O.C.C. bonuses (if not the exact skills) of that CS O.C.C.

Skills of Note (includes +15% I.Q. bonus): Literacy (98%), Basic & Advanced Math (98%), Lore: Magic (95%), Lore: Demons and Monsters (90%), Paramedic (85%), Field Surgery (55%), Biology (80%), Radio: Basic (98%), Read Sensory Equipment (95%), Basic Electronics (95%), Computer Operation (98%), Computer Repair (80%), Aircraft Mechanics (80%), Automotive Mechanics (80%), Locksmith (80%), Mechanical Engineer (80%), Robot Mechanics (85%), Weapons Engineer (80%), Electrical Engineer (85%), Robot Electronics (85%), Cryptography (85%), Laser (85%), Optic Systems (85%), Radio: Scramblers (90%), Surveillance Systems (85%), T.V./Video (64%), Land Navigation (79%), Pilot Automobile (97%), W.P. Energy Rifle (“Honest, it’s all theory. I’ve never held a gun in my life!”).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic

Attacks Per Melee: Five

Combat Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, +2 to damage, +5 to save vs psionic attack and insanity.

Other Combat Info: None.

Weapons:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Compliments of the CS for a job well done. Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Vibro-Knife (1): Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Silver Plated Survival Knife (1): 2D4 S.D.C.

Other Equipment: Cordoba keeps three palmtop computers on him at all times, along with a few pens and pads of paper. Other than that, he carries little gear with him personally, however, his RCSG team is fully decked out with sensors, surveillance and other necessary equipment.

Armor: Bushman (60 M.D.C. main body).

Bionics: Only a clock calendar. One would think a guy like this would have all kinds of cybernetics, but he does not.

The RCSG Team

Lt. Marshal Ladd, Miscreant, 9th level RCSG scientist with a Science MOS. He is resentful that the younger and less experienced Major Cordoba is in charge — he's not even Regular Army for god's sake! The two men seem to clash about everything.

Sgt. Alex Mezmyr, Aberrant, 6th level RCSG, with an MOS in Mechanical Engineering. He admires Major Cordoba and always sides with him in a dispute.

Corp. Jonathan Williams the Third, Unprincipled, 3rd level RCSG scientist with a Communications MOS. He comes from a long line of CS Military people. He just wishes everybody could get along.

Lt. Laquisha "Doc" Sanders, Unprincipled, 6th level CS Technical Officer trained as a Medic; skills include eBiology, Criminal Sciences and Forensics, Pathology, and Medical Doctor.

Sgt. Ace Gardener, Psi-Battalion, Anarchist, 5th level Officer, Major Psychic, 84 I.S.P., with psi-Sensitive powers of Mind Block, Object Read, Clairvoyance, Empathy, Remote Viewing, See the Invisible, Read Dimensional Portal, and Intuitive Combat, all powers that make him ideal for this mission.

Lt. Cindy Manheim, Aberrant, 6th level Special Forces with an MOS in Mechanics. She was selected for this duty because of her combat and mechanic's skills. She is a slender and attractive brunette who is deceptively innocent looking, but can kill a man or repair a gun faster than most. She enjoys this assignment because she can learn things from the scientists. Lt. Manheim finds herself attracted to the Major (for his brain if nothing else), but he has not noticed her, and professional decorum dictates she does nothing about her feelings. Still, she likes to hang around him and has become his unofficial bodyguard.

Sgt. Jason "Cutthroat" Carter, Miscreant, 7th level CS Special Forces member. "Cutthroat" likes to kill and "interrogate" (e.g. torture), and frequently offers to capture and interrogate practitioners of magic for the Major. Should they ever encounter the Street Raiders gang, Major Cordoba might just let him do that.

Darrel Williams, Miscreant, 4th level CS Ranger. He hates this assignment. He wanted to be on Special Forces Squad or a Deep Reconnaissance team, not playing nursemaid to a bunch of

eggheads. Like the Lieutenant and all the "muscle" on the team, it is his job to help protect the scientists and get them where they want to go.

Leon "The Tank" Shrug, Unprincipled, 2nd level CS Cyborg Strike Trooper. Underwent full cybernetic conversion less than a year ago to serve his country and volunteered for duty at Tolkeen. He has become an expert with heavy missile rifles and rail guns, his favorites. He is still very green and finds all this science and magic stuff confusing and frightening. He's here to protect the eggheads.

Stan "The Man" Jackson, Anarchist, 4th level CS RPA Elite/SAMAS pilot. He flies a "Smiling Jack" Light SAMAS, but also has a Super-SAMAS along with the team to use in case they get thrown up against something big. He is a no-nonsense fighter who likes to disable and then kill his opponents, targeting what he perceives as the most dangerous threats first.

Max, Aberrant, 6th level CS Dog Boy (bloodhound) who enjoys hunting and killing supernatural creatures. He's recently added Daemnix to the top of his list for extermination. He has learned about the Major's personal vendetta and he, along with Drax, has promised to help when the time comes.

Drax, Anarchist, 2nd level CS Dog Boy (German Shepherd). Drax is young, wild and reckless, unusual for his breed. Although he tends to get anxious and take unnecessary risks, he is a good and brave soldier.

The Dirty Thirty

By Bill Coffin

Additional text by Siembieda

The infamous Coalition Special Forces unit nicknamed "The Dirty Thirty" has been making trouble in and around Tolkeen since well before the siege got underway. The elite platoon has been assigned to the Tolkeen front for three years making them experts in battling spell casters and supernatural forces. The group is essentially a mixed unit of various Special Forces personnel, each hand selected for their area of expertise and ruthlessness toward nonhumans. The Dirty Thirty is a highly mobile guerilla platoon that carries out deep reconnaissance, search and rescue, search and destroy, sabotage, assassination, sniping, surgical strikes and other such operations against Tolkeen's forces.

The group is savage when it comes to battling nonhumans and magic users, thus they make no distinction between military and civilian targets — "anything and everyone" in Tolkeen is fair game. From the Dirty Thirty's point of view, military targets are more challenging and contribute directly to the war effort. This makes them their number one targets. Countering the enemy's military has an immediate and profound impact on the success of Coalition Military operations in Tolkeen, by helping to break down, confound and weaken the enemy for the CS infantry, and the Dirty Thirty takes great pride in that.

However, unspecified and civilian targets are equally attractive. From this group's horrifying perspective, every D-Bee or magic wielding man, woman or child they kill makes the world safer for human beings. All others are either invading monsters from alien worlds or traitors to humankind — all of whom need

to be exterminated. Period. This simple worldview makes the work of the Dirty Thirty, and people like them, easy because one is either with them or against them. If the latter, expect to die. Get in the way, and you must be an enemy too.

Of course, the Dirty Thirty see themselves as noble and righteous “heroes” fighting for their country, humanity and liberty, not vindictive murderers. Just a few of the many who valiantly struggle to purge the land of a festering “pestilence” that needs to be wiped from the face of the Earth. If they want to live, let them crawl back through the Rift they came through and invade some other world. This point of view marks all citizens, allies and supporters of *Tolkeen* targets for destruction. Slay a woman or child, and one reduces *Tolkeen*’s ability to breed and the pestilence from spreading. Kill its warriors and males, and one weakens the entire infrastructure. And the Dirty Thirty, and human supremacists like them, are only too glad to oblige.

Tolkeen’s King Creed has declared the Dirty Thirty directly responsible for the deaths of thousands and has reportedly placed a bounty of 250,000 credits on each and every member of the unit. A designation the Thirty proudly wear like a medal of Valor.



Capt. Murray “Carnage” Carruthers

The Dirty Thirty was created (and is currently led) by Capt. Murray “Carnage” Carruthers, a Coalition Military Specialist infamous in his own right as a supremely vicious and wild field commander. For Capt. Carruthers, the war against *Tolkeen* is not merely a military quest for the Coalition, but a holy crusade. Carruthers feels personally charged with the responsibility to wipe out every man, woman and child in *Tolkeen*. To that end, he created his “Dirty Thirty,” a platoon of Special Forces personnel all hand-picked by him for their skills and their willingness to do *anything* to achieve total victory in *Tolkeen*.

Captain Carruthers typically recruits promising personnel from standard infantry units, or he takes the leftovers from other guerilla units that have suffered casualties and integrates them into his own group. He also has been known to recruit trusted and proven mercenaries in the Coalition’s employ, although this is uncommon.

Once he has thirty soldiers under his command, he gets them whatever equipment they desire. He has unusually high authority when it comes to requisitioning hardware (including the attention and approval of General Drogue) — another perk he enjoys thanks to his extraordinary mission record. Fully equipped, the Dirty Thirty then set out to raise hell along the *Tolkeen* border. The group usually patrols for 4-6 weeks before returning to base to drop off dead and wounded personnel, replenish its ranks, and get new equipment. While out on patrol, the group maintains strict radio silence (although it monitors radio traffic quite heavily) and will send messages only when absolutely necessary.

In the field, Carruthers calls all the shots for the Dirty Thirty. Prior to patrol deployment, he will confer with his superior officers to see what “prime targets” will be in the area, but Carruthers still retains final mission authority. Once in the field, Carruthers decides who, what, where, when, and how the Dirty Thirty will strike. As far as his superiors are concerned, the only things that matter are results. As long as the Dirty Thirty keep up their high enemy body count, their commanders see no reason to mess with a working formula. Besides, most of the Dirty Thirty (like many Coalition guerilla units) are “mavericks” and “loose cannons” who have grown accustomed to the leeway provided to the best of the best. Command figures that to integrate these wild men into other units is only asking for trouble. Better to let them gather with their like-minded fellows and direct their energies at the enemy, rather than their fellow soldiers or superior officers. Additionally, if necessary, the unit makes excellent scapegoats. Command can distance itself from the actions (and atrocities) of the platoon, claiming they had no knowledge of their conduct behind enemy lines and pointing to the fact that these troops have a long history of troublemaking, bending the rules, and psychopathic behavior.

Captain Carruthers himself is a twisted and evil man whose depravity is matched only by his military genius. This explains his unit’s phenomenal mission record. To date, the Dirty Thirty have pulled off an incredible string of high-risk missions, including the destruction of entire supply depots, the assassination of key *Tolkeen* generals and sorcerers, and the rescue of downed Coalition pilots from *Tolkeen* POW camps. The unit’s collective luck seems inexhaustible, and those outside the unit are routinely amazed at the group’s repeated ability to tempt fate and get away with it.

While Captain Carruthers is an evil man, many of his soldiers are not. Many of them are well intentioned people who so fanatically believe in the Coalition’s cause that they will do anything to further that cause and ensure their nation’s survival. For these hard-hitters, murdering innocent women and children in *Tolkeen* is an oxymoron — the very fact that they are from *Tolkeen* negates their innocence. That goes double for any practitioners of magic or D-Bees. The collective wisdom of the unit says that such enemies of humanity are emblematic of the Rifts that threatened to destroy the world. It is people like the *Tolkeenites*, and alien nations like *Tolkeen*, that stand in the

way of humanity reclaiming its rightful place as rulers of the Earth. There is no choice — they all must die. That is the logic the Dirty Thirty follows when carrying out its missions, regardless of the target. It is what enables them to torch villages and commit acts of genocide with a clear conscience.

To the rest of the Coalition Army, the Dirty Thirty and other guerilla groups like it (there are well over fifty such units active in Tolkeen alone, and the number will certainly grow higher as the Siege heats up) represent the sharpest edge of the *Crusade for Humanity*. Nowhere else will one find such purity of purpose, such unwillingness to flinch from the goal that drives the entire Coalition. Still, to the average Coalition soldier, while the Dirty Thirty do an admirable job, they are still a little disquieting. The hyper gung-ho attitude common to many members of these guerilla units seems like a manifestation or a cover for some kind of emotional or mental problem bubbling to the surface. Likewise, the utter barbarity often displayed by these groups (the Dirty Thirty once returned to base with the skulls of over a thousand Tolkeenites just to prove their deaths — many of the soldiers were wearing bones as decoration) makes people wonder at what point do these Special Ops units cross the line of aggressive soldiering and become as monstrous as the creatures they are fighting. To many honorable soldiers, it is a line these Special Ops boys have crossed far too many times already.

For now, however, such concerns are peripheral and go unvoiced (and too often, unnoticed). The Dirty Thirty is a top-notch field unit capable of doing missions most other soldiers would consider impossible. And as long as the Kingdom of Tolkeen remains standing, there will always be a need for guerilla groups like this one to strike terror into the heart of the enemy using every means at their disposal. Theirs is a dirty, vicious war, and nothing short of total victory will ever stop them from fighting it. Those who do voice concern are often told to be grateful they are not asked to do the job of the Dirty Thirty, and to let it go. Most, horrified by the very notion, shut their mouths and turn a sad, blind eye to their atrocities and psychopathic behavior.

The Dirty Thirty is split into three, ten man units, A Team, B Team, and C Team. Each has a single squad leader, an officer, who in turn answers directly to Captain Carruthers.

Captain Murray “Carnage” Carruthers

Race: Human

Alignment: Aberrant

Attributes: I.Q.: 17, M.E.: 15, M.A.: 19, P.S.: 20, P.P.: 18, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 18, Spd: 31

Hit Points: 60, S.D.C.: 70.

Weight: 185 lbs (84 kg). **Height:** Six feet, three inches (1.9 m). **Age:** 30

P.P.E.: 5

Disposition: “Carnage” Carruthers has certainly earned his nickname, for he is one of the most bloodthirsty Coalition officers currently deployed to Tolkeen. Although he will show mercy to any human he feels “has not been sullied by Tolkeen’s corruptive influence,” he will slaughter any tried-and-true Tolkeenite enemy without blinking. His homicidal urges have led him to launch deadly attacks against numerous Tolkeen villages (many of which had little to no

military value), killing all of their inhabitants in a single, bloody assault. His trademark is to decapitate the heads of the slain and pike them in a large circular formation in the center of the village. In the heat of the battle, “Carnage” Carruthers is given to extreme cruelty, and if he can, will prefer to maim his opponents rather than kill them outright, so he might be able to torture and toy with them later.

As vicious as he is to his enemies, Carruthers is astonishingly steady and stable when it comes to his command and keeping his head under fire. He is also loyal and even warm-hearted toward his own troops. He loves the Coalition and its cause, and anybody who fights for that cause is like a brother or sister to him. He does not tolerate any kind of insubordination, however, and has slain his own men more than once in the field (and covered it up later) for such offenses. To keep this kind of thing to a minimum, “Carnage” selects for his “Dirty Thirty” only individuals who share his zeal and who he can be sure will follow his *every* order to the letter.

Carruthers has no serious ambitions outside of what he is doing now. Destroying Tolkeen is a kind of personal *jihad* (holy war) for him, and he will not rest until the entire world is purged entirely of D-Bees (“the D stands for ‘degenerate,’ you know”) and magic-using scum. He enjoys combat and the thrill of putting his life on the line, so he will probably never seek a higher position that might take him off the front lines.

Experience Level: 9th level Special Forces Commando.

Skills of Note: Basic Math (98%), Radio: Basic (98%), Radio: Scramblers (85%), Land Navigation (78%), Intelligence (74%), Streetwise (68%), Lore: Demon/Monster (76%), Pilot: Jet Pack (84%), Pilot: Robots & Power Armor (98%), Pilot: Robot Combat Elite: Special Forces SAMAS, Wilderness Survival (78%), Climbing (95%/85%), Prowl (80%), Running, Boxing, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Heavy.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Commando

Attacks Per Melee: Seven

Combat Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +4 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +7 to damage, +2 to pull punch, +10% vs coma/death, +3 to save vs poison and magic, +5 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 vs Horror Factor.

Other Combat Info: Knockout/stun on a Natural 20, body flip/throw (+2), paired weapons, body block/tackle, backward sweep kick, disarm (+1), automatic body flip (+1), kick: 2D6, automatic dodge (+1), critical body flip/throw, jump kick, death blow 18-20.

Standard & Favorite Weapons of Capt. Carruthers:

CP-50 Dragonfire: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple-blast burst. Micro-fusion grenades, fired from the underbarrel grenade launcher, do 6D6 M.D. to a 12 feet (3.6 m) diameter blast area. Rate of Fire: Laser fires single shots or triple bursts equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Grenade launcher fires single shots or bursts of four. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m) for laser, 1,200 feet (365 m) for grenade launcher. Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip and 12 grenades in grenade launcher.

CP-30 Laser Pulse Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D4 per single blast or 4D6 per triple-blast burst. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 600 feet (183 m). Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip.

C-5 Pump Pistol: Mega-Damage: 4D6, Rate of Fire: Standard; see Modern Weapon Proficiency section. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 5 rounds, loaded manually one round at a time. A speed loader will load all five rounds in four seconds (one melee action). Note: Carruthers prefers this weapon to his CP-30 and when forced to use a sidearm, will draw this first. His C-5 is a custom job with a chromed finish.

Fragmentation Grenades (6): Mega-Damage: 2D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 20 feet (6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Heavy High Explosive Grenade (4): Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Plasma Grenade (4): Mega-Damage: 5D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 12 feet (3.6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Smoke Grenades (2): Mega-Damage: None, creates a smoke cloud for cover. Smoke Radius: 20 feet (6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Vibro-Sword: Mega-Damage: 2D6.

Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips, five C-5 speed loaders, 24 micro-fusion grenades in a crossover bandoleer.

Additional Field Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight.

Body Armor:

CA-7 Special Forces Heavy "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 75 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 80 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 100 M.D.C. Built-in Weapons: Retractable forearm Vibro-Blades (2) — 1D6 M.D. each; Garrote cord in left wrist (1) to strangle S.D.C. opponents. Mag-5 Jet Pack: Maximum Speed: 60 mph (96 km). Maximum Altitude: 1200 feet (365 m). Power Supply: Four E-clips for 80 minutes of total flight time.

Bionics: Bio-System plastic surgery to prepare battle damage and a couple of internal organ replacements, a bionic lung with air filtration system and internal oxygen tank, plus a gyro-compass, clock calendar and headjack.

A-Team

Also known as "D-30A," this ten-man squad resembles one of the many CS Ranger guerilla units deployed to the area. It specializes in area reconnaissance and ambushes, using its extensive knowledge of the area to provide the platoon with safe passage in and out of enemy territory. In any given mission undertaken by the Dirty Thirty, it is said that "A-Team finds the way so B-Team can open the door and C-Team can close the sale." A-Team takes special pride in that.

Lt. Maxwell Selig A-Team Senior Officer & Squad Leader

Race: Human

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q.: 18, M.E.: 18, M.A.: 11, P.S.: 21, P.P.: 20, P.E.: 25, P.B.: 13, Spd: 30

Hit Points: 45, **S.D.C.:** 35.

Height: Six feet (1.8 m). **Weight:** 190 pounds (85.5 kg).

Age: 23

P.P.E.: 8

Disposition: Lt. Selig hates Tolkeen almost as much as Capt. Carruthers does, only he is much less hellbent to destroy every last person in the nation. Lt. Selig does take a certain pleasure in knowing that he is helping to visit death and destruction upon Tolkeen, but he would be just as happy if there were no war and he were scouting out some part of the wilderness frontier. Lt. Selig basically fell into the Dirty Thirty by being an able scout and fighting with few moral compunctions, making him perfect. Lt. Selig is loyal to the unit and will fight to the death on any given mission, but if the war were to stop tomorrow, he would have no problems leaving it all very far behind him.

Experience Level: 6th level CS Ranger/Wilderness Scout

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (80%), Camouflage (55%), Climb (80%/70%), Hunting, Prowl (60%), Identify Plants (60%), Land Navigation (76%), Wilderness Survival (80%), Track Animals (55%), Track Humanoids (65%), Trap Construction (60%), Trap/Mine Detection (60%), Speak American (98%), Speak Spanish (98%), Pilot: Jet Pack (77%), Running, Swimming (75%), Body Building, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons. W.P. Knife, W.P. Sword.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert

Attacks Per Melee: Five

Combat Bonuses: +5 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +5 to damage +2 to pull punch, and +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact.

Other Combat Info: +18% to save vs coma/death, +5 to save vs poison and magic. Kick attack: 1D6. Critical strike: 18-20.

Weapons: CS Rangers will carry *either* the CP-50 or the CP-40 into battle, but not both.

CP-50 Dragonfire: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple-blast burst. Micro-fusion grenades, fired from the underbarrel grenade launcher, do 6D6 M.D. to a 12 feet (3.6 m) diameter blast area. Rate of Fire: Laser fires single shots or triple bursts equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Grenade launcher fires single shots or bursts of four. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m) for laser, 1,200 feet (365 m) for grenade launcher. Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip and 12 grenades in grenade launcher.

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Heavy High Explosive Grenade (8): Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Vibro-Sword: Mega-Damage: 2D6.

Vibro-Knife (2): Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips, 24 micro-fusion grenades in a crossover bandolier.

Other Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km) range, canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight.

Body Armor:

CA-3 Light "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 70 M.D.C., Arms: 55 M.D.C. each, Legs: 70 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 80 M.D.C.

Bionics: None.

A-Team's Members

Aside from Lt. Selig, A-Team currently has nine other members, consisting of the following:

Otto Orsi, Diabolic, 7th level CS Ranger/Scout. Orsi has a family back home in Missouri to whom he routinely sends "war souvenirs," such as spent shell casings, broken E-clips, teeth from D-Bees and monsters, and the ears of small Tolkeenite children.

Jed Churl, Miscreant, 5th level CS Ranger/Scout. Churl can be as thuggish as his namesake, and enjoys interrogating prisoners. He gets into his work a little too much sometimes, as evidenced by the numerous Tolkeenites who have died while being questioned by him.

Simon Sayer, Anarchist, 8th level CS Ranger/Scout. Sayer acts as A-Team's medic, as well as its radioman. He also acts as the group mechanic, as well as a half-dozen other tasks. The guy is a real Jack-of-all-trades.

Calista Shales, Anarchist, 9th level CS Special Forces member. Calista is best known for her participation in a raid upon Tolkeen's largest ammunition depot last year. The attack destroyed so much weaponry and supplies that Tolkeen has spent a particularly high amount of energy trying to find (and punish) her. Calista considers that a compliment to a job well done. Has all demolitions and trap skills.

Luther Gross, Aberrant, 7th level CS Special Forces member. Luther is the unit sniper, and has over 100 confirmed kills to his name. He virtually never speaks, a side effect from having spent so many hours by himself in silence. Has Sniper and all modern weapon skills.

Rez Trenton, Miscreant, 8th level CS Psi-Stalker. Trenton is the handler for A-Team's Dog Boys, and is on very close terms with all of them. Rez particularly enjoys being in this part of the platoon, since his scouting missions often give him the opportunity to kill lone Tolkeen guards and feast on their P.P.E. He routinely calls such missions "snacktimes."

Shakespeare, Unprincipled, 6th level CS Dog Boy; Pit Bull. Shakespeare thrives on melee combat and is fond of closing with the enemy whenever possible. This makes him well-suited for nighttime interventions, when swift, silent means of killing are preferred.

Chaucer, Scrupulous, 5th level CS Dog Boy, German Shepard. Chaucer has a ribald sense of humor and is always telling humorous stories, weird jokes and dirty limericks to the rest of the unit. He is so well-liked that were he injured or killed, the rest of A-Team would not rest until the culprit was torn to pieces.

Rabelais, Aberrant, 5th level CS Dog Boy; Labrador. Of the three Dog Boys in A-Team, Rabelais is the most able tracker. However, his real love is to be on the water, and once his tour of duty in the Dirty Thirty comes to an end, he will try to get into Sea Dog training.

B-Team

"D-30B" is the armored element of the platoon, featuring a small SAMAS wing, heavy combat cyborgs, and exoskeleton-wearing CS Commandos. Of the three elements of the platoon, this one is considered the heavy hitter. Once an enemy is spotted and prepared for ambush, B-Team launches the attack, using its heavy airborne and ground-based firepower to



overwhelm the enemy and to punch a hole large enough for A-Team and C-Team to follow through and help with mop-up operations. B-Team is easily the least subtle of the squads, so they often are told to hang back until the action begins.



Sgt. Mark Thresher B-Team Senior Officer & Squad Leader

Race: Human

Alignment: Aberrant.

Attributes: I.Q.: 17, M.E.: 18, M.A.: 14, P.S.: 15, P.P.: 20, P.E.: 15, P.B.: 12, Spd: 20

Hit Points: 50, **S.D.C.:** 48.

Height: 5 feet, 10 inches (1.78 m). **Weight:** 160 lbs (72.6 kg).

Age: 21

Disposition: Confident, bold, quick to size-up a situation and quick to respond. Resourceful and adaptable. If he has a flaw as a person (but that makes him a good leader), it's that he will take calculated risks and, like a master chess player, is willing to sacrifice one of his men for the greater good of the cause or his squad without hesitation.

Thresher is a new addition to the Dirty Thirty, and the SAMAS pilots who serve under him in the unit are a little resentful that he has gained a command position without having "earned" it by at least serving time on one combat patrol. The chances of these subordinates disobeying Thresher is minimal, but if they spot their commander making a bad call in the heat of combat, they will most likely ignore his further orders and handle things themselves until the fighting is over. Then they will suggest that Thresher find a new unit to serve

with, immediately. This should all change, however, after they go through a few combat missions and Sgt. Thresher earns their respect.

Experience Level: 7th level Coalition Elite RPA (Robot Power Armor) Pilot.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (80%), Radio: Scramblers (70%), Pilot Automobile (84%), Pilot Hovercraft (85%), Pilot Tank & APCs (71%), Pilot Robots and Power Armor (84%), Pilot Jet Packs (72%), Navigation (85%), Robot Combat: Elite, Read Sensory Equipment (70%), Weapon Systems (80%), Running, Climbing (65%/55%), Body Building & Weight Lifting, Boxing, Wrestling, Wilderness Survival (60%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert, Power Armor Elite Combat Training.

Attacks Per Melee: Six (eight when piloting power armor).

Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +5 to strike, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +7 to parry and dodge, and +3 to save vs psionic attack.

Power Armor Combat Bonuses (in addition to normal combat bonuses): +2 attacks per melee, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge on ground, +5 to dodge while flying (if applicable), +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, critical strike, punch: 1D6 M.D., kick: 1D6 M.D., leap kick: 2D6 M.D. (counts as *two* attacks), body flip/throw: 1D4 M.D., body block/tackle: 1D6 M.D. (counts as *two* attacks)

Other Combat Info: Kick attack: 1D6, critical strike: 18-20, and paired weapons.

Favorite Weapons of the Sgt.'s:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips.

Body Armor:

CA-4 Standard "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 70 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 80 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 100 M.D.C.

Other Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight.

Vehicles:

Super SAMAS: This is Sgt. Thresher's pride and joy. He was only recently issued one of these, and he considers it his duty to not get it terribly banged up. He has not yet tried it out in combat, and is aching to do so. **Note:** Full statistics for the Super SAMAS can be found on page 117 of the *Coalition War Campaign™* sourcebook.

Other Vehicles: Sgt. Thresher can also pilot hovercycles, Rocket Bikes and all types of SAMAS. Additional or variant vehicles and power armor are usually made available to the Dirty Thirty without delay.

Bionics: Clock calendar, gyro-compass, universal headjack and basic bionic ear.

B-Team's Members

Jack Ransom, Anarchist, 4th level CS RPA Elite/SAMAS pilot. Ransom flies a "Smiling Jack" Light SAMAS and uses it to conduct lightning-fast recon sorties over enemy positions. During combat, he is fond of buzzing ground troops in order to taunt them. He has an unfortunately overblown sense of his own skill, however, and sometimes takes unnecessary risks with the assumption that no enemy could possibly be good enough to shoot him down.

Andrea Tripoli, Unprincipled, 6th level CS Elite RPA/SAMAS pilot. Andrea also flies a "Smiling Jack" light SAMAS, only she is a much more conservative flyer than her comrade Jack Ransom. Andrea usually is a "flanker" in combat, hanging back and waiting to see how the enemy will counterattack when B-Team makes its entrance. Then she launches a sneak counterattack of her own. This tactic has saved her comrades' lives on several occasions.

Hiroshi Yoshioka, Scrupulous, 8th level CS Elite RPA/SAMAS pilot. Hiroshi flies an old-style SAMAS that he has used since his first days out of training. He has such a good sense of how this craft handles that he receives a +10% on all piloting rolls, and is at +3 to strike and dodge when flying in combat. He also considers his SAMAS a good luck piece, and will not abandon it unless it is certifiably 100% destroyed. If he can find *any* way of bringing it back to base for repairs, he will. In the alternative, he can pilot any style of SAMAS, including the Super-SAMAS, which he sometimes uses for heavy assaults.

Roger Lewis, Miscreant, 6th level CS Elite RPA/SAMAS pilot. Lewis is a sadist who gets an indescribable thrill out of strafing unarmed civilians. On several occasions, he stayed behind in a combat zone well after the rest of his unit evacuated just to kill or torment a few more Tolkeenites. So far, he has been able to cover this kind of behavior, but sooner or later it will get him into trouble. With "Carnage" Carruthers as his superior officer, this could get him killed, too. His favorite power armor suits are the Super-SAMAS and Terror Trooper with both a Missile Rifle and Particle Beam cannon.

Murag Laughlin, Anarchist, 3rd level CS Cyborg Strike Trooper. Murag underwent full cybernetic conversion less than a year ago and has used it with a vengeance against Tolkeen ever since. He has become an expert with heavy missile rifles and particle beam cannons, and ardently refuses to use any weapons smaller than those. He considers such "personal hardware" to be an insult to his capability as a Cyborg Strike Trooper.

Wendy Holland, Miscreant, 3rd level CS Cyborg Strike Trooper. Rumor has it that Wendy underwent cybernetic conversion because of some kind of rare disease she contracted in the 'Burbs as a child. This might explain the chip on her shoulder and her savagery against D-Bees (whom she blames for the disease). While this remains unverified, Holland indeed spends almost all of her take-home pay on various medical services conducted off-base. Considering that her body has no illegal modifications to it, her comrades wonder exactly what she is doing with all that cash.

Jorg Hammarskold, Anarchist, 4th level CS Cyborg Strike Trooper. Ever since he was a child, Jorg has dreamed of undergoing full cybernetic conversion. For some strange reason, he considers his own flesh to be a kind of spiritual impurity and

longs for the day when the CS develops the technology that will let him become 100% mechanical without losing any of his original personality. His comrades fear that Jorg is going just a little bit insane.

Katherine Ulster, Unprincipled, 5th level CS Commando. Katherine has served a variety of mission roles during her lengthy stint with the Dirty Thirty. She is one of the few personnel on the team who Carruthers would personally trust with a secret. It's probably because the two have an on-again, off-again romance. Sgt. Ulster pilots a Hellraiser (her all-time fave), or Hellfire or Scout Spider-Skull Walker as the situation demands.



James Durban, Unprincipled, CS Commando. Durban once caught Sgt. Ulster and Capt. Carruthers in *flagrante delicto*, and ever since has feared he will be killed to cover up the secret. Actually he has little to worry about as long as he keeps his mouth shut and follows orders (which he does). Durban is a skilled Commando who normally pilots a Terror Trooper or Glitter Boy Killer.

C-Team

Where B-Team's forte is brute power, C-Team's is finesse, not that it doesn't pack its share of power too. Consisting of Special Forces troops, Juicers and Demolitions experts, this squad practices a deadly blend of stealth, daring, and (often literally) "explosive" firepower. This team is also responsible for the penetration of fortifications and defense systems as well as the destruction of large structures, such as bunkers, buildings, bridges, communication towers, and so on. To do that, they rely on the other team elements to clear a path to their objective (although they sometimes use stealth to sabotage after A-Team has scouted a trail for them). While demolition crews work on placing explosive charges on the target, the rest of the squad provides a perimeter of defense and an avenue of escape (there is always more than one exit strategy in place). As one might expect, C-Team is so skilled that they can cut power or communication lines with hardly a trace, take out one particular room, floor or area without damaging the structural integrity of the entire building, create distractions and cover, blow open a single door and other selective targets to the demolition of an entire bridge or skyscraper.

The current lineup for C-Team has gone unchanged for the Dirty Thirty's last nine missions. That they have had no casualties in that time is a testament to the group's expert teamwork and technical skill.

Lt. Raul Auerbach, C-Team Senior Officer & Squad Leader

Race: Human

Alignment: Principled, with leanings toward Aberrant.

Attributes: I.Q.: 14, M.E.: 14, M.A.: 17, P.S.: 20, P.P.: 18, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 10, Spd: 20

Hit Points: 52, **S.D.C.:** 45

Weight: 185 lbs (84 kg). **Height:** Six feet, three inches (1.9 m).

Age: 25

P.P.E.: 9

Disposition: Lt. Auerbach has served with Capt. Carruthers for over a year and is beginning to become repulsed by his commanding officer's brutal and often insane methods, as well as his ever increasing fall into barbarism. Lt. Auerbach agrees that Tolkeen needs to be destroyed, but must it be done in such a savage and bloody way? There have been numerous assignments where the team could have met mission parameters with half the level of destruction and number of deaths they ultimately inflicted. Lt. Auerbach hates himself for thinking such treasonous thoughts, and fears he is becoming weak. He constantly worries that his teammates will discover that his commitment to the Coalition's cause has become less

extreme and resolute than the rest of the unit, and fears what will happen if he is deemed to be corrupted and "impure."

The Lieutenant's Principled good alignment is the main reason he is having difficulty fitting in. Although he is a strident and self-righteous human supremacist (which is what attracted him to the Dirty Thirty), there is only so much even he can justify in the name of the Crusade for Humanity. He will either have to become Aberrant evil or eventually clash with his teammates, probably the Captain or Laughing Boy.

Experience Level: 8th level Special Forces Officer.

Skills of Note: Basic Math (98%), Radio: Basic (95%), Radio: Scramblers (80%), Land Navigation (72%), Language: American (98%), Language: Spanish (98%), Intelligence (70%), Streetwise (64%), Lore: Demon/Monster (75%), Pilot: Jet Pack (80%), Pilot: Robots & Power Armor (96%), Pilot: Robot Combat Elite: Special Forces SAMAS, Wilderness Survival (73%), Climbing (90%/80%), Prowl (75%), Running, Boxing, Demolitions (96%), Demolitions Disposal (96%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Commando

Attacks Per Melee: Seven

Combat Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +4 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +5 to damage, +2 to disarm, +6 to pull punch, +6 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +10% vs coma/death, +3 to save vs poison and magic, and +2 vs Horror Factor.



Other Combat Info: Knockout/stun on a Natural 20, body flip/throw (+1), paired weapons, body block/tackle, backward sweep kick, disarm, automatic body flip (+2), automatic dodge, critical body throw/flip.

CP-50 Dragonfire: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple-blast burst. Micro-fusion grenades, fired from the underbarrel grenade launcher, do 6D6 M.D. to a 12 feet/3.6 m diameter blast area. Rate of Fire: Laser fires single shots or triple bursts equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Grenade launcher fires single shots or bursts of four. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m) for laser, 1,200 feet (365 m) for grenade launcher. Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip and 12 grenades in grenade launcher.

CP-30 Laser Pulse Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D4 per single blast or 4D6 per triple-blast burst. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 600 feet (183 m). Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip.

C-5 Pump Pistol: Mega-Damage: 4D6, Rate of Fire: Standard; see Modern Weapon Proficiency section. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 5 rounds, loaded manually one round at a time. A speed loader will load all five rounds in four seconds (one melee action).

Fragmentation Grenades (4): Mega-Damage: 2D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 20 feet (6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Heavy High Explosive Grenade (6): Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Plasma Grenade (6): Mega-Damage: 5D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 12 feet (3.6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Fusion Blocks: Two Type One and one Type Two.

Vibro-Sword: Mega-Damage: 2D6.

Extra Ammo & Explosives: 16 long E-Clips, 5 C-5 speed loaders, 24 micro-fusion grenades in a crossover bandoleer, and additional explosives, plastique, blasting caps and similar equipment as deemed required or desirable for the mission.

Other Equipment: Six signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), laser scalpel, hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight.

Body Armor:

CA-7 Special Forces Heavy "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 75 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 80 M.D.C.: each, Main Body: 100 M.D.C. Weapons: Retractable forearm vibro-blades (2) — 1D6 M.D.; Garrote cord in left wrist (1) to strangle S.D.C. opponents. Mag-5 Jet Pack: Maximum Speed: 60 mph (96 km), Maximum Altitude: 1200 feet (365 m); Power Supply: Four E-clips for 80 minutes of total flight time.

Bionics: Clock calendar, gyro-compass, radar detector, oxygen storage cell (lung implant), a multi-optic eye and a type AA-1 cyber disguise.

C-Team's Members

Freddie "The Fixer" Polk, Aberrant, 6th level Special Forces with an MOS in Mechanics. He's the group's mechanical wizard, field mechanic and computer expert. He is a hulking blond with nerves of steel. He never seems particularly vexed or worried, even when under attack, and is the strong, silent type.

"Doc" Mike McBride: Miscreant, 5th level Special Forces with an MOS in Medicine. "Doc" is equally skilled in torture as well as in healing, and also serves as the Team's "interrogator." With each mission he seems to enjoy "interrogation" more and more, and frequently works on new techniques in extracting information and killing with minimal evidence of torture or foul play. The "Doc" is also a major (registered) psychic with 46 I.S.P., an M.E. of 14, and powers of Bio-regeneration (self), Increase Healing, Psychic Diagnosis, Psychic Surgery, Detect Psionics, and Intuitive Combat.

Holly Danske, Anarchist, 3rd level CS Juicer. Holly has been itching to get to Tolkeen and spill some blood here for quite some time. It seems that she lost some friends in the region a few years ago, and to obtain revenge, she underwent Juicer conversion and joined the military. Ever since, she has taken every opportunity to lash out at the nation of sorcerers and monsters.

Laughing Boy, Miscreant, 5th level CS Juicer. This disturbing individual suffers from some kind of mental condition that makes him shriek with high-pitched, girlish laughter whenever he feels his life is in danger. Given his role as a high-intensity combat Juicer, one will hear his distinctive giggling and laughter all throughout combat. This takes his comrades a while to get used to (1D4 months). Until one gets adjusted to Laughing Boy's odd mannerism, an initiative penalty of -2 will apply during combat whenever Laughing Boy is present (this applies to his opponents as well, unless they have an M.E. of 22 or higher). This reflects the distracting nature of the Juicer's trademark cackle. Conversely, Tolkeenites find the laugh supremely upsetting, and in certain parts of the border territory, Laughing Boy is even becoming a kind of folk tale villain ("Now, go to sleep, or else the Laughing Boy will come to get you!")

Squire Gannon, Miscreant, C-Team's 9th level EOD Specialist. Gannon is the resident explosives expert for the Dirty Thirty. There used to be two others, but they were slain during a past combat mission, leaving Gannon on his own. Squire is obsessed with the number 13 and must incorporate it somehow in every demolitions charge he sets, or he is certain it will not detonate properly. He is both crazy and evil.

Whisper, Anarchist, 5th level CS Psi-Stalker. Whisper finds her station with the Dirty Thirty a bit of a challenge. Being so close to the Psi-Stalkers who hunt the Xitix, she must constantly fight a feral urge to simply leave the Coalition behind and join her wild brethren in and around the Hivelands. What keeps her grounded is that her Dog Boys depend on her and would be lost if she abandoned them.

Dakota, Unprincipled, 4th level CS Dog Boy; Greyhound. Dakota possesses exceptional speed and is fond of taking on the Juicers in the squad in foot races. Although he is not nearly as fast as his chemically augmented comrades, Dakota is more agile and leaps just as well as they do, making runs through obstacle-ridden forest courses a real challenge. On the battlefield, Dakota uses this ability to race up to combat vehicles, golems, or other large targets, place explosive charges on them (or lob grenades) and get clear of the blast before the victims ever know what hit them.

Fargo, Miscreant, 6th level CS Dog Boy, German Shepard. Fargo is slowly but inevitably developing a taste for human flesh. He typically dines on one or two human bodies after every mission. A few of the other soldiers in the Dirty Thirty know of



this, but are unsure of what to make of it. If news of this gets back to Carruthers, it is an even bet that the Captain will either promote the Dog Boy somehow (Carruthers loves that kind of predatory spirit), or he will have the Dog Boy shot in the head for feeding on "humans," even if they are the enemy. If he has Fargo put down, he will order another Dog Boy to do it as a show of loyalty and conditioning.

Bunyan, Aberrant, 7th level CS Dog Boy. Bunyan is simply HUGE; Wolfhound. A big, hulking brute of a canine, his sheer strength (P.S. 27, P.E. 24) has come in handy on more than a few occasions. In addition to the Plasma Cannon he carries (that a Dog Boy would even be considered for such a weapon says a great deal about both Bunyan's record and Carruthers' pull with Coalition quartermasters), Bunyan also shoulders a large load of explosives. These are used by *Squire Gannon*, usually to destroy large structures. While the various fusion blocks Bunyan carries are stable, members of A and B-Teams still fear that if he gets hit with a blast in just the right place, the Dog Boy might explode in spectacular fashion.

Dirty Thirty Hook, Line & Sinkers™

By Bill Coffin & Kevin Siembieda

The Hook, Line & Sinker is a handy *adventure format* where only the barest elements for an adventure are provided. The rest of the development is left to the G.M.'s design. These work well both as stand-alone adventures, and as stepping stones in a larger campaign.

The **Hook** is the current situation or location of the adventuring party.

The **Line** is an opportunity for adventure that presents itself to the party. Think of this as the "bait" or enticement for the party to enter the adventure.

And finally, the **Sinker** is the clincher to the Line. The Sinker presents the party with a dilemma or development that makes the situation a true adventure.

Note: These adventure outlines may include one, two or all three of the Dirty Thirty teams. Other (your own) similar CS squads and platoons can be substituted.

The Only Good D-Bee ...

Hook: A column of D-Bee refugees is headed into Tolkeen over the Wisconsin border. These guys will add to the fighting strength of the enemy, but until they hook up with them, they are vulnerable. The Dirty Thirty intends to strike the column and leave no survivors.

Line: Among the D-Bees are a number of notorious bandits, mercenaries and Headhunters who have been on the Coalition's "Most Wanted Lists" for a while. These guys are serious heavy-hitters and will provide worthy resistance should the refugees fall under attack. However, the Coalition platoon will recognize their presence if A-Team does a good reconnaissance first.

Sinker: Scouting out the area, the Dirty Thirty will spot a clearing along the refugees' path that will provide a perfect chance to stage an ambush. The only question is, will the refu-

gees fall into the trap? If not, they might have to be baited into it somehow.

Note: Player characters will recognize the Dirty Thirty, see what is transpiring, and realize they are planning to ambush the refugees. Heroes can either try to warn or otherwise divert the column of D-Bees or engage the Dirty Thirty themselves(!) long enough for the D-Bees to reach safe ground. If the D-Bees ignore the warning, or the warning comes too late, the characters may find themselves joining the fight to stave off the Coalition hit-squad or coming in later to rescue any survivors and captives.

If the player group is predominantly selfish they may ignore helping those in peril. However, if they are notorious, even if only regionally or recently, the Thirty may turn their attention on the player group instead. This is especially true if they have crossed the Coalition or had a run-in with the Dirty Thirty in the past!

Kill 'Em All

Hook: Carruthers has learned that a sizeable force of Tolkeenite militants is retreating back into friendly territory after launching a counter-raid against Coalition reconnaissance elements in the area. Coalition casualties have been high, and the stricken units are unable to give pursuit.

Line: The Dirty Thirty plan to intercept the fleeing militants and make them pay before they cross into Tolkeen. The Tolkeen forces are reportedly low on ammunition and P.P.E., so time is of the essence — the longer the militants have to recover, the stronger they will be when the Dirty Thirty attack.

Sinker: Among the retreating enemy forces are a number of combat vehicles and other heavy weaponry. If Carruthers' platoon is to destroy the entire Tolkeen force, attacking it head on is not recommended. Some kind of tactic that either flanks the Tolkeenites or divides them into smaller groups might work well.

Note: Player characters may be part of the Tolkeen raiding party on the run, or they may again be a third party who become accidentally privy to the Dirty Thirty's operation. The Tolkeen force may be large and strong enough to regroup and fend off the attack, but only if they have advance warning. That's where the player characters come in. They can warn them or create a commotion that will have the same effect.

In the alternative, they can strike the Dirty Thirty just before (or as) they attack the Tolkeen forces. This will alert the Tolkeen forces, catch the Thirty offguard and probably convince "Carnage" Carruthers and his men that *they* have walked into a Tolkeen trap, compelling them to make a hasty retreat into the wilderness. And the day is saved! Well, mostly. Any character in the player group seen by members of the Dirty Thirty will be remembered, which means the group (or at least certain members of the group) have just made some very dangerous enemies. If their paths should ever cross again, even by a single Team or member of the Dirty Thirty, they can expect them to try to extract bloody retribution.

Rear Echelon

Hook: Disturbed by some of the maverick behavior the Dirty Thirty has exhibited in the past, an officer from Chi-Town Intelligence has come to accompany the group on a patrol in order to document their every move.

Line: Needless to say, this rankles the unit a great deal. They are unused to answering to anybody but their own commanding officers and resent being second-guessed. Having to deal with some jerk from the rear will be pure torture. Moreover, snooping through his stuff, the Team discovers the officer believes the group has fallen into barbarism, is undisciplined, insubordinate, excessively violent and is a loose cannon that should be shut down before they endanger operations. This leads the group to talk about the possibility of this officer getting himself killed during patrol and his report lost. If that should happen, the Dirty Thirty can continue without worrying of about interference from the High Command.

The Intelligence officer happens to catch wind of this discussion and slips away unnoticed, before he falls victim to any skullduggery. The Intelligence officer encounters the player group and tries to hire them to provide safe escort back to Chi-Town or at least to the main mobile headquarters and command post in Wisconsin.

Convinced that the members of the Dirty Thirty want him dead, he will manipulate the player group into defending him. This may entail a plea to their mercy or some act as simple as one or more members of the Dirty Thirty making an appearance ("Hey, Captain, what's wrong? Come on back.") and the Officer shouting, "There they are. Kill them!" as he starts shooting. This is likely to cause a fire-fight or at least confusion. Whether he tries to slip away during the fight or continues to plead with the group to save him will depend on the G.M. and circumstance. The man clearly fears for his life, and while the Dirty Thirty may "claim" this is all a big mistake and they mean him no harm, their evil reputation precedes them, so nobody is likely to believe them, the least of which being the officer. Moreover, if the player group is composed of known criminals, Tolkeenites, D-Bees or practitioners of magic, they may not even feel it necessary to defend their actions, and start blasting away and take the Officer into their custody by force.

Player characters may be compelled to help the Officer if they learn the contents of his report and that he is certain that if he can get back to command these villains will be pulled out of active duty. Getting the Dirty Thirty out of action would save thousands of lives.

Sinker: The Dirty Thirty is a vile, arrogant, aggressive, self-motivated lot who consider and discuss many foul deeds. Killing the Intelligence officer was just one such debate. Ironically, after a heated discussion, they decided it was not in their best interest. They are loyal Coalition soldiers, after all, so if the High Command decides to call them out of the field, they will follow orders and do so without incident.

To add to the irony, those who have sanctioned the Dirty Thirty in the first place will find nothing alarming in the report and will let the platoon continue to operate unimpeded whether the Intelligence officer (and his report) returns or not. In fact, General Drogue is considering giving the Dirty Thirty even greater leeway in their operations, as well as an accommodation for sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty — they are military heroes in his eyes.

Not One Step Backward

Hook: The Dirty Thirty have picked a fight they can not finish. After raiding a Tolkeen barracks and killing the soldiers sleeping there, a large force of Tolkeen reinforcements has surprised the group and cornered them on a small hill.

Line: Having given the order not to retreat or to surrender, Captain Carruthers is preparing to lead his unit on a push through the enemies who surround them in a desperate bid to escape. If nothing else, they will take as many of the enemy to the grave with them in a suicidal gesture of resistance against the overwhelming Tolkeenite force.

A few of Carruthers' soldiers are considering bolting from the scene should the opportunity present itself. Captain Carruthers, however, will stay behind until the last of his troops have broken free, even if it means risking his own neck. If the rest of the unit escapes, they will either have to leave their leader behind or must somehow rescue him from his own last stand. Any way this scenario goes, it will be a violent bloodbath for both sides.

Meanwhile, the Tolkeen forces that have surrounded the platoon hope to capture "Carnage" Carruthers and as many of his teammates as possible for interrogation, public humiliation and execution.

Sinker: You guessed it, the player characters are either part of the Tolkeen attack group or witnesses to the battle. In either case they will be shocked by the ruthlessness of the Tolkeen forces, matched only by the Dirty Thirty. Furthermore, the Tolkeenites will take great delight in tormenting and torturing any captives from the group. Going so far as to heal prisoners only to inflict new torture and grievous harm upon them (even when they have no questions to ask). Characters of good alignment will not be able to stand by silently — not even the Dirty Thirty deserve this sort of sadistic punishment. However, anybody who raises their voice in protest will be told to be silent and stand down or join them! Do our heroes actually find themselves trying to rescue the leaders of the Dirty Thirty? **G.M. Note:** By the way, if they do rescue them, the player group should learn later how the Dirty Thirty ambushed their one-time captors and extracted a terrible vengeance, with all (eventually) killed.

In the alternative, members of the Dirty Thirty, Carruthers among them, make good an escape and the player group is one of those trying to track him down (either for justice or for the bounty on his head by the Tolkeenites). Or the desperados may turn to the player group to help them. If this is the case, the player characters may be tricked or forced into helping them. If they don't know who the Dirty Thirty are, being duped into helping them will be easy. On the other hand, the resourceful CS villains may blackmail our heroes into saving their cans — "Help us or my associate will blow up the orphanage (or 'I'll cut this hostage's throat,' etc.). And don't think I'm bluffing."

