



CHAPTER 2

Rob mumbled something under his breath. “All right, I suppose it’ll have to do. As you know, I have been ordered to take temporary command of Jihad forces in this region; you will, I hope, barely notice my presence - I am charging you to go about your duties as normal, and provide me with such resources as requested until the state of emergency,” he gave him a pointed glance at the word ‘emergency’, “is over. He paused momentarily. “The situation is as follows: Two hundred Jihaddi are scheduled to make rendezvous to-morrow afternoon to participate in the attack. They are making their way here as we speak and will find individual billeting around the city, as per standard procedure; their sergeants are in contact with me through JihadNet. Weapons are being smuggled across the border through the usual channels and we have managed to bring in three small mechs, currently stored somewhere in this city - they arrived three hours ago.

“From your description of the situation, I judge that this will be sufficient to take the Burnaby Mountain base with a minimum of casualties. Have there been any new developments in the last six hours?”

Lieutenant Muir rose. “I have sent you a report on the current situation. No significant further developments have taken place. We have better information than we did six hours ago, however, including satellite reconnaissance stretching back twenty-six hours. HQ believes they have the base mapped out adequately.”

“TRES HQ can take their maps. Bloody newfangled machines aren’t worth trusting.” Too many times these satellite maps had cost Jihaddi their lives. “In any case, I think we can have this B’harnate base taken out of commission by the day after tomorrow - they’ve got no real taste for a good fight and a good bloody nose is typically enough to keep them out of non-strategic areas for a good long time. Barney’s forces usually try to surround and drown their opponents through sheer numbers; they’ll avoid this area in the future.”



HEROES OF THE DAY



PALADINS OF THE PURPLE SHADOW

The Jihad to Destroy Barney the Purple Dinosaur is the central protagonist in this little comedy of errors. The Jihad has taken on the task of defeating the forces and influence of B'harne, known in the mundane world as Barney the Dinosaur. The soldiers of the Jihad are equipped with beyond state-of-the-art weapons, powerful magical artifacts, and a ferocious will to win.

The Jihad is organized in a decentralized fashion: Separate Jihad Autonomous Organizations (JAOs) perform their duties independently of the others. Overall authority in the Jihad is vested in the hands of the Triumvirate Council, who can override any JAO commander in an extreme situation.

The JAOs are the heart and soul of the Jihad. Each one has some sort of specialized function that contributes in some significant way to the progression of the Hidden War. Overall, the Jihad has roughly 25,000 people involved in the cause in some fashion. Roughly half of the Jihad's membership are considered active combat personnel; the rest are considered research or support staff, although every member of the Jihad knows how to shoot a gun and swing a sword without killing themselves. You never know when the war is going to come knocking on your door, after all...

THE HIGH COMMAND

What little central authority the Jihad subscribes to comes from the Office of the Triumvirate Council, also known as the High Command. The High Command is in essence a JAO all on its own; while not designed as an active combat branch by any stretch of the imagination, keeping the rest of the Jihad functioning as smoothly as

possible takes incredible amounts of coordination on the part of the High Command.

The High Command's base organizational structure actually predates the concept of the Triumvirate Council by several years. The original High Command was formed in the wake of the Montreal debacle, when the Jihad as a whole decided that some form of centralized leadership was necessary in order to keep another disaster like that from happening. Originally set into place by Praetor Augustus, the High Command's layer of bureaucracy has kept the Jihad functional even during the worst periods of upheaval.

Despite this vital role in the working of the Jihad, the High Command is actually very small, with only 400 dedicated staff members working out of offices scattered through JAO compounds. High Command staff are all volunteers from the separate JAOs, usually inducted under a strict quota system to ensure that no one organization is represented more or less than another.

The Command's duties are broken up into several different functions:

The Triumvirate Council: After Serp the Feral's attempted coup (see p.19) broke the back of the original commanding Praetorate, which was followed up by the general lousiness

of 1996 for the Jihad, the JAO leadership decided unanimously that overall command of the Jihad was too much strain for any one person to handle. As a result, the Triumvirate Council was established to spread out the stresses of commanding a secret army of iconoclasts.

The actual Triumvirate Council itself is made up of three flag-rank JAO officers and three alternates who are nominated by their predecessors on the council. While the Council itself is the absolute and final word on all Jihad-wide or inter-JAO matters, the officers involved are occasionally *not* the commanding officers of their JAO; this has led to friction between Triumvirate members and senior JAO officers in the past.

Due to their other duties as part of their respective JAOs, the Triumvirate only meets physically on special or important occasions. The majority of Triumvirate meetings are done via teleconference between the members and whichever High Command officer has been roped into doing the weekly briefing. When they do have a physical meeting, the Triumvirate holds it in a specially-prepared lodge in the Canadian Rockies. The lodge acts as a sort of neutral ground between the JAO heads, if and when it comes to that.

The current Triumvirate consists of Admiral Melanie Davies of TRES

The Three-Fold Truth

The Jihad's fight is governed by the Three-Fold Truth, first spoken by the High Prophet at the beginning of the war. The Truth acts as the philosophical glue that holds the entire enterprise together:

1. *Barney is the demonic incarnation of all hell on Earth.*
2. *Barney seeks to make the world his Purple Kingdom, and does so by corrupting the innocent and weak into Sponge Minions*
3. *Barney must be destroyed, all else is irrelevant!*



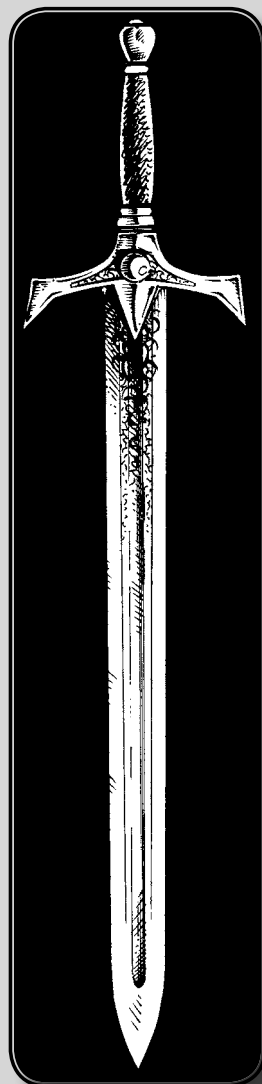
The Barney-Slayer

Forged in the distant mists of antiquity, the sword resembles a traditional European short (or one-handed) sword of the late 12th century Christian Era. The metal in the blade (called Owsenite after the original owner of the sword, Tilden Alexander, Lord Owsen) is a mana-active alloy of unknown composition, capable of cutting through nearly any material known to mundane or Jihad science. The sword also has an animistic spirit bound to the large amethyst in the hilt. The spirit is capable of communicating with whomever is handling the sword, and often “speaks” telepathically (with a Irish Gaelic accent, no less) to the owner. It is quite temperamental, and tends not like most of the people it comes into contact with. However, it doesn’t have any control whatsoever over the blade or the wielder, so all it can really do in such circumstances is grumble.

However, that is not the sword’s most impressive ability. The blade has been enchanted to act as a kind of magical sponge, absorbing magical energy from the surrounding area and using it to strengthen the blade. More importantly, the enchantment is “attuned,” for a lack of a better word, to the life-force of B’harne itself. Therefore, whenever the sword is exposed to B’harne’s physical form, it literally sucks his life energy away. This power is, to the best knowledge of the Jihad, the only thing that B’harne truly fears, and he will do anything to put as much distance between himself and the Barney-Slayer.

During the Pacifica rescue mission the Barney-Slayer was broken into two fragments as a result of a duel between Lord Owsen and Lyran High Mage Charn’El. The Jihad recovered most of the Slayer’s blade, while the whereabouts of the hilt (and of Owsen, who was presumably killed in the duel) are unknown. So far as Jihad intelligence has been able to determine to date, the hilt is trapped inside the dimensional bubble where the High Mage was imprisoned at the end of the Pacifica mission. Whether or not the hilt is still there is unknown.