Smoke Screen

Hook: The Dirty Thirty have discovered a massive Tolkeenite training facility where hundreds of young mages and Techno-Wizards are in the process of becoming soldiers. There must be over a thousand people at the facility, nearly all of whom have some kind of spell casting ability.

Line: Among the distinguished residents is *Ako Toltek*, a mage high on the Coalition's "most wanted" list. Toltek is responsible for assassinating a number of key Coalition personnel as well as organizing a few embarrassing defeats for the Coalition. If he could be captured and delivered back to base, it would be an intelligence coup for the Coalition.

Sinker: Possibility #1: For this, some outside assistance is needed. Breaking with their standard procedure, the Dirty Thirty are going to send encrypted burst transmissions to a nearby Coalition air wing and order a sneak air strike against the training facility. The Dirty Thirty will be on the edge of the bombing site and as soon as the last bombs fall, they will take advantage of the confusion and raid the place, killing as many left-over spell casters as they can find, and either killing or capturing *Ako Toltek*. This is a very risky mission, and "Carnage" Carruthers is certain that a good number of his own soldiers will not survive. He does not care. To him, the mission is worth it. The question is, will his soldiers feel the same way? Could there be dissension in the ranks? If so, will "Carnage" and/or other members of the Thirty be vulnerable to capture by ... oh say, the player characters?

Possibility #2: Basically the same as number one, except instead of risking his own men, the good Captain has hired some extra help, namely the player characters. Our heroes can be working with "Carnage" to share in the reward for *Ako Toltek*, personal revenge against Toltek (if applicable), or as spies trying to infiltrate the Dirty Thirty to bring it down. If the latter case, they may even be working with or for *Ako Toltek* (and "Carnage" Carruthers is on to them, of course).

Possibility #3: The player group has been on the trail of the Dirty Thirty for awhile in hopes of capturing "Carnage" Carruthers (and maybe 1-4 other members of his platoon) to collect the bounty on his (or their) head. King Creed has put a bounty of one million Universal credits (or the equivalent in trade) on this monster's head. Other key members of his crew, Laughing Boy, Roger Lewis, Luther Gross, and Lt. Maxwell Selig among them, will net 250,000 each. The group believes they will have their best chance during the confusion of the raid on the training center. If the group is completely mercenary, they'll capture *Ako Toltek* too, and turn him over to the CS for a cool half million.

Possibility #4: A non-player group of evil mercenaries are implementing Possibility #3, right down to capturing members of the Dirty Thirty and *Ako Toltek*. They have their own reason to hate Carruthers and his crew, and *Ako* only means money to them. The player characters enter the picture to rescue *Ako* and any other innocents who may have been captured by the mercenaries. The only problem is, once the mercs are dealt with, the captured members of the Dirty Thirty (and their comrades who come looking for them) turn the tables on them. If the player characters are lucky, these Coalition soldiers elect to escape rather than extract revenge, have some fun, or demand *Ako*.

Possibility #5: Our heroes could care less about the Dirty Thirty and are fighting only to help protect those under attack at the training center. Their goal is only to get people to safety, not extract revenge or make good on a bounty.



Hello, My Name's Laughing Boy

Hook: The player characters are trying to get a rest, food and drink before heading off again on adventure or combat.

Line: They meet and have fun with this wild and zany Juicer and a couple of his buddies. Everybody has a good time together.

Sinker: Before everyone calls it a night, the rough and tumble, but friendly Juicer says, "By the way, my name's Laughing Boy. I hope we have the pleasure to meet again, or maybe even fight together sometime."

The player characters will know who *Laughing Boy* is by his reputation, if not by practical experience (if they have clashed before, neither the Juicer nor the player group recognize each other). There's a price on Laughing Boy's head, and if he's around the other members of the Dirty Thirty can't be far away. This is actually an opening to a few different possible adventures/encounters.

1) Bushwack and capture Laughing Boy for the bounty and/or to bring him to justice. If successful (he is pretty drunk at the moment), the group will definitely have to deal with the rest of the Dirty Thirty coming to his rescue.

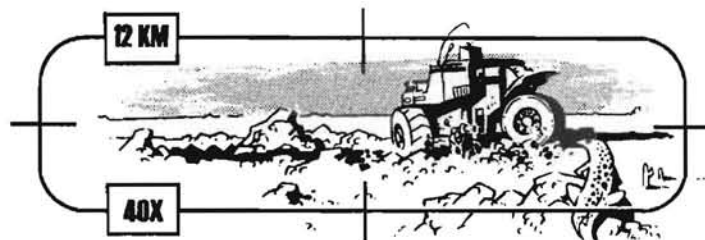
2) Follow him (very, very carefully) to the rest of the group, and spy on them to see what they are planning (an attack on the very town where the group met Laughing Boy, a plot to kidnap or kill somebody important there, a raid on a neighboring community or Tolkeen stronghold, etc.) and try to foil their plans.

3) Follow him so they may join the Coalition band, at least for a while.

4) Hang with the Juicer for awhile longer to see if they can get him to talk about any plans (or caches of loot or weapons). In the interim, they see the dark side of this murderer as the booze turns his playful mood into a mean one and he goes looking to "carve up a slimy D-Bee or stinkin' mage." At any rate, some innocent bystander is likely to fall victim to his murderous rage unless they stand between them. And Laughing Boy won't like that, even if they try to be tactful and clever about it. "What's this? No man, no. Don't tell me you're a D-Bee lover. Not after the fun we had. God, now I have to kill you too."

5) Walking along with Laughing Boy (for more drunken laughs or to glean some information from him or see what other members of the Dirty Thirty are in town), the group gets ambushed by a pack of thugs (magic wielding or not — common bandits or Tolkeen patriots who recognize the Juicer to be a CS soldier or spy). Laughing Boy loves it and begins to cackle and feign mock terror. It's clear these two-bit hoods (not one of them more than 2nd level) don't know who they are up against. Laughing Boy coaxes them to "bring it on," while our heroes are likely to be trying to defuse the situation. "Hey, ya guys doan hassta worry 'bout me. I kin thake all deese punks myself." The soused Juicer will fight to kill and wonder why his new buddies aren't doing the same.

6) There are many other possibilities, so get that imagination going.



NPC Stats

Typical Combat O.C.C.s

The following is a quick reference for the "average" Coalition Special Forces and elite combat personal typically assigned to military units like the **Dirty Thirty**. They are presented as a Game Master "aid" to quickly present a basic, CS non-player character (hero, villain, or cannon fodder) on the spot.

All stats are "average" or "typical" members of that O.C.C. and are at *fourth level of experience*. These soldiers are neither green recruits nor supermen. They are highly trained and experienced elite soldiers, and their abilities should reflect that.

G.M.s, remember this is only a *guide*, so from time to time you will need to adjust the power level of the NPC, up or down to best suit your campaign, the situation at hand, or to personalize the character. We advise that if you adjust the levels of experience for these NPCs, they should be *no lower than second level* and *no higher than sixth level*. Only specific and unique characters should have higher levels and attributes. Have fun!

CS Cyborg Strike Trooper

Due to the extreme rigors of the patrols behind enemy lines, most Special Ops, like Capt. Carruthers, only recruit Heavy CS Cyborgs.

Race: Human

Alignment: Any, but typically Unprincipled, Anarchist, Aberrant, Miscreant and occasionally, Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q.: 11, M.E.: 15, M.A.: 9, P.S.: 26, P.P.: 24, P.E.: 14, P.B.: 8, Spd: 132 (90 mph/144 km); give or take a couple points here and there.

Average Hit Points: 38, **M.D.C.:** 280

Typical Weight: 1000 pounds (454 kg), **Height:** Eight feet (2.4 m).

Age: 20-30

P.P.E.: 4

Disposition: These guys are the walking tanks of the unit, and they know it. Their ability to dish out and soak up tremendous amounts of damage makes them the obvious choice for point men and front-liners. The cyborgs of the Dirty Thirty take this job with relish, for it gives them ample opportunity to revel in the cybernetic abilities they have traded their natural bodies away for.

Experience Level: 4th level CS Cyborg Strike Trooper.

Skills of Note: Math: Basic (70%), Language: American (98%), Radio: Basic (70%), Pilot: Jet Pack (64%), Land Navigation (58%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Heavy, Boxing, Climbing (75%/65%), Gymnastics, Swimming (75%), Intelligence (54%), Tracking Humanoids (50%), Demon & Monster Lore



(45%), Detect Concealment (40%), Detect Ambush (45%), Basic Mechanics (45%), Read Sensory Equipment (45%), Weapon Systems (55%).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike, +10 to parry and dodge, +4 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +11 to damage.

Other Combat Info: Can leap 10 feet (3 m) high or lengthwise from a standing position or twice that distance with a running start. Karate kick: 1D8. Knockout on a roll of natural 20. +14% to save vs coma/death. +4 to save vs poison and magic.

Weapons: The CTT-P40, CTT-M20 and C-200 are the standard primary weapons carried by the Dirty Thirty's CS Strike Commandos. Any given individual, however, will only carry one of these weapons.

CTT-P40 Particle Beam Cannon: Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 per single blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 40 blasts.

CTT-M20 Missile Rifle: Mega-Damage: Varies by missile type. Standard issue is armor piercing (1D4x10 M.D.) or plasma (1D6x10 M.D.). The targeting laser does 2D6 M.D. per shot. Rate of Fire: One at a time, or in volleys of two or four. Range: Mini-missiles depend on type; usually about one mile (1.6 km). The targeting laser has a range of 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 20 mini-missiles; 10 per launch tube. The targeting laser takes a standard E-clip (20 shots) or long E-Clip (30 shots).

C-200 "Dead Man's" Rail Gun: Mega-Damage: A full damage burst does 4D6 M.D. A single round does 1D4 M.D. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range:

4,000 feet (1,200 m). Payload: 200 rounds/10 full damage bursts (short clip), 600 rounds/30 full damage bursts (light drum), or 2,000 rounds/100 full damage bursts (heavy drum). Bonuses: +1 to strike.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet/244 m. Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Fusion Block (2): Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 (light), 2D6x10 (medium), 4D6x10 (heavy). Blast Radius: Each has a contained blast radius of 10 feet (3 m). Range: The blocks are made for placement, not throwing or shooting. However, one can try throwing the explosive, typical range is 1D6x10 feet (3 to 18 m); fusion blocks are not aerodynamic.

Plasma Grenade (8): Mega-Damage: 5D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 12 feet (3.6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Extra Ammo: 4-8 reloads (depending on size and weight of the reload) for their primary weapon. Often act as ammo bearers for other troopers as well.

Body Armor:

CA-6C Heavy "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 100 M.D.C., Arms: 100 M.D.C. each, Legs: 120 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 200 M.D.C. Bonuses: +1 to strike.

Other Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight. Additional items may be made available upon assignment.

Standard Cybernetic Features: Language translator, radio receiver and transmitter, headjack, bionic lung, multi-optic eyes, energy-clip hand or arm port (both), one forearm blaster (plasma or particle beam), retractable vibro-blade (1) or concealed arm laser rod, concealed iron rod in one leg, and one large secret compartment (usually for holding sensitive intelligence documents) in the other leg.

CS Commando

Race: Human

Alignment: Any, but many lean toward Scrupulous, Unprincipled, Anarchist, Aberrant and Miscreant.

Typical Attributes: I.Q.: 11, M.E.: 11, M.A.: 9, P.S.: 18 (27 in armor), P.P.: 17, P.E.: 13, P.B.: 10, Spd: 30 (44 in armor)

Typical Hit Points: 35-45, S.D.C.: 1D4x10+32

Average Height: Six feet (1.8 m), **Weight:** 180 lbs (81.7 kg).

Average Age: 20-25

Typical Disposition: Although they are finely tuned killing machines, CS Commandos are, for some reason, often considered the "grunts" of the unit (this is certainly the case with the Dirty Thirty). This means they tend to get a bit less respect than everybody else, and newcomers inevitably get hazed a bit when first joining the unit. This inevitably includes having to prove one's worth to the unit, which sometimes results in Commandos taking unnecessary risks on the battlefield. Aside from that, however, most CS Commandos are deadly, resourceful, and rock-steady in times of trouble.

Experience Level: 4th level CS Commando.

Skills of Note: Math: Basic (80%), Radio: Basic (80%), Radio: Scramblers (50%), Land Navigation (58%), Intelligence (54%), Parachuting (75%), Pilot: Jet Packs (64%), Pilot: Ro-



bots & Power Armor (78%), Recognize Weapon Quality (52%), Wilderness Survival (45%), Climbing (65%/55%), Running, Detect Ambush (45%), Detect Concealment (40%), Escape Artist (45%), Tracking (50%), Body Building & Weightlifting, Boxing, Wrestling, Climbing (55%/45%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Sword (+4 to strike and parry), W.P. Paired Weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Commando

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Combat Bonuses: +1 to initiative, +1 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +5 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +3 to pull punch, +3 to damage (+15 in armor) and +2 to save vs Horror Factor. Does not include likely attribute bonuses.

Other Combat Info: Body Flip/Throw: +1, Body Block/Tackle, Backward Sweep, Disarm, Kick Attack: 2D6, Knockout/Stun: Natural 20, Pin/Incapacitate: 18-20, and Crush/Squeeze: 1D4+7.

Weapons:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

CR-1 Rocket Launcher: Mega-Damage: Varies by missile type. Standard issue is armor piercing (1D4x10 M.D.) or plasma (1D6x10 M.D.). Rate of Fire: The weapon fires only one mini-missile, but a two-man team can load and fire three

missiles per melee (15 seconds). A single operator can only fire one per melee. Range: One mile (1.6 km). Payload: A carrying side pack can hold six mini-missiles. A backpack can hold 24 mini-missiles, and a portable carrying case can hold 24 mini-missiles. Note: Out of every two Commandos, one typically carries a CR-1 in addition to his other weaponry, and the other wears a backpack of 24 mini-missiles and acts as a loader.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Vibro-Saber: Mega-Damage: 2D4.

Extra Ammo: 10-14 long E-Clips.

Other Equipment: Four signal flares, 2-4 S.D.C. knives (1D6 S.D.C. damage), binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), camouflage paint, camouflage netting, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight, laser distancer, and language translator. Additional items may be made available upon assignment.

Body Armor:

CA-6EX Heavy "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 100 M.D.C., Arms: 100 M.D.C. each, Legs: 120 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 200 M.D.C. Bonuses: +8 P.S., +14 Spd, +10 feet (3 m) to length of leaps, reduces rate of fatigue by 50%.

CS Dog Boy

For simplicity's sake, this stock NPC was written without adding any bonuses for its canine type (Irish Water Spaniel, Wolfhound, English Setter, etc.) or any mutation abnormalities. See *Rifts® World Book 13: Lone Star* for all the glorious details about these marvelous mutants.

Race: Mutant canine.

Alignment: Any, but typically Scrupulous, Unprincipled, Anarchist, or Aberrant.

Attributes: I.Q.: 13, M.E.: 13, M.A.: 13, P.S.: 24, P.P.: 19, P.E.: 24, P.B.: 13, Spd: 45

Average Hit Points: 34-50, **S.D.C.:** 30-40

Average Height: 5-6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m). **Weight:** 140 pounds (63 kg).

Average Age: 5-8 years old (that's the equivalent of a human in his twenties).

P.P.E.: 10

I.S.P.: 1D6x10+42

Typical Disposition: Dog Boys assigned to groups like the Dirty Thirty view their placement with mixed emotions. On the plus side, they are extremely honored to serve with such a distinguished group of humans. That they have been selected for this duty is an affirmation of their loyalty, bravery, and dependability — three things that Dog Boys hold dear to their hearts. They also enjoy the fact that this work puts them in harm's way, the place where they can best serve and protect their human masters.

On the down side, many of these Dog Boys have been selected from larger packs, and they inevitably go through brief feelings of loneliness when getting used to the group dynamics of their new team. This only lasts for a short while, however, and rarely has a meaningful impact on the performance



of these noteworthy soldiers. Humans who depend on these Dog Boys are genuinely fond of them, and if one were to get hurt, the rest of the unit would take special measures to ensure that their fallen comrade is avenged. The addition of Dog Boys to any team ultimately adds a great deal to the group's already high motivation and morale, making the entire platoon that much more combat-worthy.

Those who belong to particularly savage groups like the Dirty Thirty, sometimes become more animalistic and savage, even feral, themselves — enjoying the hunt, trapping and slaughter of the enemy more than they should.

Experience Level: 4th level CS Dog Boy.

Special Abilities: Sense psychic and magic energy (16%/60%), sense supernatural beings (70%/70%/55%/82%), track by smell (91%), identify by smell (62%), and keen hearing.

Psionics: Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (3), Sixth Sense (2), Empathy (4), Telepathy (4); considered equal to a Master psionic who needs only a 10 to save vs psionic attack.

Skills of Note: Intelligence (50%), Radio: Basic (70%), Pilot: Hovercraft (75%), Read Sensory Equipment (55%), Weapon Systems (65%), Climbing (65%/55%), Running, Land Navigation (58%), Wilderness Survival (50%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Knife, W.P. Blunt, Climbing (55%/45%), Prowl (40%), Body Building, Swimming (65%).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts

Attacks Per Melee: 5

Combat Bonuses: +2 to initiative, +5 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +9 to damage, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +2 to save vs disease, +2 to save vs possession, +18% to save vs coma/death, +5 to save vs magic, and +1 to save vs psionic attack.

Other Combat Info: Bite: 1D6, Karate kick: 1D8. Physical endurance as it applies to weight/load and exertion is two times greater than for normal humans.

Standard Weapons:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-18 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D4, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 10 shots per standard E-Clip.

Light High Explosive Grenade (4): Mega-Damage: 3D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Heavy High Explosive Grenade (4): Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Vibro-Blade "Cat's Claw" Handguard: Mega-Damage: 3D4.

Extra Ammo: 10-12 long E-Clips.

Other Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, backpack, air filter & gas mask, short-range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight. Additional items may be made available upon assignment.

Body Armor:

DPM D1 Dog Boy Armor: Head/Helmet: 50 M.D.C., Arms: 35 M.D.C. each, Legs: 50 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 80 M.D.C.

Bionics: None.

CS EOD Specialist

Race: Human

Alignment: Any, but tend to lean toward Principled, Aberrant and Anarchist.

Typical Attributes: I.Q.: 12, M.E.: 14, M.A.: 9, P.S.: 15, P.P.: 18, P.E.: 12, P.B.: 10, Spd: 21

Average Hit Points: 35-45, **S.D.C.:** 20-30

Height: Six feet (1.8 m), **Weight:** 160 lbs (73 kg).

Average Age: 20-25

P.P.E.: 6

Typical Disposition: The nature of demolitions work generally attracts two kinds of people to it in the Coalition military: whack jobs and ultra-professionals. Whack jobs are adrenaline junkies who get a thrill from working with high explosives. The mere thought of getting blown to kingdom come without warning is a weird kind of pleasure for these characters. Ultra-professionals are rarely rattled by pressure, and enjoy the satisfaction of mastering the fine art of precision explosives. Both kinds find their way into Special Ops Teams like the Dirty Thirty on a regular basis. Both kinds end up being valued members of the group, and despite their personality quirks, command great respect for their special-

ized skills. Were it not for the resident EOD Specialists, espionage and seek and destroy units would have a much harder time destroying Tolkeen's bridges, supply depots, and other installations.

Experience Level: 4th level CS EOD Specialist.

Skills of Note: Homemade Explosives (56%), Demolitions (89%), Demolitions Disposal (89%), Underwater Demolitions (78%), Nuclear, Biological & Chemical Warfare (60%), Trap Construction (explosives only) (50%), Trap/Mine Detection (49%), Literacy: American (65%), Basic Math (85%), Radio: Basic (70%), Computer Operations (65%), Basic Electronics (60%), Mechanical Engineer (50%), Pilot Hovercraft (75%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic

Attacks Per Melee: 5

Combat Bonuses: +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact. +4 to parry and dodge, +2 to strike.

Other Combat Info: Kick attack: 1D6.

Weapons:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Light Fusion Block (3): Mega-Damage: 1D4x10. Blast

Radius: Each has a contained blast radius of 10 feet (3 m).

Range: The blocks are made for placement, not throwing or shooting. However, one can try throwing the explosive, typical range is 1D6x10 feet (3 to 18 m); fusion blocks are not aerodynamic.

Medium Fusion Block (3): Mega-Damage: 2D6x10. Blast Radius: Each has a contained blast radius of 10 feet (3 m). Range: The blocks are made for placement, not throwing or shooting. However, one can try throwing the explosive, typical range is 1D6x10 feet (3 to 18 m); fusion blocks are not aerodynamic.

Heavy Fusion Block (3): Mega-Damage: 4D6x10. Blast Radius: Each has a contained blast radius of 10 feet (3 m). Range: The blocks are made for placement, not throwing or shooting. However, one can try throwing the explosive, typical range is 1D6x10 feet (3 to 18 m); fusion blocks are not aerodynamic.

Fragmentation Grenade (3-6): Mega-Damage: 2D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 20 feet (6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Light High Explosive Grenade (3-6): Mega-Damage: 3D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Heavy High Explosive Grenade (3-6): Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Plasma Grenade (3): Mega-Damage: 5D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 12 feet (3.6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Vibro-Knife: Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Extra Ammo: 10 long E-Clips.

Other Equipment: Other types of explosives, four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight. Additional items may be made available upon assignment.

Body Armor:

CA-4 Standard "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 70 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 80 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 100 M.D.C.

Bionics: A third will have augmented sight and bionic ear implants.

CS Juicer

Race: Human

Alignment: Any, but tend to lean toward Unprincipled, Anarchist, and Miscreant.

Typical Attributes: I.Q.: 10, M.E.: 10, M.A.: 11, P.S.: 30, P.P.: 25, P.E.: 28, P.B.: 10, Spd: 100

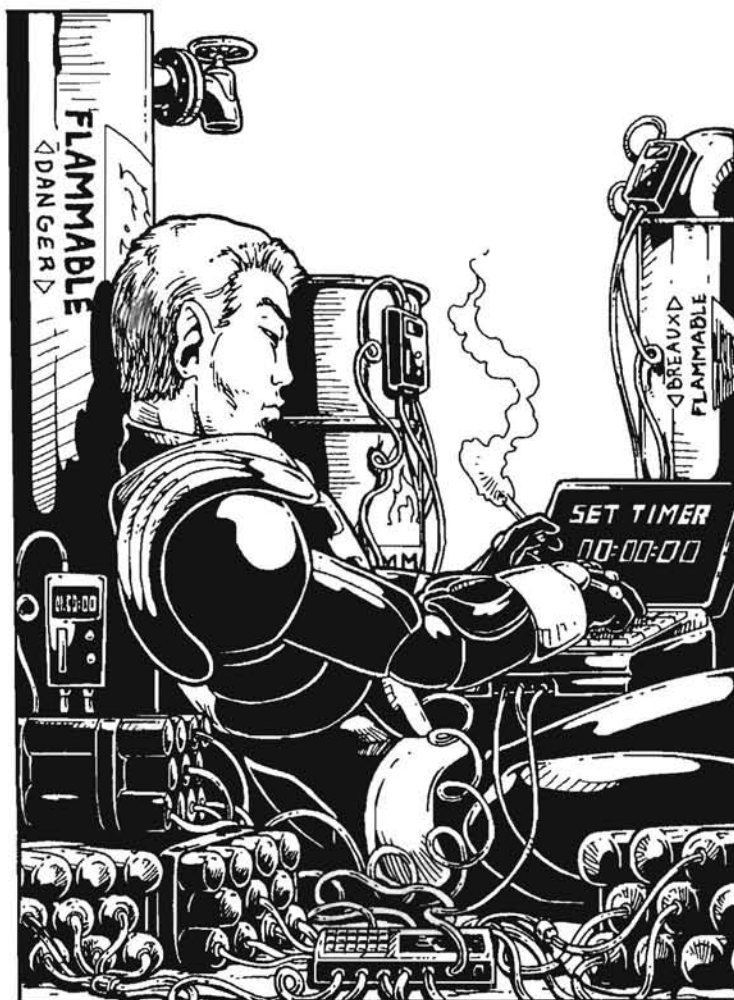
Typical Hit Points: 60-70, S.D.C.: 400

Average Height: Six feet (1.8 m). **Weight:** 200 pounds (90 kg); all muscle.

Typical Age: 18-23 (generally only have 1.5-3 years left to live).

P.P.E.: 5

Disposition: These Juicers are typical of their kind — hyper-energetic and gleefully aware of their impending mortality. The extreme risks taken by covert and Special Ops Teams, like the Dirty Thirty, play to the Juicers' love for ac-





tion and risk taking, and many of the do-or-die missions undertaken are spearheaded by these chemically augmented warriors. It is said that a great deal of these units' luck is burned up by the never-say-die antics of their Juicers, who routinely defy death on the battlefield for the sake of their comrades.

Experience Level: 4th level CS Juicer.

Skills of Note: Speak American (98%), Basic Math (72%), Radio: Basic (70%), Pilot Hovercraft (80%), Pilot Tank and APC (63%), Read Sensory Equipment (60%), Weapons Systems (60%), Intelligence (54%), Interrogation (65%), Detect Ambush (55%), Detect Concealment (50%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Heavy, W.P. Rifle, Boxing, Prowl (40%), Climbing (55%/45%).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts

Attacks Per Melee: 8

Combat Bonuses: +4 on initiative, +8 to strike, +11 to parry and dodge, +8 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +15 to damage, automatic dodge or parry on all attacks, +4 to save vs psionics, +4 to save vs mind control (psionic and chemical), +6 to save vs toxic gases, poisons and other drugs, +3 to save vs Horror Factor. Heals about four times faster than normal, +20% to save vs coma/death, and virtually impervious to pain. Plus skill bonuses.

Other Combat Info: Karate kick: 1D8. Knockout on a roll of natural 20. Can leap 30 feet (9.1 m) across after a short run (half that from a dead stop) and 20 feet (6 m) high (half with-

out a short run). Can lift and carry four times more than a normal person of equivalent strength, and can last five times longer before feeling the effects of exhaustion. Can remain alert and operate at full efficiency for up to five days without sleep. Normally needs only three hours of sleep per day.

Typical Weapons: CS Juicers in this unit typically carry *either* the CP-50 or the CP-29 as their primary weapon. They generally do not carry both into combat.

CP-50 Dragonfire: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple-blast burst. Micro-fusion grenades, fired from the underbarrel grenade launcher, do 6D6 M.D. to a 12 feet/3.6 m diameter blast area. Rate of Fire: Laser fires single shots or triple bursts equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Grenade launcher fires single shots or bursts of four. Range: 2,000 feet/610 m for laser, 1,200 feet/365 m for grenade launcher. Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip and 12 grenades in grenade launcher.

CP-29 "Hellfire" Heavy Plasma Cannon: Mega-Damage: 1D6x10. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round; each blast counts as one melee action/attack. Range: 1,400 feet (423 m). Payload: 8 blasts per energy canister; mounted on the top-side of the weapon. In addition, the C-29 can be connected with an energy cable to a portable hip or backpack carried energy canister the same size as the CP-40. This gives the weapon a total initial payload of 16 blasts. The dual backpack is commonly issued with this weapon, with two to four additional energy canisters carried in a satchel.

CP-30 Laser Pulse Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D4 per single blast or 4D6 per triple-blast burst. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 600 feet (183 m). Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip.

CAJ-5 Weapon Arm Plasma Blaster: Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 800 feet/243.8 m. Payload: 10 shots per standard E-Clip.

CAJ-5 Weapon Arm Light Laser Tool: Mega-Damage: Three settings — 4D6 S.D.C., 1D4 M.D., and 1D6 M.D. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 800 feet (243.8 m). Payload: 20 shots per standard E-Clip.

CAJ-5 Weapon Arm Vibro Tri-Claw: Mega-Damage: 3D6 M.D.

Heavy High Explosive Grenade (4): Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Plasma Grenade (5): Mega-Damage: 5D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 12 feet (3.6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Extra Ammo: 12 long E-Clips and 24 micro-fusion grenades in a crossover bandolier if the CP-50 is the primary weapon. Six extra energy canisters if the C-29 is the primary weapon.

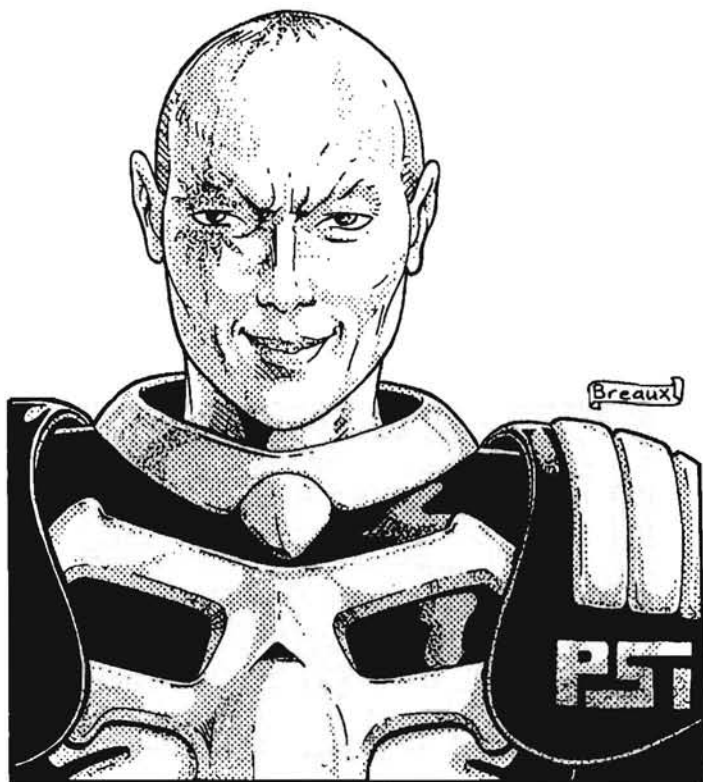
Other Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight, bionic climb cord (30 feet/9.1 m), bionic "AWOL" bomb in skull. Additional items may be made available upon assignment.

Body Armor:

Cyber-Armor: A.R.: 16, M.D.C.: 50

CA-5 Juicer "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 80 M.D.C., Arms: 70 M.D.C. each, Legs: 85 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 125 M.D.C. **Note:** The CA-5 can be worn on top of the Juicer's Cyber-Armor.

Common Bionics: Clock/calendar, gyro-compass and **Finger Laser:** Mega-Damage: 1D4 M.D. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 300 feet (91 m). Payload: 10 shots.



CS Psi-Stalker

Race: Human Mutant

Alignment: Any, but tend to lean toward Scrupulous, Unprincipled, Anarchist and Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q.: 10, M.E.: 12, M.A.: 9, P.S.: 18, P.P.: 17, P.E.: 15, P.B.: 8, Spd: 22

Hit Points: 28-36, S.D.C.: 40

Average Height: Six feet, four inches (1.93 m). **Weight:** 170 pounds (77 kg).

Age: 20-30

P.P.E.: 10; needs to consume a minimum of 50 P.P.E. per week to function without fatigue, weakness or penalty.

I.S.P.: 70

Disposition: These grim mutant predators are considerably less feral than their wild cousins, especially those known to lurk just north of Tolkeen, in the Xitcix Hivelands. The Psi-Stalkers of most covert and Special Ops teams are usually either or, more likely, "controllers" for the Dog Boy elements within the unit. For every three or four Dog Boys, there will be one Psi-Stalker. As beloved as the Dog Boys are, many Officers feel they need a handler to give them direction and keep them in line. The Psi-Stalkers themselves

love being part of units like this, since it allows them to hunt and stalk as well as feed on P.P.E. rich enemies, especially enemy magic users.

Experience Level: 4th level CS Psi-Stalker.

Special Abilities: Sense psychic and magic energy (80%), sense supernatural beings (60%), psionic empathy with animals.

Psionics: Astral Projection (8), Clairvoyance (4), Sense Evil (2), Telepathy (4), See Aura (6), and Object Read (6).

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (70%), Pilot: Hovercraft (75%), Robot Combat: Basic, Read Sensory Equipment (55%), Weapon Systems (65%), Body Building, Climbing (60%/50%), Running, Prowl (50%), Swimming (75%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Knife.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Assassin

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike. +3 to pull punch. +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact. +4 to damage.

Other Combat Info: Master psionic: needs a 10 or higher to save vs psionics, +4 to save vs psionics, +4 to save vs magic attacks. +6 to save vs Horror Factor, +5 to save vs mind controlling/altering drugs.

Common Weapons:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Light High Explosive Grenade (3): Mega-Damage: 3D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Heavy High Explosive Grenade (3): Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Vibro-Knife (1 or 2): Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips.

Other Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight. Additional items may be made available upon assignment.

Body Armor:

CA-4 Standard "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 70 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 80 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 100 M.D.C.

Bionics: None.

CS Ranger/Wilderness Scout

Race: Human

Alignment: Any.

Attributes: I.Q.: 11, M.E.: 12, M.A.: 9, P.S.: 19, P.P.: 12, P.E.: 14, P.B.: 10, Spd: 25

Average Hit Points: 30-40, S.D.C.: 35.

Average Age: 18-24

P.P.E.: 8



Disposition: The Rangers of any unit typically take point when leading the group through the Tolkeen borderlands. Nobody in the group knows the terrain like these specialists do, so when it comes to providing expert reconnaissance, evading (or setting) ambushes, tracking, using camouflage, and stealth, the CS Rangers are the ones to call. Those chosen for Special Ops come from the many CS Ranger guerilla units stationed in the area. Unfortunately, those groups tend to suffer a fairly high casualty rate since they must routinely infiltrate enemy positions for Intelligence gathering and spying purposes. Those serving Special Ops usually exhibit uncommon tenacity, survivability, and ingenuity.

Experience Level: 4th level CS Ranger/Wilderness Scout.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (70%), Camouflage (45%), Climb (70%/60%), Hunting, Prowl (50%), Identify Plants (50%), Land Navigation (68%), Wilderness Survival (70%), Track Animals (45%), Track Humanoids (55%), Trap Construction (50%), Trap/Mine Detection (50%), Speak American (98%), Speak Spanish (90%), Pilot: Jet Pack (69%), Running, Swimming (65%), Body Building, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Knife, W.P. Sword

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert

Attacks Per Melee: 5

Combat Bonuses: +4 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +3 to damage, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, plus those from possible attribute bonuses.

Other Combat Info: +18% to save vs coma/death and +1 to save vs poison and magic.

Common Weapons: CS Rangers will carry *either* the CP-50 or the CP-40 into battle, but not both.

CP-50 Dragonfire: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple-blast burst. Micro-fusion grenades, fired from the underbarrel grenade launcher, do 6D6 M.D. to a 12 feet (3.6 m) diameter blast area. Rate of Fire: Laser fires single shots or triple bursts equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Grenade launcher fires single shots or bursts of four. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m) for laser, 1,200 feet (365 m) for grenade launcher. Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip and 12 grenades in grenade launcher.

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Heavy High Explosive Grenade (8): Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Vibro-Sword: Mega-Damage: 2D6.

Vibro-Knife (2): Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips, 24 micro-fusion grenades in a crossover bandolier.

Other Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations, backpack, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight, and laser distancer. Additional items may be made available upon assignment.

Body Armor:

CA-3 Light "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 70 M.D.C., Arms: 55 M.D.C. each, Legs: 70 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 80 M.D.C.

Bionics: Half will have a bionic ear with augmented hearing and headjack, clock calendar and gyro-compass.

CS RPA Elite/SAMAS Pilots

Race: Human

Alignment: Any.

Attributes: I.Q.: 10, M.E.: 11, M.A.: 10, P.S.: 12, P.P.: 13, P.E.: 11, P.B.: 10, Spd: 15

Hit Points: 32-40, S.D.C.: 30

Average Height: 5 feet, 10 inches to 6 foot, two inches (1.78 to 1.88 m). **Weight:** 160-180 lbs (72.6 to 81 kg).

Average Age: 20-25

Disposition: These guys are SAMAS specialists, and often have a tighter cohesion among their fellow pilots than the rest of the group. Still, they have a fine sense of teamwork, and enjoy being part of a finely organized and executed plan. These "hot doggers" enjoy their role as air support, and, in general, would rather provide fire support for their ground-pounding comrades than dogfight with other aerial enemies. Their favorite tactic for eliminating other flying craft is to get them to give chase, and to lead them right into an ambush site, where

the rest of the platoon opens up with mini-missiles and other ground fire.

Experience Level: 4th level Coalition Elite RPA (Robot Power Armor) Pilot.

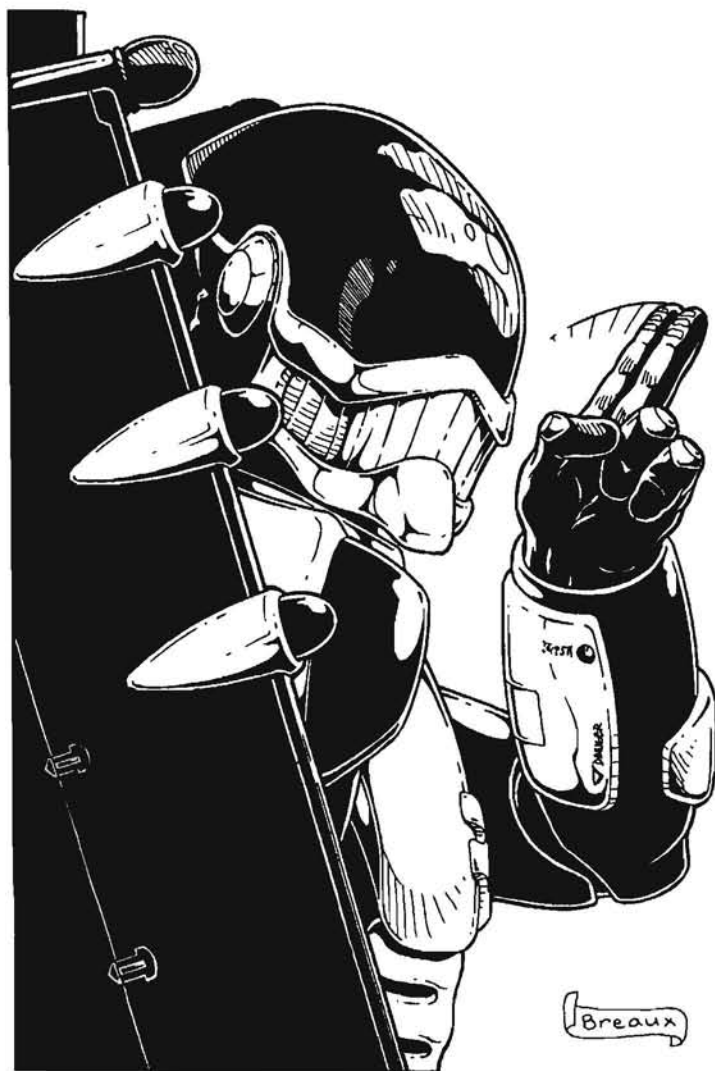
Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (70%), Radio: Scramblers (60%), Pilot Automobile (76%), Pilot Hovercraft (75%), Pilot Tank & APCs (63%), Pilot Robots and Power Armor (78%), Pilot Jet Packs (64%), Navigation (75%), Robot Combat: Elite, Read Sensory Equipment (60%), Weapon Systems (70%), Running, Climbing (55%/45%), Body Building & Weight Lifting, Boxing, Wrestling, Wilderness Survival (50%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert, Power Armor Elite Combat Training.

Attacks Per Melee: 6

Combat Bonuses: +2 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to pull punch.

Power Armor Combat Bonuses (in addition to normal combat bonuses): +2 attacks per melee, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge on ground, +5 to dodge while flying (if applicable), +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, critical strike, punch: 1D6 M.D., kick: 1D6 M.D., leap kick: 2D6 M.D. (counts as *two* attacks), body flip/throw: 1D4 M.D., body block/tackle: 1D6 M.D. (counts as *two* attacks).



Weapons:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips.

Other Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight. Additional items may be made available upon assignment.

Body Armor: When not using a SAMAS ...

CA-4 Standard "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 70 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 80 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 100 M.D.C.

Bionics: Typically clock calendar, gyro-compass, and basic ear implant with universal headjack.

CS Special Forces Member

Race: Human

Alignment: Any. The worst lean toward Aberrant and Miscreant.

Average Attributes: I.Q.: 12, M.E.: 12, M.A.: 11, P.S.: 18, P.P.: 14, P.E.: 14, P.B.: 10, Spd: 20

Hit Points: 36-44, S.D.C.: 40-50

Height: Six feet, three inches (1.9 m). **Weight:** 185 lbs (84 kg).

Age: 19-25

P.P.E.: 9

Disposition: Calm, cool and collected, these professional killers represent the cream of the Coalition infantry. They are reliable in combat and do not flinch before potentially repugnant tasks such as firing upon unarmed women or children, or poisoning an entire town's water supply. Tend to be fiercely dedicated to their country, army and cause.

A Dirty Thirty Note: As a fellow Special Forces member, "Carnage" Carruthers holds a special place in the hearts of these individuals, who all see themselves as a cut above any other kind of soldier in the Coalition. These troops practically idolize their captain, and are often the first to volunteer for any special tasks he has to assign.

Experience Level: 4th level Special Forces Commando.

Skills of Note: Basic Math (80%), Radio: Basic (75%), Radio: Scramblers (60%), Land Navigation (58%), Language: American (98%), Language: Spanish (90%), Intelligence (54%), Streetwise (48%), Lore: Demon/Monster (55%), Pilot: Jet Pack (64%), Pilot: Robots & Power Armor (88%), Pilot: Robot Combat Elite: Special Forces SAMAS, Wilderness Survival (53%), Climbing (70%/60%), Prowl (55%), Running, Boxing, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Commando

Attacks Per Melee: 7

Combat Bonuses: +1 to initiative, +3 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +5 to damage, +10% vs coma/death, +3 to save vs

poison and magic, +5 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 vs Horror Factor, plus any likely bonuses from attributes.

Other Combat Info: Knockout/stun on a Natural 20, body flip/throw (+1), paired weapons, body block/tackle, backward sweep kick, disarm, automatic body flip (+1), kick: 2D6, jump kick, death blow 18-20.

Common Weapons:

CP-50 Dragonfire: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple-blast burst. Micro-fusion grenades, fired from the underbarrel grenade launcher, do 6D6 M.D. to a 12 feet/3.6 m diameter blast area. Rate of Fire: Laser fires single shots or triple bursts equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Grenade launcher fires single shots or bursts of four. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m) for laser, 1,200 feet (365 m) for grenade launcher. Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip and 12 grenades in grenade launcher.

CP-30 Laser Pulse Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D4 per single blast or 4D6 per triple-blast burst. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 600 feet (183 m). Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip.

Fragmentation Grenades (4): Mega-Damage: 2D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 20 feet (6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Heavy High Explosive Grenade (4): Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 6 feet (1.8 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Plasma Grenade (4): Mega-Damage: 5D6 M.D. Blast Radius: 12 feet (3.6 m). Throwing Range: 40 yards/meters.

Vibro-Sword: Mega-Damage: 2D6.

Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips, 24 micro-fusion grenades in a crossover bandoleer.

Other Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight. Additional items may be made available upon assignment.

Body Armor:

CA-7 Special Forces Heavy "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 75 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 80 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 100 M.D.C. Weapons: Retractable forearm vibro-blades (2; 1D6 M.D.), Garrote cord in left wrist (1) to strangle S.D.C. opponents. Mag-5 Jet Pack: Maximum Speed: 60 mph (96 km), Maximum Altitude: 1200 feet (365 m); Power Supply: Four E-clips for 80 minutes of total flight time.

Bionics: Typically a clock calendar, gyro-compass, basic ear implant with universal headjack, radar detector, and oxygen storage cell. Half will have a multi-optic eye, an AA-1 type cyber-disguise and 1-3 additional cybernetics.

Coalition Bounty Hunters & Mercenary Agents

By Kevin Siembieda

In addition to its regular troops, the Coalition Military also employs *bounty hunters* and *mercenaries*. Actually "employs" isn't really the right word, because half of these freelancers work on consignment, getting paid by the head (sometimes literally) or for capturing or killing specific "enemies of the State." To identify them as official "agents" of the Coalition Army, these villains and rogues are given an arm patch with the classic skull and lightning bolts, only the lightning bolts are black for mercenaries and red for bounty hunters. Each "freelance" squad is also given a corresponding flag with the same insignia to serve as a means of additional identification. Of course their hiring is recorded and filed away for later reference and to keep track of who's who.

These independent operatives are generally perceived as the opportunistic scum they are, and treated with only a modicum of respect. Some are well-known to the CS because they work with them regularly as wilderness scouts, spies, mercs and bounty hunters. These "regulars" tend to be the most trusted, but even they are viewed with some measure of disdain and suspicion. After all a man who can be "bought" by the CS can ultimately be bought by anybody, if the price is right. Consequently, they are seldom made privy to top secret or sensitive information, nor given easy access to weapons, equipment, supplies or military

facilities. In most cases, other than water, the recharging of E-Clips, basic of medical treatment and the occasional handout (left to the discretion of the commanding officer), mercenaries and bounty hunters are on their own. All independent agents are expected to provide for themselves, and only get paid a prearranged "fee" after they have accomplished their mission.

Mercenary Scouts are typically expected to know the lay of the land, act as the "native" guides (which includes acting as a translator when necessary and advising CS troops on *local and regional* customs, dangers, available resources, communities, dwellings, and trails), as well as perform reconnaissance, point out potential areas for ambush and lead patrols. If attacked, the scout is usually (but not always) expected to help defend the unit and suggest the best avenues to surround/counter the enemy or make an effective (and relatively safe and speedy) retreat.

Pay: Is typically 1200-1500 credits a month.

Bonuses: A bonus made in credits, gifts of equipment or trade of services *may* be given for outstanding performance of duty, acts of courage and special services that extend above and beyond the scout's contracted services (i.e. rescues a soldier or officer, disarms a trap, saves the unit from an ambush, scrounges up vital supplies, captures a spy, kills an assassin, etc.), and sometimes just because the character is likable.

Bonuses may be cash rewards of 100 to 2000 credits depending on what the Scout is being rewarded for and the availability of funds, but is more often than not “gifts” in the way of material goods (weapons, armor, ammunition, food, supplies, booze, and basic transportation) or special privileges (gets to eat and bunk with the unit, full medical treatment, access to certain military facilities, etc.). These material rewards can be CS issued

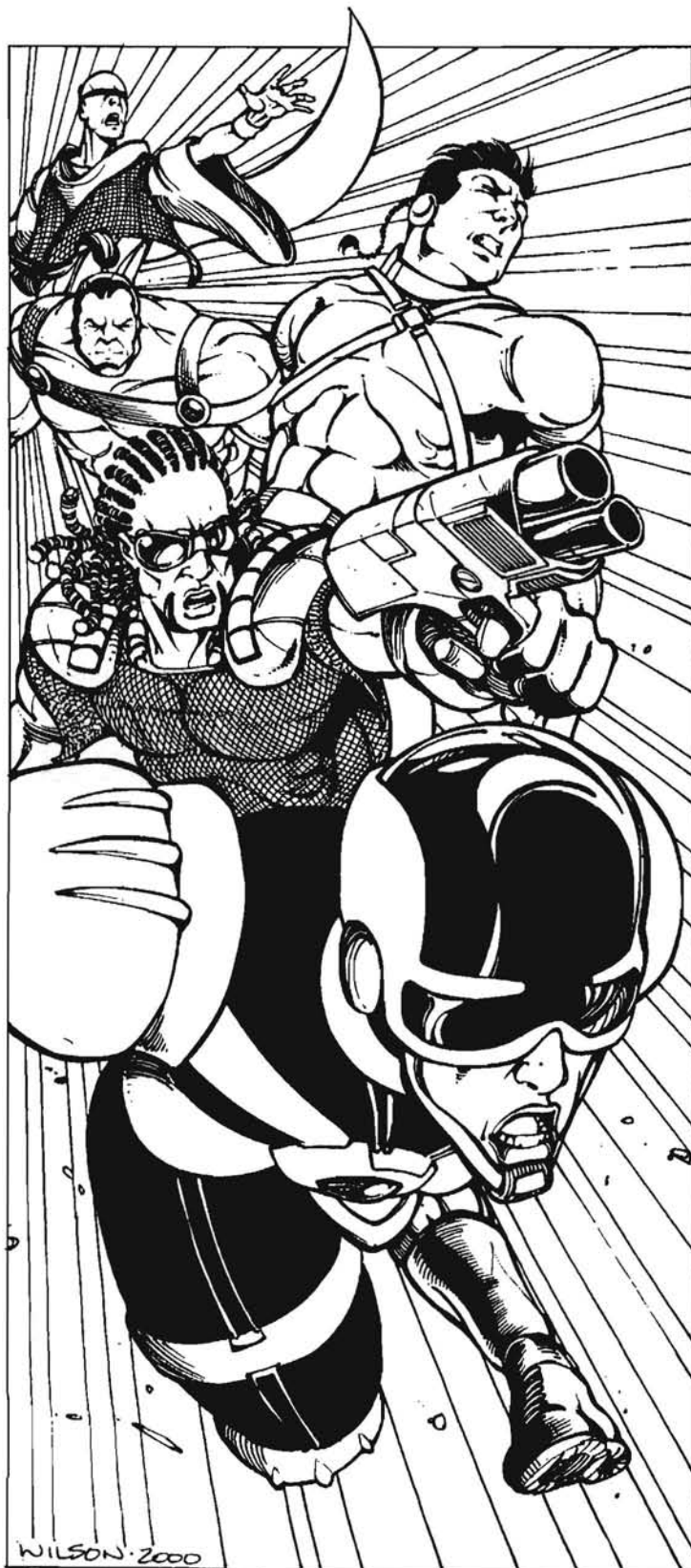
arms and equipment, or items captured from the enemy or confiscated from the civilian community.

Mercenary Soldiers. When a free agent or independent operator is referred to simply as a “mercenary” or “merc” (for short), he is usually a warrior of some kind (any men at arms), but may also include adventurer and psychic O.C.C.s (never magic O.C.C.s or D-Bee R.C.C.s when hired by the CS). In all instances, the “mercenary” is a hired-gun who is expected to *fight*. As such, they are often used as cannon fodder to lead the charge, head infantry assaults and be sent on the most dangerous and frivolous missions. Even if the mercenary is a superior or more experienced fighter, he is typically segregated from the regular Coalition Army troops along with the other mercenaries, and generally treated as a second-class warrior. This lack of respect is sometimes warranted, but always unappreciated, and can lead to trouble. The most honorable mercenaries subtly retaliate to being treated like expendable fodder and unappreciated lowlifes by being disrespectful, crude and boisterous, as well as conning the regular soldiers and stealing food, booze, ammunition and other small things whenever they can. Truly dishonorable brigands may brawl and instigate trouble among the CS soldiers as well as rob, con, cheat and trick them. Worse, when the going gets tough these roughnecks may hold back to protect their own necks, or even break rank and flee, or sell out to the “other side.” The point is, many mercenaries, especially those who are treated badly, feel no loyalty to the people they serve, nor their cause. Unless the situation is worth their while or the mercenary group is completely trustworthy and honorable, they may abandon or betray their employer at any point.

Pay: Payment to mercenary fighters can vary greatly, from as little as 1000 credits a month to 2000, plus basic food rations and medical treatment. Professional assassins, spies and smugglers may get 50% to 100% more depending on their level of experience and reputation. Likewise, recognized warriors of renown, as well as Juicers, Crazies, full conversion Cyborgs, Gunslingers, Gunfighters, and Mind Melters of even low level, will get 20-50% higher pay than the rest of the mercs, while those with reputations get as much as double to triple the pay. On the other hand, those paid more are expected to earn their pay, if not, they are fired or their pay is renegotiated to much lower levels.

Bonuses of cash, equipment or services *may* be given out as usual for superior service and acts of valor. See the description under Mercenary Scout. Only the most powerful and notorious mercenary fighters can command a cut of the booty (5-15%) or be allowed to keep whatever they can pry from the dead hands of the enemy. In the latter case, this applies only to “reasonable” — usually portable — items like wartime supplies, weapons, armor and vehicles, and not entire fleets of war machines, giant robots, bank accounts, land resources, real estate, livestock or people.

Mercenary Raiders are typically the lowest of the low, highwaymen, bandits, thieves, and cutthroats who are given a license to raid, steal, destroy property and kill the enemy in the name of the Coalition Army. Raiders never associate with the regular army other than to make occasional reports, sell information, collect on bounties, and to be accountable for actions they may have taken against CS orders (or troops). Otherwise, Raiders are left entirely on their own as independent “gangs”



unleashed into enemy territory (often deep in enemy country) to raid, harass and kill the enemy. Most are small bands of 6-24, but they sometimes number as large as 100-200. They are under no obligation to follow Coalition Army regulations or code of conduct, nor coordinate with CS operations. However, each "official" raiding party has a sponsor within the Coalition Army and is expected to "check-in" with him from time to time and follow basic instructions (i.e. avoid certain restricted areas, do not interfere with or harass CS troops, stand down when asked, and similar).

Pay: Whatever they loot is theirs to keep. Nothing more, nothing less. Of course, if raiders make a big score, the Coalition Army may decide to trick them out of it, buy it for a song (10-15% of its real value), or take it by force (which gives a whole new meaning to "terminating" one's contract).

Bounty Hunters are exactly what they sound like, professional manhunters and assassins sanctioned by the Coalition Army to operate behind enemy lines to "acquire" (capture or kill) enemy targets.

Pay: Payment is made for the fulfillment of each individual bounty, meaning each "wanted" enemy or item with a price placed on it. This can include enemy military personnel, political leaders, notable civilians (religious leaders, manufacturers, mages, etc.), and exotic creatures (demons, dragons, Black Faeries, etc.) to magic items, specified weapons, documents and similar. A bounty can be as little as 20 credits to millions of credits, although most range in the thousands.

The real trick for Bounty Hunters is *proving/validating* the success of their claim, especially when involving a "kill." The best is to have the physical body, dead or alive. Oftentimes the head(!) will do, particularly if it involves a common enemy or monster. Killing a public figure can usually be verified from news reports and spies, however, sometimes other Bounty Hunters or mercenary groups will make a false claim to the reward, causing a dispute over who is the rightful collector of the bounty. Unless one or the other can be made to retract their claim (or disappear), payment can be withheld indefinitely. The other problem with bounties (not with the CS, but others) is being making good on the reward. Many times the individual, group or government offering the bounty doesn't actually have the money and can't pay up, at least not in cash. In these cases, 30-60% of the cash is paid with the balance being paid in "trade" of goods and services (sometimes even land, houses, businesses, slaves and livestock).



Notable Bounties wanted by the Coalition

Wanted Dead!

- 25 credits per head of a Xiticix.
- 40 credits per head of a Brodkil or Gargoyle.
- 300 credits per head and wings of a Black Faerie.
- 500 credits per head of a Witchling.
- 1000 credits per head of a Chatterling.
- 2,000 credits per head of a Neuron Beast.
- 3,000 credits per head of an Iron Juggernaut.
- 10,000 credits per head of a dragon.
- 100,000 credits per vampire.

Wanted (people "alive")

- 1,000 credits per each Techno-Wizard device or gun.
- 10,000 credits per Cyber-Knight.
- 10,000-50,000 credits for "named" enemies of the State, including a number of practitioners of magic.
- 70,000 credits for each authentic rune weapon.
- 200,000 credits for the rune sword, *Ironbane*.
- 1 million credits for each *Ring of Elder*.
- 2 million credits for the *Key of Solomon* (Note: The CS doesn't know this is a person, not an artifact, and doesn't know anything about the Orb of Solomon. So *you* know, see pages 128-135 of Chapter One).
- 10 million credits for *Poor Yorick*.
- 20 million credits for *The Book of Ten*.
- 100 million credits for *The Mobius*.

Wanted Dead or Alive

- 10 million credits for King Robert Creed.
- 7 million credits for Warlord Corin Scard.
- 6 million credits for The Riparian, Dragon King of Freehold.
- 1 million credits for each member of Tolkeen's Circle of 12.
- 1 million credits for The Great Purple Mage.
- 1 million credits for Erin Tarn.

Notable Mercs & Bounty Hunters

There are hundreds of Bounty Hunters and mercenary bands working for both sides of the Tolkeen War, and ten to twenty times that number can be found in northeastern Canada, with 60% working for (or looking for work from) *Free Quebec*. This means those independent operatives at Tolkeen tend to be either the bottom of the barrel (the majority) or the best of the best. This is not good either way one cuts it.

Those attracted to Tolkeen tend to have a reason to hate the Coalition, are D-Bees or practitioners of magic themselves, believe in the cause, or can relate to them. Those attracted to the Coalition tend to be the more "civilized" and tech-oriented, including cyborgs, power armor pilots, Headhunters, Crazies, and Operators, as well as their fair share of Wilderness Scouts.

Juicers have flocked to Tolkeen in droves, many reducing their normal fees by half, others waiving them entirely (accepting only basic food and supplies) just to get back at the Coalition for the events surrounding the *Juicer Uprising*. These chemically boosted warriors typically get work as guns for hire, bounty hunters and raiders. Unlike many clients, Juicers enjoy

great respect and excellent treatment from the Tolkeenites, yet another incentive to work for them.

Gunslingers, Bounty Hunters, Gunfighters, and Lawmen from the New West have also been attracted to the conflict at Tolkeen, along with other opportunists, Drifters, Gamblers and Bar Flies trying to pass themselves off as Gunfighters. Many of those trying to carve out lives in the western frontier are, themselves, refugees and rejects from the Coalition. Consequently, some of them also have reasons to hate the CS, however, most are young bucks (1st-4th level) looking to carve a name for themselves, and see the war at Tolkeen as a good way to do it. Others are desperadoes who see Tolkeen as a good place to hide from regional lawmen on the lookout for them while getting a license to plunder and kill.

Roughly 65-70% percent of the westerners join Tolkeen simply because they feel they have more in common with them. Of the remaining 30% or so who side with the CS, most are Gunslingers, Highway Men and other lawbreakers.

Freelance Psi-Stalker warriors and scouts can be found on both sides of the war, but the vast majority have an affinity for the Coalition Army and side with them seven out of ten times. Still of the hundreds of thousands of Wild Psi-Stalkers, only a few hundred fight for Tolkeen and a few thousand for the CS. Most avoid the war. The Psi-Stalkers who have joined the battle tend to be cunning, merciless and savage, often losing themselves in the thrill of combat.

Little Bobby & Big Drew

This pair from the New West have quickly established reputations as malicious Coalition hit men with "cowboy" flair, quick tempers and quicker guns. Both like to face their opponents or quarries in close combat, Gunslinger style, and enjoy taunting, harassing and frightening their target before they capture or kill him. Little Bobby is particularly brazen and condescending, while Big Drew tends to be the strong, silent type. Little Bobby's attitude is both part of his personal style and cockiness, as well as a calculated strategy to unnerve his opponents. These two and their gang have gotten a great deal of work from the CS and enjoy exploiting the bounty Tolkeen has to offer. The following interlude was actually caught on video-disk while Little Bobby, in typical, unmodest fashion, expresses what he thinks about bounty hunting in Tolkeen and working for the CS.

"I ain't never seen so much work in all my days. I think it's mighty nice of all of the Coalition's enemies gitting together in one place like this, so me an' Drew don't haveta spend so much time hunting 'em down. Hell, seems like any town we walk into has two or three wanted men. Them Dead Boys pay right up too. Never try an' cheat ya out of a credit. Yes sir, ain't never had it so good. 'Course it's mighty nice of the Coalition ta have made so many enemies, too.

"Gotta say though, we make it tough on them other Bounty Hunters, 'cuz we're smarter and faster than they are — hand-somer too — so we beat 'em ta the draw each an' every time. What can I say when yer the best there is?

"Say now, ain't you that Cyber-Knight, Sir Malcolm of Scottsdale? You know, I think 120,000 Coalition credits says

you is. Don't leave yet, pardner. You kin do this the hard way or the easy way, it don't matter to me. An' don't go thinkin' I'd prefer the easy way, neither. I think it's only fair to give these nice people and pretty ladies a show. Now, watch ya say?" (Wink and a nod to the camera. Gunfight ensues. Cyber-Knight and three of his traveling companions go down in less than 30 seconds. Little Bobby grabs and kisses the nearest girl. Big Drew, who seemed to appear out of nowhere during the fight, just grins at his partner's audacity).

"See," says the Gunslinger, "ain't nothin' to it." (Enter the rest of the gang, miffed that they missed the action "again.")

Little Bobby

Little Bobby is a 6th level Gunslinger who is always smiling, laughing and cracking wise even when facing the barrel of a gun. He is frighteningly cheerful and seems to laugh at death with the same eerie nonchalance as most Juicers. Which may explain why a pair of devil-may-care Juicers and a Crazy are part of his and Big Drew's gang.

Little Bobby's bold fearlessness combined with his menacing, sarcastic and mocking banter is designed to unnerve and confuse his opponents, giving him and his teammates the advantage in a gunfight. He uses this to such great effect that it must be considered psychological warfare and is practically a psionic power. This ploy usually involves laughing and joking about torturing and/or killing the intended target, what the CS will do to the desperado once he and Drew turn him in, what will become of the victim's family, and similar things combined with veiled (and not so veiled) threats, puns and mocking overtures. If he feels especially confident, this banter may be part of a cat and mouse game ("Yoohoo, I see you. Ya all can run, boyo, but ya can't hide. I'm comin' for ya right as soon as I visit your family and have a little chat with them. Oh, no, I'm just kidding. Who would wanna hurt a single hair on that precious little girl's head? Why a man would have ta be crazy?" and, "Oh, I sure hope you have a gun hidden up your sleeve because killing ya any other way jus' wouldn't be challenging, now would it? Not that ya all would represent a challenge if ya had a rail gun hidden up your pant leg. Tell you what, go fer it. Draw first. Jus' so it'll be fair. I mean it. Here, I'll even turn my back." And so on.) A third of the time, this tactic will convince lone opponents to surrender (some actually break down and plead not to be killed). However most of the time it is use to anger and provoke his would-be opponent to attack. Blind with anger, they give the Gunslinger an added advantage, some even fumbling with their weapon, acting rashly or making some other deadly mistake. As fast as Little Bobby is, this extra little edge practically assures he'll beat his opponent's draw and win the fight.

Whether frightened/unnerved or angry, the result is the same, the character or characters being harassed (anybody who can hear his jovial, confident and menacing voice) must roll a 15 or higher as if saving against a Horror or Awe Factor. A failed roll means loss of initiative and one melee action/attack — a veritable death sentence when facing Little Bobby alone or together with Big Drew or the "boys." Neither man has any compunction about shooting an innocent man or somebody who doesn't have a chance against them. In fact, that's the way they prefer it. However, neither will shoot an unarmed opponent unless he or she is psychic, a practitioner of magic or possesses some other

special power or combat ability, like Juicers who can strike with lightning speed and kill with their bare hands. But even then both still wait for their opponent to make the first move. Of course the slightest flinch will bring guns out blazing.

Little Bobby, Gunslinger and CS Assassin

Also known as "Two-Gun Bobby." Real name Robert Lewis Sinclair. He doesn't like to be called "Robert" and insists on "Little Bobby" or "Bobby."

Alignment: Miscreant

Attributes: I.Q.: 10, M.E.: 23, M.A.: 15, P.S.: 17, P.P.: 24, P.E.: 14, P.B.: 12, Spd: 11

Hit Points: 52, S.D.C.: 41

Height: Five feet, two inches (1.6 m). **Weight:** 110 lbs (49.5 kg).

Age: 22

P.P.E.: 8

Disposition and Background: Insufferably arrogant, sure of himself, cunning and cruel. He claims his momma used to say he was, "bold as brass and twice as glitzy." Despite his diminutive size, he has no hang-ups about it, and never even thinks about himself as being "short." Consequently, when somebody tries to get to him by mocking his height, Little Bobby often doesn't even notice they are talking about or to him. On the few occasions he gets annoyed, Little Bobby doesn't get mad, he gets even. At such times he is fond of making a quip like, "Dude, it ain't the size that matters, its how fast I kin put two bullets in yer brain" (as he does just that or launches into a barrage of threatening and belittling jokes until the rude individual apologizes, flees or wets himself). Or he might smile and say, "Hey big man," (bang, bang — the shots ring out so fast unless one was looking right at him, you'd never know he fired them), "yer dead and my little feet is dancin' on yer grave. Ain't standin' bigger than me now, is ya?" On a good day, Little Bobby may be feeling magnanimous and only blow out the individual's knee caps to make his point.

Little Bobby is absolutely convinced he is one of the fastest and greatest Gunslingers in history, and enjoys proving it against those he and Drew hunt down and bring to justice. Of course, "justice" is an ambiguous word for a bounty hunter, and for Bobby and Drew, justice always lays in the hands of the person, organization or authority paying the bounty. Whether the individual is actually guilty of a crime or not is none of their concern and Little Bobby never loses sleep wondering about it. He has a job to do and does it well. If he didn't do it somebody else would. "Besides," he'll tell anybody who asks, "bin my experience that if a fella is innocent, it will all work out for the best in the end. The world is funny that way."

Ultimately, Little Bobby is out for himself. Anybody who gets in his way gets hurt. So like most Gunslingers (and Juicers), he lives fast, rides hard, spends his earnings as fast as he makes them and ignores his future, absorbed with himself and the here and now. This makes the lad attractive to Juicers and party-animals, both of which are members of "the gang." Speaking of which, he knows his current girlfriend and gang member, *Sweet Sue*, is a worthless, gold-diggin' hanger-on, but he doesn't care because he's having fun with her. When he gets tired of her, he'll dump her (and she's smart enough not to try to get revenge on him).

The only person Little Bobby trusts in the entire world is Big Drew, who he has known since he was thrown out on his own at age 13. Although the two are as different as night and day, they are blood brothers who will do anything for one another. Anything, even eat a bullet.

Horror Factor/Reputation: 12 (14 when dealing with ordinary folks). **Experience Level:** 6th level Gunslinger. See *Rifts® New West™*, pages 92-95, for complete details on this unique O.C.C.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (70%), Basic Electronics (65%), Find Contraband (36%), Interrogation (67%), Streetwise (52%), Seduction (45%), Cardsharp (54%), Prowl (60%), Recognize Weapon Quality (70%), Climb (80%/70%), Land Navigation (66%), Wilderness Survival (65%), Track Animals (55%), Track Humanoids (65%), Speak American (96%), Speak Spanish (96%), Pilot: Hovercycle (85%), Running, Swimming (75%), Body Building, W.P. Revolvers, W.P. Automatic Pistols, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, and W.P. Knife.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert and Gunslinger.

Attacks Per Melee: Five — Six when using any type of revolver or pistol.

Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative (+7 with handguns!), +7 to strike (+10 with revolvers and pistols), +8 to parry and dodge, +1 to damage, +4 to pull punch, +4 to disarm, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +4 to save vs psionic attack, insanity and illusions, +6 to save vs mind control specifically, +2 to save vs possession and +4 to save vs Horror Factor.

Other Combat Info:

Quick Draw Initiative with Revolvers and Pistols (including energy pistols)! See initiative bonus, above.

Paired Weapons: Revolvers and Pistols: Can draw and shoot with both hands simultaneously and without penalty, and shoot two different targets simultaneously.

Sharpshooting: Revolvers and Energy Pistols: Can fire a two-hand gun, like a rifle, with one hand without penalty, can shoot over his shoulder, while riding/moving, roll and come up shooting and do ricochet shots!

Other: Not to mention kick attack: 1D6, body flip, and critical strike: 18-20.

Weapons:

Revolvers (2): A pair of pearl handled, silver plated .44 caliber revolvers and 144 silver bullets (does 5D6 S.D.C. per bullet; each gun holds six bullets).

Automatic Pistols (2): A pair of .45 caliber pistols (does 4D6 S.D.C. with a 13 shot clip).

Wilk's 237 "Backup" Laser Pistols (2): These are relatively recent acquisitions (got 'em about a year ago) and are quickly becoming two of Bobby's favorites, especially for heavy combat and taking down "tough bounties." **Mega-Damage:** 3D6 M.D. per single blast or 6D6 M.D. per double blast, **Rate of Fire:** Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. **Range:** 500 feet (152 m). **Payload:** 8 double shots per gun per standard E-Clip or 16 standard/single shots per clip, or 16 double-strength blasts or 32 single blasts per long E-Clip. **Note:** See page 205 of *Rifts® New West™* for complete details.

Wilk's-Remi 130 "Six Shooter" (3): His trusty old pair of Wilk's-Remi "Six Shooters" are still the Gunslinger's per-

sonal favorites. Comparatively light and easy to conceal with a good payload. **Mega-Damage:** 2D6 M.D. per blast. **Rate of Fire:** Standard, although he likes to use them as single-shot weapons like the Old West gunslingers (i.e. equal to hand to hand attacks per melee). **Range:** 500 feet (152 m). **Payload:** 20 shots per standard E-Clip or 40 blasts with a long E-Clip; Bobby has 7 clips of each variety **Note:** See page 207 of **Rifts® New West™** for complete details. Little Bobby has three of these energy weapons, one for the holster on each hip, and one tucked into his belt, behind his back.

Wilk's-Remi 104 Derringer (1): Bobby has a derringer blaster tucked in one boot and an S.D.C. throwing knife in the other (the S.D.C. blade may be substituted with a Vibro-Knife depending on the situation he anticipates). **Mega-Damage:** 2D4 M.D. per blast. **Rate of Fire:** Each shot counts as one melee action, although two blasts can be fired simultaneously if so desired for 4D4 M.D. (still counts as one melee attack). **Range:** 300 feet (91.5 m). **Payload:** Four shots is it, and needs a special "plug" assembly to directly recharge the weapon with a standard E-Clip recharger. **Note:** See page 207 of **Rifts® New West™** for complete details.

Vibro-Knife (2): **Mega-Damage:** 1D6 M.D.

Throwing Knife (2; S.D.C.): 1D6 S.D.C.

Extra Ammo: 10 standard E-Clips and six long E-Clips for each, unless stated otherwise.

Other Equipment: Black, silver rimmed cowboy hat, cowboy boots, black silk vest and stylish clothing all around. Two signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, two-gun holster, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short-range radio (5 mile/8 km), two canteens, saddlebags (thrown over on his hovercycle), backpack, food rations, bottle of whiskey, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, cigarette lighter, pocket mirror, small silver cross, flashlight, language translator, six pairs of handcuffs, one set of leg-irons, and a hovercycle. Plus 2D6x100 credits at any given time. Bobby can't hold onto money and spends it like a drunken Gunslinger.

Body Armor:

"Branaghan" armored long-coat (with 59 M.D.C. left to its main body), plus a suit of "Bandito" armor usually worn under the long coat (38 M.D.C. main body).

For heavy combat, Little Bobby has managed to finagle himself a suit of **CA-3 Light "Dead Boy" Armor:** Head/Helmet: 70 M.D.C., Arms: 55 M.D.C. each, Legs: 70 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 80 M.D.C.

Bionics: None. To get cybernetics would be to deny his "natural" abilities and make him "less of a man."

Big Drew

The understated partner of the flamboyant Little Bobby, is a giant of a man known as Big Drew. The pair have been together for eight years and are as close as biological brothers, although they are clearly not. Big Drew tends to be a much more sedate and pragmatic individual, however beneath that calm surface is a man who enjoys a life of adventure and the thrill of being a manhunter. For a while Big Drew thought about becoming a lawman or ranger, and even associated with the Justice Rangers for six months before moving on. It was shortly after the big man left the Justice Rangers that he encountered a 13 year old drifter calling himself Two-Gun Bobby. The kid had spunk and the older Drew took him under his wing.

For years the pair took work as deputies and bounty hunters. However, both liked playing too fast and loose with the law to make it as lawmen, and turned to bounty hunting. This profession fit both of them like a glove. The two-some operated as equal partners for several years, but as their reputation grew, they attracted others who wanted to join their operation. Before they knew it, they had a small band of 3-6 others willing to take a back seat to their two leaders, handle a lot of the dirty work and do it all for a modest cut. Part of the thrill for the gang members was to have privilege of riding with (and maybe learning a thing or two from) Little Bobby and Big Drew. If nothing else, the pair lived charmed and exciting lives and definitely knew how to party. "The gang" (it has no other formal name) has changed several times in just the last four years with some members striking out on their own, settling down or getting themselves killed. The current members have been riding together for almost eight months now, something of a record. This is due in part to their streak of luck working for the Coalition Military rustling up Tolkeenite fugitives on the CS Most Wanted List. The list is so long, and so many people with bounties on their heads (heroes and brigands who have crossed the CS) have come to join Tolkeen in its war to stave off CS aggression, that it has been easy pickings for the Bounty Hunters.

Little Bobby and Big Drew get the lion's share, 70%, of the take, split down the middle, while the rest of the gang divides up the remaining 30%. Most of the gang are adrenaline freaks who thrive on action and adventure, so since the spoils are good, the adventures challenging and hunts frequent, nobody other than Sweet Sue (the least useful member of the gang) can find reason to complain. In between the manhunts there is much revelry and partying with Little Bobby spending his money on everybody, so that tends to keep Sue content for the most part.

Big Drew is the brains of the operation and has the most experience, thus everybody (except not so Sweet Sue) defers to his leadership and follows his lead. The big guy is a natural leader well liked by most of his teammates (the only exception being you know who). In addition to his know-how and instincts as a manhunter, they all know he is trustworthy and concerned with all their welfare. Big Drew really likes the members of this group and will feel badly if any of them gets killed. He dislikes, but tolerates Sweet Sue because she is Bobby's latest fling and Drew knows that his "little brother" is already growing tired of her, so her days with the gang are numbered. Big Drew has his own sweetheart back home in Wyoming and he often thinks about her. Unlike his partner, the cagey Bounty Hunter saves at least 40% of every bounty so he can retire in another six or eight years and buy a nice spread with his sweetheart and start a family. Like Bobby, Drew tries not to think about whether or not the men they hunt, kill and/or capture and turn over to the Coalition may be innocent. However, unlike his partner, some of their faces come back to haunt him in his dreams. Drew doesn't particularly like the Coalition or Tolkeen; the main reason he's been working for the CS is because they offered great deal of opportunity and pay very well.

Big Drew, Bounty Hunter and CS assassin.

Also known as Ox. Real name Andrew G. Andrews.

Alignment: Aberrant

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 19, M.A.: 12, P.S.: 26, P.P.: 17, P.E.: 13, P.B.: 10, Spd: 14

Hit Points: 69, S.D.C.: 44

Height: Seven feet (2.1 m). **Weight:** 260 lbs (117 kg), mostly muscle.

Age: 29

P.P.E.: 11

Disposition and Background: Tall, dark, strong and silent. Big Drew only speaks when he has something to say, or there's something that needs to be said. Compared to his irascible, chatterbox partner, he's a down right pillar of stone. He finds Little Bobby and his jabbering quite amusing and can often be seen nearby quietly watching with amusement with a grin stretched across his wide face. This contrast in personalities makes many people mistake Big Drew for a big, dumb ox — Drew being the obvious muscle of the operation and the verbose Bobby as the brains, but exactly the opposite is true. Not only is Drew smarter and a natural leader with a good head for strategies and tactics (it's Drew who formulates most of their mission plans), he is also much more even tempered and a calming and controlling influence on the hyperactive Gunslinger. In fact, there are many a time when Little Bobby wants to blow somebody away or cause a ruckus and Big Drew reins him in. Not that it's obvious, but Little Bobby pretty much does whatever Big Drew suggests, especially when the big man expresses his disdain or the seriousness of a situation. However, both enjoy horseplay and Big Drew never underestimates the unnerving power of Bobby's banter on others. (The big man, himself, is immune to the Gunslinger's intimidation tactics.)

Big Drew has raised Bobby since he was a youngster (age 13) and is loved and revered by him like a favorite, big brother. Furthermore, the Gunslinger recognizes that Big Drew has a better head for "plannin' and tactics." Big Drew loves his adopted "little brother" and will do anything for him, including tolerating a lot of nonsense and rabble-rousing that sometimes gets them in trouble. If Little Bobby is ever captured, Big Drew will gather the gang (and/or freelancers if necessary) and break him out. If slain, there will be hell to pay.

Experience Level: 8th level Bounty Hunter who once rode with the Justice Rangers for a summer a year before he found Bobby. See *Rifts® New West™*, pages 87-90, for complete details on this unique O.C.C.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (95%), Surveillance Systems (80%), Find Contraband (46%), Interrogation (65%), Intelligence (75%), Detect Ambush (85%), Forgery (65%), Pick Locks (75%), Cardsharp (52%), Land Navigation (74%), Wilderness Survival (85%), Track Animals (70%), Track Humanoids (80%), Basic Math (90%), Speak American (98%), Speak Spanish (98%), Pilot: Hovercycle (98%), Horsemanship: Basic (72%), Swimming (98%), Prowl (70%), Climb (90%/80%), Body Building, Boxing, W.P. Revolvers, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, and W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert and Boxing.

Attacks Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +13 to damage, +5 to pull punch, +2 to disarm, +4 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +2 to save vs psionic attack, insanity and illusions, and +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Other Combat Info: Boxing, paired weapons, kick attack: 1D6, body flip, and critical strike: 18-20.

Weapons:

Revolver (1): Silver plated .44 caliber revolver and 80 silver bullets (does 5D6 S.D.C. per bullet; holds six bullets). Good against vampires and the supernatural

Bandito Arms' BigBore Revolver (1): **Mega-Damage:** 1D6 M.D. per shot and has a chance of knocking its victims off their feet (losing initiative and one melee action), **Rate of Fire:** Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. **Range:** 200 feet (61 m). **Payload:** 6 explosive rounds. Big Drew has an additional 288 rounds of ammo. **Note:** See page 174 of *Rifts® New West™* for complete details.

Bandito Arms' "Big Bang" Bandit 6000 Grenade Launcher (1): This is Big Drew's favorite, heavy-duty armament he's nicknamed his "coffin nailer." **Mega-Damage:** 2D6 M.D. per single round, 4D6 per rapid-fire bursts of two grenades. Inflicts damage to a 12 foot (3.6 m) radius. **Rate of Fire:** One or two at a time. Each single or dual blast counts as one melee attack. **Range:** 2000 feet (610 m). **Payload:** 12 grenades; takes one melee action to reload two. Drew always carries 80 rounds with him in a backpack or satchel. **Note:** See page 176 of *Rifts® New West™* for complete details.

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Compliments of the CS for a job well done. **Mega-Damage:** 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. **Rate of Fire:** Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. **Range:** 2,000 feet (610 m). **Payload:** 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Vibro-Knife (1): **Mega-Damage:** 1D6 M.D.

Silver Plated Short Sword (1): 2D4 S.D.C. +P.S. damage bonus, good for fighting vampires and the supernatural.

Silver Plated Knife (1): 1D6 S.D.C.

Extra Ammo: 10 standard E-Clips and 10 long E-Clips for each, unless stated otherwise.

Other Equipment: Large cowboy hat, sunglasses, simple and comfortable traveling clothing. Two signal flares, binoculars, passive nightvision goggles, robot medical kit, two-gun holster (BigBore revolver in one, the silver bullet loaded one in the other), utility belt, bandoleer, short-range radio (5 mile/8 km), two canteens, saddlebags (thrown over on his hovercycle), backpack, food rations, bottle of whiskey, 30 feet (9.1 m) of chain, cigarette lighter, pocket mirror, small silver cross, large wooden cross, six stakes and a mallet, flashlight, language translator, four tracer bugs, IRMSS robot medical kit, three sacks, six pairs of handcuffs (15 M.D.C. each), two sets of leg-irons (30 M.D.C. each), a souped-up hovercycle (goes 20% faster) and 90,000 in credits (his savings) plus another 2D4x1000 credits at any given time earmarked for spending.

Homespun Body Armor made from parts of a SAMAS, combined with Bushman and Buffalo armored suits. **Armor:** Head/Helmet: 60 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 70 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 138 M.D.C.

Bionics: None. Just doesn't like it. Seems unnatural.

The Boys

Little Bobby and Big Drew's gang varies in size from time to time, but it currently includes the following members. All are reasonably loyal and a little bit afraid of their two leaders, follow their orders and always back down from them in any altercation. The only exception is Sweet Sue who is strictly out for

herself (and when Little Bobby realizes this, he will dump her like a hot potato).

Swing-man, Miscreant, 3rd level Juicer who owns a pair of magic swords (figures one needs to fight fire with fire when hunting practitioners of magic and their supernatural minions). Swing (for short) uses the swords as paired weapons. He doesn't know how or why they work, but the swords have superior balance and the weight of daggers, return when thrown, can be hurled up to 200 feet away, are +2 to parry, inflict 2D6 M.D. each, double to supernatural beings and creatures of magic, seem to be indestructible, and three times a day each (six times total between the two swords) create a magical force field (Armor of Ithan) around him upon command (100 M.D.C. that lasts for ten minutes each time). Consequently, one of his favorite ploys is to pretend he has lost his armor or strip down to his skivvies, his only weapons his swords, to trick assailants into thinking he is unprotected and an easy mark. Swing-man is also fond of laser rifles, plasma guns and Vibro-Blades. Note: Swing hides his swords whenever dealing with his Coalition employers, and lets Little Bobby do all the talking for the gang.

Speedy Morales, Anarchist, 4th level Juicer babe with, as she is fond of saying, "a body to die for" — and many have. Maria Morales is a slick, cunning, streetwise girl who uses seduction and her Juicer speed and reflexes to lay her opponents low. She earned the nickname "Speedy" because she has a Speed of 110 (75 mph/120 km), P.P. 26, and eight attacks per melee round (one from boxing) and she isn't even a Hyperion Juicer! Worse yet, she's smart (I.Q. 14) and knows how to trick, cheat and manipulate others, particularly men (Maria has a P.B. of 21 and uses it to her advantage).

Sweet Sue, Miscreant, 2nd level psychic Burster and Little Bobby's paramour (i.e. his current girl friend). She is innocent and attractive (P.B. 15) in a sweet, wholesome kind of way, but is really a wild cat who has little regard for anybody but herself. Even Little Bobby is just a meal-ticket and good for excitement. She craves excitement. Sweet Sue is new to life as a bounty hunter/assassin/bandit, but likes it just fine. In addition to the usual Burster fire powers (see **Rifts® RPG**, page 102-104), she also has the psionic powers of Levitation, Mind Block and Resist Fatigue; I.S.P.: 95. If Sue falls victim to any foul play, Little Bobby will come looking for revenge.

Stanley "Flick" Polanski, Miscreant, 3rd level Crazy. He got the nickname "Flick" because he's always flicking a coin, knife, twig, rock or something into the air with his thumb, like some deranged movie gangster from pre-Rifts Earth. When suitable, he will flick food like popcorn, chips, raisins, chicken nuggets, etc. into his mouth. His flicking is a nervous habit of which he can't be broken. Flick is a maniac who takes foolish chances and taunts his opponents with funny faces, crazy antics and snide words (without the effectiveness of Little Bobby). One of his favorite moves is to run out in the open dodging gunfire by using somersaults, back flips, spins and leaps. When he puts all his energy into this move (i.e. no other actions or attacks), he is +6 to automatic dodge, meaning he can usually dodge whatever is directed at him! He is also fond of throwing things, from knives and Vibro-Blades to rocks and food. Flick is a good fighter and usually follows orders, even crazy and suicidal ones, but has the I.Q. of a child (I.Q. 5).

Ike Flint

Ike is a crusty old Bounty Hunter who has worked for the Coalition States on and off for nearly 20 years. Before that he served the CS for 15 years as an ISS Specter in the Chi-Town 'Burbs. He dislikes "hotshots" and "kids" like Little Bobby and Big Drew. The only things he hates more are D-Bees, demons and practitioners of magic — particularly Necromancers and Shifters for reasons known only to Ike — so they are among his favorite targets for bounties. Which makes bounty hunting at Tolkeen very attractive.

Ike Flint is feared and hated from Old Bones to the borders of the New West. He usually prefers to work alone, but sometimes enlists 1-4 Crazies or Headhunters and/or 1-6 Psi-Stalkers from the Spider tribe on missions that involve tracking mages and monsters or require more than one man. One or two Psi-Stalkers have been seen with "Old Ike" since he arrived in Minnesota. It is no secret that he has a special relationship with the Spider Tribe and that most 'Stalkers from that tribe consider him to be a blood-brother.

Ike is tough, resilient and pragmatic, doing whatever it takes to catch his quarry. That may include blackmail, frame jobs, arson, threatening his "mark's" loved ones and manipulating other unsavory characters to do his dirty work for him (typically to cause a distraction so that he can make his move elsewhere or to divert the attention of the authorities away from him and to them). The burly Bounty Hunter has a full head of reddish brown hair streaked with grey, a full beard and mustache, and wears a bear-fur long coat that gives him the appearance of grizzly bear, himself. Underneath his coat is the cold steel of his bionic limbs and NG "Buffalo" body armor.

Rumor has it he is really a double agent working for both the CS and Free Quebec's **le Sûreté du Québec** spy organization. Whether this is true seems unlikely. Then again, Ike spent five years up in and around Old Bones and has many friends and connections in eastern Canada.

Ike Flint — CS Bounty Hunter

Also known as "Old Ike" and "Nasty Ike."

Race: Human

Alignment: Diabolic

Attributes: I.Q.: 13, M.E.: 14, M.A.: 9, P.S.: 26, P.P.: 22, P.E.: 12, P.B.: 8, Spd: 132 (90 mph/144 km)

Hit Points: 88, S.D.C.: 56

M.D.C. by Location:

Bionic Legs (2) — 125 each

Bionic Arm (1; right) — 80

Also see body armor.

Weight: 320 pounds (144 kg), but part of that is his bionics.

Height: Six feet, seven inches (2.04 m).

Age: 54 and has a grizzled, war-torn but powerful look to him.

P.P.E.: 6, I.S.P.: 71

Disposition: Ike is known for his ruthlessness, cunning, and heartlessness. Anybody who gets in between him and his "mark" will get hurt. Without missing a step, Ike will brush aside, use or kill those in his way to get to his quarry. This extends so far as threatening and using the mark's loved ones as hostages (even killing them to make a point or draw the



mark out), setting fire to buildings (including hotels, schools and churches!) to flush his mark out into the open, hurt him emotionally or to extract revenge, and similar despicable acts. There is something menacing about this big burly man even when he's relaxing, laughing and having a good time. He just exudes danger and power.

Experience Level: 12th level Bounty Hunter, formerly an ISS Specter.

Skills of Note: Math: Basic, Language: American and Euro, Literacy: American, Radio: Basic, Surveillance Systems, Lore: Demons & Monsters, Lore: Magic, Pilot: Robots & Power Armor (basic), Pilot: Hover Vehicles, Tracking Humanoids, Swimming, Detect Concealment, Detect Ambush, Land Navigation and Wilderness Survival, all at 98%.

Plus Recognize Weapon Quality (90%), Find Contraband (84%), Streetwise (78%), Intelligence (91%), Interrogation (95%), Escape Artist (98%), Wrestling, Boxing, Climbing (75%/65%), W.P. Blunt, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle.

Psionics: A minor psychic with the abilities of Mind Block and Resist Fatigue. I.S.P.: 71; used mainly to power his TW weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Assassin

Attacks Per Melee: 7

Combat Bonuses (includes all bonuses, even bionic ones): +3 to initiative, +8 to strike, +9 to parry, +10 to dodge, +15 to damage, crush/squeeze does 1D4+15 damage, +3 to pull punch, +5 to roll with impact, +14% to save vs coma/death, +4 to save vs poison and magic.

Other Combat Info: Can leap 10 feet (3 m) high or lengthwise from a standing position or twice that distance with a running start. Karate kick: 1D8, pin/incapacitate on a roll of a natural 18-20, knockout on a roll of natural 17-20, Critical Strike 19-20, Death Blow on natural twenty.

Weapons:

NG-P7 Particle Beam Rifle: Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 per blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee

round. Range: 1,200 feet (365 m). Payload: 8 shots per standard clip, 14 per long clip; has 10 long E-Clips earmarked specifically for this rifle.

C-20 Laser Pistol (1): Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip. Kept in a hip holster.

Wilk's 237 "Backup" Laser Pistol (1): Mega-Damage: 3D6 M.D. per single blast or 6D6 M.D. per double blast, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 500 feet (152 m). Payload: 8 double shots per gun per standard E-Clip or 16 standard/single shots per clip, or 16 double-strength blasts or 32 single blasts per long E-Clip. Note: See page 205 of *Rifts® New West™* for complete details. Kept in a shoulder holster.

Wilk's 210 "Pocket Pistol": Mega-Damage: 1D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 400 feet (122 m). Payload: 3 shots before requiring recharging from an E-Clip charger. Note: Concealed on his person.

S.D.C. Revolver (1): A silver plated .44 caliber revolver, speed loader and 96 silver bullets (does 5D6 S.D.C. per bullet; holds six bullets). Used for fighting supernatural enemies.

Techno-Wizard TW Snare Gun (pistol): Mega-Damage: None, fires a Magic Net, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 300 feet (91.5 m). Payload: Two nets when fully loaded. Requires 20 I.S.P. to recharge two nets (10 for one). Note: Net only lasts for 3 minutes. See *Rifts® New West®* for details.

Techno-Wizard TW Super-Six Carbine (rifle): Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 1500 feet (457.2 m). Payload: 6 shots when fully loaded. Requires 30 I.S.P. to recharge. Note: Used for fighting supernatural enemies.

Techno-Wizard TW Hellfire Shotgun: Mega-Damage: 6D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 300 feet (91.5 m). Payload: Two fire blasts when fully loaded. Requires 32 I.S.P. to recharge two blasts (16 for one). Note: Used for fighting supernatural enemies. See *Rifts® New West®* for details.

Neural Mace: Damage: Incapacitates one's opponent by stunning him. It can also kill when used as a bludgeon against S.D.C. opponents. See page 205 of the *Rifts® RPG* for complete details.

Vibro-Knife: Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Grenades: Four smoke, two flash/stun, and four fragmentation.

Extra Ammo: Has 20 long E-Clips and 10 short.

Armor: In addition to the M.D.C. of his armor, Ike wears a helmet (80 M.D.C.) and heavy body armor (120 M.D.C.).

Bionics: Language translator, built-in loudspeaker, modulating voice synthesizer (can disguise his voice), radio receiver and transmitter built into the head/jaw, headjack, amplified hearing (bionic ear), clock calendar, bionic lung, and multi-optic eyes.

Bionic Arm (right): Finger camera (1), explosive finger segment (pinkie; 1D6 M.D.), Wrist Needle (and a variety of drugs, see *Rifts® RPG* page 236), one Plasma forearm blaster (4D6 M.D.C.; 1000 foot/305 m range), retractable Vibro-Blade (one; 2D4 M.D.C.; medium-sized) and Energy-Clip arm port.

Bionic Legs (2): Concealed laser rod in the right (3D6 M.D.C.; 2200 foot/671 m range), concealed iron rod in the left leg (4D6 M.D.C.; 1600 foot/488 m range), and medium-sized secret compartment also in the left leg.

The Crimson Wing

To the world the Crimson Wing are a group of power armored mercenaries originally from the region around Iron Heart. Like so many, they have come to Tolkeen in search of fame and fortune. The mercenary group specializes in armored combat, escort and protection duty. Rumor has it that the squad has worked for "both sides" in the war, depending on who has the best offer at the time. Right now they are soliciting work from Tolkeen and claim to dislike the Coalition (probably over some dispute).

Nobody seems to know much of anything about these newcomers, which isn't unusual for a group just making a name for itself. However, one would think there would be a little bit more history than there appears. This has suggested to some that the Wing is completely green, and to others that they hide from some dark past.

The leader of the Crimson Wing calls himself *Red Falcone*, and wears Colonel's stripes. (Funny, nobody calls him "Red," his men always refer to him simply as "Colonel.") He is a hardened warrior who constantly wears a frown and is as cold as ice. He is a brass tacks, down-to-business warrior who has no sense of humor, no time for frivolity nor appreciation for the good things in life. If one didn't know better, one might think he's one of the Coalition's notorious hardcase officers with a corn-cob shoved up his ...

The rest of the squad has considerably more personality, although all are clearly highly disciplined and carry themselves like veterans of numerous conflicts. Only one, *Sigman Kline* is a fun-loving clown, but he and his teammates all seem a little afraid of their leader and become more proper and reserved the instant he enters a room. The majority of the team is human, but three are D-Bees and one is a Psi-Stalker.

Game Master's Note: In truth, each and every one of the Crimson Wing, even the D-Bees in the group, are Coalition RPA disguised as mercenaries to get in good with other mercs, adventurers and Tolkeenites in order to gather intelligence about the enemy, and whenever possible, engage in sabotage, misdirect the enemy and bushwhack Tolkeen forces and their hired guns.

Red Falcone — Squad Leader

Real name: Nick Thomason, Colonel in the CS RPA, SAMAS Division.

Race: Human

Alignment: Aberrant

Attributes: I.Q.: 14, M.E.: 12, M.A.: 15, P.S.: 18, P.P.: 20, P.E.: 11, P.B.: 9, Spd: 8

Hit Points: 50, S.D.C.: 48

Height: 6 feet (1.8 m). **Weight:** 182 lbs (82 kg).

Age: 26

Disposition: Stern, dispassionate and unapproachable. Even his own men find him distant and cold. He is a loyal member of the Coalition Army and volunteered for this covert duty.

Experience Level: 7th level (Coalition Elite) Robot Power Armor Pilot, pretending to be an RPA mercenary.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (80%), Radio: Scramblers (70%), Pilot Automobile (84%), Pilot Hovercraft (85%), Pilot Tanks & APCs (71%), Pilot Robots and Power Armor (84%), Pilot Jet Packs (72%), Navigation (85%), Robot Combat: Elite, Read Sensory Equipment (70%), Weapon Systems (80%), Running, Climbing (65%/55%), Body Building & Weight Lifting, Boxing, Wilderness Survival (60%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert, Power Armor Elite Combat Training.

Attacks Per Melee: Six (eight when piloting power armor).

Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +5 to strike, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +7 to parry and dodge, and +3 to save vs psionic attack.

Power Armor Combat Bonuses (in addition to normal combat bonuses): +2 attacks per melee, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge on ground, +5 to dodge while flying (if applicable), +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, critical strike, punch: 1D6 M.D., kick: 1D6 M.D., leap kick: 2D6 M.D. (counts as *two* attacks), body flip/throw: 1D4 M.D., body block/tackle: 1D6 M.D. (counts as *two* attacks)

Other Combat Info: Kick attack: 1D6, critical strike: 18-20, and paired weapons.

Favorite Weapons of Red Falcone:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Triax Pump Pistol: Mega-Damage: 4D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: Five rounds; has only 80 extra rounds.

Extra Ammo: 14 long E-Clips.

Other Equipment: Four signal flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, short range radio (5 mile/8 km range), canteen, food rations bag, 30 feet (9.1 m) of climbing cord, fire starter kit, S.D.C. saw-wires (3), hunting/fishing kit, compass/inertial mapper, flashlight.

Body Armor: Triax T-11 Enhanced Body Armor: Illegally acquired, he says from a Naruni, this NGR Military body armor is never supposed to be sold in North America. Head/Helmet: 50 M.D.C., Arms: 60 M.D.C. each, Legs: 75 M.D.C. each, Main Body 100 M.D.C.. Exoskeleton enhancements: +6 to P.S., +10 to speed, +10 feet (3 m) to leaps and the wearer fatigues as half the normal rate.

Vehicles: Triax X-10A Predator — the fully powered, souped up version of the X-10 Predator normally sold in North America and piloted by two of his troops. Sorry, see **Triax & The NGR™**, pages 49-51 for complete details (or use the X-10).

Other Vehicles: "Red" can also pilot hovercycles, jet packs, Rocket Bikes and all types of SAMAS.

Note: In case the team should ever need it, there is a hidden weapons depot near *Janesville* (or elsewhere if it better suits the Game Master). It contains two Super-SAMAS, two

Smiling Jacks, two Rocket Bikes, 60 long E-Clips, 36 plasma grenades, four C-14 Fire Breather assault rifles, two CP-50 Dragonfire assault rifles and two C-200 Dead Man rail guns with four ammo-drums, along with some basic supplies, including drums of drinking water, food rations, medical supplies and a Universal credit card with 6000 credits. Since the Crimson Wing is under deep cover, anything else they need or want must be "acquired" as would any other mercenary, meaning it must be bought or taken by force.

Bionics: Clock calendar, gyro-compass, universal headjack and basic bionic ear.

Members of the Crimson Wing

Note: The "D-Bees" are actually humans with bionic implants to alter their appearance to look inhuman.

"Mad Mike" (no surname given), Miscreant, 3rd level Juicer. Claims to have participated in the Juicer Uprisings and pilots a *UTI Icarus Flight System* (see **Juicer Uprising**, page 86, for details). He is a typical Juicer focused on combat and killing, but seems highly disciplined and less wild than most. He also has a beat up old-style SAMAS (which looks much more beat up than it really is; is missing only 10% of the normal M.D.C. and all weapons are in perfect working order). He calls it "his trophy" and pretends to like showing it off. He has a story about how he and some other Juicer buddies bushwhacked a

SAMAS unit during the Juicer Uprising and each of them walked off with their own SAMAS. He tells this story with practiced precision and attention to details, but without enthusiasm. This has led some to believe the story is fabricated and that he probably bought or stole it from the Juicers who really took it from the CS.

(Note: "Mad Mike" is a "CS" Juicer which explains his uncharacteristic self-control. He can't disguise his contempt for the Tolkeenites he must mingle with, but most assume it is just Juicer superiority).

Sigman "Siggie" Kline, Unprincipled, 4th level Mercenary Soldier. This is the clown of the group and while he seems to be well liked by his teammates, he is clearly disliked by the "Colonel." He also pilots a *UTI Icarus Flight System* (see **Juicer Uprising**, page 86, for details) or *Triax X-10 Predator* (see **Rifts® Sourcebook One** or **Triax & The NGR** for details) depending on what the mission entails.

(Note: Siggie is really a 4th level, 20 year old, lieutenant, RPA "Ace," with a P.P. of 23 and above average attributes across the board. He is, by nature, energetic, exuberant and fun-loving, so he sees the Colonel as a mean and merciless hardcase who needs to lighten up. As a hot shot fighter pilot, Siggie tends to be more independent and free-spirited than the rest of his squad. Actually, a little too free-spirited even for other aces, which is how he landed this lousy assignment. The



Colonel has reprimanded him for conduct unbefitting an officer, three times now. If Siggie is not careful, he may anger the wrong people and find himself on the receiving end of friendly fire. Mitch and a few others aren't too keen on him either.)

Ferdie MacGill, Anarchist, 4th level RPA pilot. He flies a fully loaded NG-X9 Samson (see *Rifts® RPG*, page 212, for details).