The blade is currently being kept in a vault at the JPV campus, where it is apparently slowly regenerating. The method of regeneration continues to baffle Jihaddi scientists. JPV mages assume that the missing hilt is regenerating as well, possibly being altered by its proximity to Charn’El. What this means for the Jihad as a whole has yet to be determined.



Corps, Commander Aris Merquoni of VRDET, and Captain Shadur T’Kharn of TRES Corps. The Adjuncts are Rear Admiral Katze Brenner of TRES Corps, Grand Admiral Kirk Felton of TRES Corps, and Archchancellor Joseph Schneider of the JPV.

Jihadlink: Communications and coordination are vitally important to the Jihad’s well-being. Without a smooth flow of information between the various JAOs, watch houses, outposts, field teams, etc. the Jihad would quickly splinter into a dozen different fragments, each with a slightly different agenda and none capable of facing the threat from the enemy alone.

The High Command’s Jihadlink staff are responsible for keeping the voice and data networks connecting the JAOs functional. This involves both hardware and software maintenance (a job usually contracted out to the original inventors of the Jihadlink network) and overall system administration.

Liaison Office: The Jihad has a network of deep-cover agents scattered across the globe, watching the mundane public for signs of enemy action. In order to prevent duplication of work whenever possible, these agents are kept under the sole control of the High Command.

Liaison agents are recruited from JAO intelligence branches, carefully groomed for insertion, then let go into the general population. Reports are collected by the Liaison Office, then turned over to the JAOs as a group for analysis and potential action.

Quartermaster: The other branch of the High Command that deals with the mundane world, the deceptively-named Quartermaster is in charge of the Jihad’s funding. Shell companies and other activities bring in the cash, and the Quartermaster is in charge of distributing it.

Like most other things the High



Command is responsible for, mundane money distribution is done as fairly as possible. This doesn't always sit well with the JAO leadership, who occasionally try to make end-runs around the Quartermaster. It doesn't work out all that well.

Inspector General: The least-liked part of the High Command, the Inspector General is in charge of ensuring that JAOs are run to the exacting standards of the Triumvirate. Inspectors are there to make sure that the individual JAOs are still conforming to the basic rules of the Jihad, namely the Three-Fold Truth and their own internal codes of conduct.

The most important thing the Inspector General watches out for are potential violations of the secret nature of the war. Since the potential penalties for letting the Jihad become public are dire, it benefits even the most intransigent JAO commanders to let inspectors check their troops for potential leaks. This doesn't make them well-loved among the rank and file, but compared to getting your face plastered all over CNN's morning news, the Inspector General is willing to take a little flack now and then.

ALL OVER THE WORLD

The Jihad's mission often takes it around the world and back in order to fight the good fight. While most of the fighting takes place where B'harne is strongest, the Jihad maintains watch over much of the rest of the world, as well as providing boltholes for Jihaddi caught out in the cold after a mission draws unwanted attention.

NORTH AMERICA

North America is where the Hid-

den War started, and remains the Jihad's major stronghold. All the primary bases of the Jihad's autonomous branches are located inside the United States. The Jihad keeps a close watch over Canada as well, with monitoring stations in Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax, Calgary and Vancouver, and safehouses scattered in cities across the provinces.

Mexico is watched with much the same amount of scrutiny, with monitoring stations in Mexico City, Guadalajara, Ciudad Juarez, and Veracruz.

Safehouses are placed mostly along the Mexico-US border, with a few hiding places secreted in the forests of the Yucatan.

Central America is not as intensely monitored or protected by the Jihad. Safehouses can be located in the capitols of the Central American nations, and these are mostly only lightly staffed.

EUROPE

The center of European operations is located in London - by a strange coincidence, not far from the headquarters of MI-6. Anything Jihad-related will end up relayed through the London office, and so it tends to absorb the bulk of the resources and personnel sent to Europe. As a result, the monitoring stations in continental Europe (located in Paris, Bonn, Barcelona, Warsaw and Bucharest) tend to be very lightly staffed - the Bonn station being almost totally automated. Safehouses, of course, are found in most of the major population centers in both Western and Eastern Europe.

ASIA AND OCEANIA

The Asian and Pacific Rim operations center is located in Sydney, Australia, a long-time source of Jihad

recruits. Much like its counterpart in London, the Sydney office tends to draw most of the allocated resources to itself, leaving the other Asian stations fairly lightly staffed.

However, the mundane political landscape requires that at least *some* of the main stations keep a full staff handy. The East Asia monitoring stations in Tokyo, Manila and Beijing have been required to keep a full staff, if only to maintain counterintelligence operations to keep the mundanes off track. As a consequence, the monitor stations in India and Central Asia have been cut down to almost purely automated setups. Safehouses are available for Jihaddi on the run in the major East Asian cities and in Indian population centers, but Jihaddi are advised that several Central Asian safehouses have been compromised by mundane forces, primarily in Afghanistan and the former Soviet republics.

SOUTH AMERICA

South American operations are run out of the Ecuadorian capitol of Quito. Unlike the European and Asian operations centers, the Quito office has not managed to divert all of the primary resources to itself, meaning the fully staffed monitoring stations can be found in La Paz, Caracas, Rio de Janeiro (a popular choice for assignment) and Buenos Aires. Safehouses can be found in areas ranging along the Amazon River and stringing along the coastline.

Of particular interest is the Jihad's combined staging base at Punta Arenas, Argentina. This base is meant to serve as the Antarctic operations center, and frequently sends out expeditions to watch the Ross Ice Shelf for signs of spongification. The Punta Arenas base is possibly the least desired posting in the entire Jihad, and Jihaddi have a traditional fear of crossing the wrong

No Inspector General has lasted more than a year before burning out.



**Jihadi Installations
in North America**



superior and getting travel orders for Argentina cut.

AFRICA

Africa is probably the least-watched part of the world by the Jihad, due to the near-total lack of inroads made by B'harne into that continent. Regardless, the Jihad maintains lightly-staffed monitoring stations in Cairo, Nariobi and Pretoria just on the principle that "it never hurts to be cautious."

ABOVE THE SKY

The Jihad, for all its overtechnology has only a few limited ventures into space operations. The single major space asset the Jihad holds currently is the TRES Corps space station *Ithaca*. *Ithaca* is the home of Zeta Squad, and even with them in residence the station is still mostly half-empty. No other JAOs have functional operations in space.

Before the X'hirjq invasion, the Blood Jihad had constructed and maintained a mining and manufacturing operation on the lunar surface. Luna Base, as it was so (predictably) named, was totally destroyed during the Invasion, when the X'hirjq vaporized most of the surface facilities, killing the entire staff. After the Invasion, the ruins of Luna Base stood empty. The Blood Jihad's successor organization VRDET decided that rebuilding would be a waste of limited resources, and left the base as a monument to the terrible force of the Invasion.

JIHAD AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATIONS

The Jihad has been composed of many different groups in the decade since its creation. Most of these groups spontaneously formed and just as spontaneously dissolved back into

the void. The most spectacular case of this happened in 1997, when the venerable Blood Jihad group simply *collapsed*, leaving behind entire truckloads of equipment and a very confused subordinate staff, the leadership having just up and vanished within the space of 24 hours. Some JAOs, however, manage to find a particular niche and cling to it, no matter what the odds.

TRES CORPS

The largest of the functional JAOs, TRES Corps stands as the de facto



"leader" of the Jihad as a group. TRES was formed as the military wing of a more esoteric group in 1993, as a supposed successor to the Knights Templar. The original TRES group dis-

solved within eighteen months, leaving only the TRES Corps as a remnant. From this beginning, TRES has grown rapidly, from a small tactical force to the single largest military contingent in the Jihad today.

Having evolved from a purely philosophical organization which found a sudden need for a military branch, the TRES Corps has always enjoyed military organization of a rather eclectic nature, immediately obvious in its naval-based ranking structure despite its lack of a wet navy and its common deployment as the bulk of the Jihad's infantry fighting force. This theme of oddball structure carries over into the organization's division of manpower, which vaguely resembles modern infantry organization but bears anachronistic labels inspired by that of the Knights Templar.