(Note: Really a CS RPA Elite/SAMAS pilot who usually flies a "Smiling Jack" SAMAS and is experienced in aerial reconnaissance and power armor raids. He likes Siggie and wishes the rest of the squad would be a little less serious.)

Mitch Andropolis, Aberrant, 7th level power armor pilot who pilots a Triax Ultimix! He is another hard-edged grunt with a serious attitude. This guy comes off like the calculated killer he is.

(Note: Really 7th level Special Forces who specializes in assassination and normally pilots "Striker SAMAS" or "Glitter Boy Killer." He is hard as nails and loathes the enemy, particularly mages and Daemonix. He sees "Siggie" as a foolish twerp with no self-control, and a potential liability to the mission. He would be glad to "retire" the young pilot whenever the Colonel asks).

Grant "Ironsides" Oakley, Aberrant, 5th level, full conversion 'Borg with a demonic face plate and jet pack for ground and air capabilities. "Ironsides" claims to have been a human-like D-Bee who turned in his scrawny body for a powerful metal one after the CS turned him into a cripple. He claims to hate the CS for killing his family and crippling his body, but he is a tough, sadistic bully who seems to target D-Bees as the butt of his rough and mean sense of humor. (Note: Sgt. Grant Donald Oakley comes from a long line of Coalition infantrymen and was one of the first to volunteer for bionic conversion to create Coalition Cyborg shocktroopers. He loves the power being a cyborg gives him and he likes to dish out pain.)

Shelly Windruff, Miscreant, 3rd level, D-Bee assassin. She is cold, quiet and always seems to be watching those around her like a cobra ready to strike. (Note: Really a CS Commando skilled as both a thief and assassin. Her inhuman appearance is the product of Type AA bionic implants. She also has a bionic arm made to look like flesh and blood with a wrist garrote and palm needle).

Mirlt "Bad Axe" Crsii, Aberrant, 4th level D-Bee warrior. Bad Axe is a huge *Vanguard Brawler* (see *Coalition War Campaign™*, page 206). He loves magic and wields a *TW Shard Pistol* and *TW Storm Rifle*, although he needs to get a mage or psychic outside the Crimson Wing to recharge them for him. His most precious magic item, however, is a rare *Dragon Thunder Rune Axe* (1D4x10 M.D., returns when thrown, can be thrown 300 feet/91.5 m and can cast the following spells: Invulnerability, Levitation, Summon Rain, and Calm Storms at 8th level potency; see page 130 of *Rifts® Atlantis One* for complete details). He claims to have stolen the axe from a Minion of Splugorth. (Note: He is really a very large, quick/P.P. 21 and strong/P.S. 24, grunt named Matthew Lopez, who has had his physical body transformed to look like a Vanguard Brawler through a series of skin grafts and physical reconstruction, that's how dedicated this soldier is to the cause. He gets a kick out of tricking the enemy to charge his TW weapons for him. Meanwhile he is honestly falling in love with his Aberrant evil

Dragon Thunder Axe; the two are, after all, kindred spirits. He was given the rune weapon by his superiors to help make the group appear more convincing as non-CS mercenaries. The fact that CS brass had a Greater Rune Axe and TW weapons to offer as part of an undercover group's "disguise" may add credence to the stories that there is a place called *The Black Vault* where the CS government secretly collects and stores magic weapons.)

Dra-nang, Anarchist, 6th level Wild Psi-Stalker. He's the group's Wilderness Scout and resident expert on the supernatural and magic. He enjoys stalking and fighting. He loves to use blade weapons and has a TW Flaming Sword and TW Snare Gun, along with a Juicer variable laser rifle for precision shooting. (Note: CS Psi-Stalker who is enjoying acting more "wild" than he usually can. He has no love for Tolkeenites and justifies anything he does against them as their just deserts for bringing monsters like the Daemonix into the world.)

Multan Kaine, Unprincipled, D-Bee warrior who can slightly alter her appearance, and pilots Flying Titan power armor. She is an attractive "elf-like" female with a sunny disposition and keen insight. (Note: Shannon Riech is really a 5th level CS Commando with a Type AA cyber disguise system to change her appearance and minor cosmetic surgery to give her the "elf" look. She is also a minor psychic with 32 I.S.P. [was 43 before the cyber disguise interfered] and the powers Sense Magic and Machine Ghost.)



The twin faces of evil



By Bill Coffin

Additional text and ideas by Kevin Siembieda

The Final Words of Pax Tyrannica

Another artillery round lands directly above me, topside. Even down here, the dull thunder makes its way though the shelter's fortified understructure and shakes dust loose from the ceiling. Sitting against a wall of Mega-Damage stone, I can feel the explosion's vibration rattle faintly into my spine.

*The bombardment's been going on for about an hour, so I reckon there can't be much more than twenty minutes left to it. Thirty, tops. But once it ends, that's when the **real** waiting begins. The wait to see if those Coalition gunners have really stopped shooting up the town we are hiding under, or if they're just pulling another fast one.*

Only the Coalition's getting wise to our tactics and the use of magic much faster than anybody ever expected. They bombarded that Killzone town (Valence? Vilencia? Just can't remember) just like normal, only when they stopped and everybody emerged topside, that's when the CS really dropped the hammer on those poor bastards. During the heavy bombardment, shorter-range tanks, artillery and air units moved in and

encircled the town. With everybody below ground and all the noise and vibrations from the bombing, who was to know? When they came out of hiding, the CS opened up a simultaneous barrage that pretty much wiped out everybody. A whole town gone in a matter of hours.

I heard about another town, mostly humans too, who thought it was smarter to surrender. They gave it up without a shot being fired. Pretended there weren't any spell casters or shapechangers among them. Figured they'd try to make a move later and escape. Maybe take some Coalition grunts with them in the process, disrupt CS operations for that Battalion like others have done in the past. Didn't happen. The Coalition soldiers rounded them up and shot them dead. All 292 of them. Left them in laying in the road like the wood of a fallen fence for anybody who passed to see. Salted the little town with Skelebots waiting in ambush for anybody who stopped to visit or investigate, too. Another several dozen people perished that way.

It hasn't taken too long for word to spread about what's been happening, and people are starting to get frightened. The Coalition has gotten tricky and mean. Really mean. They don't take chances and they're developing a taste for blood. People would

rather stay in hiding for a week than risk eating a storm of missiles or energy blasts. Can't say I blame them. I might spend the night down in my little hole like a scared rabbit myself.

I wasn't there for either of those incidents, but I made the mistake of object reading a bit of broken furniture that belonged to somebody who didn't survive one. I really can't express to you the horror of such a brief, roaring end, so I'm not even going to try. It's just one of those things that is in my head now, behind my eyes, replaying itself every time I try to go to sleep. Every time I see a Tolkeen settlement under fire. Every time I hear another shell land right above my head.

There goes another one.

It would be one thing if those were the only dirty tricks coming out of the Coalition's Big Black Bag. But it's not. They've totally uncorked on us, throwing everything they've got to make a difference in their desperate push northward. I guess I should feel honored; if it weren't for mages such as myself to fortify our cities against harm, the Coalition's original battle might have worked. Hell, maybe they would already be celebrating in the City of Tolkeen by now. Of course, given how things have turned out, our earlier victories might be hollow ones. I shouldn't think that way. We had them running like chickens with their heads cut off. They were so unnerved we had them shooting at their own shadows and me and my squad must have foiled three dozen patrols, killed a couple dozen soldiers before they even knew what hit them and god only knows how many Skelebots, two ... three hundred maybe. And our forces still have them clustered along the southern and eastern borders, barely able to move. No wonder they're getting more ruthless. Part of it is frustration too. As soon as they start to adapt, we throw something new at them. First an army of mixed spell casters and unholy shock-troops of lesser demons like the Brodkil to stop the invasion — some Elementals and dragons for good measure. Then we pick them apart with magic weaving guerilla fighters and shapechangers, not to mention recruiting local fiends like Witchlings, Thornhead Demons, Black Faeries, Simvan Monster Riders and others to join in the massacre. It took them nearly a year to start to get a handle on them and we unleash the Iron Juggernauts and other wonders of Techno-Wizardry. Now, the Daemonix join the fray. And we're still holding back our share of surprises.

As I think about it, I need to stop feeling sorry for myself. King Creed and Warlord Scard are right. We can defeat the Coalition. Nobody thought we'd get this far, and there's a hell of a long way to go before Tolkeen or Freehold falls. Maybe my days out here on the front-line are numbered — I have a bad feeling that my luck is soon to run out — but that doesn't mean we'll lose the war. I mean ... the Coalition will give up after awhile, won't they? They won't just keep sending their soldiers to die, will they? They have to give up eventually, we can't hold out forever. The Coalition is simply too strong to hold if they keep pressuring us like they are. And now that they've launched a no-holds-barred campaign of true genocide ... I don't even want to think about it.

No. What am I doing? That's exactly what the Coalition wants. If we let them break our spirits we'll lose our resolve and they'll win for sure. I am certain one day we shall stand triumphant amid the ruins of the Coalition Army. Already, the Coalition's efforts have bogged down. Their vaunted Skelebots are

pathetically simple for our cunning mages to outwit and destroy. Our cities have proven extremely costly to conquer in terms of time, manpower, and materials. And quite simply, our morale is far stronger than theirs. One Tolkeen soldier is worth ten Dead Boys under any given circumstances! As the war continues to go poorly for the CS, their men will become even less useful than they are now.

I can't blame them, really. Most of them are unshaven children far from home and facing magic for the first time. Tolkeen is not like the Coalition's other exploits, which in comparison have been puny and without risk. Tolkeen is bloodying the skull-faced giant for the first time in anyone's memory. Well, perhaps I owe Free Quebec its due, they too fight valiantly and the war there has divided the Coalition's strength. Were it not for two wars at once, both Tolkeen and Free Quebec might never have been able to mount any kind of lasting, substantive defense. In any case, the stress of two wars is taking its toll, and the first cracks in the Coalition's supposedly invincible surface are beginning to show. Not even the Federation of Magic has ever been able to do what we've accomplished.

Do not mistake me, many Coalition troopers are the most fearsome adversaries I have ever known. They fight with courage, passion, and skill. But also, many of them do not. Faced with the unfathomable mystery and power of magic, many hesitate and fall, or run in retreat.

What they have done to counter this, however, boggles my senses. I had thought the Coalition had some shred of honor among them, but now I know they do not. For in failing to defeat our mighty Army, our enemy has struck where it pains us most. Our people. They decimate defenseless civilians and innocent children with the fury of a vengeful god. Daring our guerilla fighters and mass army to leave their post to come and stop them. To save the lives of the innocent, and in so doing weaken our stronghold and create openings in our lines of defense. Cleaver, but oh so cruel. The town I am hiding under now is not a military base, or even a center for guerilla activity. It is just a town like any other, guilty only of being part of a Kingdom of Tolkeen. A place of freedom and diversity Emperor Prosek must see destroyed.

Even now as I record my thoughts, this town and scores of places like it are under siege or lie shattered as smoking ruins, strewn with the decaying corpses of the innocent. Elsewhere on the front, Coalition engineers construct vast containment camps to imprison thousands of my people at a time, to force them into slave labor and perhaps worse.

Where Tolkeen fights hardest and the Coalition suffers worst, vicious enemy commanders order full-out retaliatory strikes upon any settlement that is deemed worthy of the attention. For every Dead Boy that dies, ten Tolkeenites shall answer for it. And answer they do, in blood and screaming.

From the sky, Coalition bombers drop wave after wave of incendiaries on our settlements, creating firestorms so vast that only the strongest of our Warlocks can hope to contain them. Other times Death's Head Transports unleash SAMAS by the hundreds, sometimes thousands, to swarm down like angry locusts to strafe and destroy everything in their path. Every day those afraid to live in their homes flee in huge groups to the City of Tolkeen, only to be harassed by SAMAS, Rocket Bike companies, Robot formations and Death Squads like the Dirty Thirty

and driven into the wilderness or slaughtered out in the open. Those who make it to the grand city, and hundreds do every day, overflow its streets and strain its resources. New permanent and temporary housing and fortified walls are being erected on the city's outskirts to accommodate the masses, but barely able to keep pace with demand — and anyone with a military mind knows these refugee areas are more vulnerable than the city proper.

It is as if the Coalition's newfound barbarity has infected them entirely, for not only do they raze Tolkeen villages, but now they also lay their weapons to any settlement unwilling to immediately join their crusade. Time and time again, we see the sad villages, cities and kingdoms between our borders and the Coalition's get caught in the crossfire of this increasingly bloody campaign. They, I fear, are the true victims of this war. They wanted nothing of it in the first place, and even now, we Tolkeenites take part in their destruction, using their homes and buildings as advance defenses against the Coalition Army. Here is where the fighting rages the worst, and the innocent folk in the middle suffer hardest. It is the people who live ordinary lives and have no power to change their situation whatsoever who suffer and pay in blood for our war. It's their world that is being destroyed. They have no sense of what is happening or why. They only know that for some reason, forces larger than they have decided now was their time for destruction, and all they had ever known until then would come to an end.

Such is the way of war, I am told, but something about this casual bloodshed makes those words ring false. I see scores of dead women and children in a shattered town, and I do not think that they are the unfortunate side effect of an unfortunate war. All I see are the victims of murderers from both sides. For we answer the Coalition's savagery with our own. We match their ruthlessness step for step. If they deign ten Tolkeen civilians must die for every slain Dead Boy, we counter by trying to kill twenty soldiers for every slain innocent. We rain down elemental forces and call forth demons to lay waste to Coalition encampments and laugh while we watch the ensuing carnage, proud of the vengeance we have inflicted. Revelling in the moment of revenge rather than feeling the pain of the multitude who we claim to be avenging, for they have become as faceless to us as the Coalition butchers who slaughter them like cattle.

Ultimately, we are as guilty of the Coalition's atrocities as they. Worse, we are guilty of our own. It is a vicious circle where the enemy's atrocities spark our own retaliation, which in turn demands retribution by the CS, which evokes our wrath once again. It ... it never ends. And we're all part of it. Willing participants caught in a maze that we don't know how to exit. I can only hope that when this damned war ends some day, we shall have the grace to forgive ourselves and hope that the ghosts of our victims do likewise.

For now, I can take solace only in the evidence that already, the Coalition's evils have come back to roost on their heads. Where once stood neutral settlements, having nothing to do with the conflict, now stand rubble-strewn recruiting stations for guerrillas and partisan fighters. Attracting survivors of the Coalition's barbarity, all willing to fight for Tolkeen until their dying breath. Where once the Coalition war machine strode on in unison, entire companies have come to doubt the legitimacy of their cause, and Tolkeen actually has Coalition defectors clam-

oring to help us! And throughout the Coalition's captured territory, towns they had thought were conquered are recaptured by Tolkeen guerrillas in lightning raids, forcing the enemy to re-deploy precious resources back to their rear, stalling their larger offensive. Day after day, the Coalition Army must leave behind more and more of its troops to secure what it has taken, leaving fewer soldiers at the front. Some day, there may be too few soldiers to continue, and the exhausted war effort will stall before it ever assaults the City of Tolkeen directly. At least, that's the hope.

Silence.

I listen, as do the others in the shelter, as the buzzing conversation stops. We wait, and hear no more explosions. Now the waiting begins.

Ten minutes.

Twenty.

Thirty.

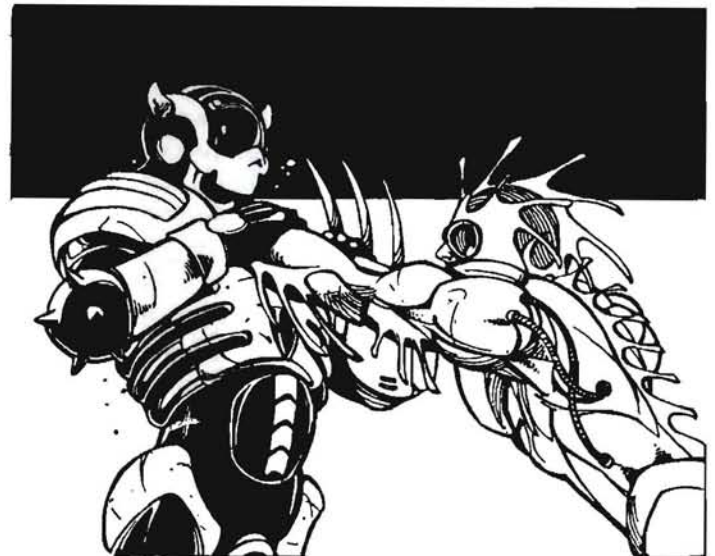
We stir, we shuffle. We have no way of telling how safe it is up top, and I find myself cursing for never having learned simpler incantations that would allow me to travel the Astral Plane, or to view the surface immune from harm. Indeed I am grateful my teachers saw me fit to be the receptacle for some of Tolkeen's Spells of Legend, but frankly, none of them do me any good one hundred meters below a town that may or may not have a company of cannon muzzles pointed at it.

I breathe, shaking my head. No better time than the present.

Standing, my knees and back crack and pop from having been held out of whack for so long. I gingerly step over the many other refugees down here and make for the door. I hardly need special powers to feel every set of eyes upon me as I make my way to the shelter's airlock door, crank the handle, and begin heading up to the surface.

I honestly do not know if I'm heading into deliverance or death. Whichever it is, I can not feel too badly about it. I prepare my magic and ready myself for whatever might await us outside. I will do my best to defend and protect those who look to me for safety.

We shall never surrender. We shall never give up. For the Coalition has shown it takes no stock in mercy, and that our only alternatives are victory or death.



Borrowed Time

Letter from a Tolkeen Patriot

"My dearest Scamander, my life mate and a beacon of light in a rapidly dimming world, I write to you as a dead man. Even as I pen these words, Coalition troops are battering down the mystic barriers I have erected and shall force their way through in less than twenty minutes. I have failed King Creed, our mighty and wise ruler, just as I have failed our great city-state. But most of all, I have failed you, my dear, sweet Scamander, as your friend and husband, in breaking my promise to return home safe and sound. My only hope is if my final words do reach you, then my efforts will not have been entirely in vain.

"Where, then, to begin? I suppose I could start by telling you that as I'm sure you have suspected, my involvement with the Circle of Twelve is what has kept me from home these last few months. I am sorry I could not tell you why I had to leave, or on what business I was leaving, but for the security of Tolkeen I had to keep that secret to myself. Please forgive me.

"Everyone in Tolkeen has heard of the Circle of Twelve, but few actually know what it is. It is a cadre of mages like myself, who help to govern our great nation, but they are more than counsel to the King. Each is a powerful practitioner of magic in his own right, and wise in the ways of the Megaverse. It is the Twelve who help formulate strategies, tactics and defenses along with the King and Warlord Corin Scard. Master Scard picked twelve accomplished Ley Line Walkers, Shifters and other arcanists and bid them to travel the Megaverse in search of special magical artifacts that could help Tolkeen defend itself. Each of us was given an item to retrieve and its last known location. Mine was *The Mobius*, the most powerful and least known of the lot. All Scard could tell me was that the item was rumored to have been lost in a far-off dimension eons ago, but that he had recently heard that it had resurfaced and was free for the taking. All I had to do was find it.

"To that end, I embarked on my grand journey across worlds, dimensions and even time itself! If only I had the time, I could regale you with stories of fantastic peoples, civilizations and technologies from the infinite multitude that is the Megaverse! Unfortunately, you must content yourself with knowing that your husband has seen things that even the most seasoned Shifter would stare at in slack-jawed amazement. The Megaverse is a vast and wondrous place, filled with exactly the kind of diversity and magical energy that the dreaded Coalition States stands so firmly against.

"How I pity the Coalition, saddled as it is with paralyzing xenophobia. They had not always been like that, you know. Before the Federation of Magic rashly attacked them nearly a century ago, the Coalition had been an open, tolerant, peace-loving community where D-Bees were tolerated and the pursuits of magic were explored! How tragic it has been to witness this society transform into the fear-mongering juggernaut it has become. Even more tragic to know that if they only learned not to fear what they do not understand, they would be ten times more powerful. Were they not so concerned with their idiotic tenets of human supremacy, the Coalition might very well command the whole of North America by now.

"But my musings are wasted on an enemy I have no sympathy for. For how long did Tolkeen entreat — nay, beg — the Coalition to settle our differences peaceably? For how long did the Coalition opt for war rather than find a much more civilized alternative? Tolkeen's leaders insisted for years that the Coalition was not really as barbaric as it appeared. That somewhere, there must have been some crucial lack of understanding that made them seem worse than they really were. Those old fools simply could not digest the concept that the Coalition *is* a force of evil. It *is* bent on dominating the world. And it *is* ready, willing, and able to destroy every D-Bee and practitioner of magic it can place within its sinister gun sights. Were it not for the insight of King Creed and the arrival of Warlord Scard, who together can be credited for Tolkeen's militarization and massive armament, our fair Kingdom might have been ground under Coalition boots long ago. How hypocritical it is for Emperor Prosek to point his finger at our defense efforts as a sign of danger, when we built them only to protect ourselves from *his* evil empire! An empire which has become so infected with his venomous talk that I do not believe there exists a single innocent among their entire populace. Were the entire Coalition to fall to the sword, I would not shed a single tear. For as long as it has existed, the Coalition has waged war on righteous people such as ourselves. Killing only for the sake of killing, and making this world a blighted wasteland of human supremacy. Regardless of how this bloody war ends, I remain confident that history shall prove us right, and that the Coalition will be revealed as the murderous cowards they really are.

"Indeed, it is the Coalition's cowardice that has landed me in my current predicament. Cowardice and a disgraceful love of all things mechanical. Technology can not be avoided in this day and age. Even we use conventional vehicles, weapons and such to defend our fair kingdom, but we have not fallen prey to the sheer lust of the machine that has gripped the Coalition. To embrace filthy, unreliable constructs over the pure, cleansing power of magical energy is almost too stupefying a concept to grasp. I can understand the Coalition's hysterical backlash against magic after the Federation's attack in 12 P.A. What I can not fathom is why they chose to hold on to that hysteria rather than let it go and embrace the more natural and graceful ways of magic and spellcraft. After all, the Great Cataclysm returned magic to this world. It is a natural process. Indeed, it may be the *only* natural process! It was technology and the machines of war that ruined this world, magic can rebuild it. Yet the Coalition continues to fear it, much like a dog fears thunder. Weak. Primitive. Laughable.

"Yet it is these infernal machines that give them their strength. Power they have used to corner me here and lay siege to my position. I had only recently returned from the **Scattered Worlds**, a confederation of realms in another dimension where magic and technology have fused to a point well past Techno-Wizardry, where the two truly have become one. It is difficult for one who has not seen these things to understand them, but suffice it to say that the Scattered Worlds possess more power and knowledge than all of the petty nations of this world combined. It was there that I had finally located and procured the precious Mobius, an artifact of such making, such raw power, that once it was delivered into King Creed's waiting hands, Tolkeen would defeat the Coalition in a single day, and rule the world not long after that. How grateful I am that my

magical powers were insufficient to operate this device — perhaps that is why they sent me to retrieve it. I suspect they believed that only the Great Nexus of Tolkeen might have enough power to charge the device. We may never know, however. As soon as I returned to this world I was beset by Coalition troops and their mangy Dog Boys. It turns out that while I was gone, they had captured *Berzenna the Red*, and learned of the plan to gather artifacts of power for Tolkeen's. Somehow they learned of my returning point, and patiently waited for me.

"My retainers were instantly cut down in the initial barrage, and only my quick reflexes and spell knowledge kept me alive during those first horrible minutes. I take comfort in knowing I sent at least a dozen of the wretches to their graves, and mauled another dozen as I broke free of the ambush site and made for freedom. However, my endurance was so sapped at that point that all I could do was find a rock hollow and shield it off while I rested and penned this, my last testament.

"To my deepest regret, I lost The Mobius during the barrage, shot from my hand by a Juicer assassin who was too afraid to confront me face to face! I had no time to see where it fell. I only know I have lost what might have been Tolkeen's salvation, and has delivered it into Coalition hands. My only solace is that those filthy barbarians are so ignorant of magic they will never be able to use it, even if they dared.

"Outside my magical barrier, the Dead Boys hammer at me with their energy weapons and bombs, slowly chipping away, inching ever closer to me. It is only a matter of time for me now. However, I do not think such a fate lies in store for my mighty and wonderful homeland. Certainly not if it is to be crudely assaulted by the likes of the Coalition Army.

"Tolkeen may not be the greatest sorcerers' city on the continent (Lazlo clearly bears that distinction, despite their cowardly refusal to confront the Coalition, so busy are they licking Prosek's boots, apparently!) but it is powerful, especially in defensive magicks. Other arcane cities such as Stormspire, Dunscon, Lazlo and others all have their ways of protecting themselves from a massed attack (I have heard of cities in South America that have defenses so strong they sap all of the surrounding ley line energy for a week after their use!), and Tolkeen is among the strongest. I'd like to believe we can remain defiant forever before the Coalition as it impotently batters at our gates. And let them try! For the more they exhaust themselves, the faster they shall realize the folly of their crusade and return to their squalorous Chi-Town city, therein to dwell in the muck and slime of their fetid civilization.

"I will admit that for all of our endurance, we have always lacked the offensive powers to strike back at the Coalition in a way that they so richly deserve. To carry the battle to their homeland and bombard their citizens. That was the mission of The Mobius, for in the right hands, the device would have reduced Chi-Town to a smoldering crater, piled high with the corpses of a people utterly deserving of total annihilation! Let their machines and their fear of magic serve them then! That I would like to see. Listen to me, my love, railing on in defiance. But my rage is impotent, for The Mobius is gone, and my end is near.

"You may think me cruel for wishing such harm on our enemies. Indeed, I *have* grown cruel over the last year, as have many of my fellows and those patriots who would give their

lives so that our Kingdom may live. We must be cruel, for it was the feeble kindnesses of our predecessors who let the Coalition States grow so strong and advance to our border. If we as a society are to survive the Coalition's grim intentions, then we must do so on strength of will alone. Our enemy is cruel and heartless, able to commit the most base barbarities for the sake of victory. So we must be even more cruel and heartless than our enemy if we are to win. We must forget peace and compromise. We must forget our reluctance to cross swords with villainous nations such as the Coalition. We must forget our own sense of mercy and forsake morality. To prevail, we must take on the character of our enemy and outdo even them.

"History may judge such turn of events harshly, and unfairly condemn our leaders who encourage us, but to the victor goes the spoils, and we *must* be victorious or perish. I have already heard outsiders like those on the Scattered Worlds whispering about us in disparaging ways. They have called our great and noble King a cruel and harsh despot who consorts with demons and who would gladly slay a million women and children if it brought Tolkeen closer to its victory over its nemesis. They have pointed to his love of dark and forgotten magicks better left unknown, and condemn his use of the many freakish and sinister minions he has brought to Tolkeen to battle on its behalf. They say he and the Circle of Twelve have corrupted the people and have become the very monsters the Coalition believed us to be. Foul, bitter creatures lost to vengeance. So it was that I had no qualms about killing the men who dared to judge us from afar, and take The Mobius from them. Such is my strength and conviction.

"It is the Coalition who dictates that to survive, one must become a vicious predator, eager to rip out an enemy's throat, burn his house, and slay his children. Warlord Scard has reminded us often of that. It is the Coalition's legacy, damnable though it may be, that has made us monsters, if that is what we have become.

"I have no regret for what I have done to my enemies in defense of my homeland. I do not shed tears over the innocent people I may have slaughtered in my drive to defeat the Coalition. I weep only for Tolkeen's lost innocence, stolen by the skull-faced invaders from the East. They are the *real* monsters of this world. And they must be stopped, no matter what. As our hated enemy has learned, the mages of Tolkeen have the power to scorch the earth, blot the sun from the sky, and consume the air. We shall rain pestilence and destruction upon our aggressors the likes of which have not been seen since the Great Cataclysm, and we shall be proven righteous in doing so. The world has thought us a secondary power, a forgettable realm tucked away in the back country of North America for far too long, but we will show people what true power we command. Let the world tremble, and take heed. And should we fall before skull-faced invaders, let the Federation of Magic, Lazlo and anyone who lusts for freedom pick up our banner and press the battle onward.

"My shield is failing and I must cut my missive short. You may wonder, my dear Scamander, why I have spent these precious moments writing, instead of in meditation to build my power and make good my escape. There is no use. My enemies overwhelm me, a hundred to one. Even at full power I don't know if I would be strong enough to battle them. As for fleeing

— my body aches and my soul screams in agony. I'm tired of running and tears stream from my eyes for having failed King and country by losing The Mobius. It is a loss I can not endure. I welcome death. Now and forever, let the glory of the mystic world, if not Tolkeen, reign supreme over the debase Coalition States.

"Goodbye my love. I only have enough energy to teleport this letter to you. I trust that you still live at our woodland cottage, and if not, that by some miracle this letter finds its way to you. Funny. Of all things I could ... perhaps should, be thinking about, it is you and our love that gives me comfort. Your sweet face the last thing on my mind."

Greetings From Camp Prosek!

Dear Lareesa,

I have only a little of this special ink and the guards will surely take notice if I try to send a letter of blank paper so I must be brief. For the true message, please read the words I have anointed. They should stand off the page if you hold it up to candlelight.

Please accept my apologies for not writing you for so long. I know I must have worried you terribly, especially when you learned I had been relocated to a Coalition processing center. It is my hope that this letter will **help** you realize my liberators are taking good care of **me**. I am not their prisoner. None of us here are. We have been liberated by the Coalition forces from the tyranny put upon us by the armies of Tolkeen. **They** are the ones who are the villains here, not the legions from Chi-Town. I don't **have** to tell you what kind of relief it's been, really, to be **placed** here. I think I speak for all of **us** when I say that the safety and security of our new home is far superior to the squalor and outright danger we knew living in town. Before the Coalition came, **all** we knew were the lies Tolkeen was feeding us, day **in**, day out. Now, having seen and heard the Coalition's side of the story, it's plain to see that **this** war is all Tolkeen's fault, and were it not for them, then places like this **camp** would not be necessary. I have tried to see this terrible conflict from both sides, but it does not **work**. All I can see now, **as** I grow closer to my Coalition brethren, is that Tolkeen exists for one dark purpose: to make us all their **slaves**.

The guards here are courteous, kind and understanding of all we have gone through. They even spend much of their spare time with us, playing games and such. Yesterday, Corporal Savin **beat** me soundly at matches of King's Corners and Skulls and Roses. It was practically **torture** to watch him beat me so, he was that skillful! And he is not the only soldier to have befriended **us**, either. Many of us have grown very fond of our caretakers and participate in all sorts of activities with them **daily**. They do not bear us any ill will, **even** though our village had once thought of declaring loyalty to Tolkeen! Personally, I had thought things here would be much **worse**, but they are not. It is a credit to the Coalition States that their soldiers are so utterly civilized. They are especially protective of the village's **women**. I think it is because they too have families at home, and they simply **cannot bear to think what** would happen if **their** families were in this war zone with nobody to protect them. Thankfully, the Coalition has made it plain that **they are doing** everything they can to protect the innocent civilians caught in the crossfire. The only ones I am worried about are the **children**. I don't think they fully understand what is going on or why it has become necessary for the Coalition to group us together like this. Before these troubled times, they **never thought**

of the Coalition as anything but an enemy, so saturated had they (like the rest of us, really) been with Tolkeen's lies and deceptions. The more we see how benevolent the Coalitions, the more we realize that there is no lie Tolkeen **would** not tell to make themselves seem like angels and anyone else exactly the opposite. It seems a shame that they feel the need to **do** that; if only they could put their hate and fear of technology aside, then perhaps there would have been no war and we could have been spared all **this**. **They are** a sad lot, those mages to the north. At one time I felt for them, but now I see that they are no **more than** monsters in the guise of humans, trying to work their own insidious brand of **evil**. **They** must be stopped, and I am so very thankful that there are champions such as Emperor Prosek who are willing to stand up to the forces of evil and challenge them for the sake of all humanity. Incredibly, Tolkeen **actually** believes they can win this war, but it is crystal clear that the Coalition has the advantage, and shows no signs of weakness. Most of all, they **enjoy** a crushing numerical advantage, and what I've seen of their war machines can easily crush even the strongest mage underfoot. Surely Tolkeen knows this, and it must be **tormenting** them terribly. I only hope that when the Coalition stands triumphantly atop the ruins of Tolkeen, those magical warlords who started this war will remember **us**. We, the so-called "little people" who were thought to be mere pawns to their schemes. That we so readily turn to the Coalition when we have the chance shows just how bankrupt Tolkeen's way of life really is.

But enough of my gushing. Please forgive me for going on and on — it is just that I have been overwhelmed by what I have seen and experienced here at the camp, and I only want to **send** news of my good fortune to you. I hope this letter can **help** convince you that things truly are much safer here in the south, and if you were to leave your border city and join the liberated settlements of the Coalition, you would be much safer. I know such a decision would not be an easy or quick one for you. But please remember that **we** have always trusted each other implicitly, and I would never try to convince you to do something that would bring you harm. If you are to come here, it must, of course, be of your own free **will** and I respect that. But by the same token, I know that **all** who have chosen to live outside the Coalition's aegis have met with a dire fate, and I would hate to think that something like that could happen to you. While death and destruction surrounds us, there is no reason why we must **die** as well. For the weeks I have been in camp, there has not been the sound of gunfire or artillery **here**. **You** know I speak the truth, and that the Coalition soldiers **are** the only warriors in this entire region who will actually look after the people they are

guarding, unlike sinister Tolkeen or the corrupt freetown militias they seduce to their cause. Anyway, my time runs short, and I must finish my letter if I am to get in this morning's air drop. I am sorry I could only get down a few pages to you, but I am sure you understand. On the off chance that Tereus and Slader are still there, please feel free to show this letter to them, too. I fear for their safety as I do yours, and I would hope that you all might journey southward to safety and freedom from war's horrors. I must sign off now. But I hope that by the time I write you next, you will already be on your way here. **Hurry!** Your brother misses you terribly.

Love,
Brogan

A Moment of Truth

I know this message is not going to reach you. Army censors will scratch it all to hell, or more likely, they'll simply ash can it once they realize where it's coming from. I can't say I blame them. Their job is to keep a lid on things, and I keep thinking that if the rest of the Coalition knew what I know, there would be some really big problems for the Emperor and his grand plans for the rest of the world.

My name is unimportant. All that is truly important is that you know I was there. I was at **Gadarene**. I was one of the triggermen who killed all those women and children, and who packed the survivors onto a transport for Camp Prosek.

Camp Prosek — even now, the mere name of it makes bile rise into my throat. I can only hope that when Tolkeen finds out about the place, they smash it to pieces and let everyone know what kind of monsters we, the Coalition, have become.

I didn't always feel this way. In the beginning, I was like a lot of my friends and fellow soldiers. Decent family man from a mid-level of Chi-Town. Good grades, level psych-profile, the whole deal. I took a tour in the Army right after trade school because hey, this is the Coalition. What else are you going to do? Basic Training was not as bad as I thought it would be, and even my first tastes of combat never really jangled my nerves. I even took a few bad hits one time in an ambush outside of the 'Burbs, but the entire time I just took it in stride. I remember when they medevaced me back to Chi-Town, I just kept feeling at peace, thinking, "This is it. This is how I checked out. Not too bad. I was helping keep my country safe." I made it, though, and they didn't even need to mech me up, either. Still home grown and 100% human.

It wasn't long after that when I first killed somebody. I might very well have popped some rebel or something during my first few fights, but to be honest, I was basically laying down suppression fire. I couldn't see where my shots were going, let alone if I was actually hitting anything. But it was my first patrol back from the med-center when I did it for certain, and like everything else, it never hit me the way I thought it would.

It was on patrol on the west end of Missouri somewhere. We'd been on the trail of a bunch of grain bandits for awhile, and after a couple triangulations, we caught them napping in their hiding place, a hollowed out bomb shelter of some kind that looked like it was pre-Rifts construction. I won't bore you

with the details of the battle, except to say that during the first phase of the ambush is when I did it. Our unit sniper had opened fire with that weird Juicer rifle of his, and got the rest of them up and about. That was when we hosed them down. My guy looked like some kid, probably sixteen, seventeen tops. Through my gun sight, he seemed scared, didn't know what to do. He had not yet put his armor on, so for me, it was a simple deal. I sighted in on his head and drilled him with my laser. The thing about a laser wound against a person like that is it will cauterize instantly, so lots of times, there is no blood. Just this big, fused hole. My guy jerked back after I hit him, and he seemed to look right at me with this confused, sad look on his face, like he was the butt of a joke he just didn't get. I knew he couldn't really see me, but it felt like it anyway. What I remember most is that I didn't really care about it one way or the other. I scored two more guys that fight. There were a few others who'd had their first kills too. A few were sickened by it. The shakes, puking, the whole deal. A few others were real pumped up, like they couldn't wait for some more. I just did what I normally did at night. It was like I hadn't done anything. I just didn't care. He was a perp and knew the consequences of his actions. He got what he deserved. No big deal.

Fast forward two tours. Combat decorations, promotions, the whole nine-yards. Transfer to Tolkeen and command of an entire company of elite field specialists. We took the jobs too touchy for those fresh out of training, and too complicated to trust to Skelebots. My guys were one of the few units what didn't get its guts kicked out in the first weeks of the Invasion, which made us kind of special. Practically the entire invasion had gone wrong so far, and there was a lot of talk that we might not even make it more than twenty clicks past the Iowa border. Casualties were sky-high, and morale was simply not there. Command wanted to do something big, to get things moving again. They sent in that idiot General Drogue to devise a special mission for us. "For the good of the Empire," he said. Like he cares.

Drogue and I go way back, back to when I was wrapping up my first tour. I'd transferred to his unit and even got a chance to speak with him directly, which at the time seemed like an honor. Only he began talking nonsense about killing children and the thrill of genetic purity and a bunch of other things that I either didn't understand, or couldn't stomach to hear. I was a patriot, and more than willing to serve my country and Emperor, but what Drogue was suggesting as official Coalition policy was sick. It wasn't the work of warriors. It was the work of butchers, and I wanted no part of it. Drogue caught on that I wasn't about to join the little "Fun Bunch" he was collecting, and within the month, I was pulling every kind of dreg duty the man could think of.

That was the worst time, I think, being near Drogue and his inner circle. It was like he was assembling some kind of cult or fan club of the worst animals you could find in the army. Every one of his little suck-ups were those mad dog types you see every now and again. You know the type, obsessed with death and the graphic details of what we do. Unhealthy minds, really. Guys who see no higher purpose to what we do, only the bloodshed and misery it involves. There's no honor in that kind of soldier. None at all. Thankfully, a good part of the Coalition isn't like that. But a good part of it is, and somehow, they all were learning about Commander Drogue, and becoming his — I

guess *disciples* is the word. I was not one of them, and that made things rough for me. The base was downtown Drogueville, and if you weren't with him you were against him. I'd heard of a bunch of guys got beaten up badly around the PX on account of this, good guys who were just looking to pull a few tours and go home. They hadn't signed on to kill women and children, and neither had I. Things were getting pretty hot around the base, and guys like me became the minority, and before long, there were even cases of fraggings made to look like accidents. If I didn't get the hell out of there, that was exactly what would have happened to me, too.

Thankfully, my old CO from a unit I'd previously served with got popped in the leg near the Magic Zone and needed a replacement ASAP. I requested the transfer and got it, leaving Drogue and his freaks behind me. But I don't think he ever forgot about me. That was the weird thing about him, he never seemed to forget *anything*. Which is what makes him so damned dangerous. Every once in a while he'd send his respect via some huge ball of red tape, or Internal Investigations breathing down my neck for a few weeks. Little "thinking of you" presents from the D-man. Nothing serious, but just enough to keep me mindful that we weren't done with each other by a long shot.

So my unit is on front-line Tolkeen, having actually accomplished our objectives so far, and faced with a clear path into the heartland of enemy territory. The actual borders of Tolkeen were still a good distance away, but the neutral territory between us and them is also good and hostile, so it is there where we were to make our statement. Word comes down from Command, who got it from General Drogue himself, that I'm to take the unit into *Gadarene* and clean the place out.

No problem. I've worked behind the lines down in Pecos and with the Federation, so I figure this shouldn't be any different. I tell my people to saddle up and move out. Within the hour we leave the front-line behind us.

Half a day's march later we sight Gadarene, a village so small it barely registers on our tactical maps. How the hell is *this* supposed to be a viable target, I wonder. The place is nothing but farms and houses. No walls, no guns, no enemy troops. Note even a wizard doing magic to entertain the kids. We spot and snipe three or four guys who look like guards or mercs passing through on the perimeter, and we move in to confirm what I thought initially. The place is just a civvies pad. No hostiles here. Just buck-toothed farmers.

That's when General Drogue comes in over my helmet mike, reminding me to "clean the *entire* place out," not just those gunners we popped on the border. I radio back my assessment and request to return to base. Drogue repeats his order. I think about it for a second, and then I realize he's serious. He wants a whole town full of corpses, just to show Tolkeen we mean business. Like those half million guys we have twenty clicks back are just for show?

At this point, I'm a micron away from pretending I never heard the order, but then I've got my three second looies looking at me, wondering what I'm going to do. Turns out the General broadcast the orders on an open frequency, so now the whole unit knows what we're really here for. I look at my guys, and I can practically feel their stares burning through me from behind their face plates. My hesitation is cause for alarm, it appears, because a few of my people's hands start drifting to their sidearms, ready to enforce the field penalty for insubordination.

The people of Gadarene are watching us from their houses. Some of them wave at us. They don't know why we're here. And even if they did, there was nothing they could do to stop us. The only thing standing between them and the hereafter is whether or not I've got the stones to tell my own people to disobey a direct order from General Drogue himself.

Of course, I ordered them to blitz the town. What would you have done? I sure wasn't going to get popped by one of my own guys, and I definitely wasn't about to expect my entire unit to go rogue on my say so. They're obedient soldiers who figure there must be some reason behind the madness. You know, good soldiers don't ask questions, they just do what they're told. Getting myself killed in that town wasn't going to save those people. The way I saw it, I didn't have any choice.

It was only when my troops were about halfway through Gadarene when I realized just how wrong I was. I *did* have a choice. It wasn't a very attractive one, but it was there. In my heart, I knew General Drogue's orders were wrong. He wanted us to massacre innocent civilians purely for the sake of revenge and to send a message. These weren't the evil monsters threatening our homes. They weren't even militant mages or D-Bees. These were just a bunch of scared human beings who found themselves caught in the middle of something huge. They didn't deserve to die. At least, not the way that they did. And I knew it. In my heart, I knew our orders were wrong, but I let them stand anyway. And that was when I realized I had become just like Drogue. Maybe a paler version of him, but the same strain of evil all the same. General Drogue's evil was the kind that encouraged others to do bad things and gloat about it. Mine was the kind that stands and watches instead of stopping guys like Drogue. My daddy used to tell me that evil only ever wins by default. That as long as there are good people willing to throw down, the world remains a decent place. What I did in Gadarene, or more importantly, what I *didn't* do in Gadarene that day was my little part in making what's left of our world not worth living in.

That's why I can't exactly pity myself for what happened after.

The village was in flames. Most of the houses had been torched, often with their occupants still inside. Most of them tried holding out for as long as they could, because they knew that to go outside was to buy a laser hole, dead center. But after a few seconds of close scorching, they'd come out, usually on fire, screaming and thrashing, trying anything to make the hurting stop. We were only too happy to oblige, and would pop them at point blank range.

A few of my people were taking bets on how long folks would take to finally evacuate their homes. A few of them were cleaning up on each other, racking up terrific amounts of debt, scores to be settled back at the base. Some of them would simply let the villagers come out all ablaze, and then just let them burn. Of course, the fire couldn't hurt us in our armor, so a few guys would go into the homes to flush them out.

The ones who got shot got off lucky. By the time my people got to the east end of town, things were well out of hand. The soldiers who weren't chasing down runaways were lining up villagers over in Gadarene's east end and having their own brand of fun with them. When I arrived, one of the squad commanders had issued a light bullet pistol to a small child, put a single bul-



let into it and told the kid to choose which one of her parents to pop. The next house over, three of my best were assaulting the honor of a young lady of the settlement. Beyond that, all I could detect were some of the worst screams I'd ever heard.

What happened next is difficult to say. I just hazed out, I think. Some part of me, that tiny decent sliver I'd buried deep, came to the surface and took over. I know for certain that I leveled my plasma rifle at Durango Squad and cut them all down, somehow not hitting the pregnant girl they were about to torture. I also know that when one of my three second looies tried taking the gun from my hands, I slid my vibro-knife through the font of his face plate. After that, all I remember was a terrific concussion on the side of my head — glancing shot from my 'borg's rail gun, maybe — and everything going numb.

I fell to the ground, and could feel somebody sitting on top of me so I couldn't get back up. They bound my hands and went

back to their work. After that, it all seemed distant somehow, as if a dream, or viewing through a video monitor, but the details remain clear as ever. They continued with Gadarene for another hour or so until they ran out of people, and then they left.

During the last fifteen minutes or so, somebody dropped the pregnant girl I'd saved on the ground a few meters from me. She just kind of laid there, staring right into me, like she was trying to understand why all this happened. I wished I had some slick answers for her, but all I had was the truth. Gadarene went down because I was too cowardly and incompetent to stop it. Maybe deep in my heart I resented these Tolkeenites enough to pay them Drogue's wages. Or maybe all the killing I've done froze something important inside of me. Maybe I was just too damn scared to do the right thing when it really mattered. When the people of Gadarene needed me more than the Coalition ever did.

I looked back at the girl, hoping that maybe I could somehow convey that to her, but she was gone, her eyes glossy and dark like a doll's. Whatever life had been inside of her was gone now. *I know exactly how she felt.*

A Tolkeen patrol of Techno-Wizards and assorted spell casters swept into the village about a half hour later and took stock of what happened. I had been left behind, hog-tied and laying in the street. A few of the Tolkeenites found me and started with the questions, but what the hell was I supposed to tell them? Nothing I could say was going to make any of this better for them. A bunch of the men in the group sounded like they lived here, and they all wanted a piece of me, badly. Their commander held them back, though, and instead dropped me onto a flatbed and had me driven back to some fortress town in Tolkeen's exterior. They worked me over pretty well in their search for details on Gadarene and whatever else I knew. I didn't hold out for very long. You never do when somebody skilled is putting the knives to you. All that stuff about resisting torture you see in the holos and movies? Crap. I spilled pretty fast all right, but that didn't stop them any. They kept going, for pay-back, I think, and they definitely got it.

They dumped what's left of me in this cell and gave me an hour to write my confession which is what this is. They said they would send it home for me, but I don't know what will happen, really. Maybe they will post this on the city walls as a reminder of the kind of enemy they face. Or maybe they really will send it to Chi-Town as a reminder of what kind of resistance Drogue's sadist tactics are going to conjure up if he keeps going with his genocide trips.

Me? I'm finished. They're hanging me once I reach the end of the page, which is right about here, so I hope this does the deed. Sorry if I left something out. It's sort of hard to think right now.

I suspect they expect me to ask for forgiveness for what I've done, but I won't do that. How can they expect to forgive me after Gadarene? How can I expect them to forgive me, when I can't forgive myself? Better just to spare them that and let them think of me as the unrepentant monster that I am. All I really want at this point is for my story to get out there, somehow. For some of my old squadmates or my family to know that I might have lost it before, but at least I did one good thing before it all ended. If they could know that, then maybe my crimes won't have been so bad. Yeah, I like that. Just so that nobody remembers me as one of Drogue's little "Fun Bunch." I don't think I could handle that.

In a second they'll take me to the gallows where they will tie a noose around my neck and hang me until I am dead. If they hang you right, your neck breaks right away and you blank out pretty fast. I hope God can find it in his mercy to give me that much. It's more mercy than was shown the children of Gadarene.

HIGH COMMAND DISPATCH — ALL FORCES FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

At 5:00 Tolkeen Time, Special Invasion Liaison General Drogue announced the tragic death of Lt. Commander Evan Stosticyzyn. Commander Stosticyzyn had been missing for several days following an ambush near the Tolkeen Killzone and was presumed dead or captured. Treacherous agents from Tolkeen dropped the remains of his body, which clearly bore the evidence of torture and other barbarities, at his base camp, where he was later identified.

"This is a tragic day for every soldier fighting for a free and pure world," General Micander Drogue said at a hastily assembled Information Conference. Visibly shaken, the General showed his trademark courage as he proclaimed his respect for his fallen comrade and the Coalition's resolve to see the invasion through to its righteous and inevitable conclusion of unconditional victory for Emperor Prosek, the Crusade for Humanity, and you, the heroic people of the Coalition States.

"Commander Stosticyzyn was in every way the model soldier. Pure of mind, body and spirit, he never faltered in the face of adversity, always striving on to provide a fine example to his men of what true leadership underfire is made of. Time and again, the Commander showed his bravery in battles too numerous to mention, but most recently at the *Battle of Gadarene*, where he personally destroyed over seven Tolkeen tanks and hauled a dozen of his own men to safety. Were it not for the dishonorable tactics of our enemy, the Commander would still be with us today, as we push ever closer to final victory in Tolkeen."

General Drogue went on to note that he had always considered Commander Stosticyzyn a close personal friend and confidant, and that his loss was a blow to him personally as well as professionally. The General closed the conference by announcing the construction of the Stosticyzyn Memorial, in reverent memory to the many brave veterans who gave their lives liberating the town of Gadarene and places like it from the foul demons and wizards that lord over this part of the country. May we all learn from the Commander's long record of heroism and sacrifice as he battled ceaselessly to realize our greatest dreams as humans and citizens of the mightiest empire in existence.