The smallest unit of organization

in the TRES Corps is the Lance, a twelve-man unit typically consisting of a Lance leader, often an Ensign, an assistant Lance leader, eight riflemen and two support weapon specialists. For operational purposes the Lance can be further subdivided into two six-man teams, three four-man teams, or six two-man teams.

Two Lances plus a Headquarters Lance form a Banner, traditionally a formation of ten to twenty Knights Templar plus their entourage. The HQ Lance consists of a Banner commander typically a Lieutenant in rank, a Banner subcommander of Lieutenant or Junior Grade rank, four drivers whom double as riflemen, four riflemen and two support weapon specialists.

Eight to ten Banners plus a Company HQ form a Company, playing the role of the "squadron" in Templar organization which was typically a group of ten to twenty Banners. The Company HQ is a typical Banner lead by the company commander and the company executive, typically Captain and Lieutenant Commander in rank, and composed of support staff trained in parallel roles to their battle brethren. A full Company will consist of roughly 360 men.

Four to eight Companies form the largest of the TRES Corps' divisions of organization, the Squadron, a term borrowed from U.S. Navy organization rather than Templar history. The Squadron HQ is a Company, typically the 1st, headed by a Commanding Officer of Rear Admiral or greater rank and an Executive Officer typically of Captain or greater rank.

The Commanding Officers of each Squadron form the TRES Corps Admiralty, the governing body of the Corps as a whole, whom in turn are lead by the Grand Admiral, the Commander-in-Chief of the organization and his/her Second-in-Command, of rank no less



than Admiral. It is not uncommon for both the CinC and the 2inC to command their own squadrons.

The Corps is commanded by Grand Admiral Kirk Felton, a veteran of the assault on the Pacifica POW camp, former electronics technician and member in good standing of the Maenads. Admiral Felton took command after former Grand Admiral Melanie Davies went on an extended sabbatical in Tibet. (Or just hasn't returned yet from a pub crawl in the north of England, according to latrine rumor.)

On the whole, the TRES Corps consists of roughly 10,000 personnel on active and inactive duty, divided into the following squadrons:

Alpha Squadron: Alpha acts as the command group for the Corps as a whole. They run headquarters, keep the paperwork flowing, deal with inter-squadron and inter-JAO relations and otherwise devote their lives to keeping the Corps operating as smoothly as possible.

This doesn't mean that they're all rear-eschelon types; Alpha Squadron is still a fully-equipped combat group, and is charged with defending the command compound and protecting the Admiralty with all the resources at their disposal. The squadron is usually commanded by the Grand Admiral, but in a break from tradition Admiral Davies has retained command of Alpha after swapping jobs with Grand Admiral Felton. While Admiral Davies is still on sabbatical, the day-to-day operations are overseen by her executive officer, Real Admiral Katze Brenner.

Delta Squadron: In order to fight effectively, the Corps needs the best information possible. To this end, Delta Squadron was formed with the express intent of collecting, analyzing and reporting intelligence to feed the targeting computers and battle plans of the more combat-oriented squadrons.

Delta's four companies spend most of their time either in the field or in the depths of HQ, gathering and going over

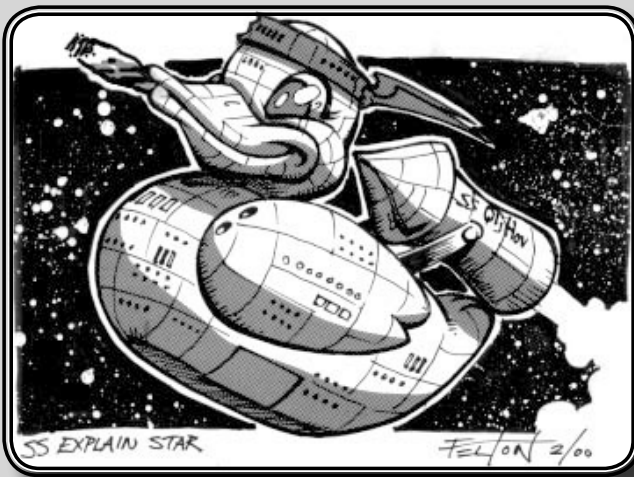
the latest intel on enemy movements and mundane activities that could pose a possible threat to TRES operations. The squadron has the largest number of liaisons of any other TRES operation save Chi, and can be counted to know what's going on at all times anywhere in North America. The common refrain from Delta's squaddies is that not a sparrow falls without them noticing.