*Commander, you shall be sorely missed.
Hail Prosek!*

General Drogue's "Projects"

Destroying Tolkeen's military is like striking off the head of a hydra. To kill the beast, you must destroy the body, and in Tolkeen, that means going after the very thing that ultimately gives Tolkeen its will and ability to fight — its people. It's not that extreme, really. After all, they are all twisted practitioners of magic and alien lovers, are they not? By not rejecting these things, the people of Tolkeen embrace the very Rifts and the chaos they have brought to this world. They embrace the world's unmaking, and the forces of destruction that threaten the Coalition every single day. They may carry no weapons, nor march in formation, but their subtle betrayal of everything human is just as much a declaration of war against humanity and the Coalition, as is taking up arms against it. And for that, the people of Tolkeen must be punished. Severely.

— General Micander Drogue, before Battle Group Relentless

We have fought the gentlemen's war for too long. The aging element within our ranks have had their day, when it was enough to ride off against the enemy in a suit of armor, perhaps to kill a few and live to tell about it. But those days are long gone. We face a world that seeks to destroy us, and to meet that challenge, to survive, we must use every weapon at our disposal. We must exercise every ounce of our strength. And we must show this merciless world that we too are without mercy, and that it is us that the world should fear, not the other way around.

— General Micander Drogue, upon receiving the first nuclear weapons to be deployed in Tolkeen

The first and foremost step in destroying Tolkeen, according to General Drogue, is the elimination of Tolkeen's civilian populace. Part of the problem with the current invasion into Tolkeen, Drogue believes, is that Tolkeen fights with a fully integrated citizen-army. Unlike the Coalition, where only a certain segment of society participates in battle, nearly all of Tolkeen's adults can fight against their Coalition enemies since so many of them know magic or have inherent D-Bee abilities that make them especially combat-worthy. That is why the initial Battle Groups have encountered enemy forces many times larger than they anticipated; because entire populations of villages and towns on the front-lines have risen up and joined the formal Tolkeen military in the defense of their homeland.

So far, this phenomenon of the citizen-soldier has only occurred along Tolkeen's southeastern border, where the initial stages of the invasion are underway. There seems to be no evidence at this point that large numbers of Tolkeen's civilians are mobilizing to join the war effort. Still, as the Coalition pushes northward, they shall certainly encounter more of the same, so

in light of that, General Drogue has declared *all* of Tolkeen's citizens eligible military targets.



Naturally, this does not sit well with the rest of the Coalition Military High Command, so General Drogue has toned down his proclamation to the effect that all Tolkeen civilians are to be treated as "potential militants," and as such, can not be left to their own devices. The Coalition will do everything in its power to harass, detain and debilitate the Tolkeen populace without conducting full-blown military actions against them (for now, anyway). Of course, the determination of whether or not the "potential militants" pose a real danger and require "pacification" (an euphemism for "genocide") is left to the discretion of the individual military unit that encounters them. In time, as conditions warrant, these measures might very well escalate into a formal and methodical campaign to completely exterminate Tolkeen's civilian population, but for now, General Drogue is willing to authorize everything short of that unless the war continues to go poorly. In which case he feels he will have no choice but to carry out the destruction of Tolkeen's citizenry. This questionable restraint is not borne of the General's humanitarianism. No such feelings exist within this monster of a man. No, General Drogue's concern is that if the Coalition tries to destroy the civilian populace as it advances into the kingdom, it will create three serious problems. First, there are a *lot* of Tolkeenites — destroying them all would necessitate using a great deal of ammunition that could be better spent destroying genuine military strongholds and resistance fighters. Secondly, word will certainly spread throughout Tolkeen and the sur-

rounding area that the Coalition is taking no prisoners, which would only exacerbate the citizen-soldier problem. Third, as word spreads, other independent kingdoms, such as Whykin, Lazlo, the Federation of Magic and others might feel compelled to rise up against them.

What Drogue really wants is to make it so Tolkeenites believe somehow that if they surrender to the Coalition, they will be treated fairly. This way, the Coalition Army can take large numbers prisoner and destroy them later, under controlled circumstances when not the rest of Tolkeen will know about it, and when it best suits the Coalition to do so. Make no mistake: General Drogue is practically obsessed with carrying out genocide upon the people of Tolkeen. He just wants to make sure that in doing so, he will not hinder the greater war effort.

Until he can herd Tolkeen's population into the Coalition's version of Nazi death camps, General Drogue will rely on military ways of punishing these non-combatants. He shall deploy weapons of mass destruction and eradicate entire towns and villages where civilians live and work. He shall destroy farms, establish embargoes, and blanket the countryside with engines of death so horrifying they will be too fearful to behold. War is hell, they say. So be it, then, for the people of Tolkeen.

Operation Spoilsport consists of a number of initiatives designed to maximize the Tolkeen citizenry's collective misery. These include:

Operation Hardball, the effort to decimate civilian resistance and corral a good portion of Tolkeen's civilians into detainment camps for slave labor (and worse).

Operation Spoilsport, an extensive campaign in which small Special Units, like the Dirty Thirty and hired guns, penetrate into enemy territory to engage in flagrant acts of sabotage, surgical strikes, assassinations, wholesale slaughter, destruction of property and general chaos, all designed to harass, confound and damage enemy operations from within.

Operation Kingkiller, a covert operation to assassinate King Creed and members of the Circle of Twelve (so far, dreadfully unsuccessful; haven't even come close).

Operation Hailstorm, the Coalition Army's main push into enemy territory on its arduous trek to the cities of Tolkeen and Freehold.

The horror of Operation Hardball

Operation Hardball is a sinister two-pronged plot hatched by General Drogue to reduce civilian resistance and break the spirit of the Tolkeen Defenders. Phase one is a "scorched earth" campaign to destroy every town, village, farm and homestead occupied by Tolkeen supporters or citizenry (taking reasonable care not to torch honest to god CS supporters stuck within the so-called Kingdom of Tolkeen). This tactic only requires chasing Tolkeenites out of their homes and into the wilderness with no place to return to, but extreme prejudice is advised to put down any resistance. This often leads to the (unofficially sanctioned) slaughter of entire communities. Those places that actually harbor militants and secret military posts are usually the ones that suffer the heaviest assaults and greatest casualties, but

as noted earlier, towns of innocent people also fall victim to this loose-knit approach to genocide.

Phase Two involves the reintroduction of that pre-Rifts instrument of genocide, the concentration camp. General Drogue wishes to build a network of camps that will eventually house the entire Tolkeen civilian population, which will have been captured by the advancing Coalition Battle Groups. While all known practitioners of magic will be separated and “pacified” the rest of the Tolkeen *human* population will be sent to work camps, and D-Bees who have managed to have lived this long to other “camps” reserved specially for their kind (Death Camps). The use of internment and work camps serves a number of purposes:

a) It keeps captured Tolkeen cities clean of potential magic users.

b) It stymies the most effective tool of the guerilla warrior — open civilian settlements and loss of manpower and support. With ordinary folks with which to mingle, guerrillas can spread out over the entire theater, strike and vanish, causing untold problems for Coalition soldiers. Depopulating Tolkeen’s towns and villages gives guerrillas no place to go but the battlefield, where they can be more easily rooted out and destroyed.

c) It gives the Coalition a base of slave labor. Once the Kingdom of Tolkeen is conquered, the CS will need lots of cheap labor to rebuild the area into a proper CS colony. Human Tolkeen citizens will provide the muscle for that operation.

d) It separates the wheat from the chaff — in this case, ordinary humans from dangerous spell casters and monstrous D-Bees. This separation enables the CS to quietly eliminate (i.e. exterminate) a huge portion of the D-Bee population without anybody being the wiser, at least until it’s too late. Permanent pacification (i.e. obliteration) of Tolkeen and its people is the end goal, here, out-and-out genocide. The Coalition’s darkest side making itself known to all. If this actually comes to pass (it is only in the formative stages), the CS is no better than the demons and monsters they so valiantly battle under the auspices of protecting innocent human beings.

So far, only three, newly built detainment camps have been erected in Wisconsin, but a half dozen more are under construction. No doubt additional ones will pop up as the war continues. The facilities currently in operation include **Camp Prosek**, the flagship camp designed to incarcerate and pacify D-Bees (it currently holds around 5,000 people), **Camp Purity**, another D-Bee pacification camp (secret death camp) that currently holds about 3,000 people, and **Camp Victory**, a work camp for humans that currently holds about 3,000 people.

Wisconsin was chosen as the ideal location because it is a secluded, largely uninhabited and hostile wilderness territory where Coalition citizens never venture. Moreover, it is close enough to the war front to keep curiosity seekers away, and remain under the strict control and protection of the Coalition Army at Tolkeen. Any busy-bodies who come snooping around to investigate will have to be armed and can therefore be treated as Tolkeen warriors, spies or other enemies of the Coalition States and either killed as hostile soldiers or captured and interned in the camps themselves. Thus, General Drogue (who is personally supervising the Operation) keeps his little project a relative secret away from prying eyes. (The “camps” are not reported on back in the States, and there is no mention of their

true, sinister purpose as Death Camps, in any military documentation. They are referred to simply as work and detainment camps.)

“**Detainment Camps**” are fairly simple facilities consisting of detainee dormitories, command posts, guard towers, and the occasional workshop, canteen, and other such building. The rest of the facility is open yards where the detainees can gather, walk, exercise, and grow small gardens. Ringing the facility is a 30 foot (9.1 m) high, 10 foot (3 m) wide, light, mega-damage concrete wall (60 M.D.C. per 10 foot/3 m segment), regularly interspersed with guard towers and crowned with barbed wire.

These are grim, stark facilities with no creature comforts for their inmates or the soldiers who police them. They are usually built in desolate and remote areas with little to do besides sit and grow despondent. Which, really, is what these camps were, in part, designed for.

For now, these camps are nothing more than large makeshift prisons for holding the populations of entire towns. They sport a kind of modular design so that they can be added on to easily to support an endless supply of new inmates. The strategy is that as the Coalition armies advance deeper into Tolkeen, they will overrun every civilian settlement along the way. Those Tolkeenites who are not killed or who support the CS as ardent sympathizers are taken prisoner and sent to the nearest detainment camp for the duration of the war.

Detainee Dormitory

Typically, detainee dormitories are grouped in clusters of five, with a single command post to watch over them. Each dormitory resembles an oversized Quonset hut or barracks with a large, chain linked fence “rec yards” attached to the sides. The chain link fences are constructed out of light Mega-Damage material (10 M.D.C. per 10 foot/3 m segment) and are topped by coiled Mega-Damage razorwire that will inflict 1D6 S.D.C. points of damage to whoever touches it and 4D6 S.D.C. per melee round that anybody gets tangled in it (takes at least one melee to get untangled). For the S.D.C. detainees, this wire can mean serious injury, and since medical treatment is sometimes withheld (usually if a D-Bee), trying to climb over the fence is to flirt with death. Anybody falling on the bailed wire inevitably gets cut to ribbons. The camp guards also have a nasty habit of leaving dead escapees hanging up on the fences where they died as a grisly reminder to the rest of the camp inmates to stop trying to break free.

Crew: Each dorm can hold 250 people *uncomfortably*. The occupants packed in like sardines, bunking one on top of another in very cramped quarters like the crew of a submarine or battleship. The conditions in here are so claustrophobic that detainees try to spend as much time out of their dorms as possible.

M.D.C.: 250. Each dormitory is a lightly fortified barracks building capable of withstanding some direct fire, but not a prolonged bombardment. If the structure’s M.D.C. is depleted, the building will collapse. Anybody inside at the time of collapse stands a 90% chance of being killed or seriously injured by falling debris unless they are in Mega-Damage armor, in which case they will only take 3D6 M.D. However, the chance of anybody wearing armor of any kind in here is slim to none, so a collapse means certain death for 90% of the occupants. The only other chance one has is if some of the falling debris creates a



barrier that pins, but does not crush those handful lucky enough to survive this way. The question is, will the villains running the camp allow the other inmates to dig through the rubble to rescue survivors? The answer may be no, even if they know survivors are trapped alive.

Statistical Data: Height: 20 feet (6 m), Width: 40 feet (12.2 m), Length: 160 feet (48.8 m). **Power System:** These buildings receive minimal power from the Command Post. The heating and cooling systems in the buildings are virtually non-existent, however, so during the summer and winter an average of 4D6 people per season will die from the extreme temperature and exposure.

Weapons: None.

Special Sensory Systems: None.

Camp Command Post

Each Command Post is a combination troop barracks and administrative center for the camp. Each sector (i.e., group of five detainee dormitories) is assigned its own Command Post so strict security can be maintained.

Crew: Each Post houses a reinforced company of FASSAR-30 Skelebots, divided into 16 squads of nine combat 'bots (144 total) and one command unit. Fully 75% of the time, the "command unit" will be a human supervisor (typically sergeant) wearing CA-6EX exoskeletal body armor (most common), *Mauler* power armor, or *Terror Trooper* power armor. Human Squad Commanders have the capability to rewrite their skelebots' collective programming on the spot by using encrypted burst transmitters and voice-activated coding equip-

ment. The other 25% of the time, the Squad Commander will be either be a *FASSAR-40 Skelebot Hunter* or a *FASSAR-50 Helion* (these are fairly rare, however). **Note:** For full data on the Coalition Skelebots, please refer to the **Coalition War Campaign™** sourcebook, pages 122-133.

While the Skelebots maintain the bulk of the Command Post security, each Post also has an enhanced platoon of human and Dog Boy soldiers as a contingency measure. These platoons consist of five 10 soldier squads. Three of these squads will have six standard (human) Dead Boys (wearing CA-4 standard body armor and carrying CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifles, C-50 Dragonfires, or C-29 Hellfires), one Specialist (usually a Military Specialist, Ranger, 'Borg, or Special Forces Commando; often a soldier who has lost favor with his superiors and "sent to camp"), two power armored soldiers (PA-100 Mauler, PA-200 Terror Trooper, PA-07A Light Assault SAMAS, PA-8A Special Forces Strike SAMAS or PA-09A Super SAMAS), and a squad leader (wearing CA-6C or CA-6EX body armor and carrying standard infantry weaponry). Typically, a squad leader holds the rank of sergeant. The remaining two squads each have 10 Dog Boys, outfitted with standard gear and used to "sniff out" infiltrators, spell casters, the supernatural, and seditionists within the detainee population. The entire platoon is commanded by a single officer, usually a 1st lieutenant.

Together, both the human and Skelebot forces are commanded by a captain, who also handles the various administrative duties of the Command Post.

The soldiers largely police the detainee population, making sure they cause no trouble, do the work they have been assigned, and do not escape. Perimeter patrol is the most common duty as-

signed, as well as routine scouting missions to scour the surrounding area for any signs of outside attack. For the human and Dog Boy troops here, detainment camp is extremely boring, and most of them yearn to return to the battlefield, where the real work lies.

Many of the live troops here (even a few Dog Boys) have serious misgivings as to the nature of these camps. They are not idiots. It is clear to them that some day all these detainees are going to be systematically executed. Many of the live troops at the camps find that repugnant for reasons not even they understand. They realize the Coalition's need to destroy all D-Bees and magic users, but many of the people held in these camps are neither. They are just innocent human beings who got mixed up with the wrong people or had the misfortune of living on the wrong side of the border. While the camp troops are conditioned to believe that there is no such thing as an innocent Tolkeenite, seeing the misery, humiliation and fear suffered by the people of these camps has eroded many of the troops' resolve that these camps are morally acceptable. They realize that the camps will help the military conquest of Tolkeen, since the lack of free civilian settlements is a natural hindrance to the guerilla tactics Tolkeen relies on. But sending all these people to death after the war is over? That's something else entirely. Likewise, most (so far) at the human camps refrain from truly sadistic and brutal actions against the prisoners, although humiliation, power games, bullying, cruel horse-play and jokes on the prisoners are commonplace. Only the most fanatical misanthropes engage in regular acts of savage physical abuse, blackmail, torture and murder. And, of course, troublemakers are a different story, but still many try to show their prisoners some bit of compassion.

It is because of misgivings like these that the bulk of camp security is provided by heartless robots who will kill every detainee at a single command. The human and Dog Boy element is maintained in case the skelebots malfunction for some reason.

M.D.C.: 750. Each Command Post is a fortified barracks building capable of withstanding some direct fire, but not a prolonged bombardment. If the structure's M.D.C. is depleted, the building will collapse. Any soldiers inside at the time of collapse stand a 90% chance of being killed or seriously injured by falling debris unless they are in Mega-Damage armor, in which case they will only take 3D6 M.D., but may be pinned or trapped (01-50% chance) and require help to get free.

Statistical Data: Height: 25 feet (7.6 m) high (four stories). Width: 150 feet (45.7 m). Length: 150 feet (45.7 m). Cargo: Each Camp Command Post has a spare vehicular garage/hangar for accommodating visiting field units. When not occupied, these areas are used for spare storage. Power System: Internal nuclear generator handles all power requirements (communications, heating, lighting, powering perimeter fencing, etc.).

Weapons:

C-104 Tri-Barrel Rail Gun: This is a modified version of the vehicular weapons mounted atop the CR-004 Scout Spider-Skull Walker. Each troop barracks has one of these weapons mounted in a 360 degree turret on top of the building to deter any outside attempts at "liberating" the camp. These rail guns are also meant to fire upon the crowds within the facility, should they try to rebel or if a riot breaks out among them. Never underestimate the crowd control potential of a few well placed bursts of rail gun fire, as the guards are fond of saying.

Mega-Damage: A burst is 60 rounds and inflicts 1D4x10 M.D. **Range:** 6,000 feet (1,828 m). **Rate of Fire:** Six shots/bursts per melee round. **Payload:** A 4,800 round ammo drum good for 80 bursts.

Other Defenses: The Command Posts have no heavy armor or air capability aside from the power armor used by their human soldiers. Any heavy combat vehicles, assault robots or air power must be called in from nearby field units.

Special Sensory Systems: Each post has a radar system with a 20 mile (32 km) range, making any large scale assaults on the camp virtually impossible to mount by surprise. Each Command Post also has its own communications station, with an encrypted burst transmission range of 50 miles (80 km). General Droque is working on getting these camps dedicated communication hardlines, but there is some opposition to that since they are expensive and Tolkeen saboteurs will merely cut them anyway.

Camp Guard Posts

These are simply elevated weapons platforms equipped with long-range optics (range: 10 miles/16 km) and monitors slaved to the Command Post radar and communications stations. Each station is manned by a pair of human or Skelebot guards, and armed with a single tri-barreled rail gun to spray anybody who tries entering the camp by force.

M.D.C.: 100. Depleting the tower's M.D.C. will cause it to crash to the ground. Human or Dog Boy soldiers in the tower when it falls will take 1D6x10 S.D.C. in damage when they hit the earth, even if they are wearing Mega-Damage armor. They also will be stunned for the next 1D4 melee rounds and at -4 to initiative, -2 on all combat moves (strike, parry, etc.) and -2 attacks per melee. Skelebots will take no damage and suffer no combat penalties from being in a falling tower. They will simply dust themselves off and open fire on whoever knocked them down.

Statistical Data: Height: 50 feet (15.2 m). Note that these towers are usually mounted right on top of the camp walls, which means they have a *total* height of 50 feet, not 50 feet on top of the 30 foot high camp walls. Width: 10 feet (3 m) at the top.

Weapons:

C-104 Tri-Barrel Rail Gun: **Mega-Damage:** A burst is 60 rounds and inflicts 1D4x10 M.D. **Range:** 6,000 feet (1,828 m). **Rate of Fire:** Six shots/bursts per melee round. **Payload:** A 4,800 round ammo drum is good for 80 bursts.

Prisoner Care

The severity of treatment a detainee may suffer depends on the individual camp commander and the soldiers under his command, but *none* of these places are home to any kind of decent or humanitarian impulses. Detainees are routinely harassed, bullied and beaten by their captors. Female detainees are often subjected to the basest of humiliation as they are assaulted and brutalized by those among the garrisons who have an appetite for cruelty. Openly slaughtering the detainees is discouraged, especially at human camps, since they are honestly scheduled for forced labor, and there is some effort to re-indoctrinate children (often taken from their parents). And these are the lucky ones.

Massacres at D-Bee camps are also frowned upon, at least for the moment. The fear is that if word gets out about how these camps are death traps, Tolkeenite civilians will begin fighting to the death rather than surrendering, which will only complicate the invasion effort even further. D-Bee prisoners are treated like worthless animals, making the human work camps look like pleasant getaways. D-Bees are routinely given inadequate amounts of food, medicine is withheld from the sick and injured, psychological and physical torture is a daily occurrence (often for the pleasure of the keepers), troublemakers are severely beaten, and ringleaders are taken out and shot, often a dozen at a time.

As bad as this is, if something isn't done about General Drogue, there *will* come a day when the D-Bee detainment camps (and some of the human ones) will become death factories. Once the war is over, the Coalition will use some of these detainees as slave labor to help build new Coalition colonies and outposts, but all the D-Bees and most captured Tolkeen militants will be quietly killed and discarded, a grim testament to the madness that can come with war. The only hope for the inmates of these camps is either to escape (not likely without help), or for heroes from the outside to learn of their woeful predicament and put an end to these places one way or another (public outcry, military attack and liberation, etc.).

Lt. General Nikoto Galva

Brilliant but unstable, Lt. General Galva is Micander Drogue's "go to" man when it concerns missions of extreme moral ambiguity, such as organizing pogroms, deploying certain weapons of mass destruction, and so on. Galva is the perfect choice for such work because as far as anybody can tell, he has an almost complete lack of any moral understanding whatsoever. He rarely speaks anymore (apparently, he was a lot more chatty during his days as an enlisted man, working up the chain of command), and he exhibits the occasional flash of unprovoked violence that make him well suited to Drogue's kind of work.

Galva made his name as a Military Intelligence Specialist who excelled at extracting information from people. His various methods of "high-intensity" interrogation and torture methodology are required reading for many of the shadier branches of the Coalition Military, even though the very existence of these books is classified and officially disavowed. Galva was the officer who broke the infamous *Chareg Kuqui*, a Federation of Magic operative, and one of the individuals involved in the Lady Prosek incident, some years ago. The incident, now an infamous bit of Coalition history involved a botched attempt by Federation of Magic operatives to kill or abduct the Prosek family. The Emperor's youngest son was slain in the attack and Lady Prosek was successfully kidnapped. Galva's security detail managed to catch one of the perpetrators (who was later officially counted as dead on the scene) and subsequently tortured him into spilling all of the details regarding the attack. Galva began to organize a rescue party but was given specific orders not to proceed any further. Nobody knows who issued the orders or why exactly Galva chose to follow them, but the Coalition rescue attempt never materialized, and it was only Lady Prosek's rescue at the hands of *Lord Coake* and several other *Tolkeen* heroes that saved her from certain death.

In Tolkeen, Lt. General Galva has been put in charge of designing, constructing, and overseeing General Drogue's vision for concentration camps. Galva sees these as eventually becoming huge death factories for destroying *all* D-Bees in Minnesota, but for now, he will suffice with running them as temporary detainment centers and work camps. Running the camps is pretty much the only thing keeping Galva under General Drogue's control — the mere prospect of being able to oversee the systematic termination of potentially thousands upon thousands of innocent people makes Galva's mouth water. To see this insane dream of his into fruition, he will play ball with whoever can help make that dream a reality. Actually, it has been things like this that have always kept Galva in line and a "model" officer within the Coalition military. Whether it was pulling what he liked to call "murder walks" along the Coalition borders (patrols in which his units would destroy whatever villages they found), to torturing prisoners, the military life has always held some kind of sick payoff for this individual that made him abide by its many restrictions.

Lt. General Nikoto Galva

Race: Human

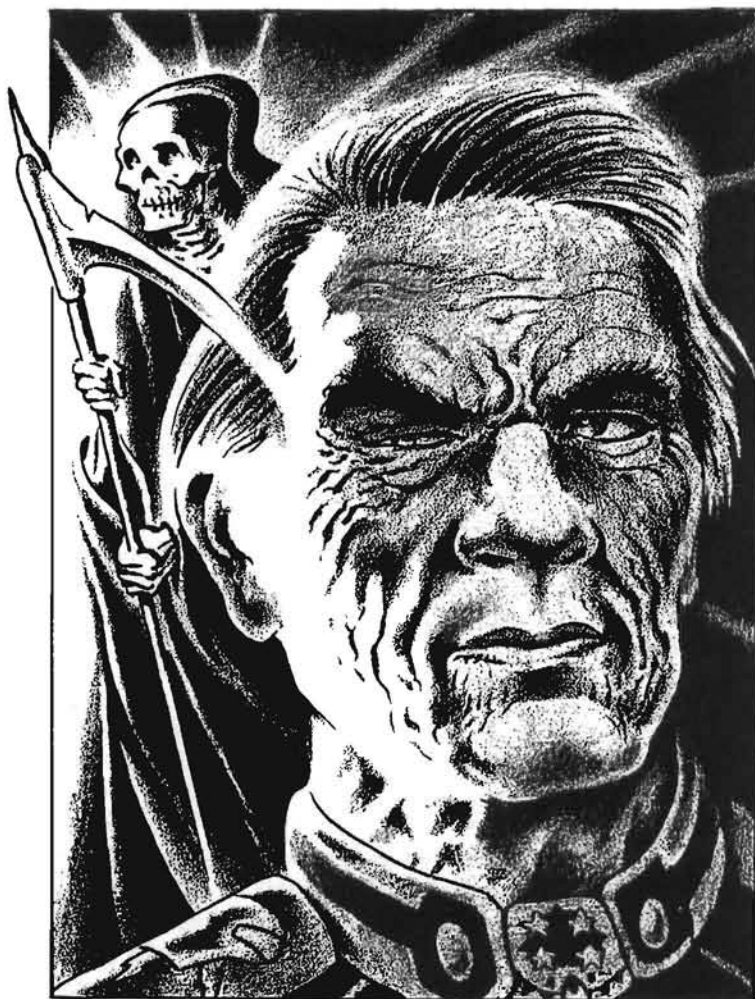
Alignment: Diabolic!

Attributes: I.Q.: 20, M.E.: 20, M.A.: 18, P.S.: 14, P.P.: 15, P.E.: 15, P.B.: 11, Spd: 28

Hit Points: 51, S.D.C.: 36

Height: Six feet, three inches (1.9 m). **Weight:** 200 lbs (90.8 kg).

Age: 40



P.P.E.: 4

Disposition: Dark and grim. He excels in the art of intimidation, probably because he practices it upon nearly everyone he meets. He is a creep of the first order, who delights in bullying those beneath him, which explains why he gets along so well with General Drogue. This man knows nothing of honor, mercy, or pity. He only exists to satisfy his most dark desires, which are legion. Becoming a Coalition intelligence officer has provided him with an excellent outlet for his sinister energies, and he gets along best with like-minded blackguards who enjoy their cruel work as much as he does, whether it be interrogating prisoners, frightening (and often using) children (they make excellent objects for blackmail), or putting the boot to some poor D-Bee who had the misfortune of getting in his way.

At heart, Lt. Gen. Galva is a brute and a sadistic monster whose greatest joy is overseeing the secret detainment camp program (he loves secrets). The thought of imprisoning thousands of innocent people and subjecting them to endless torment fills him with a child-like glee that is sickening to behold for all but the most vile and twisted individuals. With any luck there will come a day when Galva will be made to answer for his crimes. When that happens, he will no doubt blubber and grovel like the worm that he is, desperate to do anything to avoid the kinds of punishment he has meted out to so many others over the years.

Experience Level: 8th level Military Specialist.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (96%), Literacy (81%), Computer Operation (86%), Intelligence (76%), Pilot Hovercraft (98%), Pilot Robots and Power Armor, Robot Combat: Elite, Read Sensory Equipment (86%), Weapon Systems (91%), Running, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks Per Melee: 5

Combat Bonuses: +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 to strike,

Other Combat Info: Kick: 1D6, critical strike: 18-20, paired weapons, body flip: 1D6 plus victim loses initiative and one attack.

Weapons:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Vibro-Saber: Mega-Damage: 2D4.

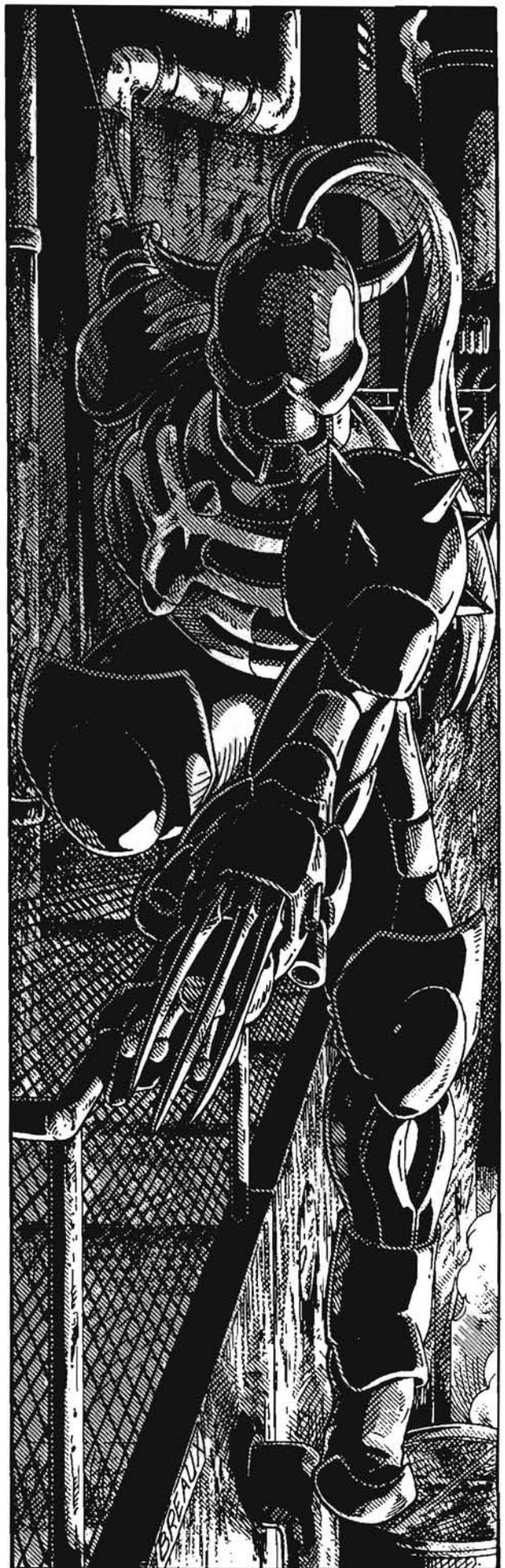
Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips.

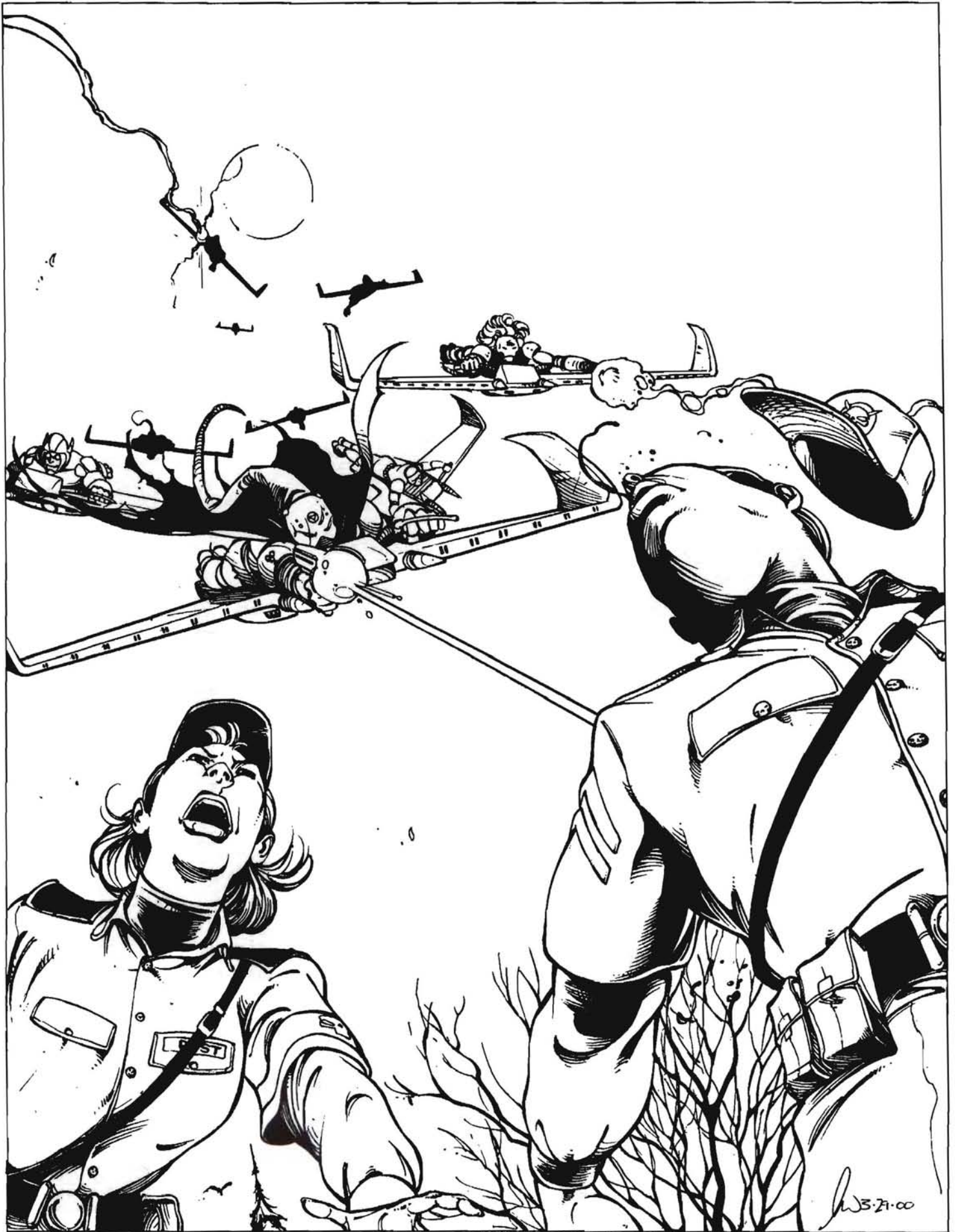
Body Armor:

CA-6EX Heavy "Dead Boy" Armor: Head/Helmet: 100 M.D.C., Arms: 100 M.D.C. each, Legs: 120 M.D.C. each, Main Body: 200 M.D.C. Bonuses: +8 P.S., +14 Spd, +10 feet (3 m) to length of leaps, and reduces rate of fatigue by 50%.

Other Equipment: Two flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, canteen.

Cybernetics and Bionics: Universal headjack & ear implant, multi-optic eye, fingerjack, and retractable finger blades (S.D.C.) on one hand.





Tolkeen Triumphant

By Kevin Siembieda & Bill Coffin

More important than the Coalition's failings thus far are Tolkeen's victories. Tolkeen has fought exceedingly well to this point, better than either side ever expected. It is a credit largely to the formidable array of magic power and abilities Tolkeen commands, and their masterful application to military strategies and tactics, that explains why they have doled out such a beating to their enemies from Chi-Town. For years, military strategists in the Coalition devised a hundred arguments for why magic is vastly inferior to technology on the battlefield. In a very brief time, the teamwork and efficiency of Tolkeen's magic arsenal and its clever tactical deployment have shredded those arguments.

The Military Warlords of Tolkeen city knew their kingdom could pose a formidable defense, but frankly, they have even surprised themselves with their success. Tolkeen's magical defenses (let alone their offensive capabilities) had never been tested to the degree that the Coalition threat presented. Although confidence was high, nobody honestly knew how effective they could be or how long they could hold back the Coalition, if at all. While they dared to dream they could hold the Coalition Army to a standstill, few held out much hope that they could actually achieve such a feat. Thus so far, the results are far greater than Tolkeen had ever bargained for. Its combination of preparedness, battlefield savvy, finding and exploiting the Coalition Army's weak points, and most importantly, its sharp use of various and diverse magical proficiencies has sent the CS forces reeling and made Tolkeen all but unassailable. All along the front, Coalition spearheads throw themselves at their magic weaving enemy only to be annihilated by Tolkeen's myriad defenses and warriors. The invading army has since begun to regroup, anticipate and counter the mystic might of Tolkeen with increasing success, but Tolkeen defenses remain strong and its defenders bold and resourceful. Besides, when the time is right, they still have a few surprises in store for the Coalition.

Tolkeen Strategies & Tactics

Brains, not Brawn. The overriding philosophy behind the Tolkeen defense effort is to best the Coalition by fighting *smarter*, not *stronger*. Part of this stratagem arises out of necessity, for Tolkeen's forces are greatly outnumbered and their resources, even magical ones, are limited. Consequently they have to fight "smarter" or they are doomed. In terms of pure brawn, the Coalition can not be beat. Their fighting force in Tolkeen alone tops one million individuals, well over half the total population of Tolkeen itself! But aside from the occasional Spell of Legend or school of magic devoted purely to combat, the real strength in magic has always been its application, not in the strength of the spells alone. The greatest warrior mages in Tolkeen and elsewhere usually earn their distinction by applying seemingly harmless magicks ingeniously, and to dramatic mili-

tary effect. Tolkeen has practically made an art just out of applying its magical abilities inventively, and this alone has granted Tolkeen defenders a measure of flexibility and power that the Coalition had never anticipated.

This has gone beyond just the use of magic. Throughout Tolkeen's military, its officers have stressed that the Coalition's greatest vulnerability is that they can be easily out-thought, and those who think a little before entering combat will almost always emerge triumphant. Only when Tolkeen's warriors are lured into fighting the Coalition in one-on-one, open combat does the Coalition have the decided advantage.

Our goal is to "stop" the enemy. Annihilation will come later. This simple tenet is perhaps Tolkeen's military leaders' greatest insight. Stopping the Coalition Army, especially its initial push into their kingdom, would not only have a practical defensive application but a tremendous psychological impact on both sides. For the invincible Coalition it is tantamount to defeat! Nobody has ever stopped the Coalition. Nobody! The fact that the backwater sorcerers of this (comparatively) tiny kingdom could do it will (and has) shake the Army to its foundation. For the first time, perhaps ever, CS soldiers start to doubt themselves, their leaders and the power of their war machines. Mass confusion ensues. Fear of the enemy sweeps across the entire army. Morale plummets to depths the CS has never experienced. Troops begin to panic and retreat, offensive lines break down, and the army becomes splintered and divided. These isolated combat units become an easier target to rout, harass, cripple and destroy. Each loss, defeat and retreat only adds to the level of confusion and fear, which contributes to further decay of confidence and morale in a snowball effect that stops the CS in its tracks and sends its troops running for the safety of its main base camps behind Tolkeen's borders.

By contrast, this only adds to the confidence of the Tolkeen defenders and sends their morale soaring to new heights. Each victory, small and large, makes them bolder and more aggressive as well as more experienced in dealing with a conventional army. The only danger here is the Tolkeen fighters getting overconfident (like the CS was), ignoring precautionary measures and taking foolish risks.

Ultimately, the "stop the enemy" tactic has two long term effects that could change the war. One, the enemy *may* grow so frustrated, and suffer so many defeats and losses that it eventually decides to give up and leave. Of course, this is a remote possibility at best when it comes to the Coalition Army. (They have no plan to give up, ever!)

Two, each stoppage forces the aggressor to retreat, regroup and reorganize. This causes a dramatic decline in major offensive operations that could last weeks or months, which means few losses and less expenditure of manpower and resources for Tolkeen. Meanwhile, the Tolkeen forces can continue and even



step up their harassment of the enemy with increased guerilla warfare and deadly skirmishes. Guerilla war is incredibly less costly to wage and always gives the advantage to the guerilla fighters. Guerilla fighters have tremendous flexibility and advantage because they are fighting on their home turf, know the lay of the land infinitely better than their opponent, engage in highly mobile small unit combat, and use sabotage and hit and run tactics — disappearing in the wilderness or among the sympathetic civilian population like ghosts without needing magic to vanish. This enables the Tolkeen troops to continue fighting at a high level, inflicting grievous harm and trouble on the Coalition forces, while the mass army of the CS is ground to a halt or a comparative crawl. This also buys Tolkeen time. Time to devise new defenses, find new weapons, acquire new allies and circumvent whatever sanctions the CS has planned for them. At the very least, fighting this kind of war can prolong the conflict over a period of years, whereas a stand-up fight spells certain and quick doom for the nation of magic.

Lastly, once an enemy is divided he is that much easier to contain and conquer. This applies even to small squad tactics. First, try to divide the troops; once separated, a soldier can be double or even triple-teamed and more easily subdued. Second, incapacitate the enemy. Once the members of the squad are incapacitated, crippled, or trapped, they are that much easier to capture or finish off. A pair of Coalition soldiers struggling to escape a Magic Net or Carpet of Adhesion can not run to join their comrades nor take effective action in a fire fight. When half the squad has fallen to magical sleep or other enchantments, those remaining up are more likely to grab their fallen comrades and make a hasty retreat, for their numbers are (albeit temporarily) diminished and their chance of winning is dramatically reduced — best to retreat and regroup, perhaps returning with reinforcements. But by then their sorcerous assailants will be gone or they the soldiers will return only to fall into an ambush

or trap. On the other hand, the Tolkeen squad may press the attack to capture or slay all or most of their opponents while the going is good.

The bottom-line is that an opponent who is incapacitated or encumbered in some way is always easier to defeat. There are numerous spells and enchantments that are especially effective at doing just that, and often at low cost to P.P.E. *Carpet of Adhesion*, *Magic Net*, *Levitation*, *Sleep*, *Force Bonds*, *Circle of Flame* and other magic barriers can be used to trap, hold and contain the enemy. Spells like *Cloud of Smoke*, *Blinding Flash*, *Charm*, *Befuddle*, *Fear*, *Domination*, *Trance*, *Compulsion*, *Paralysis*, *Agony*, *Sickness*, *Blind*, *Mute*, *Wisps of Confusion*, *Aura of Death*, *Aura of Doom*, *Disharmonize*, *Mental Shock*, *Speed of the Snail* and others will inflict confusion, pain, or weakness that reduce combat abilities that slow and impair (inflict penalties on) the enemy's fighting abilities. Likewise *illusionary magic* can be used to distract, confound, frighten and trick the enemy, while *Energy Disruption*, *Implosion Neutralizer*, *Extinguish Fire*, *Invulnerability*, *magic armor*, *energy fields* and other magicks can block, counter or diminish their attacks. And the spells listed here are just some notable examples.

Fear is a weapon, use it; Never underestimate the power of fear. It makes the enemy slow, reluctant, and off-balance. It creates tension and pandemonium that diminishes the effectiveness of the combat troops, encourages mistakes and makes them more inclined to hold a position rather than advance, and to retreat the moment things start to "look" bad. Ironically, the policy of the Coalition States to demonize "magic" has worked to the advantage of the Tolkeen defenders in a huge way. First, the Coalition troops have little to no understanding of magic, other than the fact that it is evil and powerful. It is something mysterious and dangerous. Something to fear. Second, most CS troops have never had to deal with magic, so they have virtually no understanding of it, what it can do or how to counter it. This lack of understanding and undercurrent of fear made the soldier particularly vulnerable to it in combat, because they literally had no idea what to expect. Consequently, when face to face with magic and the seemingly amazing and impossible things it could do, they were overwhelmed and panicked.

One of the intangible advantages practitioners of magic have over the conventional Coalition troops right off the bat, is that there is nothing "conventional" about magic. Mages and those who associate with them learn early on to be imaginative and to expect the unexpected. The principles of magic demand an open mind and an understanding of the supernatural world and, from the Coalition's point of view, the impossible. This automatically makes them more flexible, adaptable and less shakable. Tolkeen's military leaders have used recognized and used this basic truth to great effect, at least in the early days of the war. The problem is the Coalition's troops are slowly adapting themselves and becoming more accepting and appreciative of magic. The more they see of it the more commonplace and less frightening it becomes. Being victimized by magic is also making them more resourceful and flexible when it come to battling it. As the CS forces become less shakable, their level of success against Tolkeen shall rise considerably.

Shadows and Water. This describes the double-headed tactic of striking only when it suits you, the defender, and avoiding or refusing to engage the enemy when he attacks. The idea is

that “you” are controlling the conflict, not your enemy. The two together make for a basic defense philosophy that, so far, has worked very well for Tolkeen, as evidenced in the battles of Front-line, Morning Glory, and Sectorville, where the Coalition were dealt some of their first (and worst) defeats by far smaller Tolkeen forces. In each case, the Tolkeenites employed both Shadows and Water. First, the defenders used “Water” by falling back before their rapidly advancing enemy. In doing this, they made a hole for the Coalition to fall through, which made the attacking force naturally bunch up. Meanwhile, the Tolkeenites easily flanked the invaders and caught them in a thin encirclement. From there, the “Shadows” concept went to work as Tolkeen strike teams hit the Coalition from the sides and behind and instantly withdrew before the enemy could engage. By doing this several times from every side, the Coalition forces panicked and began firing in any direction, ultimately producing severe fratricide (friendly fire) within their own ranks, further contributing to the unit’s overall disintegration. From there, the surrounding Tolkeen forces moved in, forcing the soldiers to retreat or face obliteration. Each time they struck, however, the Tolkeen warriors only did so when their enemy was preoccupied with something else, making it impossible for them to launch an immediate defense. This allowed Tolkeen to hit their enemy many times without ever facing retaliatory fire, and by the time the Coalition did get some shots off, they only hit their own troops or “shadows” (because their attackers had already moved away to reposition themselves) and furthered the Tolkeenites’ cause.

Small squad guerrillas thrive on the Water and Shadows concept. To move as fluidly and quietly as “water,” to be flexible and change with the enemy, and to be like a “shadow” popping up when and where the enemy least expects it, and vanish before he can react and retaliate, leaving only shadows for him to shoot at. This fundamental hit and run tactic is a primary tactical weapon in Tolkeen’s arsenal.

Moreover, the practitioners of magic and many of their supernatural allies and minions have taken the concept of “Water and Shadows” to a level with magic. Most spell casters can be all the more fluid, flexible, silent and deadly using a variety of magic. *Magical flight, Teleportation, Mystic Portals, Levitation, Chameleon, Cloak of Darkness, Invisibility, Swim like a Fish* and other powers make the Tolkeen mages and their teammates veritable phantoms who can strike at anytime from anywhere — air, ground and water — and from any angle, up, down, and sideways. Warlocks can actually use “water” as a weapon, and many spell casters can literally merge with and commands the very “shadows” with spells like *Shadow Meld, Cloak of Darkness, Summon and Control Shadow Beast*, and *illusions* (what is an illusion but a creation of light and shadows) or call forth *dark forces* like demons and animated dead.

City Defense. So far, the successful defense of Tolkeen’s population centers, and the war in general, have gone exactly to plan, and have even twisted one of the Coalition’s own plans. The CS has pinpointed several “primary” targets for capture and occupation, cities, towns and strongholds located on a ley line or nexus point, or which hold some other strategic value. The CS knows practitioners of magic use ley lines as a power base, therefore the plan is to capture and hold communities that sit upon ley lines and thereby rob them from Tolkeen’s use. They also wish to destroy or occupy Tolkeen’s ley line settlements

because they are fortresses with a natural power source, and can be protected by magical force fields and other defenses.

In the first weeks of the offensive, Tolkeen settlements near the Iowa border fell under immediate attack. Being also sites of some of the most intense defensive build-ups, the fighting here was savage and bloody, producing extremely heavy losses for the Coalition as companies tried repeatedly to storm the settlements’ fortifications and take them in a single swift stroke. After the first few failed attempts, short-range artillery bombardments were used to force out the defenders, but the hardy towns shrugged off any damage, and the soldiers within mocked their attackers’ feeble ways. Finally, the Coalition resolved to take these settlements the hard way, by sending large numbers of troops to sweep the areas slowly, carefully and methodically. The Coalition was performing textbook urban combat procedure, which by nature is very time-consuming and costly in terms of lost men and expended ammunition. By the time the first few villages and towns were taken, the entire invasion timetable had been thrown off by weeks, and the unusually high casualty rate played havoc as units scrambled to re-deploy their men in order to prevent any major manpower gaps from developing.

The worst insult of all, however, was that on at least two occasions, Tolkeen soldiers staged lightning raids on captured towns soon after they had been considered pacified, requiring the Coalition to stage yet another siege on the same places! Again, the same kind of time, manpower and materials were wasted, all to capture settlements nearly devoid of civilians, and which had been vacated by wily Tolkeen fighters moments be-



fore recapture. In this, Tolkeen's urban defense was excelling at one of its primary goals — to sap the invader's strength of numbers, strength of arms, and strength of will.

The Power of Nature, the Nature of Power. Not all of the Tolkeen defense rests on smart pinpoint fighting and hit and run tactics. There are some cases where Tolkeen simply brings out its nastiest magic and throws down. This was necessary to stem the Coalition's initial push across their southeastern borders. For such occasions, the kingdom's cadre of Warlocks have become indispensable. Able to cast catastrophic spells such as River of Lava, Earthquake, Tornado, and Tidal Wave, as well as summon Lesser and Greater Elemental beings, a handful of these elemental spell casters supported by a relatively small number of troops can wreak havoc on just about any sized Coalition force. The use of Elementals and other supernatural forces, only compounds the Coalition's troubles, especially when these supernatural beings are sent to wreak havoc in Coalition field camps and other rear facilities. Water and Air Elementals and Warlock magic have been especially potent against the invading army as much of the heaviest fighting has taken place along the *Mississippi River* and other bodies of water — and Minnesota is, after all, "the land of a thousand lakes."