Delta Squadron is commanded by Admiral Travis Bond – no jokes please – who moved in from Alpha as part of former Grand Admiral Marburger's general housecleaning of the Corps after Operation PACIFICA. Bond is a capable administrator, but his general dislike for the parahuman members of the Corps – to say nothing about parahumans under his own command – has made him a less-than-respected figure among much of the officer corps.

Zeta Squadron: Whenever a member of TRES Corps needs a fancy new laser pistol or a new tracking widget for their car, they call Zeta Squadron.

The SS Explain Star

The SS *Explain Star* occupies a *very special* niche in the Jihad's organizational chart. The ship itself is a modified VRDET interdimensional scout craft, crewed mainly by rankings from TRES Corps and brethren of the Church of St. Dino the Avenger, and operates totally independent from all three JAOs.



The *Explain Star* was designed and built by former VRDET R&D director Malaclypse the Seeker, under circumstances that remain fairly hazy ("Remember kids," Mal is on record saying about the *Explain Star*, "don't drink heavily and operate a CAD/CAM autofactory"). The ship fell under the command of a Commander LoS of TRES Corps, also under hazy circumstances that probably involved alcohol as well. Somewhere along the line, CosDtA wrangled co-jurisdiction of the crew, and things finally came to a head when LoS declared his ship "the last warship of the Bwahahahaharian Empire" and refused to answer calls demanding that he return the ship to the proper authorities.

As the only truly independent spacecraft operating in the Jihad today, the *Explain Star* wanders on patrol between Earth and Mars, watching for B'harnate or allied attack ships approaching from the Void, and blowing up the occasional stray rock.



The Zeta techs are TRES' dedicated research and development operation, devoted to producing useful gear for Corps field teams, not to mention the occasional superweapon.

Zeta is unique in TRES in that it's the only squadron which doesn't have its primary offices at TRES HQ. Instead, they've taken over the *Ithaca* space station and use that as their base of operations and main labs. This suits the rest of the Admiralty, since *Ithaca's* geosynchronous orbit means that any potential earth-shattering kabooms won't actually shatter the earth. Despite the lack of regular contact with the ground, Zeta's members seem happy enough to fiddle with their gadgets.

The squadron is commanded by Admiral Svartalf, a former executive officer of Alpha Squadron with a fair amount of engineering prowess under his belt. Svartalf was the one who suggested spinning off Zeta as a research group in the first place, and as such is all but worshipped by many of his fellow techies.

Theta Squadron: People who sign up with TRES Corps aren't automatically assigned to squadrons randomly. The process of creating a fully-fledged TRES soldier takes time and training. This is where Theta Squadron comes in. Theta's two training companies take in recruits and turn them into Jihaddi.

As befits its purpose, Theta is not intended to participate in combat operations. Drill instructors are carefully ordered to keep their trainees out of the line of fire at all costs. However, if push comes to shove Theta's full-time troops are prepared to assist in combat ops if it arrives at the gates of TRES HQ.

Theta Squadron is commanded by Admiral Natasha Markova, a former Kappa company commander with extensive field experience from the X'hirjq invasion.

Iota Squadron: Iota serves as one

of the two front-line combat operations squadrons. Smaller than Kappa Squadron, Iota doesn't get the same level of troop or materiel support, so the company command staff has made an artform out of doing more with less. Dubbed the "MacGuyver Squadron," Iota's troops have a knack for very unorthodox tactics and equally unorthodox weapons. Where Kappa gets dibs on the fully-tested weapons systems, Iota works to get their hands on Zeta's highly experimental prototypes, with predictably unpredictable results.

Iota Squadron is commanded by Admiral James Yearnshaw.