Elemental magic is hardly Tolkeen's only source of noteworthy arcana. The Kingdom relies heavily on all types of magic and magical artifacts. One such artifact is its treasured *Book of Ten*, a legendary collection of Spells of Legend that grants their most elite spell casters considerable power to stop the Coalition cold. Unfortunately for the Coalition, Tolkeen has been fairly

generous with this mystic knowledge, teaching it to entire cadres of its most experienced and best spell casters, some of whom end up teaching it to other spell casters or making scrolls of what they know. This too provides yet another mighty weapon and shield for Tolkeen's freedom fighters to use against the Coalition aggressor.

Magic Based Machines of Destruction. The leaders of Tolkeen have seen trouble brewing for generations and have, over the last decade, spent much thought, time, and money devising their own war machines. The equivalent of Techno-Wizard tanks, aircraft, power armor, robots and firearms. While many have been relatively untested until the onset of war, so far all have proven to be very effective. *Iron Juggernauts* and the mechanically enhanced *Daemonix* have, overnight, become icons in this war to be feared. The Iron Juggernauts are largely the product of Techno-Wizardry, while the *Daemonix* are a frightening union of machine, magic and the demonic. Both are being mass produced as quickly as possible, which to the benefit of the Coalition, is not as fast as Tolkeen's leaders like or need. The creation of Iron Juggernauts (and other Machines of Destruction yet to be revealed) is a painstakingly slow process compared to the manufacturing process required to make most CS bots, power armor and vehicles, and many potentially devastating prototype weapons may never see production at all, depending on how the war turns. Still, Tolkeen has a formidable arsenal of war machines that all performed admirably during the initial months of war. Most are achieving better than expected kill ratios and proving themselves versatile to a number of tasks.



The use of heavy TW war vehicles is a dicey gambit for Tolkeen, one which could have backfired on them were they not careful. Vehicular combat is the kind of fighting the Coalition excels at, and, in open vehicular engagements, Tolkeen vehicles will usually be seriously outnumbered. Thankfully for Tolkeen, they planned for this too, and turned possible disaster into profound victory. First off, Tolkeen war machines rarely engage the Coalition *en masse*. They often form small hunter groups and ambush smaller Coalition formations, or provide heavy firepower and support to lighter, faster and more plentiful combat troops as well as defend (or help retake) fortified positions and embattled towns or cities. Second, Tolkeen makes sure to deploy its heavy vehicles with numerous other units. Heavy TW weapons and vehicles are almost always a part of large, mixed units, making these big guns just another diverse element in a larger whole. This makes them capable of hitting the Coalition where it really hurts: its infantry, both as an element of mass combat and guerrilla warfare. These heavy Techno-Wizard Machines of Destruction are especially effective in small unit combat and guerilla operations. If pitted against a division of Coalition tanks and large combat robots, Tolkeen TW units, even Iron Juggernauts and Daemonix, stand a good chance of destruction. However, against infantry, i.e. CS foot soldiers, these heavy Techno-Wizard vehicles are devastating. Likewise, they can handle the Coalition's heavy hitters — robots, power armor and tanks — provided they face a mixed group or small unit like a squad, platoon or company, especially when the TW units are themselves part of a mixed group, combining, say, Iron Juggernauts with spell casters, conventional fighters (Juicers, Headhunters, mercs, etc.) and demons or creatures of magic. As dedicated infantry-killers, Tolkeen's magical war machines have made their biggest mark, decimating Coalition ranks and eroding morale. The Coalition has tried deploying smaller anti-armor units, but they have difficulty operating deep in enemy territory, and the infantry accompanying Tolkeen armor often detect, incapacitate and cripple or destroy these elite units before they can do their job.

Psychologically, the Tolkeen war machines have made a lasting impact, in the damage they cause to Coalition strength, as well as the way in which they are doing it. These Tolkeen units are essentially beating the Coalition at their own game, defeating them in the kind of combat they are supposed to be supreme in. If the Coalition cannot triumph at its specialty, one-on-one combat and small unit operations, the enemy could keep them stymied for years.

Higher Powers. Wily spell casters and hard-hitting armor riders are hardly the end of Tolkeen's resources. Through its many contacts on Rifts Earth and elsewhere throughout the Megaverse, Tolkeen has made a great number of powerful friends and allies, many of whom have been enlisted or forced to come to Tolkeen to fight the Coalition. Not all of them are entirely benevolent or willing participants (an issue that may come back to plague the Kingdom), but they all command considerable power and evoke primal fear, which, for the moment, is enough.

Demons, monsters, and unique D-Bees populate Tolkeen in great number, but greatest among these are the mighty **Dragon Kings** and the legion of dragons who follow them and populate Tolkeen's sister city, *Freehold* (once known as St. Paul). Although they number only a few hundred at the most (and as few

as several dozen, according to some CS estimates), these dragons pose a grave threat to any Coalition force unlucky enough to encounter them. Thankfully for the invaders, Tolkeen's dragon allies seldom travel in groups, and are mostly hatchlings, which makes them reckless and willing to take risks they might ordinarily avoid. The dragon adults, however, command incredible powers and respect, and the Dragon Kings are the most powerful of them all. An estimated 60 dragons were accounted for during the defense against the Coalition Army's failed mass push across the Mississippi and into the Kingdom of Tolkeen. Unofficial reports from soldiers in the field place that number at easily double or triple, scattered across the length of at least a hundred miles (160 km). Whether 60 or 160, by all accounts this was the largest collection of dragons working together for one purpose ever recorded in modern history (since the advent of the Post Apocalyptic calendar). Fortunately for the CS, the dragons were satisfied with rebuffing the invasion force and seem to have taken a back seat in the rest of war. Thus, the dragons have not gathered *en masse* again, although individual dragons are frequently members of small units, i.e. one of the soldiers in a squad, platoon or company. However, should the enemy push too close to home, the cities of Tolkeen and Freehold, these mighty wyrms will certainly leave their lairs and take to battle again. Woe be to any Coalition units in their way, for once stirred, these nearly invincible giants will not rest until the source of their ire is wiped clean from the face of Tolkeen forever. The Coalition may think it knows about determined enemies, but until they have crossed an angered adult dragon, they have no idea what the words "determined vengeance" really mean.

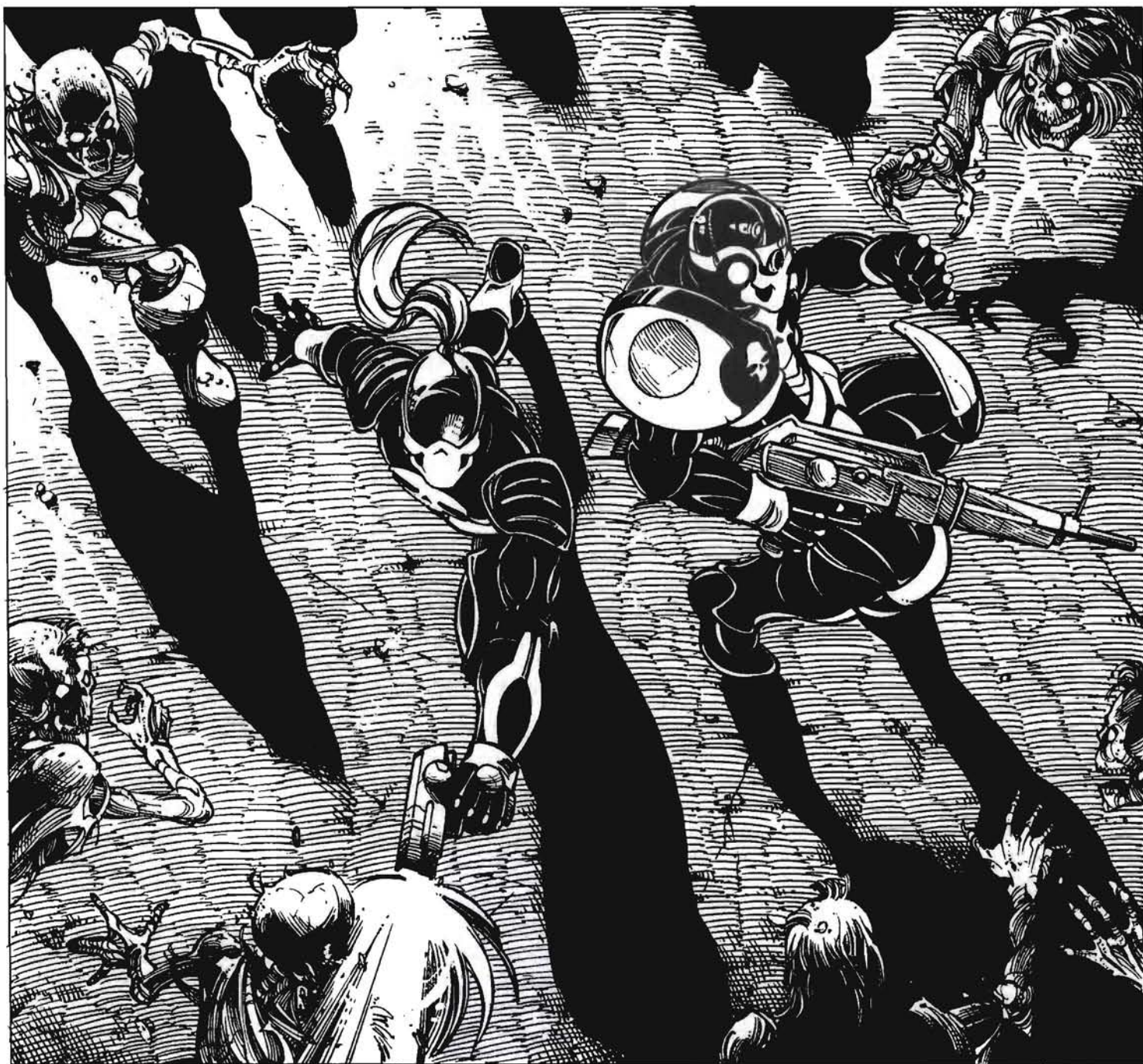
Until then it is the young and adventurous dragon hatchlings and a small handful of adult dragons who remain active in combats in the war. These individuals may lead companies or join squads and platoons of guerilla fighters to challenge the enemy. Such characters often disguise themselves as humanoids, revealing themselves as dragons for dramatic impact to frighten and demoralize Coalition troops (most of whom can't tell the differences from a two day old hatchling to an experienced 30 year old to an adult). They may also take their true form when they feel safe among friends or when enraged (a sight to behold). The point is, the enemy will not realize they face a dragon until it is too late. Most dragons, young and old, are spell casters as well as possessing a range of formidable superhuman abilities including Supernatural strength, the ability to bio-regenerate physical damage, shapechange at will, fly, breathe fire and more.

Real "Dead Boys." The Walking Dead are the perfect disposable infantrymen, the perfect psychological weapon. Few things have amused Tolkeen's grim cadres of Necromancers and dark spell casters more than *re-animating* entire fields of dead Coalition soldiers and sending them shambling against their own troops. Early on, entire Coalition outposts were overrun by returning corpses and skeletons. At first, they were slow to attack, often mistaking them for returning troops or another unit. When they realized they were facing the Walking Dead, it was often too late and they were overpowered. Others were either scared out of their wits or uncertain that their fallen comrades were actually dead and reluctant to fire on their own (mind controlled?) troops. In either event, several units abandoned their posts and fled outright.

Since then, Coalition soldiers have gotten much better at identifying and responding to animated dead. In fact, most are so reviled by it that they fight like demons themselves, until the animated corpses are destroyed. Even so, the Walking Dead coming home tends to be unnerving and cause some damage before they are finally blown to pieces. Moreover, battling the corpses wastes ammunition and expends energy, agitating and tiring the CS defenders. Thus, it is a common ploy to send a legion of animated dead against entrenched positions and CS squads to "soften" up the enemy (much in the same way that the CS uses Skelebots) and follow that attack with a manned assault against the tired and, perhaps, ammunition drained soldiers.

Regardless, Tolkeen will keep sending the Coalition back its dead because of the stress it places on their soldiers mentally and emotionally. The average "CS Dead Boy" can cope with many of the horrors and supernatural phenomena Tolkeen's de-

fenders have to offer. However, the sight of dead former comrades coming for their throats is the sort of thing that gives even the crustiest Coalition Commando a moment of pause. Even after getting over the initial shock of seeing these aberrations, every soldier must confront the possibility that one day, he too might be one of these hideous parodies of the living, and used against his old buddies. This is seen as a defilement, a desecration of the first order, and *no* Coalition soldier wishes that for himself. Of course, one will be dead by the time it happens to him, but that is not the point. It is that while Coalition soldiers are alive and fighting, somewhere in the back of their minds lies the fear of being turned into an unwilling puppet of Tolkeen. And somewhere in their hearts, they know that there is not a damn thing they can do about this. This is pure horror to the highly conditioned Coalition mind, and as long as it remains a worry for Prosek's troops, then there will always be those whose



performance suffers because of it. And right now, the CS needs all of its soldiers focused on winning the war, not fretting over being turned into a zombie.

Re-animating dead Coalition soldiers is also an effective way to bolster one's own waning troops — instant reinforcements compliments of the enemy.

The dead are also used for *sneak attacks*. The "Dead Boy" body armor make it seem like they are ordinary troops rotating back, but when the animated dead get close enough, they attack and the live soldiers find themselves fighting their own dead soldiers (buddies?) on their very doorstep. Similarly, animated dead can be made to look like soldiers bringing in prisoners (i.e. the very group of Tolkeen freedom fighters who killed them), in order to get close enough to launch a surprise attack or penetrate CS defenses. The use of animated dead is excellent for causing confusion and surprise, particularly against small squads and unsuspecting guards. Of course this tactic is only effective if the armor of the corpse is not too battered. An obvious hole in the head, missing limbs, and such, are sure-fire giveaways and won't fool anybody. Additionally, the "dead" can not speak, so they can not respond to questions or requests to identify themselves (they aren't alive and don't think, they function like puppets).

Fast Movers. Teleportation magicks, either through TW devices, ley lines or cast spells, have been an *enormous* boon to Tolkeen, as have all means of magical transport. Unlike the Coalition which must spend a great deal of resources ferrying its soldiers to and fro across the battlefield, Tolkeen soldiers can whisk themselves there in the blink of an eye. Tactically, this is of immeasurable value. It allows attack squads to provide nearly instant reinforcements, evacuate quickly out of a tight situation, transfer supplies and equipment through dangerous territory with little chance of discovery or loss, and bypass Coalition defenses, barriers and trigger-happy troops. Teleportation has also been a key component to Tolkeen's "Smoke and Water" strategy; without it, Tolkeenite fighters would have a far more difficult time flanking, encircling, surprising and generally running rings around the enemy.

Tolkeen's military also has wide access to magical powers of flight, which offer similar benefits as teleportation, only slower. Still, having entire platoons of soldiers ready and able to take flight at a moment's notice, silent and without reliance on machines, is a capability that many Coalition COs openly envy. Airborne troops can strafe their grounded enemies, as well as provide reconnaissance and a host of standard military applications. Again, it is not so much that Tolkeen soldiers can fly — so can many Coalition troops with the right equipment. It is that if they wanted to, pretty much *all* Tolkeenite infantry could fly, which has proven a big problem so far for Coalition ground troops. Even Coalition surface to air gunners are having a tough time hitting such small, one-man, nimble targets, who proceed to make no sound and cause no small amount of trouble for ground-pounding Dead Boys. To add insult to injury, they can fly without the cost, time and expense of a flying apparatus (jet pack, power armor, hovercycle, etc.). All they have to do is mumble a spell and off they go.

Self-Sufficiency. The Coalition must carry all of its ammunition and supplies into battle with it. Once those initial stores run low, additional shipments from the rear must resupply the

front-line if they are to keep fighting. This is a trying task for any army even under the best conditions. For the Coalition in Tolkeen, it is simply crippling. The size and nature of the CS invasion force, coupled with the magical nature of their opponent, their superior mobility (again, thanks to magic), hit and run tactics and how the battles have gone so far, has made keeping supply lines open and serviced a logistical nightmare. Just getting supply units to the front has been difficult, as supply convoys are subject to frequent raids, sabotage and booby traps. Only those transported by air convoys are practically guaranteed to reach their destination intact, but even the fabled *Death's Head Transports* are subject to attack and sometimes lost (a particular group of dragons have found it especially fun and challenging to waylay Death's Head Transports). Still, air dropped supplies have a better than 95% success ratio of delivering complete shipments. However, air transport is easily detected by enemy ground spotters who may target supply depots after the shipment has been delivered, and it is more expensive to conduct. Meanwhile, the Tolkeen guerrillas have been so efficient and successful at assailing ground transports that half lose 20-40% of their supplies before they can arrive to the front-line and 8% never make it at all — destroyed en route or so battered and beleaguered that they have to turn back. Some Coalition military units go days without any kind of resupply whatsoever, and may run out of food, ammo, medical supplies, and other necessities, all of which has a negative impact on their morale and combat worthiness. The closer one gets to the battle-lines the greater the problem is, while those squads deep in Tolkeen territory are currently on their own. This means deep insertion teams must be regularly extracted or otherwise return to base to resupply and go back out, resulting in lost time, energy and opportunity going back and forth. (Of course, one third to half stay out for months at a time, getting their supplies by raiding and stealing from enemy soldiers and civilians. The "scorched earth" tactics currently being deployed make this more *challenging* but not impossible, and some CS forces have taken to establishing hidden caches of looted food and equipment scattered across the region where they are operating.)

Tolkeen, on the other hand, rarely suffers from such problems. First, the war is happening in their own backyard. While this has its disadvantages, it also has its advantages, especially for a war that is in large part a guerilla operation. Everywhere Tolkeen units go there are patriotic citizens ready and willing (at least while things go well) to lend a helping hand. They offer everything from information, food and basic supplies to medical assistance, transportation, shelter and places to hide from the enemy. Furthermore, most of Tolkeen's troops know the lay of the land and know where to find fresh water, local farms, orchards, fishing holes, places to hunt, and places to hide, lay low or find help. This is why the CS has adopted the "scorched earth" policy. If they destroy every farm, orchard, village, town and city as they go, they effectively destroy a Tolkeen resource and force the Tolkeen civilians to flee, both of which taxes the remaining resources in the rest of the Kingdom. The more they destroy the fewer resources and the greater the strain on the surviving communities and strongholds. Eventually, Tolkeen will suffer terrible hardship and the same sort of supply shortages and problems the CS is currently enduring. With time, this tactic should reverse their positions, with Tolkeen weakening and the Coalition becoming increasingly strong and dominant.

Here again, magic makes a difference, especially for guerilla operations in the field. Tolkeen warriors have the advantage, because even if a unit gets cut off from all other resources, its troops are usually equipped with enough spell magic to cover their rudimentary combat needs: *Create Bread and Milk* for rations, *Armor of Ithan* for protection, *Ignite fire* and *Fuel Flame* to build campfires and cook food, *Fire Ball*, *Energy Bolt*, and many others for offensive capabilities, and a few *healing spells* for medical situations. Of course, most combat mages know many, many additional spells, but the point is that at the end of the day, when their P.P.E. (their mystic "ammunition") is expended, all they need is a decent night's rest and they are back at full strength. Meanwhile, their Coalition counterparts are still hungry, down to their last E-clips and wondering where the hell their latest supply drop is. That Tolkeen's troops can keep going under their own power gives them incredible versatility and mission endurance, and keeps their spirits high, and their bodies in good health. All of which, incidentally, has proven to increase the average Tolkeenite's combat worthiness considerably during the first wave of fighting during the Siege. As the war goes on, Tolkeen's self-sufficiency is expected to become even more of an advantage as the Coalition's manufactures begin to overextend themselves with keeping the army equipped, and become a greater and greater burden on a society overtaxed by war. On the other hand, while this works well for small units engaged in hit and run guerilla warfare, it makes minimal difference in mass combat (which is inevitable), and will be woefully insufficient to fill the needs of the thronging multitudes when Tolkeen's last strongholds overflow with refugees and there is not enough food or supplies to properly care for them. That is when the Kingdom's loss of resources early in the war will cripple them. And that's exactly what the CS is counting on. It will be a long, difficult process, but by the Coalition Army's calculations it is only a matter of time. The question that remains is how much time before Tolkeen falls? Two years? Three? Five? Ten?

From the shadows, other dangers arise

Tolkeen and the magic that makes them such a resilient and dangerous foe are not the end of the Coalition's problems. In fact, they may only be the beginning. The Coalition Army's inability to simply ride in and roll over Tolkeen has caused many of its other enemies to sit up and take notice. The questions were inevitable: Could it be that the unstoppable juggernaut of humanity is not invincible? Can the Coalition be stopped? Defeated? Could the two war fronts have spread CS resources too thin, as some within the States had feared? Has the CS made itself vulnerable to *other* opportunists? What will happen if others choose to rise up against them now? The very fact that anybody is even asking these questions is a problem and indicates that the Coalition States, for the first time in generations, appears weak and vulnerable.

Like vultures who smell blood, the enemies of the Coalition States have taken wing and begun to circle. All are hopeful that the lame CS will fall, so they may swoop down and deliver the killing blow before they feast on its bloated, dead carcass. Some want this so bad that they can hardly wait and have begun to plot and make moves of their own.

In the northeast, Coalition troops positioned on **Free Quebec's** borders are constantly besieged by raiders, thieves, trickery and sabotage. Outlaws and freedom fighters on the run are hidden and protected by the local citizens, thwarting CS war efforts and compounding the situation there. Mercenaries hired by Free Quebec and outlying communities looking to win that nation's favor also engage in activities and open combat against CS forces. A quarter of the "loose cannons" would never have considered taking a stand against the CS in the past, for any amount of pay or incentive. All of this only adds to the confidence of the Quebecois.

Old Bones, the free city that represents a sort of neutral zone, crawls with spies, assassins and adventurers of all kinds. Meanwhile, the soldiers and people of Free Quebec openly display their defiance of the Coalition decree and cling to their freedom. This is a war where the CS troops are not into it, and the so-called enemy, Free Quebec, basks in glory as it holds the Coalition Army at bay and decimates its navy. The impotence of the Coalition Navy and the massive losses it has suffered at the hands of Free Quebec are facts that the CS has carefully concealed, and Free Quebec has politely refrained from publicizing. If this ever came out (Free Quebec won't tell for a variety of reasons) the reputation of the all-powerful Coalition Military would be dealt another severe blow.

In the north, anti-Coalition sentiment, open dissension and crime reached record highs, particularly among D-Bee communities. *The State of Iron Heart* begins to feel segregated and alone. It worries that over the next few years, if things continue to go poorly for the Coalition Military, they may become cut off from the southern States and left to their own devices. The leaders and military at Iron Heart are preparing and bracing themselves for the worst, but so far only the most remote parts of their State have been troubled by increased acts of banditry, and there have been no signs of insurrection whatsoever. Iron Heart is strong and its citizens steadfastly loyal and positive.

The Kingdom of Ishpeming, better known as *Northern Gun*, starts to wonder if they have backed the wrong horse. Northern Gun and their friendly rival, the *Manistique Imperium*, are benefitting greatly from the twin conflicts with record manufacturing and sales of arms to support their recent ally, the Coalition States. Still, the powers that be at these northern Michigan kingdoms can not help wondering how much greater their profits might have been if they were supporting the "enemies" of the Coalition States. They also wonder how they will be received if the CS should actually fall. (An inconceivable notion a few months ago, but now ...?) Many "independent" kingdoms, mercenary outfits and adventurers consider their unexpected and shocking allegiance with the CS to be a "pact with the devil" and it has provoked thousands upon thousands of angry outcries, condemnations and death threats. Worse, many are turning to Wilk's Laser Technology, Bandito Arms, the Black Market and other sources for their weapons, and the two Michigan weapons kingpins are wondering if those customers will ever come back to them, even after the wars are over.

If the *Demon Kingdom of Calgary* has taken any interest in events in Minnesota, they haven't shown any. However, the *Tundra Rangers* in the north and the Lord Coake's *Cyber-Knights* in the south have decided to keep a closer eye on this worrisome group. Ironically, they fear the success of

Tolkeen against the CS may incite and encourage them and other clans of monsters to become more aggressive against humans and peaceful D-Bee communities.

The Western Frontier. Meanwhile, with the CS and Tolkeen forces preoccupied with the war, the Cyber-Knight's numbers divided and other heroes gone to join the war, there has been a sharp decline in lawmen and dramatic increase in banditry and lawlessness throughout the Canadian southwest and the American New West.

In the south, the State of Lone Star is in turmoil. **The Pecos Empire** and independent outlaw gangs, clans and D-Bee tribes too numerous and fractious to name, have gone on the war path. It is open season on the Coalition Army, CS settlements, land holdings, ranches, outposts and military patrols. However, their efforts are little more than those of a swarm of ants crawling over an elephant's back. They are barely noticed in the larger scheme of things, and easily swept away when they become too annoying to ignore. While these bandits grow more brazen with the passage of each day, they have had virtually no impact on the war effort at Tolkeen, nor do they threaten the security of the Lone Star Complex. They are noisy and troublesome to be sure, but easily dispatched and chased away when the CS Military has had enough of them.

These bandits, D-Bee bands and misanthropes also plague the communities and military of **El Dorado** (Arkansas), whom they regard as "the lap dog of the Coalition States" and their number one nemesis. In typical fashion, the hot-headed leader of El Dorado is quick to take offense and retaliate against these loudmouths and brigands. Unlike the CS forces of Lone Star who strike back out of annoyance and when the bandits honestly threaten local settlements and outposts, the Army of El Dorado actively seeks out, chases down and engages the outlaws. It is a cat and mouse game intermixed with deadly games of hide and seek that the El Dorado forces are winning. The kingdom's leadership sees the routing of bandits and the containment of "hostile elements" in the southwest as another way to win the favor of Chi-Town and earn them the right to become a member State of the mighty Coalition. To that end, the Army of El Dorado wages war against the Pecos Empire and southern clans, dealing out justice at the business end of a gun and loop of the rope. Whatever losses the CS may suffer at Tolkeen or Free Quebec have not tarnished its image in the eyes of the El Dorado people. Nor have they deterred them from their dream to become a member State. If anything, they'd love to join the fracas and help. As a matter of fact, one thousand El Dorado "volunteers" are getting ready to do just that.

Along the vampire ridden borders of Mexico and the old American Empire, vampire activity has risen significantly. With half the Cyber-Knights, their chief antagonists, gone to fight on behalf of Tolkeen, along with thousands of other gunfighters, lawmen and heroes and the remaining Cyber-Knights pulling double duty throughout the old U.S. and Canadian west, there are considerably fewer heroes to stop the Undead's inexorable migration to the north. What long-lasting ramifications this may have aren't likely to be felt for a few years yet, but already innocent people are suffering from the advancing vampire hordes. Ironically, while the Coalition and vengeance-obsessed Tolkeen duke it out between themselves, drawing many around them into the conflict (and their doom), the real "enemy of humanity" is

creeping across the border and quietly clawing a foothold in the southwest.

The Federation of Magic is the most notorious and dangerous of the Coalition's enemies. They too are practitioners of magic and beings from other worlds. For now they watch the battle at Tolkeen from the side-lines, content to watch their long-time nemesis squirm, and leave their Tolkeen rivals to handle the CS without Federation intervention.

The sorcerers and monsters of the Federation are among those who are stunned by Tolkeen's dramatic success against the Coalition Army. It is a feat the Federation (a fragmented, selfish and cowardly lot) has never come close to accomplishing despite their long history with the CS. They study with great interest and grudging admiration, all of Tolkeen's strategies and tactics so that they may be able to use them against the hated Coalition themselves in the future.

While the nefarious Lord Dunscon refuses to help Tolkeen unless they beg for it, he and his henchmen watch with fascination and begin to hatch their own schemes. All members of the Federation are attracted to the war like sharks to blood. All watch with glee and some, despite Lord Dunscon's edict to stay out of the conflict, are excited to the point of launching their own attacks and schemes against the Coalition States, Chi-Town in particular. While perturbed, Lord Dunscon must admit the show at Tolkeen is stimulating, and what better time to strike against Chi-Town than when it is reeling from its defeats in the north? Thus, he refrains from reining in the rogue factions who strike at the CS from other angles and directions, while he hatches his own plots for revenge. To that end he has already decided that even if Tolkeen should come crawling to him on bent knee, he will not help them. This upstart magic community will not steal his thunder nor reap revenge upon the Coalition, the revenge he has always dreamt about inflicting. If Chi-Town is to experience defeat and ruination, it will come from his hands and the Federation of Magic, not King Creed or anybody else. That is a promise he has vowed to himself, and he means to keep.

Note: As the situation with the Cyber-Knights, the treachery of the Federation of Magic, and the encroachment of the vampires illustrates, the real tragedy of the Coalition-Tolkeen War may be the loss of so many genuine heroes and warriors that there won't be enough to defend good and innocent people — humans and nonhumans, technologists and sorcerers alike — from the real villains and monsters in the world.





THE DAEMONIX

By Kevin Siembieda
Inspired by the art of Kent Burles

The Daemonix race (pronounced “day mon icks”) are hulking, supernatural monstrosities from another world. Exactly when, where or how the Shifters of Tolkeen found them is unknown. The main rumor circulating on the streets is that some of Tolkeen’s greatest mages and the Dragon Kings (perhaps it was they who found the creatures) liberated these brutish sub-demons from some hellish dimension, and that in return, they have promised to fight on the kingdom’s behalf.

Three of the (known) Daemonix have a vague human appearance, are bipedal, and have two prominent arms and a pair of legs, but any semblance to humanoids ends there. All Daemonix are hideous, pale skinned, hairless giants with rubbery, smooth flesh. Their skin is a sickly white or pale grey with hints of pink and/or purple around the eyes, mouths, throats and underbellies. Blue veins rippling across their bodies give accentuation to their musculature. When standing still, they can almost be mistaken for marble statues of grotesque creatures. The heads of all Daemonix are misshapened and massively oversized. Some have a rather “fish head” appearance, while others have a distinctly animal or insect aspect to them. Indeed, more than one Daemonix has features reminiscent of aquatic animals and this may indicate some connection to the sea in their distant past.

The dramatic variation in their shape and visage suggests they are primordial beings, perhaps leftover from some bygone age when demons ruled the Megaverse and the planets were only beginning to form. Their vile tempers, predatory instincts and reliance on brute strength seem to confirm such speculation. As does the fact that most higher demons and supernatural spirits seem to look upon them as humans regard monkeys or apes — animals beneath them and worlds apart. Presumably, this is why the Daemonix is a fading race of sub-demons overrun and overwhelmed by more powerful, magic-based supernatural beings such as “true demons,” Godlings, Demigods and the so-called gods of old.

Daemonix possess innate magic energy (i.e. large P.P.E. reserves) but have no means of tapping that energy reserve to create magical effects. Nor are they smart enough or patient enough to understand or learn the secrets of magic. Most also possess a smattering of psionic abilities, but nothing compared to greater demons, gods or even humans like the Mind Melter. Like most sub-demons, they lack true mystic might and a grasp of magic, which puts them at the bottom of the demonic hierarchy as slaves, workhorses and lap dogs for smaller and crueler, but more magically potent *true demons*. The Daemonix are sick of their station in life and tired of serving others as lowly slaves. Thus, they were stunned when the Tolkeenites arrived, freed them from their dimensional prison and offered them the opportunity to walk the earth. The sub-demons leapt at the opportunity to again be mighty warriors and destroyers of men — even if their wrath is limited to the Coalition Army and other enemies of the Kingdom of Magic (for now). While one could argue that the Daemonix have only traded one set of masters for another, the sub-demons don’t see it that way at all. First, the Tolkeenites they currently serve as warriors “liberated” them from a lowly

and despicable existence. Second, after liberating them, the Tolkeen representatives did not enslave them, but “asked” the Daemonix if they would join them and champion their battle against an enemy most hated. Only another slave can understand how gratifying it is to be set free and have one’s liberator respect and value them enough to “ask” them to join them. As far back as any Daemonix could remember, no one had ever “asked” them anything. No previous master had ever given them a choice or the freedom to say no. Overwhelmed by the gesture, the Daemonix embraced the Tolkeenites and agreed to fight on their behalf.

The leaders and people of Tolkeen have further won the favor of these brutes by (compared to their past) treating them as (relative) equals, or at least as beings to be respected and feared — which the monsters just love. It has been countless eons since anybody has stood humbled or in awe of their kind, and it is yet another welcomed pleasure that earns Tolkeen their everlasting loyalty. Seeing humans and D-Bees cringe, flee in terror, or plead for mercy is both comforting and exhilarating to the Daemonix. They are equally fulfilled and gratified by those mortals who dare to oppose them in hopeless battle, and enjoy more than words can express being unleashed upon other mortal beings to terrorize. It all adds to the monsters’ sense of freedom, power and being alive. It has been thousands upon thousands of years since any force allowed the Daemonix race to run free to wreak havoc, and never as an ally, a partner. This would all be wondrous enough as it is, but their benevolent and noble Tolkeenite allies go even further by bestowing them with gifts of something they call “Techno-Wizardry.” Weapons of magic that are able to tap into the Daemonix’s own inner reserves of mystic energy and draw upon it to empower the magical devices. Miracles that, for the first time ever, elevate them from lowly servants and put them on a more even keel with true demons. Or so the Daemonix like to believe.

One of the things that has always tormented the Daemonix is that most possess large, sometimes huge, amounts of P.P.E., but lack the ability to draw upon it to cast spell magic or even channel it into natural magical abilities like the so-called “lesser” demons. In their minds, it is this “defect” that has always kept them under the heel of other “greater” beings. Thanks to the Techno-Wizard think-tank at Tolkeen, that has all changed. The Techno-Wizards have found that they can attach bionic-like TW limbs and weapons (often just modifications of existing TW devices and technology) and the Daemonix can power and use them with their natural P.P.E. reserve. Since they are *sub-demons* without the power to bio-regenerate, the TW enhancements are not rejected and work perfectly.

The Daemonix are thrilled beyond belief with this turn of events which makes them true magical powerhouses. Incapable of understanding any principles of magic, the Daemonix see this as nothing short of a miracle, and their miracle-making human allies worthy of their eternal respect, allegiance and friendship. However, as far as anybody can tell, that respect and friendship extends only to the people and mages of Tolkeen, as is apparent

in how the Daemonix treat (or more appropriately “mistreat”) and brutalize the Coalition forces and other humanoids not directly allied with Tolkeen. Outsiders (and even some Tolkeen insiders) wonder how much of that loyalty and gratitude is actually “bought” with the Techno-Wizard augmentation. Without the Techno-Wizards of Tolkeen to create, attach, repair and maintain these “mysterious and miraculous mechanisms,” as the Daemonix refer to them, the monsters are devoid of magic abilities. And these newly empowered creatures never want to go back to being magically impotent again. In fact, it is all TW augmentation mages can do to keep the creatures from deliberately maiming and mutilating themselves in order to get as many TW mechanisms as possible attached to their bodies. (Note: Due to the alien nature of the Daemonix, this form of bionic-style TW augmentation *only* works on members of their race. It does not work on humans, D-Bees, Brodkil, Gargoyles or other supernatural beings. Bionics has the opposite effect on most beings, diminishing and blocking magic energy rather than releasing it in any usable way, shape or form. The Daemonix are truly unique.)

For now the horrid creatures behave themselves, heap thanks and praise upon their “grand and benevolent liberators,” as they are fond of calling all Tolkeenites, grovel at their feet, and are always subservient and obedient — shout “frog” and the Daemonix asks how high to leap. But how long will that last? Are the Tolkeenites and Techno-Wizards truly revered as gods by these strange creatures? And if so, will there ever come a day when the Daemonix realize that their “grand and benevolent liberators” are merely ordinary men? When that happens, will they not be seen as mere mortals — lesser creatures to be lorded over and enslaved? On the other hand, practitioners of magic, particularly Techno-Wizards, possess mystic knowledge beyond the comprehension of the Daemonix and are, to them, truly miracle workers, and as such, beings to be respected and revered.

The trouble with Daemonix

Ironically, Daemonix dislike other sub-demons like the Brodkil and Gargoyles, and do not get along with them. When put together without a practitioner of magic or other human or D-Bee Squad Leader to act as referee, the Daemonix will belittle, bully, abuse and mistreat the small sub-demons in an attempt to prove themselves to be their superiors and lord over them. They are even worse with true demons. It is most people’s best guess that these monsters have been kept so firmly and cruelly under the thumb of other demons that now that they have been empowered with Techno-Wizard bionic-like augmentation, the Daemonix are looking for some payback. In the least, they are no longer willing to take abuse or haughtiness from their old abusers.

This is bad, because the slightest arrogant gesture or condescending word, let alone an outright insult, will send these behemoths into a rage. Brawls between Daemonix and other demons are always bloody and quickly escalate into murder from either participant. To make matters worse, even lesser (but “true”) demons delight in needling the Daemonix and provoking fights. Battles that the barbaric monsters are only too ready to join. Daemonix are indeed brutes, and typically gang up on their demonic rivals, with two or three Daemonix to every one demon antagonist. The Daemonix aren’t too thrilled about dragons ei-

ther. In fact, they seem threatened by any powerful creature of magic and other supernatural beings (Spirits of Light, Elementals, etc.), but show them contempt and displeasure in words and attitude rather than flagrant hostility. Some mages are beginning to think there may be a good reason why these hulking brutes have always been oppressed and kept under the heel of demon society.

This incompatibility with other demons has given Tolkeen’s leaders reason for concern. However, the Daemonix have proven to be so effective against the Coalition, and there are so many of them compared even to Brodkil, let alone rare and difficult to control true demons, that the powers-that-be have convinced themselves everything will be okay. Other than making a point of keeping the various “breeds” of demons segregated, and having a human “handler” when they must work together, they ignore the problem. The Daemonix are simply too valuable to the war effort to consider getting rid of them. And speaking of getting rid of the Daemonix, nobody seems to have a plan for how to do that. Considering how much these monsters like their new found “buddies” at Tolkeen, and enjoy it here on Earth, convincing them to leave after the war may be a whole new problem. Moreover, the only people they seem to respect are the humans of Tolkeen and select D-Bees, particularly practitioners of magic. If Tolkeen loses and the kingdom is destroyed, aren’t the Daemonix likely to disperse into the world? Without their Tolkeen allies to guide and control them, what will they do? Where will they go?

All are questions that only the passage of time can answer.

Natural Enemies

In addition to the unbridled hate and rivalry between Daemonix and *all* other supernatural beings, **Wild Psi-Stalkers** take an instant loathing to the creatures, who they instinctively recognize as their natural enemies. This unreasoning hatred and revulsion toward the Daemonix is so overwhelming that a full two-thirds of the Psi-Stalkers who had allied themselves to Tolkeen (small number as that may have been) have quit. Most of them have gone to warn others of their kind that the people of Tolkeen have taken leave of their senses and unleashed a new race of demons into the world. Most return strengthened with hunting clans to stalk and destroy the sub-demons wherever they are encountered. These Wild Psi-Stalkers have not joined the Coalition forces, nor do they deliberately strike against Tolkeen as a people or a kingdom, rather they feel driven to eradicate the Daemonix from the Earth. To this end, any Daemonix encountered outside the borders of Tolkeen are stalked and slain without hesitation, while those operating within the kingdom’s borders are stalked and observed from a distance before any attack is launched. Any Daemonix found harassing or threatening a human for any reason, other than Coalition forces, is marked for death. Likewise, those sub-demons found engaging in acts of unwarranted brutality or torture, even against CS soldiers, are attacked and destroyed. In fact, there have been a number of incidents where Wild Psi-Stalkers have seemingly appeared out of nowhere to attack and kill Daemonix, resulting in the rescue of Coalition units.

When the fighting is over, the Wild Psi-Stalkers gather their injured and vanish back into the woods. Otherwise they watch and wait, attacking only when the sub-demons break away from

a larger unit as individuals, pairs or small manageable numbers. Like the warriors of Tolkeen, the Wild Psi-Stalkers use hit and run tactics and the element of surprise, striking when the behemoths least expect it. **Note:** At least 2000 Daemonix Psi-Stalker Hunters have come down from the northwest, and scores of new arrivals join the fight every day. If this continues, there will soon be a war within a war.

Civilized Psi-Stalkers and Dog Boys feel a similar visceral reaction toward the Daemonix and battle them with vigor and savagery that is frightening to the humans who fight along side them. The exact reason for this is unknown, and even the Psi-Stalkers and mutant canines can't easily put words to how they feel. One summed it up when he said,

"The loathing and need to destroy these abominations seems to well up from our very souls and radiates through every fiber of our being. We know the face of demonic evil when we see it. And we know when we are called upon to send it back to hell."

Daemonix vs the Coalition

The Daemonix are a new development in the war. Something of a "Phase Two" to keep the Coalition off balance and afraid. For the most part, the plan has worked, preventing the CS from picking up steam and remobilizing after their initial series of blunders and defeats. Many a CS soldier from grunt to officer asks himself what horror or secret weapon they can expect next from the Kingdom of Tolkeen, which is exactly what the War Council wants. It is impossible to effectively combat and counter an enemy when that enemy keeps changing the players, and sometimes even the playing field.

The Daemonix have proven to be fearless and wild combatants who thrive on adversity, fighting and chaos. They seem to find the Coalition Army a worthy opponent and take great glee in engaging its troops in combat. The monsters have found that the armor clad infantry foot soldiers and Skelebots are the easiest to defeat, but nothing seems to deter these vile creatures, not power armored troops, SAMAS, tanks or giant robots. They accept them all with equal enthusiasm and regard the Coalition's giant robots, Spider Skull Walkers and its most powerful armored units as challenges to test their power and newfound magic abilities.

The aquatic nature of the Daemonix is also well suited to the Minnesota terrain where there are thousands of bodies of water from small to large lakes and numerous rivers, including the Mississippi. This enables the creatures to launch surprise attacks, lumbering out of calm lakes and gentle flowing rivers, as well as provide a place to retreat to and hide in plain sight under the waves. Most Daemonix use the lakes and deeper rivers as places of refuge where they can go to rest, sleep or hide until ready to mount a new attack.

Since the *Mississippi River* is the line of demarcation into the heart of Tolkeen territory and the Coalition Army has established positions along its banks, Daemonix (as well as Aquatics and Water Elementals) are a constant threat. These creatures can appear from beneath the waves without warning, attack and vanish underwater at a moment's notice. This makes navigating the mighty river and its many tributaries extremely unpredictable and hazardous. Likewise, camping on the banks of any lake or river in Minnesota or western Wisconsin is begging for trouble,

and the simple task of going to the river to get water fills soldiers with dread.

Tolkeen's "Demon Soldiers" have become the primary target of CS patrols and deep insertion teams. Iron Juggernauts, Brodkil, Gargoyles and other demons are also being targeted in the hopes of dramatically reducing, and therefore diminishing, Tolkeen's offensive capabilities, at least when it comes to demonic shock-troopers.

Mixed groups of Dog Boys, Psi-Stalkers, Juicers and Commandos, as well as units entirely composed of power armor, are forming "demon hunter" squads to deal with the problem. The CS is a determined foe, and is slowly but surely mounting a new offensive. While the process may be slow and pitted with setbacks, the CS is constantly moving forward. Although Tolkeen's defenders hate to admit it, the Coalition Army is also hurting them, and the new level of violence, cruelty and destruction being leveled against them in the Coalition's "scorched earth" approach will hurt them even more.

The Daemonix Revealed

There are five known types of Daemonix, each serving a particular function in their primitive and war-like society. Each has two names, one is a recognizable human word, the other a phrase they use to describe themselves. Both are descriptive and indicate the creatures' base nature, purpose, and social position. They are ...

Feculence — or "He who is most foul and cunning."

Manslayer — or "He who battles."

Immolator — or "He who destroys."

Hangdog — or "He who serves" and "He who is lowest of the low."

Basal — or "He who shall be obeyed."

Daemonix Population Breakdown at Tolkeen:

The following are the approximate numbers of Daemonix known to be serving Tolkeen. It is believed these numbers represent 80-90% of the total population of these sub-demons throughout the Megaverse. Riffs Earth is their last hurrah.

6,900 Feculence (spies)

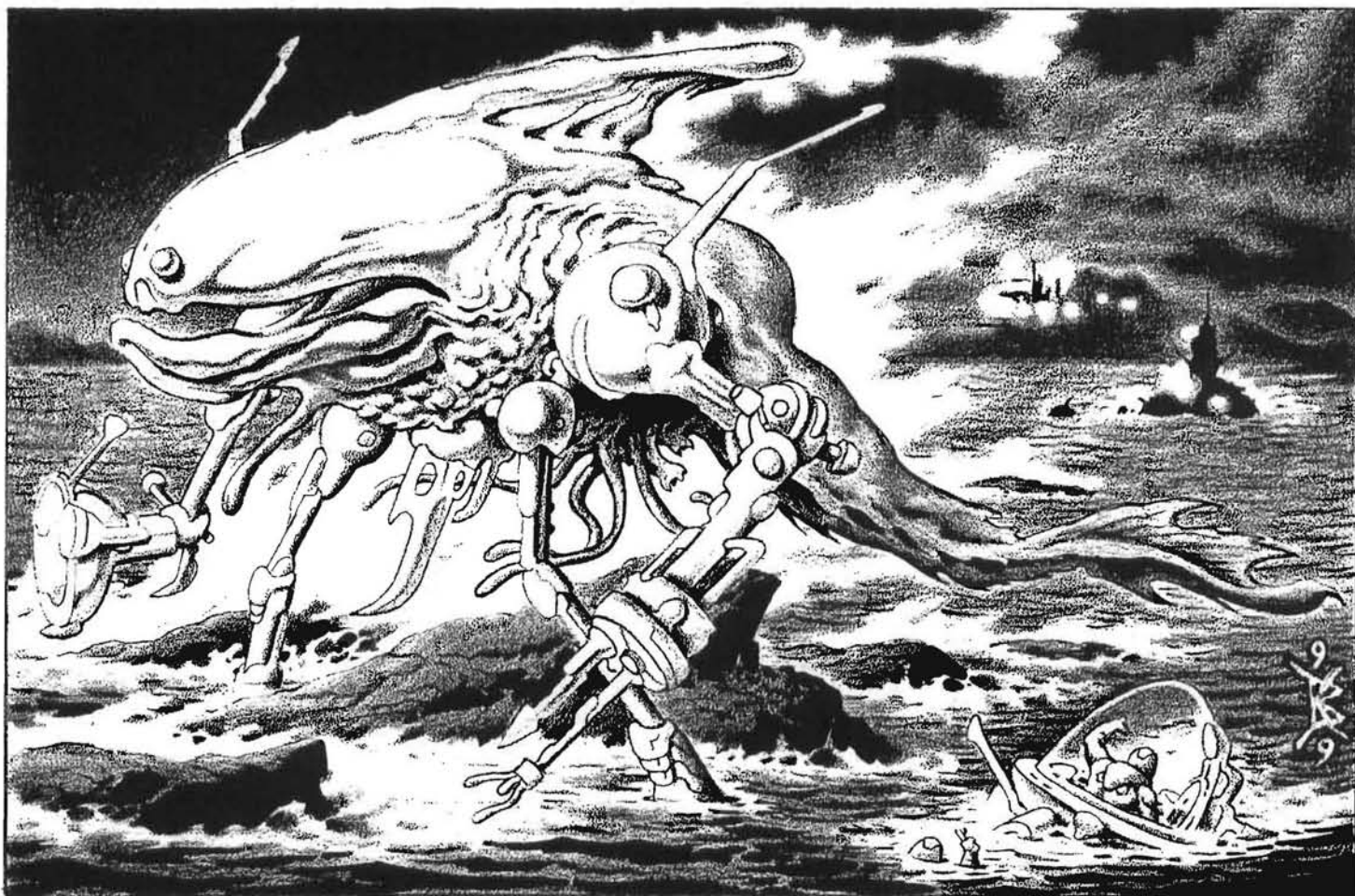
10,000 Manslayer (soldiers)

8,700 Immolator (shock-troopers/elite battle legion)

6,100 Hangdog (servants/watchdogs)

1,300 Basal (Overmasters/leaders)

Note: Approximately 33,000 in total. By comparison, Tolkeen enlists an estimated 6000 Brodkil and 2000 Gargoyles.



Feculence Daemonix

The word *feculence* means fetid or foul, and that's exactly what this sub-demon is. Aptly called "He who is most foul and cunning," the Feculence function as spies, assassins, bushwhackers, interrogators, and torturers. Work they love and excel at most admirably.

Feculence are the smallest of the Daemonix, standing only 12-15 feet (3.6 to 4.6 m) tall, but are 22 to 25 feet (6.7 to 7.6 m) long. They are also the most obviously aquatic, with an elongated head that ever so vaguely resembles a dolphin or orca. A ridged dorsal fin crowns its back and its hindquarters end in a long fish or eel-like tail. The eyes are small pink orbs and it has a long, gaping but toothless maw. *Normally* it walks on a pair of spindly crab-like legs with four to six short tentacles dangling from its underbelly like the udder of a cow. A pair of arms, thicker and larger than its legs, are found under the dorsal fin roughly mid-way on its body. Its underbelly is lumpy like the hide of a toad or wet, drippy plaster (or milk curd). The tail and top of the creature are a pasty grey color graduating toward the front into a grayish off-white head and fin. The underbelly is a pale, mottled pink and violet with the tentacles being a darker, almost purple color. Its large tongue is a healthy pink and the Feculence's voice is raspy, and when they are excited, reminiscent of a cackling dolphin.

Feculence Daemonix NPC Villain

Also Known as "He who is most foul and cunning."

Race: Archaic Sub-Demon

Alignment: Always Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. is slightly higher than the average human but cunning and sadistic: 1D6+9, M.E. 1D6+10, M.A. 1D4+6, P.S. 2D6+16 (increase by 50% when in water), P.P. 1D6+10, P.E. 2D6+16, P.B. 1D4, Spd 2D6+16 (triple speed underwater with a minimum swimming spd of 54 or 37 mph/59 km); supernatural strength and endurance.

M.D.C.: P.E. x10, but increase by 50% at night or when underwater (on S.D.C. worlds a Feculence has 2D6x10 +P.E. number for Hit Points and 2D6x10 S.D.C.; increase both by 50% underwater. A.R. 10 on dry land, increases to A.R. 12 underwater).

Horror Factor: 14

Size: 12-15 feet (3.6 to 4.6 m) tall, 22-25 feet (6.7-7.6 m) long.

Weight: 4-5 tons.

Average Life Span: Uncertain, 1000+ years; may be immortal.

P.P.E.: P.E. attribute number x3 +220.

Disposition: Foul-spirited and malicious, Feculence love to hurt and torture other beings. They are especially fond of hurting great and powerful beings, the more powerful the better, and take delight in seeing the great, good and powerful suffer and fall. Among the Daemonix as a people, the Feculence serve as scouts, spies, assassins, and the living weapons that seek revenge and retribution.

Natural Abilities: Fair speed and can run without pause or exhaustion for 1D4 hours or swim (98%) without fatigue indefinitely. Can breathe in air and underwater, survive depths of up to two miles (3.2 km), prowl (see TW enhancement),

track humanoids 76%, has nightvision (one mile/1.6 km), and heals much faster than humans, roughly at a rate of 2D6+2 M.D.C. per 24 hours.

Knows All Languages: Magically understands and speaks all languages 90%, but cannot read.

Articulated Tentacles: The creature has 4-6 tentacles on its underbelly, which it can use like hands. Each is 7-9 feet (2.1 to 2.7 m) long and can be used to strike/punch, use weapons, handle tools, entangle or pin opponents, and similar functions.

Limited Invulnerability (special): Feculence are impervious to cold and disease, and on Rifts Earth they are M.D.C. creatures invulnerable to S.D.C. weapons. Poisons, drugs, electricity and cold/ice based magic do half damage, however, fire and heat based magic does double damage. Vulnerable to psionics, M.D. weapons and magic.

O.C.C.: Not applicable.

R.C.C. Skills: Basic Math 92%, Interrogation 88%, Intelligence 80%, Surveillance (Tailing, only 86%), Streetwise 80%, Land Navigation 80% (+12% underwater), and Wilderness Survival 98%. Also see Natural Abilities, above, and TW powers and Psionics, below.

R.C.C. Combat: Attacks Per Melee: Seven

Damage: Bite 2D6 M.D., head-butt, punch or tail slash M.D. varies with supernatural P.S., or by weapon or magic.

R.C.C. Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +3 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge, +4 to pull punch, +4 to disarm, +4 to entangle, +2 to roll with impact or fall, +7 to save vs Horror Factor. R.C.C. bonuses are all in addition to any possible attribute bonuses. All, except H.F., are doubled when underwater.

Magic: Normally none, but with TW enhancements that's all changed.

Standard Techno-Wizard Augmentation: Techno-Wizardry has given the Daemonix greater power than the creature has ever known. Like most of its kind, even the TW devices and magic it selects reflects its dark purpose and place among it demonic kin.

TW Legs (2): A pair of mechanical legs replace the original crab-legs. These mechanical contrivances are also thin and stilt-like, but possess mystical properties. They leave no tracks, make no sound (no footprints nor the sound of footsteps), enable the Feculence to *prowl* at 80% and add +10 to running Speed (no affect on swimming speed). Each leg has 150 M.D.C.

TW Weapon Arms (2): Most Feculence insist on having both of their arms replaced with TW multi-weapon systems, using their remaining tentacles for hands.

- The right arm ends in a bulb covered with metal plates. When the metal shield coverings (40 M.D.C.) open, they reveal what looks like a large spotlight (20 M.D.C.; attackers must make a called shot to hit and are -4 to strike). When the protective plates slide open the Techno-Wizard device is ready to work its magic, when closed it can be used as a club (1D6 M.D. +P.S. punch damage). It enables the creature to cast the following spells at will (Note: Each spell uses up three melee attacks and costs the usual P.P.E. to cast, but has a fixed level of power equal to a 5th level spell caster; standard save): *Globe of Daylight* (2), *Light Target* (6), *Dark Light* (5) (a grey beam of light that inflicts *Fear* exactly like the 2nd level spell), and *Light of Truth* (15) (a narrow white light beam

that inflicts the 6th level spell, *Words of Truth* on whoever it strikes). M.D.C. of Right Arm: 110.

- The left arm is both a weapon and implement of torture. The weapon is the top, pointed barrel that fires a lightning bolt that does 4D6 M.D. up to 1200 feet (366 m) away, for the cost of 5 P.P.E. points per blast.

The lower forked appendage need only touch its victim to inflict any of the following as desired by the Feculence to inflict torture (P.P.E. cost is the same as always): *Befuddle* (3), *Agony* (20), *Blind* (6), *Mute* (50), *Paralysis: Lesser* (5), *Life Drain* (25) as well as a few spells to bind and control victims: *Trance* (10), *Domination* (10), and *Forcebonds* (25; see **Federation of Magic™** for those not listed in the RPG). M.D.C. of Arm: 170

Optional Extra Arm: This is a simple mechanical arm that can either have a mechanical hand or a slashing blade (2D6 M.D.). The arm is powered by the P.P.E. of the Feculence so if all P.P.E. is temporarily expended, it will not function.

Psionics: Major Psionic with M.E.x4 for I.S.P. and the powers of See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Presence Sense, Telepathy and Mind Block.

Enemies: All other demons and gods. Greatly dislike dragons and other creatures of magic of whom they are envious and fearful. Most humans and other mortal beings are regarded as weak, inferior beings to be subjugated and tormented. Historically, Daemonix are enslaved, used and abused by other demons and dark gods.

Allies: The people of Tolkeen with all Techno-Wizards, King Creed and Warlord Scard at the top of the list. And of course, members of their own race.

Value: None

Habitat: Currently the Tolkeen-Minnesota/Wisconsin region.

Manslayer Daemonix

The Manslayer, or "He who battles," is the foot soldier of the Daemonix race. Born warriors whose purpose is to fight, kill and destroy. They are only truly happy when fighting, even if they are losing. Without an enemy to battle they brawl among themselves and get cranky and agitated.

They are towering giants who stand 18 feet (5.5 m) tall. A Manslayer has a humanoid body with a pair of large muscular arms, comparatively short, powerful legs, and a fish or frog-like head, complete with huge round eyes with a dark green (almost black) center. The mouth is a huge frog-like maw with large, widely spaced teeth. Tendril-like spines extend from the top of the head. The skin is the same rubbery texture of all Daemonix with many thin blue veins rippling across their muscles. The skin color is white with a slight grey tint to it that gets a bit darker under the neck on the back.

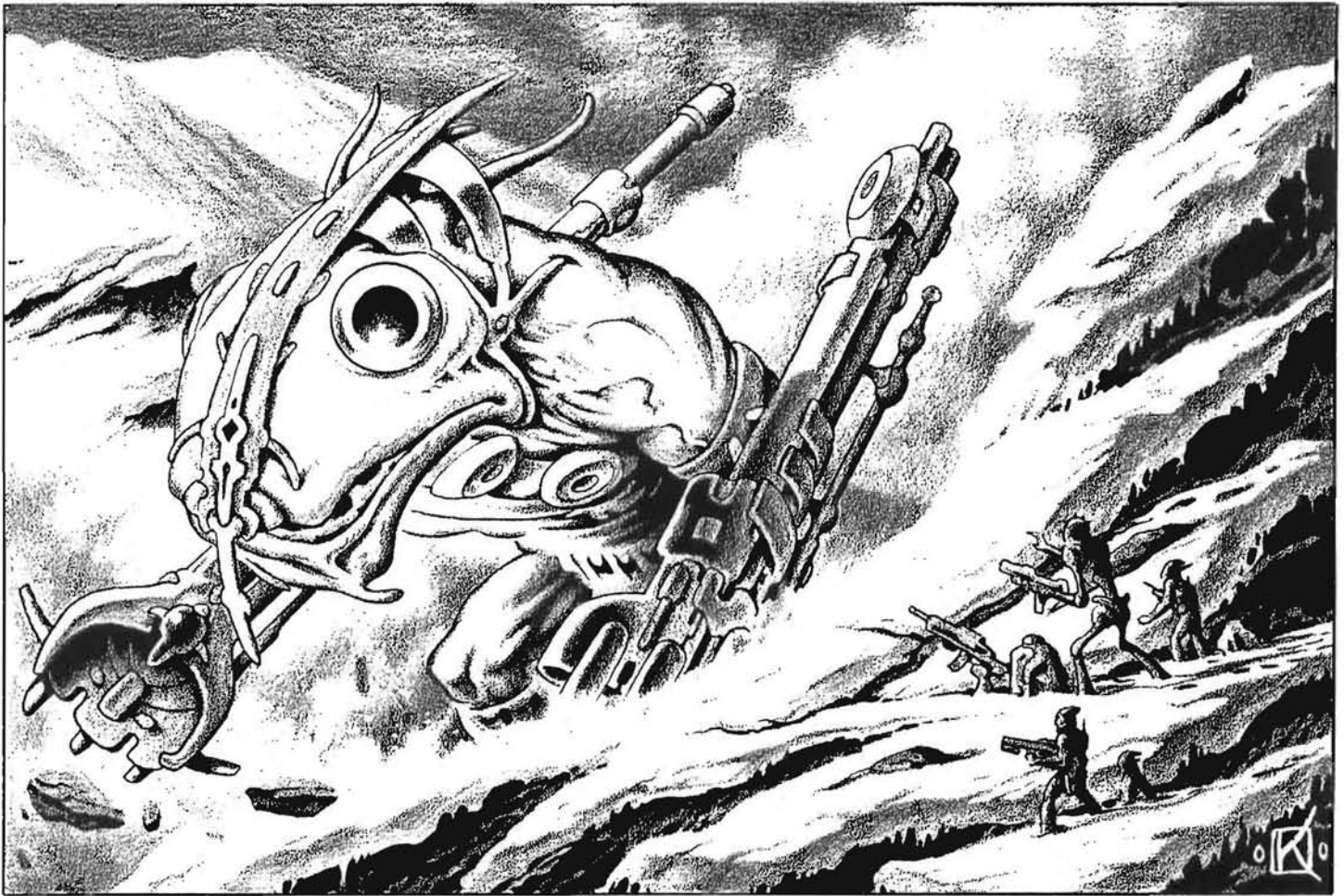
Manslayer Daemonix NPC Villain

Also Known as "He who battles."

Race: Archaic Sub-Demon

Alignment: Always Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. is average: 1D4+8, M.E. 1D4+10, M.A. 1D4+4, P.S. 2D6+30 (increase by 25% when in water), P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 1D4+20, P.B. 1D4, Spd 2D6+20 (double speed underwater with a minimum swimming speed of 42 or 30



mph/48 km); supernatural strength and endurance.

M.D.C.: P.E. x20, but increase by 25% when underwater (on S.D.C. worlds Manslayers have 3D6x10 +P.E. number for Hit Points and 3D6x10 S.D.C.; increase both by 25% underwater. A.R. 12 on dry land, increases to A.R. 13 underwater).

Horror Factor: 12; increases to 14 when there are eight or more.

Size: 18 feet (5.5 m) tall.

Weight: 6-7 tons.

Average Life Span: Uncertain, 1000+ years; may be immortal.

P.P.E.: P.E. attribute number x2 +330.

Disposition: Manslayers are natural born killers and destroyers who live for war. Thus, they are very aggressive, quick to answer a challenge and do not hesitate to rush to war when so commanded, even if they are outnumbered. That having been said, Manslayers are not fools or suicidal, so unless there is some obvious strategic need for them to sacrifice their lives, or a powerful master forcing them to suicide, they fight but make a tactical retreat to regroup and fight another time. Among the Daemonix as a people, Manslayers are the capable foot soldiers who fight to defend, protect and avenge.

Natural Abilities: Fair speed and can run without pause or exhaustion for 24 hours or swim (90%) without fatigue for 1D4 days. Can breathe in air and underwater, survive depths of up to two miles (3.2 km), track humanoid 60%, has nightvision (one mile/1.6 km), and heals much faster than humans, roughly at a rate of 3D6+3 M.D.C. per 24 hours.

Knows All Languages: Magically understands and speaks all languages 90%, but cannot read.

Enhanced Vision (special): Polarized filters slide over the eyes in bright light to protect them in a similar way as humans use sunglasses, plus the creature can see the infrared and ultraviolet spectrums of light which means it has the equivalent of natural infrared and ultraviolet sight. Range: 1600 feet (488 m).

Limited Invulnerability (special): Manslayers are impervious to cold and disease (including magic equivalents), and on Rifts Earth they are M.D.C. creatures, invulnerable to S.D.C. weapons. Heat and fire (including magic fire) do half damage, however, these warriors are vulnerable to all other types of M.D. weapons, explosives and magic.

O.C.C.: Not applicable.

R.C.C. Skills: Basic Math 80%, Intelligence 60%, Detect Ambush 60%, Detect Concealment 50%, Camouflage 60%, Climb 90%/80%, Land Navigation 85% (+5% underwater), and Wilderness Survival 98%. Also see Natural Abilities, above, and TW powers and Psionics, below.

R.C.C. Combat: Attacks Per Melee: Eight!

Damage: Bite 5D6 M.D., head-butt, punch or kick Mega-Damage varies with supernatural P.S., or by weapon or magic.

R.C.C. Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +4 to strike, +5 to parry, +3 to dodge, +6 to pull punch, +2 to disarm, +3 to roll with impact or fall, +5 to save vs Horror Factor. R.C.C. bonuses are all in addition to any possible attribute bonuses. All, except H.F., are +1 when underwater.

Magic: Normally none, but with TW enhancements that's all changed.

Standard Techno-Wizard Augmentation: Techno-Wizardry has given the Daemonix greater power than the creature has ever known. Like most of its kind, even the TW devices and magic it selects reflect its dark purpose and place among its demonic kin.

TW Weapon Arms (2 of Choice): Most Manslayers insist on having both of their arms replaced, each with a different TW multi-weapon systems for maximum power and versatility. They use their telekinesis or a mechanical arm for hands. The tiny minority (10%) who opt for only one TW Weapon Arm (unless they get TW legs) are considered fools or cowards. Each arm has 240 M.D.C.

Type One "Wind and Fury" TW Weapon Arm: The forearm is replaced with a long cannon-like appendage that is very narrow, but widens where the hand should be and ends in a catcher's mitt type opening (see the right arm in the illustration). This weapon enables the creature to cast the following spells at will (**Note:** Each spell uses up three melee attacks and costs the usual P.P.E. to cast, but has a fixed level of power equal to a 5th level spell caster; standard save). Shooting range enables this cannon to fire the magical effect at targets up to 1600 feet/488 m away!): *Thunderclap* (4), *Energy Disruption* (12), *Wave of Frost* (6), *Wind Rush* (20), *Shockwave* (35) and *Whirlwind* (30; same as the 5th level Air Warlock spell)! The appendage can also be used as a blunt weapon that does 2D6 M.D. +P.S. punch damage.

Type Two "Battle" TW Weapon Arm: The forearm is replaced with a long cannon-like appendage with three different barrels and a spindly, concealed retractable mechanical arm and hand (P.S. 12, P.P. 12, and a 12 foot/3.6 m reach); see the right arm in the illustration.

This weapon can fire any of the following magical energy blasts for the cost of 8 P.P.E. Each blast counts as one melee attack/action and the different types of blasts can be used in any combination.

Fire Bolt: 4D6 M.D. up to 2000 feet (610 m) away.

Lightning Bolt: 6D6 M.D. up to 2000 feet (610 m) away.

Magical Energy Bolt: 5D6 M.D. up to 2000 feet (610 m) away.

In the alternative, a *Frostblade* (15 P.P.E., duration 5 minutes, 4D6 M.D.) can be made to appear at the nose of the weapon to use as a sword in melee combat.

Type Three "Lance" TW Weapon Arm: The forearm is replaced with a long "lance" like appendage. This magical weapon does 2D6 M.D. +Supernatural P.S. punch damage as a clubbing weapon, or 3D6 M.D. +Supernatural P.S. punch damage as a stabbing weapon (can also be used as a power strike to inflict double damage but counts as two melee attacks). The lance has 300 M.D.C.

In addition, the Lance can cast the following magical spells (**Note:** Each spell uses up three melee attacks and costs the usual P.P.E. to cast, but has a fixed level of power equal to a 5th level spell caster; standard save). *Chameleon* (6), *Repel Animals* (7), *Invisibility: Simple* (6) and *Fly as the Eagle* (25).

Optional Crown of Defense TW Device: A metal head band is bolted to the creature's head with an ornate strip running down the middle of its face and two others at the top, back of the head behind the eyes and connecting to the jaw (see illustration). **Note:** Roughly 75% of all Manslayers have

this option. The few who do not avoid it because they feel it is a sign of weakness.

This crown makes the Manslayer +3 to save vs psionic attack, impervious to possession, and enables them to cast upon themselves the spells of *Armor of Ithan* (10; lasts for 5 minutes, provides 50 M.D.C. and magic, fire, lightning, and cold attacks do half damage while it is in place), *Impervious to Energy* (20; lasts 10 minutes), and *Repel Animals* (7). **Note:** The crown has 150 M.D.C.

Optional TW Legs (2): A pair of mechanical legs replace the original ones. These mechanical contrivances magically imbue the creature with a speed of 50 mph (80 km) and the ability to leap 20 feet (6.1 m) high and across (increase by 50% with a running start). Each leg has 200 M.D.C. **Note:** Only half the Manslayers take this option.

Psionics: Major Psychic with M.E.x4 for I.S.P. and the powers of Ectoplasm, Telekinesis, Telekinetic Leap, Telekinetic Punch, Telekinetic Lift, Levitation, Resist Fatigue, and Mind Block.

Enemies: Same as the Feculence.

Allies: Same as the Feculence.

Value: None, other than as slave labor or warriors.

Habitat: Currently the Tolkeen-Minnesota/Wisconsin region.

Immolator Daemonix

"He who destroys" are single-minded monsters bent on pulverizing their opponents and decimating their enemies. When sent to attack a city or stronghold, the Immolator is not satisfied with merely defeating his enemy, but extinguishing all life he finds, demolishing the buildings, and smashing everything that catches his notice (vehicles, statues, etc.). They are truly demonic weapons of destruction. When not destroying, the Immolator becomes quiet and sullen, finds someplace to rest and waits for the next assignment to annihilate again. Unless provoked into action, they tend to ignore everything going on around them waiting for a call to arms (which they hope will come soon).

The Immolator is a humongous creature that towers over 20 feet (6 m) and has shoulders 10 feet (3 m) across. The arms and legs are thickly muscled, the feet webbed. The head is gargantuan and resembles Earth whales, except its massive, grinning maw is filled with hundreds of sharp teeth the size of short swords! The rubbery skin of the monster is light bluish-grey with purple veins networking across the arms and legs. The throat and underbelly are a light pastel pink or violet and its tiny eyes a pale yellow with a brown center. Its normal hands are large, with three thick, webbed fingers ending in black claws (3D6 M.D. +Supernatural P.S. punch damage). However, most Immolators sacrifice their legs and hands for Techno-Wizard weapon arms.

Immolator Daemonix NPC Villain

Also Known as "He who destroys."

Race: Archaic Sub-Demon

Alignment: Always Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. is slightly above average: 1D4+10, M.E. 1D6+10, M.A. 1D6+4, P.S. 2D6+40 (increase by 25% when in water), P.P. 1D6+19, P.E. 1D6+22, P.B. 1D4, Spd 1D6+20 (double speed underwater with a minimum swimming speed of



42 or 30 mph/48 km); supernatural strength and endurance.

M.D.C.: P.E. x30, and it increases by 25% when underwater (on S.D.C. worlds Immolators have 4D6x10 +P.E. number for Hit Points and 3D6x10 S.D.C.; increase both by 25% underwater. A.R. 15 on dry land, increases to A.R. 16 underwater).

Horror Factor: 15

Size: 20-24 feet (6.1 to 7.4 m) tall.

Weight: 14-20 tons.

Average Life Span: Uncertain, 1000+ years; may be immortal.

P.P.E.: P.E. attribute number x6 +440.

Disposition: Immolators are natural born warriors and destroyers who live for war and to obliterate. When they latch onto a cause or mission (as is evident in Tolkeen), they become obsessed with it and will not rest until whatever or whomever they have been sent to immolate has been completely crushed. These behemoths can be amazingly calm and passive when not on some unholy quest, but when provoked they fight without mercy and until their opponent is slain, beaten or brutalized beyond recognition. The only things that can stop "He who destroys" from killing somebody or finishing a mission is for its master (in this case the mages and generals of Tolkeen) or a Basal Daemonix to intervene and stop the carnage or give the monster a new assignment. The only other alternative is to destroy the Immolator itself. Among the Daemonix, Immolators are the shock-troopers and weapons of mass destruction.

Natural Abilities: Fair speed and can run, swim or fight indefinitely without pause or exhaustion. Can breathe in air and underwater, survive depths of up to five miles (8 km), track humanoids 60%, has nightvision (one mile/1.6 km), and

heals much faster than humans, roughly at a rate of 4D6+6 M.D.C. per 24 hours.

Knows All Languages: Magically understands and speaks all languages 90%, but cannot read. These giants rarely speak, however, except to bellow, scream war-cries and occasionally to taunt their adversaries. They have a deep, booming voice.

Limited Invulnerability (special): Immolators are impervious to cold, disease and possession (including magic equivalents), and on Rifts Earth they are M.D.C. creatures, invulnerable to S.D.C. weapons. Heat and fire (including magic fire) do half damage, however, these destroyers are vulnerable to all other types of M.D. weapons, explosives and magic.

O.C.C.: Not applicable.

R.C.C. Skills: Basic Math 80%, Intelligence 50%, Detect Ambush 70%, Detect Concealment 80%, Camouflage 50%, Climb 70%/60%, Land Navigation 90% (+5% underwater), and Wilderness Survival 98%. Also see Natural Abilities, above, and TW powers and Psionics, below.

R.C.C. Combat: Attacks Per Melee: Ten!

Damage: Bite 1D6x10 M.D.! Head-butt, punch or kick M.D. varies with supernatural P.S., or by weapon or magic.

R.C.C. Bonuses: +4 on initiative, +5 to strike, +3 to parry, +2 to dodge, +1 to pull punch, +1 to disarm, +3 to roll with impact or fall, +8 to save vs Horror Factor. R.C.C. bonuses are all in addition to any possible attribute bonuses. All, except H.F., are +2 when underwater.

Magic: Normally none, but with TW enhancements that's all changed.

Standard Techno-Wizard Augmentation: Techno-Wizardry has given the Daemonix greater power than the creature has ever known. Like most of its kind, even the TW devices and magic it selects reflect its dark purpose and place among its demonic kin.

TW Legs (2): A pair of mechanical legs replace the original ones. These mechanical contrivances magically imbue the creature with a speed of 50 mph (80 km) and the ability to leap 15 feet (4.6 m) high and across (increase by 50% with a running start). Each leg has 300 M.D.C.

TW Weapon Arms (2): Most Immolators insist on having both of their arms replaced with TW multi-weapon systems. **Note:** In all cases, each spell uses up three melee attacks and costs the usual P.P.E. to cast, but has a fixed level of power equal to a 5th level spell caster; standard save.

- The right forearm is a strange looking device that has a small, spinning dish at the end and a long, wand-like contraption above it.

The "spinning dish" (75 M.D.C.) enables the Immolator to cast the following spells at will: *Wind Rush* (20), *Wind Blast* (40; 2D4x10+30 M.D., 1000 feet/305 m range; see Air Elemental magic in *Rifts® Conversion Book One*, page 68), *Extinguish Fire* (4), *Magic Net* (7), and *Float in Air* (5).

The "wand" can fire a laser-like bolt or a lightning bolt, whichever the user desires (point and shoot, +2 to strike), either of which inflicts 4D6 M.D. and has a range of 2000 feet (610 m); P.P.E. cost: 5 points per blast. The wand has 60 M.D.C. but it is a small and difficult target to hit, so it is -6 to strike even with a called shot.

- The left arm is unique in that it offers a mechanical "hand" with short, stubby fingers to use to pick up and handle objects. A long metal shaft that resembles a poker with a round ball at the end is the detachable weapon for this device. This ball hooks into the palm of the hand while the fingers grasp onto it, securing it completely. Nothing short of blowing off the hand (100 M.D.C.) can sever it from the arm. The long poker-like rod is a magic weapon that can parry other magic weapons, inflicts 4D6 M.D. +Supernatural P.S. punch damage as a blunt weapon, 1D4x10 M.D. +Supernatural P.S. punch damage when used to impale/stab an opponent. Plus it can generate the following magic (as is appropriate) to whatever it is impaled in (i.e. stab or insert poker, pick the desired effect and spend the necessary P.P.E.): *Energy Disruption* (12), *Paralysis: Lesser* (5), *Fear* (5), *Dispel Magic Barriers* (20), and *Negate Magic* (30; when used on shapechangers, stabbing them and using this spell will force them to assume their natural form; when an illusion is pierced and Negation is used, the illusion instantly vanishes). **Note:** The rod and ball have 250 M.D.C. but are difficult to hit; -5 to strike even with a called shot.

Rods of Power: Large, crooked, M.D.C. metal rods are implanted in the head (with TW implanted devices concealed under the skin). They protrude like great whiskers just above the eyes and imbue the behemoth with the following spell magic. *Aura of Power* (4), *Armor Bizarre* (15; provides demonic looking armor with 75 M.D.C., lasts for five minutes and adds +2 to the Immolator's H.F.), *Sorcerous Fury* (70; fires energy bolts that do 2D4x10 M.D., 300 foot/91.5 m range, five minute duration), *Wall of Wind* (40), *Summon Storm* (300), and a personal favorite of most Immolators,

Desiccate the Supernatural (50). **Note:** See **Federation of Magic™** for the descriptions of most of these spells. Each rod has 90 M.D.C. but attackers are -5 to strike even with a called shot.

Psionics: Major Psychic with M.E.x4 for I.S.P. and the powers of Ectoplasm, Telekinesis, Telekinetic Push, Detect Psionics, Sense Magic, See the Invisible, Presence Sense, and Mind Block.

Enemies: Same as the Feculence.

Allies: Same as the Feculence.

Value: None, other than as a warrior/destroyer and demolitions.

Habitat: Currently the Tolkeen-Minnesota/Wisconsin region.

Hangdog Daemonix

The Hangdog is a hideous, four legged monstrosity that resembles a demonic rhinoceros with Popeye-like bloated and clawed forearms. This downcast beast of burden is "the lowest of the low" and made to serve even the other Daemonix. As such, it is not *allowed* to be "elevated" by receiving magic powers from TW augmentation. However, it is allowed to be used as a "combat riding" and "attack" animal. As the latter, it is like a giant attack dog, only with a large horn to stab and gore its opponents, a huge maw and slashing claws. The Hangdog is always angry and cantankerous, but will obey the humans of Tolkeen and all other Daemonix.

As a combat riding animal, its P.P.E. reserve can be tapped to power a host of Techno-Wizard weapons. The illustration shows what is becoming a standard body mounting with a driver/animal controller who fires one or two forward facing TW rifles or cannons (Starfire, Shard cannon, etc.). Behind him is quite literally a "tail gunner" to cover his back and blast away on a swivel seat that can rotate 90 degrees from side to side, and 120 degrees up and down. The tail gunner typically uses a conventional M.D. or TW rifle. Additional gear, supplies, weapons and equipment are hung from the haunches and behind of the Hangdog.

Hangdog Daemonix NPC Villain

Also Known as "He who serves" and "Lowest of the low."

Race: Archaic Sub-Demon

Alignment: Always Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. Is below average: 1D4+5, M.E. 1D4+6, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2D6+30, P.P. 1D6+14, P.E. 1D4+20, P.B. 1D4, Spd 2D6+48 (with a minimum spd of 50 or 35 mph/56 km; half that speed swimming); supernatural strength and endurance.

M.D.C.: P.E. x20 (on S.D.C. worlds Hangdogs have 3D6x10 +P.E. number for Hit Points and 3D6x10 S.D.C.; A.R. 14).

Horror Factor: 14; increases to 15 when there are eight or more.

Size: 11 feet (3.3 m) tall with the horn adding an additional 3-4 feet (0.9 to 1.2 m) to the overall height. 16-19 feet (4.9 to 5.8 m) long.

Weight: 12-15 tons.

Average Life Span: Uncertain, 1000+ years; may be immortal.

P.P.E.: P.E. attribute number x3 +130.

Disposition: Incessantly angry, grumpy, snorting and grunting.

These animal-like Daemonix hate their lot in life and like to let people know it, so they are constantly grouching and complaining about everything. They actually don't mind being used as "war horses" at Tolkeen because it gives them a



chance to do something other than dig/mine or haul cargo (not that they don't grumble about it).

Natural Abilities: Good speed and can run and work for days on end without suffering from exhaustion. Ironically, unlike other Daemonix, the Hangdog hates water and tries to avoid it, but they are fairly good swimmers (70%), can hold their breath for 30 minutes and survive depths of up to one mile (1.6 km), track by scent 50% (+20% if the scent is blood or decay), dig, excavate, nightvision (one mile/1.6 km), and heals much faster than humans, roughly at a rate of 3D6+10 M.D.C. per 24 hours.

Knows All Languages: Magically understands and speaks all languages 90%, but cannot read. Mostly complains and threatens.

Limited Invulnerability (special): Hangdogs are impervious to cold and disease (including magic equivalents), and on Rifts Earth they are M.D.C. creatures, invulnerable to S.D.C. weapons. Heat and fire (including magic fire) do half damage, however, they are vulnerable to all other types of M.D. weapons, explosives and magic.

Superhuman Cargo Capabilities (special): Hangdogs can pull their P.S. x1,000 pounds in weight. That means the puniest can pull at least 32,000 pounds (16 tons)!

O.C.C.: Not applicable.

R.C.C. Skills: Basic Math 70%, Detect Ambush 50%, Detect Concealment 50%, Camouflage 70%, Climb 80%/20%, Land Navigation 95%, and Wilderness Survival 98%. Also see Natural Abilities, above, and psionic powers, below.

R.C.C. Combat: Attacks Per Melee: Six

Damage: Bite 6D6 M.D., gore with horn 3D6 M.D. +Supernatural P.S. damage (double damage from a running-ram attack, but counts as three melee actions), claw strike 4D6 +Supernatural P.S. damage head-butt, punch (no claws used) or kick Mega-Damage varies with supernatural P.S.

R.C.C. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +4 to strike, +1 to parry, +2 to dodge, +2 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact or fall, +4 to save vs Horror Factor. R.C.C. bonuses are all in addition to any possible attribute bonuses.

Magic: None. Aren't allowed to get TW implants and augmentation.

Psionics: Minor Psychic with M.E.x2 for I.S.P. and the powers of Deaden Senses and Ectoplasm.

Enemies: Same as the Feculence.

Allies: Same as the Feculence.

Value: None, other than as a battle mount and attack dog.

Habitat: Currently the Tolkeen-Minnesota/Wisconsin region.

Basal Daemonix Overmaster

The Basal are the Overmasters, the leaders of the Daemonix — "He who shall be obeyed." They are huge, frightful beings deserving of the title, "demon." Some call the Basal a "torso with eyes." The massive head is nothing more than a mound sunken into the torso. A pair of large, muscular arms extend from the shoulder area and end in strong, thick three fingered hands. Below those arms are a pair of smaller ones, with two



long, thin fingers and a stretched thumb, giving these hands the appearance of a truncated spider. The lower body tapers into a cone giving the Basal the overall appearance of a slug with arms. The mouth is more like the mandibles of some giant insect and its emerald green eyes are piercing and menacing.

Unlike the other Daemonix, the only Techno-Wizard enhancement Basal want are "legs." Apparently they have always wanted legs so that they may, "stand tall and look into the eyes of those who think themselves superior, before we slay them." Or so they say. The Overmasters decline all other augmentation because it interferes with and diminishes their formidable psionic powers.

Basal Daemonix NPC Villain

Also Known as "He who shall be obeyed."

Race: Archaic Sub-Demon.

Alignment: Always Aberrant or Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+16, M.E. 1D6+20, M.A. 1D6+16, P.S. 1D6+40 (increase by 20% when in water), P.P. 1D6+19, P.E. 1D6+20, P.B. 1D4, Spd 1D6+16 (double speed underwater); supernatural strength and endurance.

M.D.C.: P.E. x50, and it increases by 20% when underwater (on S.D.C. worlds Basal have 1D6x100 +P.E. number for Hit Points and 3D6x10 S.D.C.; increase both by 25% underwater. A.R. 15 on dry land, increases to A.R. 16 underwater).

Horror Factor: 16

Size: 20 feet (6.1 m) tall — 26 feet (8 m) tall with TW legs.

Weight: 14-16 tons.

Average Life Span: Uncertain, 2000+ years; may be immortal.

P.P.E.: P.E. attribute number x20 +240.

Disposition: Cold and calculating. No one really knows what a Basal is thinking or what it really wants. When commanding others, whether Daemonix or mortal humanoids, they are very clear, direct, and authoritative. Overmasters are also very demanding, and with the exception of Hangdogs who complain by nature, those who dare to question them, complain or challenge their authority are immediately punished. Overmasters are extremely resourceful, cunning and duplicitous. While they seem to be sincere in helping their "grand and noble liberators," one must wonder what is going through their treacherous minds, and whether they may one day be the Overmasters of Tolkeen.

Natural Abilities: Fair speed and can run, swim or fight indefinitely without pause or exhaustion. Can breathe in air as well as underwater, survive depths of up to three miles (4.8 km), has nightvision (one mile/1.6 km), and heals much faster than humans, roughly at a rate of 4D6+10 M.D.C. per 24 hours.

Knows All Languages: Magically understands and speaks all languages 98%, but cannot read. These giants often communicate via telepathy as often as they speak. They have a deep, firm voice that is both sinister and yet somehow seductive and pleasing.

Limited Invulnerability (special): Basal are impervious to cold, disease and possession (including magic equivalents), and on Rifts Earth they are M.D.C. creatures, invulnerable to S.D.C. weapons. Heat and fire (including magic fire) do half damage, however, they are vulnerable to all other types of M.D. weapons, explosives and magic.

O.C.C.: Not applicable.

R.C.C. Skills: Basic Math 98%, Sing 90%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 90%, Intelligence 90%, Escape Artist 80%, Climb

98%/90%, Prowl 80%, Palming 90%, Concealment 90%, Pick Pockets 80%, Streetwise 90%, Seduction 75%, Ventriloquism 80%, Land Navigation 90% (+5% underwater), and Wilderness Survival 90%. Also see Natural Abilities, above, and TW legs and Psionics, below.

R.C.C. Combat: Attacks Per Melee: Ten!

Damage: Bite 1D4x10 M.D.! Head-butt, punch or kick M.D. varies with supernatural P.S., or by weapon or magic.

R.C.C. Bonuses: +5 on initiative, +4 to strike, +6 to parry, +2 to dodge, +6 to pull punch, +4 to disarm, +2 to roll with impact or fall, +8 to save vs Horror Factor. R.C.C. bonuses are all in addition to any possible attribute bonuses. All, except H.F., are +1 when underwater.

Magic: Normally none, but with TW enhancements that's all changed.

Standard Techno-Wizard Augmentation: The only Techno-Wizard device the Basal desire is a lower body with six spider-like legs — this was an actual, formal request.

TW Legs (6): A mechanical lower body housing with six spider or crab-like legs to replace their old slug-like lower body. These mechanical contrivances magically imbue the creature with a speed of 80 mph (128 km) and the ability to leap 20 feet (6.1 m) high and across (increase by 50% with a running start). Each leg has 200 M.D.C.

The energy sphere between the legs is a mechanism that channels the P.P.E. to the mechanical legs with minimal interference with I.S.P. and psionic powers. It also gives the Overmaster a bonus of +2 to save vs magic.

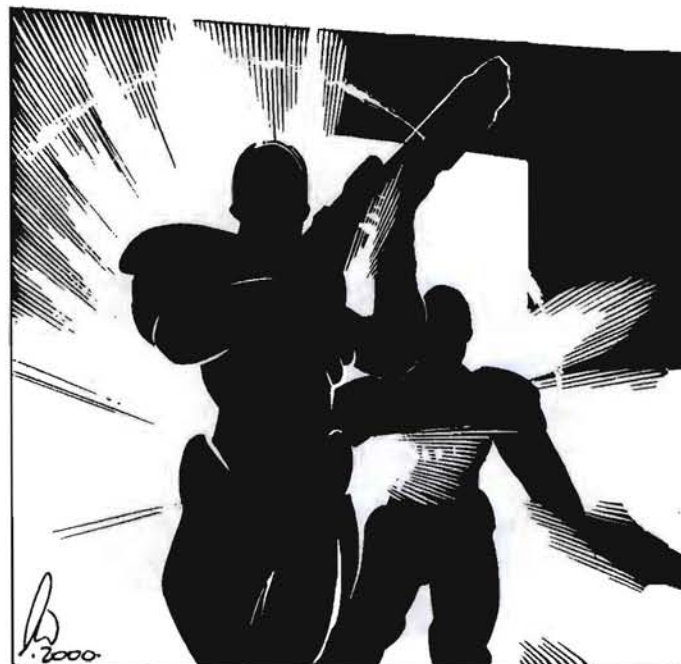
Psionics: Master Psychic with M.E.x10 for I.S.P. and the following powers: All Psionic Healing and Sensitive abilities, plus the following Super-Psionic powers: Bio-Manipulation, Empathic Transmission, Electrokinetics, Hydrokinetics, Psychic Omni-Sight, Psychic Body Field, Psi-Shield, Psi-Sword, Psionic Invisibility, Hypnotic Suggestion, Group Mind Block, Group Trance, and Mind Block Auto-Defense.

Enemies: Same as the Feculence.

Allies: Same as the Feculence, assuming one can trust a Basal.

Value: None, other than as a demonic minion.

Habitat: Currently the Tolkeen-Minnesota/Wisconsin region.



Adventure

By Bill Coffin

Additional text & ideas by Kevin Siembieda

This section contains a number of escapades that involve story lines spun out from how the Coalition is handling itself in a less than honorable manner while invading Tolkeen. For Coalition player characters, these adventures will offer ample opportunities for them to think twice about what their side is doing and if it is worth continuing. For Tolkeen player characters, these are opportunities to oppose the Coalition at its worst. For everybody else in between, they are perfect examples of the kinds of barbarity the common folk of the land must endure through the course of the Siege on Tolkeen. History shows us time and again how in war, the real victims are usually not the soldiers who fight, but the civilians who get in their way. The Siege on Tolkeen is no different.

This section features a few full-length adventures for your Siege on Tolkeen campaign. Also see the NPC sections on *The Dirty Thirty*, *General Drogue*, and *Mercenaries & Bounty Hunters* for additional adventure ideas and suggestions. Have fun!

Asher's Revenge

On the maiden combat flight of the CAF-1, the Coalition has saturation bombed a small village in the northeastern end of Tolkeen, where Asher Grey, a "retired" elder dragon had been living with his wife. His wife is dead now, and Asher is on a rampage, looking for blood. He will not stop until all Coalition forces have withdrawn from Tolkeen, until General Micander Drogue is dead, and the CAF-1 lies in ruins. He is going after the gargantuan craft and the base that houses it first. And to help him, he has recruited four other dragons, all of whom owe him favors. Together they are going to get some payback, Tolkeen-style.

Maiden Flight

After months of pre-flight tests, re-tests and counter-tests, the Coalition has finally put its mammoth new saturation bomber, the CAF-1, into service. From its armored amphibious hangar on the shores of Lake Michigan, the gigantic flying arsenal slowly rumbled to life, taxiing across the still lake waters to takeoff. As the giant craft got up to speed, a flotilla of the Coalition's finest warships patrolled the area, ever watchful for enemies who might try to sink the aircraft when it was most vulnerable. At last, after miles of slow acceleration, the lumbering bomber lifted off and headed for its first target, the civilian settlement of **Sorville**, a moderate-sized farming community along Tolkeen's northern reaches. Not too far from Tolkeen City and St. Paul, but far enough for the plane to enter enemy airspace, drop its payload and get back to safety without an undue chance of getting shot down.

The mission was an unqualified success. The CAF-1 made it to the drop point and unloaded all of its bomb racks upon the

unsuspecting town below. The few Tolkeenite defenders sent aloft to stop the huge craft were no match for its onboard weapons or its full complement of Super SAMAS soldiers as well as its generous escort of Sky Cycles. The CAF-1 was a juggernaut of the sky, as Sorville soon found out.

The first salvo of bombs gutted the town's center, pulverizing even its M.D.C. buildings and those living inside of them. By the second and third salvos, there was virtually nothing left of the town, but the CAF-1 kept dropping anyway. It blasted every square centimeter of the town's surface, its crop fields, and even the roads leading into it. By the time the CAF-1 had exhausted its stores, all that remained of the town was a large, smoking crater, as if a small nuclear bomb had just gone off.

As the CAF-1 headed for home, its jubilant crew cheered the fact that where once stood a prosperous and productive Tolkeenite town, now only ashes remained. Not a single living thing was left in the target area, as per the mission parameters. All of Sorville's people were dead.

Except one.

Asher Grey had been outside of town when the bombs started falling. He was returning from a trip to the next town over to see some friends and to buy a gift for his beloved wife, Seana. When Asher reached his home, he was the first to see what the Coalition had done. Asher searched through the pulverized wreckage in the vain hope of finding something, anything that might hint that Seana had in some way cheated death. But he knew she had not. She, like the 3,000 other people of this sleepy, peaceful town, had all died (mostly in their sleep) from the Coalition's pre-dawn raid.

As Asher knelt in the Sorville crater, tears streamed down his face as sorrow broke his heart. The one woman he had ever loved had been torn away from him by an enemy he had never personally done harm to. To Asher, the destruction of the town faded out and was replaced only by the loss of his wife and how the Coalition's brutal, senseless act of violence had robbed him of her. And there, in the dirt and dust of his shattered town, Asher Grey swore that the Coalition would pay for their crimes, that Seana would be avenged, and that he would not rest one single moment until his task was finished.

He stood and gazed toward the sky, concentrating, shifting his form from that of the aging "Asher Grey" — a human masquerade he had played for years. Slowly, surely, he assumed his true form, one he had tried so very hard to forget, but now found necessary to see Seana's killers brought to their final justice. Where once stood Asher Grey now stood the great, elder, Great Horned Dragon known throughout the Megaverse as **Aurelor the Magnificent**. A mighty hero and crusader whose power and talents were retired long ago, but would now see action once more.

Asher's revenge was at hand.

Asher Grey, a.k.a. Aurelor the Magnificent, is an ancient Great Horned Dragon who has spent thousands of years traveling the Megaverse as a wandering champion of goodness and light. In worlds too numerous to count, his name is synonymous with heroism, sacrifice and righteousness. Aurelor's travels and adventures are the stuff of legend in some realms, and even a few yarns concerning him have made it to Rifts Earth, but mostly as hazy, inaccurate romanticizations of his real deeds.

For the last century, however, Aurelor has lived under the identity of Asher Grey, an unassuming human with no special powers or abilities whatsoever. Aurelor chose this identity because he had grown weary of constant battle and bloodshed. His fellow dragons scoffed at his foolish crusading, and his many enemies spared no effort to lay him low when he least expected it. After a time, he had simply grown tired of the hero's life, and began looking for a way to quietly slip away. He got his chance during a titanic battle with a pair of rogue Godlings who had been terrorizing a large territory in China on Rifts Earth. The battle ended with a tremendous explosion that killed the Godlings and severely wounded Aurelor. As the smoke cleared, he vanished from the scene, letting the witnesses think that he had been vaporized in the blast. His old identity shed (or so he thought), Asher left for greener pastures, and eventually settled down near Tolkeen where he felt that the strong community of dragons, spell casters, Cyber-Knights and other extraordinary individuals would keep the Megaverse's ne'er-do-wells at bay.

For a time, he was right. Despite the constant posturing and threats from the Coalition, Tolkeen grew and flourished. Aurelor's hometown, Sorville, was safely nestled within the Tolkeen Kingdom, close enough to Tolkeen city and Freehold to feel like the harsh, savage world was a million miles away. It was in Sorville that Aurelor took on the persona of kindly Asher Grey, forsook his heroic legacy, and began life anew as a simple peasant farmer, yearning only for the tiny pleasures life had to offer. No clamor of battle. No scheming villains to destroy. No Megaverse to worry about safeguarding.

The subterfuge did not last long among the Dragon Kings of Freehold. They had ways of seeing through Aurelor's disguise, and they openly disdained the Great Horned Dragon for his bizarre decision. How could he, a great elder wyrm, choose to live as a groveling mortal, content with scratching at the dirt instead of bathing in the power of raw magic? How could he stand to consort with simple-minded commoners when he could be enjoying a place of power and privilege among their Legion of Dragons?

Aurelor wanted none of those things, and merely asked the Dragon Kings to respect his decision and his privacy. He wished to lead a simple life, and he hoped that they would do nothing to overturn that. Disgusted and befuddled, they agreed, and turned their backs on Aurelor, whom they regarded as a fool of fools.

For many years, Asher lived contentedly. He fell in love with a beautiful girl of the village named Seana. They wed and began a long and loving relationship that knew little trouble or strife until the Siege on Tolkeen loomed on the horizon. As it became clear that the Coalition was going to invade, the Dragon Kings contacted Asher and asked him to lend his strength and experience to Tolkeen's defense. Asher refused, wanting nothing to do with his former life. He had made his choice, and that was final.

Angrily, the Dragon Kings informed Asher that he had had his chance, and that no matter what happened during the course of the war, he should expect no pity or help from any of them. They had offered twice to admit him into their brotherhood, and he had refused both times. Whatever troubles befell him in the upcoming war would be his own, and they formally disavowed any knowledge of him as Aurelor the Magnificent.

This was fine for Asher, who cared not for the company of other dragons. In truth, he had always feared they would expose his secret, so the farther they distanced themselves from him, the better.

That was before the Coalition destroyed Sorville, and killed Asher's Seana. Overcome with grief and rage, the dragon desired revenge, so he went to the Dragon Kings of Freehold looking for help. They brushed him off for having rebuffed them earlier. "We told you this would happen, arrogant fool," the hierarch proclaimed. "You refused our brotherhood. Now Seana's death is on your hands alone. Seek vengeance if you must, Asher Grey, but seek not our help in it. For you have chosen to walk apart from the Legion's path. And walk alone you shall."

Stung, Asher was hardly about to quit. He was hellbent on waging a personal war on the Coalition, but he was not about to commit suicide doing it. He was going to need some help, but from where? Eschewing the harsh words of the Dragon Kings, Asher posted messages throughout the Kingdom of Tolkeen, announcing his intention to destroy the Coalition's air base on Lake Michigan in retribution for the bombing of Sorville, and that he needed volunteers to help him in the battle. As he awaited a response from the Kingdom's many adventurers, mercenaries and wandering champions, he called upon two of his dear friends from other worlds to help him in his time of need. Reminding them both of the many favors they owed him, Asher convinced the elder Kumo-Mi dragon **Nikiden Shodai** and the elder Hydra **Corrigal of the Nine** to come to Rifts Earth and join his cause. With such great dragon allies by his side, Asher's chances of striking back at the Coalition began to look less like a dead man's charge, and more like a legitimate military operation. Before he launched his attack, however, he waited for other adventurers to join him, preferably not other dragons, but those whose talents were of a more subtle and mortal variety. For indeed, an army composed of one kind of warrior is doomed to slow death, and mighty though dragons be, not even they are ideally suited for every contingency one might find on the battlefield. Certainly, if the dragons wished to capture any Coalition equipment or use the Coalition's weapons against them, they would need mortal allies to do it, since the dragons themselves lack such skills. Mortal allies would also be important for stealthy approaches, when warranted, since both Asher and Corrigal of the Nine are in no mind-set to go quietly into enemy territory.

Those who joined him would be rewarded most handsomely in the form of precious treasure, magic items, arcane knowledge, and most of all, the eternal friendship of *Aurelor the Magnificent*, a powerful ally if ever there was one.

Meanwhile, the Coalition was abuzz with news of an impending attack upon the CAF-1's hangar. Aurelor had issued an open challenge to the Coalition that he would smash to pieces the aircraft that killed his wife. He would punish the command-

ers who put the plane into the air and ordered it to bomb Sorville. And he would destroy *anyone* who stood in his way. He sent a flock of Magic Pigeons bearing this message, including one that went directly to Emperor Prosek, several to people within the Coalition Military High Command, and one to each leader of the Coalition Battle Groups invading Tolkeen. Despite his blunt threat, Aurelor's message seemed to beg the Coalition to oppose him.

The great dragon was spoiling for a fight, and the Coalition would be only too happy to give it to him. The CS arranged for a second flight of the CAF-1, this time to blitz an even larger town closer to the Wisconsin border. As before, the plane would carry its full complement of SAMAS jockeys, sky cycle pilots, and any other military VIPs (**G.M. Note:** Including prominent player characters on the side of the CS, hint, hint) who wanted to get in on the action. After all, it is not every day that one gets to be party to bringing down a powerful, ancient dragon. This would be an excellent symbolic triumph on the part of the Coalition Military. A gesture that would reassert their power and help energize their troops on the front-line.

All the while, the Legion of Dragons at Freehold and the rest of the Coalition Battle Groups nervously awaited the outcome of the battle, as if it were some kind of proxy for the war at large.

Asher Grey

Also Known As: Aurelor the Magnificent. Since the destruction of Sorville, he has gone back to his identity as Aurelor, but now calls himself "Aurelor the Avenger." The offended Dragon King's refuse to acknowledge him and tell any who ask that Aurelor the Magnificent perished a century ago, and that the wizened dragon using his name is an insane fool.

Alignment: Unprincipled (used to be Principled, but he has slipped down over the centuries).

Attributes: I.Q.: 28, M.E.: 27, M.A.: 29, P.S.: 50 (supernatural), P.P.: 21, P.E.: 40, P.B.: 32, Spd: 70 running, 200 flying (130 mph/208 km).

M.D.C.: 8,500

Horror Factor: 18

Size: 30 feet (9 m) tall, 70 feet (21.3 m) long, 120 foot (36.6 m) wingspan.

Weight: 30 tons

Age: 10,000

P.P.E.: 1,300

I.S.P.: 202

Disposition: Asher typically is a sedate and level-headed individual, but the death of his wife has driven him nearly mad with rage. While hardly foaming at the mouth, Asher/Aurelor is obsessed with avenging Seana's death, and will brook no interference that keeps him from it. The vengeance of dragons is legendary, and the CS is about to learn why, the hard way.

Experience Level: 14th level Adult Great Horned Dragon.

Skills of Note: Basic and Advanced Math, Language/Literacy in Dragonese/Elven, American, and Techno-Can, speaks Faerie, Chinese, Japanese, Euro, Spanish and Russian, Demon and Monster Lore, Faerie Lore, Magic Lore, Gemology, Sing, all Domestic, Science and Technical skills. All skills are at 98%.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), see the invisible, turn invisible at will, bio-regenerate 1D4x10 M.D.C. per minute, resistant to fire and cold (does half damage, includ-

ing M.D. magic fire and plasma energy), metamorphosis at will (for unlimited duration), teleport self (92%), dimensional teleport (88%).

Magic: The Great Horned Dragon knows *all* spells from levels 1-12 plus the following: Sanctum, Summon Storm, Close Rift, Impenetrable Wall of Force, Restoration, Dimensional Portal, Teleport: Superior, Restore Life (**Federation of Magic™**, page 157), Annihilate (**Federation of Magic™**, page 158), and Void (**Federation of Magic™**, page 159).

Psionics: Considered a Master Psionic and knows *all* sensitive, physical, and healing psionic powers, plus Bio-Manipulation (which he might well use to paralyze the pilots of the CAF-1 in order to crash the plane) and Psi-Sword.

Vulnerabilities: Like all Great Horned Dragons, Asher/Aurelor tends to overestimate his abilities and underestimate his enemies. This has only gotten worse as he has grown older and more powerful. Now that he is on a wrath-fueled rampage, he will have no regard for his opponents' firepower whatsoever, which will lead him into trouble and possibly his doom. He will also be unfocused due to his rage, and will be at -20% on all skills until the CAF-1 is destroyed.

In his current emotional state, he will not break off or retreat from combat, no matter how badly things are going, unless his friends pull him away. He is simply too hellbent on taking revenge to notice when he or those around him (the player characters?) are in danger. He is so obsessed that his allies may actually have to abandon him or face losing their lives.

Combat Training: Special!

Attacks Per Melee: Eight physical attacks per melee, or three fire breath and five physical, or three by magic! Favorite weapon is magic.

Combat Bonuses: +4 to initiative, +6 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +8 vs Horror Factor, +17 vs poison and magic, +4 on all other saving throws, +50% vs coma/death.

Damage:

Fire Breath: Range: 100 feet (30.5 m), six feet (1.8 m) wide.

Damage: 4D6 M.D. Special: The width of the blast enables the dragon to strike several opponents (2-6) simultaneously if they are huddled closely together.

Restrained Punch: 2D6 M.D.

Full Strength Punch: 1D6x10 M.D.

Power Punch: 2D6x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks)

Tail Whip: 2D6x10 M.D. (counts as *one* attack)

Weapons: The dragon currently has no weapons. He scarcely needs them, and is looking forward to getting his hands bloodied. If he should survive and remain a dragon warrior and not revert to a humble human identity after the destruction of the CAF-1, he might begin to amass a hoard of magic and technology. In his younger days, Aurelor was famous for keeping the weapons of his vanquished enemies, which ultimately became a huge armory within his treasure trove.

Body Armor: None. Aurelor has no use for it.

Other Equipment: None, at present. But this might very well change in the near future.

Note: Although Aurelor was once a great champion of light, he is right about one thing, he's not a hero any longer. The Great Horned Dragon is consumed only with revenge and not actually saving lives or defending the Kingdom of Tolkeen. Indeed, he

will jeopardize the lives of any heroes or adventurers who follow him on his quest of vengeance.

If he successfully destroys the CAF-1, he will turn his wrath on the Super-SAMAS and other escorts, slaughtering as many as he can. When he is done with them, he will turn his attention to tracking down and slaying *Lt. General Zachary Kael*, who authorized the attack on Sorville. Kael might very well die in the initial battle, since he will be piloting the lead Super SAMAS that is escorting the CAF-1.

General Drogue will be the next target because he is the mastermind behind the current Tolkeen offensive. After that, Aurelor plans on killing the leaders of the Coalition Army's main battle groups. However, getting to General Drogue may prove to be impossible even for this ancient champion. Drogue is nestled safely in the middle of the Coalition's main army in Wisconsin, his precise whereabouts kept secret so assassins can not find him (a third of the time he's actually in Chi-Town). Getting to him will mean facing an entire field of over 20,000 soldiers, entire brigades of CS tanks, robots, power armor and aircraft. This is suicide even for the great and powerful Aurelor the Magnificent, and certain death for anybody crazy enough to follow him. The dragon is so grief-stricken that he will not listen to reason, and even if all of his allies, fellow dragons included, abandon him, or die following him, he will press forward, fighting to the death. (Finding General Drogue will be difficult and any lead Aurelor may follow only has a 01-18% chance of being accurate — thus the hated General is not even likely to be where Aurelor and his allies attack. Their deaths will have been for nothing.)

Nikiden Shodai

Also Known As: "Niki the Just" and simply, "The Just."

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q.: 25, M.E.: 25, M.A.: 24, P.S.: 40 (supernatural), P.P.: 25, P.E.: 24, P.B.: 25, Spd: 100 flying/snaking through the sky (65 mph/104 km).

M.D.C.: 8,100

Horror/Awe Factor: 14

Weight: Four tons

Size: Like all Kumo-Mi, Nikiden can assume any size from 15 feet (4.6 m) long from snout to tail to his natural full length of 60 feet (18.3 m). He usually moves in a fluid, coiled pattern, like an undulating spring.

Age: 9,000 years.

P.P.E.: 800.

I.S.P.: 100.

Disposition and Background: Nikiden is a compassionate hero and humanitarian, hence his nickname, "The Just." This means he is honorable, loyal (which is why he has agreed to help Aurelor in the first place), trustworthy, and merciful. He has a keen sense of justice, balance and fair play.

Nikiden has known Aurelor/Asher for over a thousand years, and he has never seen him in such a crazed emotional state. Nikiden sincerely worries for his friend's health and welfare, but there is little he can do to dissuade him from his mad quest. Nikiden personally frowns on the very idea of vengeance (a base desire too often confused with justice). However, he owes Aurelor the Magnificent his life from more than one occasion, and now that his friend has come to collect on that debt, Nikiden feels he has no choice but to

help. Still, if there is some way he can convince the Great Horned Dragon to take a more subtle, and less reckless, rage-influenced revenge, he will. During the course of the adventure, if Nikiden and the player characters are on the same side, he will ask them to help talk some sense into his grief-stricken friend.

Experience Level: 12th level Adult Kumo-Mi (*Rifts*® Japan, page 212).

Skills of Note: All Technical skills, Basic Math, Calligraphy, Land Navigation, Identify Plants and Fruits, Gardening, Dance, Sing, Play Wind Instrument (Flutes and Horns). All skills are at 98%.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 1,200 feet (366 m; can see even in total darkness), see the invisible, turn invisible at will, climbing 98%, prowl 60%, bio-regenerate 1D4x10 M.D.C. per minute (every four melees), dimensional teleport 88%, impervious to cold, poisons, and possession.

Magic: Nikiden knows *all* Air Elemental magic spells as printed in the *Rifts Conversion Book*, pages 62-68. For those of you without this sourcebook, substitute all air, illusion, and dimensional magic spells from those listed in the *Rifts*® RPG, plus Tongues, Magic Pigeon, Eyes of Thoth, Dispel Magic, Negate Magic, Anti-Magic Cloud and both protection circles.

Psionics: All healing psionics plus Telepathy, Empathy and Mind Block.

Vulnerabilities: Weapons made of silver do Mega-Damage, and fire and magic weapons do their usual damage. Earth Elementals inflict double damage.

Combat Training: Special!

Attacks Per Melee: Seven physical or psionic attacks per melee round or two by magic.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +6 to strike and parry, +9 to dodge, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +7 vs Horror Factor, +7 vs magic and poison, +2 on all saving throws, +18 vs coma/death.

Damage:

Restrained Punch: 3D6 M.D.

Full Strength Punch, Kick or Bite: 5D6 M.D.

Power Punch: 1D6x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks)

Tail Whip: 1D4x10 M.D. (counts as *one* attack)

Weapons, Body Armor and Other Equipment: Nikiden owns a small arsenal of rune weapons and other magic high-tech gear, but he currently is keeping it safely stowed in his treasure trove on another planet in a distant dimension. Since he honestly doubts the outcome of Asher's vendetta, he thought it would be wise to keep his belongings elsewhere, lest they fall into the hands of the Coalition.

Note: As much as he respects and loves his old friend, will not commit suicide for him nor face down an entire army. This means there is a line he won't cross and a point where he will walk away from Aurelor and go back to whatever dimension he heralds from. He will counsel other allies (the player characters) to do likewise. Furthermore, he may clash with Aurelor about slaughtering hundreds upon hundreds of soldiers and intercede to help some escape.

Corrigal of the Nine

Also known as Lord Nine.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q.: 9, M.E.: 20, M.A.: 11, P.S.: 45 (supernatural), P.P.: 24, P.E.: 24, P.B.: 25, Spd: 100 (65 mph/104 km).

M.D.C.: 8,000

Natural A.R.: 14

Horror/Awe Factor: 17

Size: 25 feet (7.6 m) tall, 60 feet (18.3 m) long.

Weight: Twenty tons

Age: 5,000.

P.P.E.: 800.

I.S.P.: 100.

Disposition: Dull-witted and simple-minded by dragon standards, Corrigal lives for a good fight, and is constantly crusading against evil and cruelty wherever he finds it. Extraordinarily rare for a Hydra, both for his two extra heads (Hydra typically only have seven) and his good alignment, Corrigal is considered by many dragons to be a *freak* and a mutant, shunned at every turn.

Corrigal normally would have led a solitary life had he not run across Aurelor the Magnificent some three or four thousand years ago. The two kept bumping into each other throughout the Megaverse over the ages, and after a while, a genuine trust and respect developed between them. Corrigal owes Aurelor his life for a nasty incident involving some nuclear weapons, a wildly expanding Rift to a world of pure antimatter, and a recurring villain named *Ferral Caldron*. Neither Corrigal nor Aurelor care to discuss that episode; they are just glad to have escaped the whole mess with their lives. Even if Corrigal did not owe Aurelor/Asher a life-debt, he would join his vendetta out of misplaced friendship and loyalty. Besides, Corrigal can not stand the Coalition and has been looking for an excuse to mix it up with them for years. Their insistence that technology is superior to magic really irks him, as he considers himself a living argument to the contrary.

Corrigal is on exceedingly bad terms with the Dragon Kings and their Legion of Dragons, and were he in Tolkeen for any reason other than to harass the Coalition, they would probably demand that he leave the area or face their collective wrath. Even if Corrigal were to receive such a threat, he'd probably take the Legion up on it. From his point of view, they are a bunch of mouthy, pretentious cretins whose egos write checks their bodies can't cash. It's no wonder somebody took them down a peg or two, and banished them from their homeworld.

When talking to people, Corrigal is fond of using multiple heads to say a single sentence. One head will begin, another head will carry the middle, a third head will end the sentence, and a fourth head will await the response. Needless to say, those unfamiliar with Corrigal's brand of conversing may find it disturbing and a bit hard to follow, at least initially.

Experience Level: 12th level Hydra.

Skills of Note: Basic Math (50%), understands and speaks a guttural form of Gobblely and Dragonese/Elven (90%), Faerie Lore (50%), Track Animals (70%), Track Humanoids (60%), Wilderness Survival (90%), Land Navigation (70%), Swim (90%), Climb (70%/60%).

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 600 feet (183 m), see the invisible, exceptional hawk-like vision, head #1 can see in the infrared light frequency, head #2 can see in the ultraviolet frequency, turn invisible at will, track by smell (84%), recog-

nize a familiar scent (80%), track by sight (60%), prehensile tail, resistant to fire and cold (does half damage, including M.D. magic fire and plasma energy), bio-regeneration 1D6x10 M.D. per melee round, teleport self (40%), dimensional teleport (60%).

Note: Each of Corrigal's nine heads can act independently of the others and can ward off attacks from all sides. The I.Q. and mental attributes are the same for each head.

Magic: Knows Sense Magic, Sense Evil, Repel Animals, Animate and Control Dead, and Turn Dead.

Psionics: None other than the Bio-Manipulation power used by Head #9.

Vulnerabilities: Corrigal is fairly dim-witted for a dragon and more than once has been played for a fool by less powerful creatures. Nowhere is this more true than when adversaries exploit his unslakeable thirst for battle and an over-eagerness to accept any challenge. Corrigal so loves fighting he will take on opponents even if he is sick, injured, outnumbered or overpowered. He is obsessed with proving himself as an invincible hunter and fighter, and though he is not the smartest of adversaries, woe be to anyone who asserts that Corrigal is not the most savage and deadly of warriors.

His need to constantly prove himself by fighting and winning can be used to distract and trick the Hydra. Name calling and assertions made against Corrigal's power and fighting prowess will drive him crazy until he can rebut the insults in combat. On general principle, Corrigal automatically assumes all battles are to the death. When he is asked to give mercy, he agrees, but will always be seriously disappointed in his fallen opponent for not having the pride to die fighting. Sadly, this means he is likely to follow Aurelor to his death.

Combat Training: Special!

Attacks Per Melee: 16 total attacks per melee! Nine physical (bite/claw/tail) attacks and seven by breath attacks.

Combat Bonuses: +7 to initiative, cannot be surprised by attacks from behind or above (the heads are always watching in all directions), +9 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +4 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, +9 to save vs Horror Factor, +7 to save vs magic and poison, +2 on all other saving throws, and +18% vs coma/death.

Damage:

Restrained Punch: 2D6 M.D.

Full Strength Punch, Claw or Bite: 1D6x10 M.D.

Power Punch: 2D6x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks)

Tail Whip: 2D6x10 M.D. (counts as one attack)

Heads One and Two (Fire Breath): Range: 300 feet (91.5 m), six feet (1.8 m) wide. Damage: 1D6x10 M.D.

Head Three (Frost Breath): Range: 100 feet (30.5 m), six feet (1.8 m) wide. Damage: 6D6 M.D.

Head Four (Poisonous Vapors): Range: 100 feet (30.5 m), six feet (1.8 m) wide. Damage: Paralyzes victims who breathe the vapors and fail to save vs magic. Victims are paralyzed for 1D6+2 melee rounds.

Heads Five and Six (Breath of Death): Range: 30 feet (9 m), six feet (1.8 m) wide. Damage: A magical gust of wind that inflicts 6D6 points of damage direct to Hit Points to those caught within it, regardless of what armor or vehicle they may be shielded by. (Very useful for neutralizing power armor and ground vehicles.)

Head Seven (Corrosive Spray): Range: 30 feet (9 m), six feet (1.8 m) wide. Damage: 1D6x10 M.D.

Head Eight (Cloud of Slumber): Range: 300 feet (91.5 m), six foot (1.8 m) radius. Damage: Victims who fail to save vs magic fall asleep for 2D6 melee rounds.

Head Nine (Psionic Evil Eye): Identical to the Bio-Manipulation psionic power. This head is also invulnerable to psionic and magic mind control.

Saving Throw Note: A roll of 14 or higher is needed to save against those breath/head attacks for which saving throws are applicable. A successful save means the attack has no effect.

Weapons, Body Armor and Other Equipment: Corrigal feels his nine heads and bad attitude are weapons enough for most situations. He has a pile of junk he calls a treasure trove locked up somewhere (consisting of trophy possessions taken from fallen opponents), but he really doesn't pay that much attention to it unless somebody tries to plunder it. Since Corrigal can hardly manipulate technology, he hates it just about as much as all Hydras do, and therefore has no urge to collect it.

Note: He will be confused and torn if Aurelor and Nikiden have a falling out and part company. However, the odds are he will stay with Aurelor to the bitter end (01-60% likelihood).

The Player Characters

More likely than not, the player characters will be on the side of Tolkeen or well intentioned adventurers glad to save lives by destroying the Coalition's bomber. Thus, they join Aurelor the Avenger on his crusade. There are several enticing reasons for

any hero or adventurer to do so, especially if they are looking to make a name for themselves or lust for revenge against the CS themselves.

1) If they have heard of the legendary Aurelor the Magnificent (any dragon hatchling will have) most heroes would jump at the chance to fight side by side with this living legend.

2) Destroying the CAF-1 and/or its base would strike a blow for Tolkeen that nobody could ignore and might make the Coalition reconsider pressing forward with the war. (Well they can dream, can't they? Truth is, this will make the CS angrier and more aggressive than ever.)

3) Hunting down and eliminating General Drogue can only be good for everybody (the CS as well as Tolkeen). The idea of putting an end to this madman will be very appealing, however, our heroes will not realize that they have to face an army to do it until their dragon leader takes them to it and urges them to fight.

4) For the more mercenary characters, the idea of the great Aurelor the Magnificent giving each of them one magic weapon (nothing outrageously powerful) out of his personal treasure trove (what remains of it) and, say, 1D6x10,000 in gold or gems should be enough to hire most adventurers; not to mention the satisfaction of striking an embarrassing blow against the Coalition.

5) For fame and glory! There's no question that going on this mission will make all involved famous. (War criminals wanted by the CS too, with a bounty of at least 50,000 credits on each of their heads!)



Air Station Alpha

This is the amphibious hangar complex where the CAF-1 is stored between combat missions. If the heroes and their dragon allies decide to assault the CAF-1 by stealth, then sneaking into the facility is the way to go.

The facility itself is a fairly standard Coalition vehicles yard, walled off on all sides, studded with armed guard towers, and heavily populated by human and Dog Boy infantry as well as numerous power armor and mechanized units. The strength of the current force here is slightly higher than usual, since the base is on alert, thanks to Aurelor's declaration of war. The security force consists of a mixed infantry division, as follows:

- **16 ten man squads** consisting of six standard Dead Boys (wearing CA-4 standard body armor and carrying CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifles, C-50 Dragonfires, or C-29 Hellfires), one Specialist (usually a Juicer, 'Borg, Ranger or Special Forces), two power armor (PA-100 Mauler, PA-200 Terror Trooper, PA-07A Light Assault SAMAS, PA-08A Special Forces Strike SAMAS or PA-09A Super SAMAS), and a squad leader (wearing CA-6C or CA-6EX body armor and carrying standard infantry weaponry). Typically, a squad leader holds the rank of sergeant. Four squads make a platoon (40 troops), led by a 1st lieutenant. Four platoons make a company (160 troops), led by a captain. Throughout the base, the infantry handles guard and patrol duties at the squad level, so if the heroes are sneaky enough, they will not run into more than 10 Coalition soldiers at a time. Of course, if these soldiers are not dispatched quickly and quietly, they will alert the whole base to the invaders' presence, making things considerably more ... shall we say ... complex.
- **One company of FASSAR-30 Skelebots**, divided into squads of nine combat units and one command unit. Fully 75% of the time, the command unit will be a human supervisor (typically sergeant) wearing CA-6EX exoskeletal body armor (most common), Mauler power armor, or Terror Trooper power armor. Human squad commanders have the capability to rewrite their Skelebots' collective programming on the spot by using encrypted burst transmitters and voice-activated coding equipment. The other 25% of the time, the command unit will be either a FASSAR-40 Skelebot Hunter or a FASSAR-50 Hellion (these are fairly rare, however). For full data on the Coalition Skelebots, please refer to the **Coalition War Campaign™** sourcebook, pages 122-133. **Note:** The Skelebots will share guard and patrol duty with their human squad counterparts. Fully half the time, the units handling base security will be Skelebots. The other half of the time, humans.

The base also keeps on hand four IAR-2 Abolisher Robots (**Coalition War Campaign**, page 134) for rebuffing frontal assaults against the base. The long-range guns of these units should keep all but the larger and most determined forces at bay.

Other defenses. Aside from its infantry, the CAF-1 base also has the considerable firepower of the Coalition Navy at its convenience. The Coalition battleships stationed near Station Alpha are used mostly to launch air strikes against large enemy forces, or to provide long-range fire suppression against oncoming enemies larger than company strength. The Station Alpha flotilla consists of the following ships, all docked 1-4 miles (1.6 to 6.4 km) offshore:

- Six (6) CSN Mark IV Hurricane submersible patrol boats (**Coalition Navy™**, page 62). These light craft are mostly used to intercept small surface-going raiders on their way into the base.
- Two Improved IHA Sea King guided missile cruisers (**Coalition Navy™**, page 64) for providing punishing firepower far from the Lakes.
- One CSS James Bay-Class Iron Heart Destroyer (**Coalition Navy™**, page 65). The CSS *Fairweather* is a recently commissioned craft designed to be a tactical flagship for CSN forces in the Great Lakes. It has been hugging the shore for most of the war so far, angling for a firing solution on Tolkeen, should the order be given. It is also the main deterrent against any pirates or other hostiles from moving into the Station Alpha area. Those who do will tangle with this ship first, and if they have any brains in their head, they will turn back rather than fight.

Thunder in the Sky

Should the heroes decide to intercept the CAF-1 in the air, they will have a heck of a fight on their hands. The super-bomber will be flying with a full load of Super SAMAS power armor escorts as well as the following additional escort craft:

- Four Shrike Interceptors (**Coalition Navy™**, page 87). These high-speed aircraft are for long-distance interception, and to handle especially fast-moving targets. They also are designated as pursuit craft, assigned to chase and shoot down any hostiles who break away and try to flee. In the event that hostiles close to within 10 miles (16 km) of the CAF-1, the Shrikes will back off and let the close-range interceptors (Warbirds) and Super SAMAS do their job.
- Eight Warbird Rocket Cycles (**Coalition War Campaign™**, page 169). These are dedicated anti-dragon aircraft, and their pilots are just itching to mix it up with Aurelor and whoever else he might have brought along.

Note: The CAF-1 will require only an hour's flying time once it leaves its base to reach its bombing site. The players must intercept and destroy the plane before then if they wish to save the town. Otherwise, the CAF-1 will annihilate yet another unarmed civilian settlement along the border of Tolkeen. During the final moments, as the aircraft rumbles over the settlement, anti-aircraft fire will begin to come up; the G.M. is encouraged to make the incoming cannon-fire appropriate to the player's handling of the battle so far. If their characters have had a rough time of it, let the assault merely be dramatic, with some shots hitting the CAF-1 but not doing any serious damage, and others just narrowly missing the player characters. If the heroes have had an easy time so far, then perhaps a random blast of gunfire would throw an interesting X-factor into the battle. Roll a D20; on a roll of 20, one of the characters (NPC?) gets hit and takes double damage. A roll of 16-19 means a character gets hit by a normal-strength blast and a roll of 10-15 means the character got nicked and takes half damage. Rolls of 1-9 means the barrage just sails upward and misses; nobody is hit. The standard damage from a blast of ground-based anti-aircraft cannons is 1D4x10, either in the form of conventional rail gun fire, or a heavy TW cannon.



Aftermath with the CAF-1

Mayday, , we're going down! If the heroes manage to crash the CAF-1, they will have scored a phenomenal victory for Tolkeen, in both pure military and psychological terms. That Tolkeen defeated a dedicated Coalition "weapon of terror" will provide the nation with excitement and high hopes. Of course, the Game Master is at liberty to decide where the CAF-1 crashes; it is entirely possible the heroes could damn one town by saving another if the CAF-1 crashes on settled territory and its bomb load detonates. Or, if the plane glides in for a relatively easy landing, Tolkeen could salvage a ton of weapons as well as take prisoners. On the other hand, it could crash in the woods and be blown to atoms, or into Lake Michigan and explode upon impact with whatever survived sinking into its murky depths. If the plane survives even partially intact, the player group needs to act quickly, because once the Coalition learns that the plane is down, they will deploy cruise missiles to blast it into oblivion to prevent its secrets from falling into Tolkeen's hands.

Assuming the heroes' dragon allies make it out alive, this will only be the first step in Aurelor's plan for revenge. With the CAF-1 out of the way, now he will turn to destroying **Lt. General Zachary Kael**, who authorized the attack on Sorville. Kael might very well die in the initial battle, since he will be piloting the lead Super SAMAS escorting the CAF-1. Then, Aurelor will go after the big villain himself, **General Micander Drogue**. Once he is dead, the Great Horned Dragon may declare his vendetta finished and the matter at an end, or he may go ahead and track down and slay the leaders of the main battle groups of the CS Invasion Force as he had originally intended. Of course, the odds of Aurelor successfully getting General Drogue are slim and none (see the notes under Asher Grey/Aurelor's description).

For the player characters, the reward for pulling this off will be great — if they survive, that is. As noted earlier, Aurelor will indeed pay the heroes what they deserve, some cash and/or a few minor magic items, or a single major magic item, provided he lives long enough to hold up his end of the bargain. Any reward is at the G.M.'s discretion, of course.

Regardless of any physical rewards, the individuals in the group will be regarded as daring "heroes" to all of Tolkeen (except, maybe, to the Dragon Kings) and will be remembered as the "Sky Pirates" who defeated the Coalition's "Death Bomber" as they like to call the CAF-1. Naturally, this will also place them on the **Coalition's Most Wanted** list, so they should be on the lookout for Coalition spies, assassins and bounty hunters looking to cash in on the player characters' heads. This death mark will last for pretty much the rest of the characters' lives unless they somehow strike a deal with the Coalition that will change that. Not very likely, of course, but perhaps worth a shot. It is amazing the lengths people will go to clear their names after fending off the tenth bounty hunter in a row.

Slayer of Dragons. If the player characters should take part in the successful *defense* of the CAF-1, they will be hailed as heroes of the Coalition, and subject to hefty bonus payments if mercenaries, or enviable promotions and decorations if Coalition soldiers. If any of the player characters personally dispatched any of the dragons, they will receive the *Imperial Medal of Honor* (if regular troops) or the *Emperor's Medal* (if mercenaries or independent but pro-Coalition adventurers). They will

also receive preferential treatment in the assignment of their next mission, as well as a general extra latitude from their superior officers well into the future. Killing dragons is the sort of thing that earns one major respect in the Coalition military, regardless of rank, and it is one of those things for which even a general will buy a lowly private a round of drinks.

If the CAF-1 survives and bombs its target, then the saturation bombing campaign will officially be in full swing, with one such mission being carried out each week. Every time the CAF-1 goes up, it will expect to engage heavy enemy resistance, making the aircraft itself a kind of mobile battlefield. One of these days, the giant craft is going to get shot down, Tolkeen swears. The question is, will the player group be on it when it happens?

Hybrid endings. The players try to defend the CAF-1 but it goes down anyway. The heroes assault the craft but lose the dragons. The heroes hijack the craft and bomb a *Coalition* target! Followed by a chase and deadly attack by the CS to destroy it in mid-air before it can be used to do anymore harm. G.M.s and players alike, keep your minds open on this one, since there are plenty of directions to take this in. Don't be afraid to use the foundations off this adventure to create something totally different and off the cuff.

Offstage Action. Another way of playing this entire adventure, if you like, is to have it all take place outside of your ongoing campaign. Give the players a break from their characters for a night and allow them to command one of these mighty dragons or their allies as they seek vengeance. (For larger groups, simply whip up a couple more 5th to 9th level dragons, or some other tough characters.) The success or failure of Aurelor's revenge, as well as the changes that may come from it, will certainly affect the general scope of the war, changes that your "regular" party of heroes will have to contend with the next time you pick up their campaign.

CAF-1 Flying Leviathan

This monstrosity is one of General Drogue's "Special Projects." He actually spearheaded the operation before getting promoted to help head and coordinate the Tolkeen war front. Under his instruction, engineers at Iron Heart took existing and prototypical technologies and found new military applications for them. The end result is the CAF-1 "**Flying Leviathan**" amphibious cargo aircraft. Inspired by aviation legends such as the HK-1 "Spruce Goose" and the "AN-225 Mriya," the CAF-1 is an attempt to create the biggest airplane in aviation history for the purpose of moving huge amounts of conventional forces to anywhere the Coalition wants them. The project was shelved years ago mostly because the Coalition Military High Command felt that such enormous aircraft were too easily intercepted by enemy air forces, and if crashed, placed an excessive amount of manpower and material at risk. At that point, the airplane was 90% completed, but the program freeze condemned it to become a Coalition "hangar queen," an interesting prototype that would probably never see the skies. Until now.

Only a year ago, General Drogue discovered the project and resurrected it with dreams of turning this mammoth flying boat into the largest long-range "bomber" ever to fly. After a brief

and intense redesign and refitting blitz, the CAF-1 was *finished*, completed its tests flights and was ready for combat. The bombardment of Sorville was its maiden voyage into the history books. It currently sits in its amphibious dock on the shores of Lake Michigan, ready and able to deliver death from above to anywhere in Tolkeen.

CAF-1 "Flying Leviathan" Stratocarrier

The Flying Leviathan was inspired by two notable pre-Rifts aircraft: the HK1 Hughes Flying Boat and the Antonov AN-225 Mriya.

The HK1 was better known as the "Spruce Goose," and at the time was the largest working airplane ever built. It flew only once, however, and was never anything more than a showpiece. Like the 1929 *Dornier Do X*, which perhaps inspired it, the Spruce Goose was an enormous flying boat meant primarily for civilian, not military use. Although superseded in most respects by later aircraft, the Spruce Goose held the record for the largest wingspan of any conventional aircraft, at 320 feet (97.6 m), until the construction of the CAF-1.

The An-225 Mriya was by far the largest and heaviest conventional pre-Rifts aircraft ever to fly. It was also a one-of-a-kind vehicle designed by the old Soviet Union to carry extremely heavy payloads, such as a space shuttle mounted on its back, over long distances. The aircraft was surprisingly nimble for its size, and surely would have seen more use had the Soviet/Russian space agency not run out of funding. When that program collapsed, the Mriya was placed in storage, seeing only occasional use, such as guest appearances at air shows.

The CAF-1 is an elephantine hybrid of these two craft, designed for land or water takeoffs and landings, as well as an unprecedented aerial carrying capacity. As a bomber, the CAF-1 Flying Leviathan is able to shower a target with an incredible amount of ordnance from beyond the reach of most ground-based defenses. Multiple gun turrets and a full squadron of SAMAS troopers provide the craft with adequate defenses against most airborne interceptors or even enemy boarding parties. Plus, the CAF-1 is itself as sturdy as it is large, covered in multi-layered M.D.C. armored plating that enables it to take extreme punishment and remain aloft.

The biggest drawback is its utter lack of maneuverability. Unlike the An-225, the Flying Leviathan handles like a big flying brick, and is hardly capable of any kind of airborne evasive action. Where this really hurts the aircraft is not so much in avoiding getting hit by enemy fire, but in maintaining flight and maneuverability if there is an engine malfunction. Should the engines cut out for any reason, the CAF-1 will plummet like a rock, and not even a reboot of the engines or the world's best pilots will be likely to pull the stricken craft out of a death spin before it crashes. So far, the plane has shown no engine problems whatsoever. Each engine has its own power plant as well as fully redundant electronics and velocity control, which will help the CAF-1 stay in the air in the event of a problem. But should an enemy ever exploit this weakness, it could defeat the flying fortress rather easily. To date, General Drogue has not been informed of this Achilles' Heel, since the project engineers fear what will happen to them once he learns that his "super-bomber" is less than invincible.

Class: Prototype Bomber Aircraft.

Crew: The CAF-1 really has three crews, the *Flight Crew*, the *Combat Crew*, and the *Technical Crew*. The Flight Crew consists of one pilot, one co-pilot, one navigator, one communications officer and one bombardier (who actually deploys the onboard ordnance).

The Combat Crew consists of 32 SAMAS pilots (each of whom pilots his own Super SAMAS as part of the aircraft's on-board defense network) and 10 defense gunners, each of whom mans one of the plane's rail gun/mini-missile hybrid turrets.

The Technical Crew consists of four ordnance technicians (who load and maintain the plane's internal bombing modules), two gunner technicians (to handle any problems with the defense guns during flight) and eight SAMAS technicians (to handle any problems with the SAMAS during flight times).

Total crew: 61.

Passenger Capacity: When the internal bomb bay is empty, the Flying Leviathan can accommodate a passenger/troop payload identical to a CTX-54 "Fire Storm" Mobile Fortress. The larger units walk directly into the cargo hold through the front of the airplane, where the CAF-1's nosecone detaches and hinges back. These payloads do not utilize the entire cargo bay, either. Coalition engineers are convinced even more equipment could be stuffed inside if only the proper loading and storage systems were designed and installed. However, as long as the CAF-1 remains General Drogue's pet bomber, any further development for troop transport will remain on the drawing board. Currently, the CAF-1's passenger configurations include:

- One Squad (6) of Skull Smashers
- One Squad (6) of Spider-Skull Walkers
- One Squad (10) of Glitter Boy Killers
- One Platoon (40) of Scout Spider-Skull Walkers
- One Platoon (40) of Hellraisers
- One Platoon (40) of Hellfires or CS Cyborg Strike Troopers.
- One Platoon (40) of Terror Trooper Commandos or CS Juicers.
- One Platoon (40) of Scout Rocket Cycles and/or Warbird Rocket Cycles, or some other small aircraft.
- Two Platoons of Special Forces (80 troops; 60 in Striker SAMAS and 20 in Terror Troopers or power armor of choice).
- One Company of Light Assault SAMAS (160 troops; old or new style).
- One Company of Super SAMAS (160 troops).
- One Company of Infantry Soldiers (160 troops, supplies and support personnel).

Note: These passenger complements are in addition to the 32 Super SAMAS that are kept onboard to defend the plane during operations. These Super SAMAS are stored in a separate compartment of the airplane, and deploy through a series of bomb bay-like doors on the belly of the craft during flight time.

M.D.C. by Location:

- * Main Body — 5,000
- Reinforced Pilot's Compartment — 500
- Gunner's Compartment — 250
- (8) Entry Hatches (2 for crew, 6 for Super SAMAS) — 200 each



**** (2) Wings** — 500 each

***** (4) Stratolifter Engines** (Note: These Stratolifters are essentially two large megaturbines joined together to form a single composite engine.) — 250 each

* Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body shuts the vehicle down completely, causing it to spin out of control and crash.

**** Destroying one of the wings** will cause the vehicle to spin out of control and crash. The wings themselves are simply massive and do not require a called shot to strike.

***** The craft can lose up to a single engine and remain aloft**, but at 75% top speed. Losing two engines reduces the craft to 50% top speed, and all piloting rolls are made at -20%. Losing a third engine will reduce the craft to only 25% of its top speed, and all piloting rolls will be made at -40% as the plane begins to lose altitude and handle like a falling brick. The plane will descend by 200 feet (61 m) every melee round (15 seconds) until it lands or crashes (make a piloting roll at -50% to successfully land the plane under these conditions; otherwise a crash will result, demolishing the plane and probably killing everybody on board). Ultimately, the conditions of a Flying Leviathan crash are left to the G.M., but the crash is likely to be devastating and explosive and create a hair-raising crash scene. The engines of a Flying Leviathan are fairly large and easy to hit. Striking them does not require a called shot.

Speed:

Cruising: 450 mph (720 km).

Maximum: 550 mph (880 km).

Special Conditions: This plane requires a full five miles (8 km) of relatively calm water to reach takeoff speed. Landing requires roughly the same amount of space, although skilled pilots can usually touch down and stop in considerably less than five miles (8 km). Unless the prototype were fitted with retractable wheels and had access to an incredibly long runway, this plane can not land safely on the ground. It is designed as a nautical aircraft.

Range: Effectively unlimited, since the engines run off internal nuclear cells. The endurance of the craft is limited only by the endurance of its pilots and depleting its weapons payload.

Maximum Ceiling: 40,000 feet/7.6 miles (12,200 m/12.2 km).

Piloting Skill: Pilot: Jet

Statistical Data:

Height: 80 feet (24.4 m).

Width (Fuselage): 50 feet (15.2 m).

Wingspan: 385 feet (117.4 m).

Length: 366 feet (111.6 m).

Empty Weight: 632,000 lbs/316 tons

Gross (Fully Loaded) Weight: 1,363,500 lbs/681.75 tons

Maximum Payload (Cargo Weight): 731,500 lbs/365.75 tons

Standard Cargo: In the cockpit, there is a small weapons locker for the pilot, co-pilot, navigator and communications officer. The locker holds a rifle, a pistol, and a basic survival kit for each officer. The cockpit crew is required to wear their personal armor during flight operations. Each gunner's station also has an identical locker present. Also, in the passenger compartment is a locker capable of storing up to 10 suits of personal body armor, 10 rifles, 10 pistols, and 10 survival kits.

Power System: Each engine pod has its own miniature nuclear reactor and power cell, and the plane's power systems run off another miniature reactor and cell. A fully charged system has an expected life span of roughly 10 years.

Estimated Development Cost: One hundred and fifty million credits. If mass produced, the production cost would probably be about half the development cost, eventually.

Note: Currently there is only ONE Flying Leviathan in service. Despite General Drogue's current popularity and influence, the Coalition Military High Command will not authorize the manufacturing of additional CAF-1s until this one has proven to be effective in combat. Personally, they all believe it is a "lame goose" and a huge waste of money. The only reason they approved this one's deployment is that it was pretty much finished and Drogue was so insistent about it that they figured, "Why Not?"

It would take Iron Heart at least 20 months to reconstruct a second Leviathan aircraft, and that's working around the clock. However, if the CAF-1 proves to be ineffective or too vulnerable to enemy attack (as the preceding adventure should accomplish), it will be scrapped.

Weapon Systems:

1. C-20R Rail Guns (10): The plane's primary means of defense, aside from the SAMAS troopers on board, are its complement of 10 C-20R rail guns — one on the nose, one on the tail, and four each (top, bottom, left side and right side) on the fore and aft sections of the fuselage.

Primary Purpose: Anti-aircraft, anti-personnel.

Secondary Purpose: Anti-missile point defense.

Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 M.D. for a full damage burst of 40 rounds. At the flip of a switch, the gun can fire 10 shot bursts which inflict only 3D6 M.D.

Range: 4,000 feet (1,220 m).

Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot's combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee round.

Payload: 6,000 round drum feed for 150 burst per each rail gun. Reloading a drum will take about 25 minutes for those not trained, but a mere 10 minutes by characters with engineering or field armorer skills. Note: These rail gun turrets are each mated with a mini-missile pod, described below, making the CAF-1's gunnery stations hybrid weapons platforms capable of delivering either electromagnetic fire or mini-missile fire.

2. Mini-Missile Pods (10): Typically packs the most damaging complement of armaments.

Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 (plasma).

Range: One mile (1.6 km).

Rate of Fire: Single shot or volleys of two, three, or four. Payload: Ten mini-missiles per launcher.

3. Cruise Missiles:

Mega-Damage: Varies according to missile type. For a full selection of medium- and long-range missiles, please refer to the *Rifts® RPG* page 46, or *Coalition War Campaign™* page 97. Range: Varies according to missile.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot's combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee round.

Payload: The Flying Leviathan has a total of six heavy weapons pylons, three on each wing. Each pylon can accommodate either six medium-range cruise missiles or less commonly, three long-range cruise missiles. Technically, the pylon could be fitted to accommodate six mini-missile pods each, but the short-range of those weapons makes them impractical as a pri-



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Most importantly, The Rifter™ is a forum for Palladium's Fans. At least half of each issue will be text and material taken (with permission) from the Web, as well as fan contributions made especially for **The Rifter™**. We get tons of fan submissions that are pretty good, but not good enough for publication as an entire sourcebook. In other cases, the submission is something clever and cool, but only a few pages long. There's lots of cool stuff on the Internet, but you must have a computer and Internet access, something a lot of fans just don't have.

The Rifter™ will reprint some of those "Web-Works™" allowing fans (and the world at large) to get a glimpse of their genius. It is one more avenue in which fans and professionals alike can share their visions of role-playing and the Palladium Megaverse with other fans. It's a chance to get published, get a little cash, get your name in lights (well, in print) and have fun.

This also means, more than any RPG publication ever produced, **The Rifter™ is yours.** Yours to present and share ideas. Yours to help shape and mold. Yours to share.

Why call it The Rifter™? Because each issue will span the Palladium Megaverse of games, adventures and ideas. Each issue will publish features from people across the Web and beyond! But mainly because each and every one of us, from game designer and publisher, to Joe Gamer, traverses the Megaverse™ every time they read an RPG or play in a role-playing game. We travel the infinite realm of the imagination, hopping from one world to the next — building one world to the next. Time and space are meaningless in our imaginations as we *Rift* from one place and time to another.

**Palladium Books Inc.
Rifter Dept.**

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mary payload weapon, and the airplane's lack of maneuverability makes it impractical to strafe ground targets from a low altitude. Likewise, long-range missiles are not commonly loaded because their range makes them just as easily fired from the ground, eliminating the need for loading them on the cumbersome Flying Leviathan. (The plane would be more likely to launch LRMs if the Coalition ever wished to deliver a nuclear payload to a target, such as Atlantis, from a moving platform. To that end, the Flying Leviathan could accommodate a single Tomahawk cruise missile on each of its six pylons.)

4. Internal Bombing Modules: Fully loaded, the CAF-1 can carry up to 30 hexagonal magazines loaded with 48 laser-guided bombs each. These guided bombs, which are the rough equivalent of medium-range missiles, are dropped through the bay doors in rapid succession. The bomb bay doors close automatically when the last bomb is released. Then the empty bomb module is rotated to the back of the column and the next module slides into place over the bomb bay. There is a 15 second delay when switching bombing modules.

The accuracy of these bombs is very high, since they were originally designed for use by the CSN Dagger Bomber, and as such, are suitable for targeting specific armored vehicles, buildings, or other small targets. The CAF-1 has no use for such accuracy, since it is meant to carpet bomb its targets into oblivion.

The hexagonal bomb modules/magazines are easily removable and can be on- or off-loaded by a trained crew in under five minutes. Reloading a module takes a trained crew nearly one hour, so if pre-prepared reloads are not available when the CAF-1 returns to base, there will be a substantial wait between sorties. In general, however, the CAF-1 is not meant to perform more than one sortie per day, since its many gun turrets and SAMAS squadron will also require service after a combat operation.

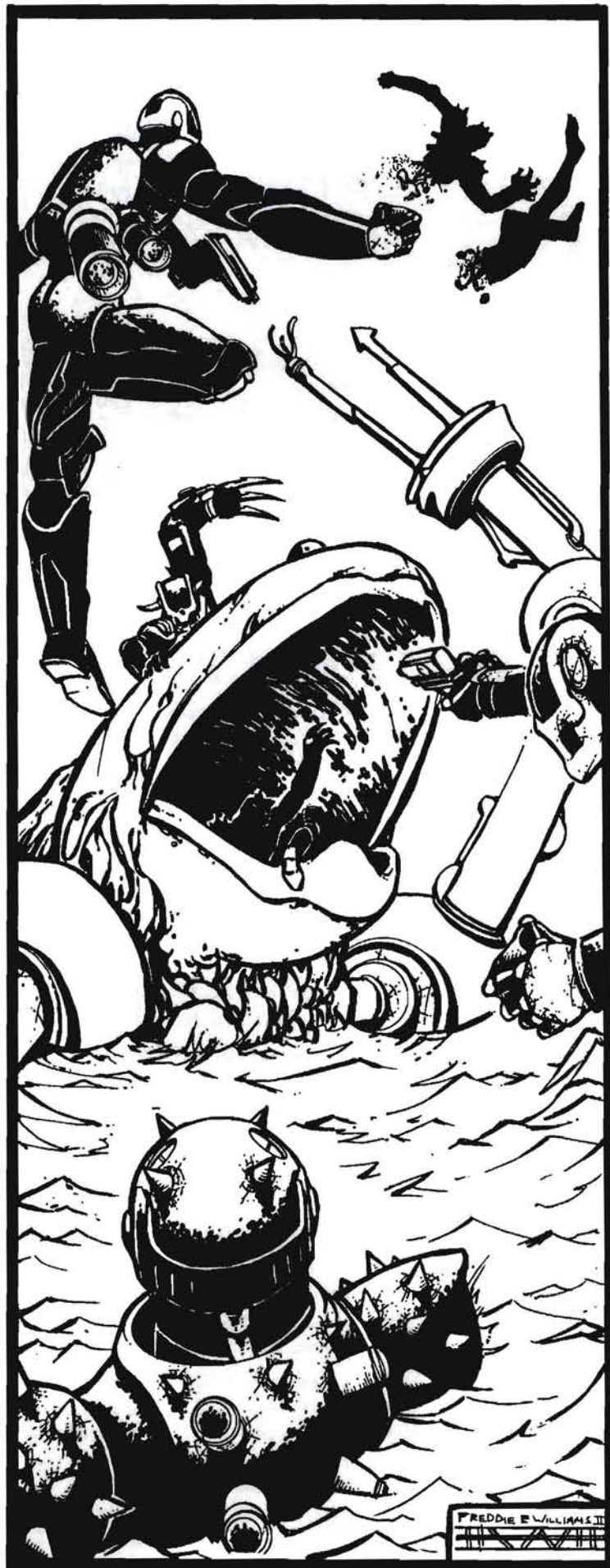
Primary Purpose: Saturation assault.

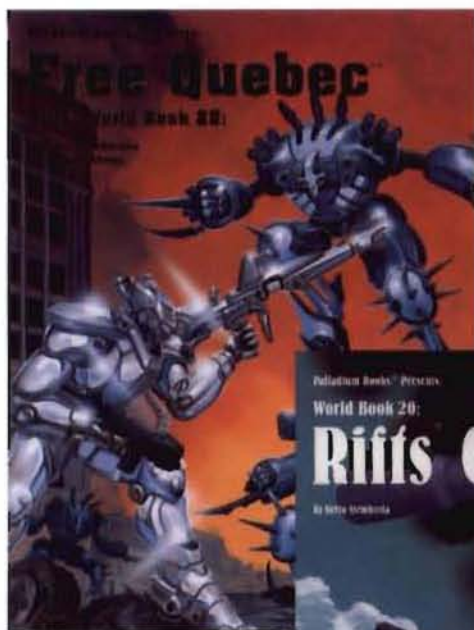
Mega-Damage: Varies with bomb type. Standard armament is multi-warhead (2D4x10 M.D., plasma or high explosive (2D6x10 M.D.)). **Range:** The CAF-1 bombing crew can accurately place bombs on their target from an altitude of 20,000 feet/3.78 miles (6,100 m/6.1 km) above the ground. Releasing payload any higher than that entails a -2 to strike for every 1,000 feet (305 m) above the 20,000 feet cruising altitude.

Rate of Fire: One at a time or in volleys of 2, 4, 6, or 8. **Payload:** 48 bombs per loaded magazine. When fully loaded with 30 hexagonal magazines, the CAF-1 carries a whopping 1,440 LGBs.

Note: Obviously, this giant craft could carry more ordnance, but the Coalition has yet to design a bomb delivery system large enough to fit more than 100 bombs at once. Thus, when used as a bomber, the CAF-1 has a fair amount of empty space in its cargo hold. Future upgrades of the internal bomb racks will allow the craft to carry at least several times more bombs than its current maximum.

5. Sensory Systems: This vehicle packs state of the art sensors and communications equipment. Among its many features is an enhanced radar system that can track up to 128 targets simultaneously out to a range of 250 miles (400 km). Any targets acquired by the radar are fed into the vehicle's targeting computers, giving all gunners a +3 bonus to strike when firing the plane's rail guns or mini-missile pods.

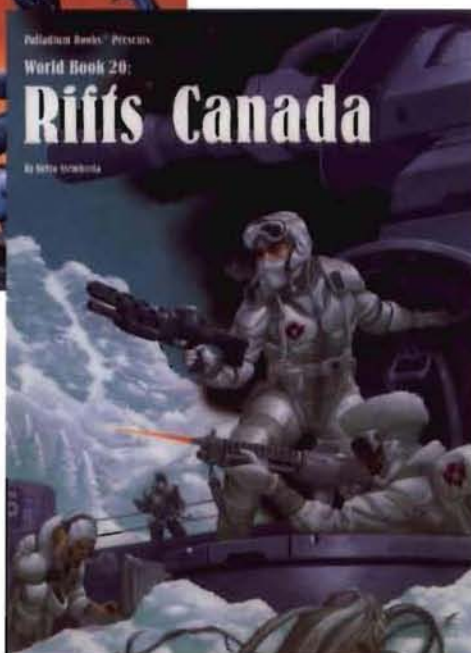




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