Kappa Squadron: Kappa is where all the fun is, if you define "fun" as "blowing up everything that moves." Kappa Squadron is TRES Corps' primary front-line combat battalion, focusing mainly on high-tech heavy weaponry and infantry operations. Kappa boasts eight companies worth of troops, double what the other combat squadrons can field. They also go into the field with the most advanced weapons and equipment, bearing the finest technology the Zeta Squadron technical boffins can produce.

In terms of combat strategy Kappa favors the direct approach: plenty of firepower and overwhelming force. This has worked well in most of the small-scale engagements the combat squad has engaged in, but every so often a team of gung-ho Kappas will get themselves into a hole that they can't climb out of and call for backup. When that happens, the entire squadron will appear and start kicking ass.

Kappa Squadron is commanded by Admiral J-Rock, one of the original TRES recruits and a hardened warrior in his own right. J-Rock's prestige both as a leader and as a member of the Maenads of the Holy Albino allows him more leeway in the Corps than any other commander save the Grand Ad-

miral.

Chi Squadron: Chi is the Corps' janitorial squadron, not to put too fine a point on it. Their job is to watch out for mundane parties that get too interested in TRES shell holdings or front operations, scout out potential recruits, engage in cleanup jobs after particularly messy combat and gently steer any possible witnesses away from the war.

The particulars of Chi Squadron's job are very similar to the classic operations of the Men in Black, and the comparison is often made by other Jihaddi. Members of Chi don't take the jibes all that well; the best way to start a barfight with a Chi member is to make a MIB joke. Despite the occasional bout of snickering, Chi members take their jobs very seriously indeed.

Chi Squadron is commanded by Admiral William Keith, a Kappa veteran who moved up through the ranks on raw stubbornness. His tenacity has served him well in his duties commanding the cleanup squad.

Omega Squadron: Whenever a situation pops up that can't be solved through the application of indiscriminate violence, the Admiralty turns to Omega Squadron for the *discriminate* use of violence. Omega's role as special operations wing of the Corps means that it's kept small, (only two companies) to facilitate rapid deployment to wherever somebody needs a Jihaddi SWAT team.

Omega usually shows up only when the situation has gone completely to hell and open military action on the part of Kappa or Iota Squadrons isn't an option. This usually involves a lot of close work with Chi and Delta, in order to successfully keep the mundanes from freaking out when they show up.

Omega Squadron is commanded by the Grand Admiral himself, since he has some affinity with special operations in general.



TRES Corps' central headquarters is a high-tech compound built in the Colorado Rockies, deep inside ski resort territory. The ski town of Winter Park, and the resort, lies to the south, while Corps HQ is accessible from a nearby private road.

DOBERMAN EMPIRE

One of the first JAOs to form, and the oldest of the JAOs still in operation



today, the Doberman Empire began as an attempt to expand the Jihad's reach out of the United States proper, following in the wake of the enemy's attempts at building a commercial empire overseas. The Dobermans were the first purely combat-oriented JAO, the first

ones to employ large group tactics in their battle

planning, and the first JAO to operate in non-American territory. They were the place to go in the early period of the Jihad if you wanted to kick butt and take names. Moreover, they were the de-facto leaders of the Jihad for much of its history.

A series of devastating setbacks during the X'hirjq invasion – losing several key global bases, as well as taking heavier casualties than any other JAO – caused the Empire to lose its lead-

Captain Miranda Delgado, TRES Corps

268 points

Miranda Delgado was born and raised in East Los Angeles. In high school she excelled at both her schoolwork and on the basketball court, which earned her a full ride scholarship to the University of California, Berkeley. After four years at Berkeley, in which she earned double majors in sociology and statistics, she graduated in the spring of 1994 and went to work for a middling sized corporation in San Francisco. Early in 1995, the company entered acquisition talks with another company, but Delgado became suspicious of the people from the other company because they did not seem like any businessmen she had run into before.

After a couple weeks of observation, Delgado approached the person from the other company who had been appointed to audit her department with her suspicions. He listened patiently, but didn't give any indications that Delgado had been right in her guesses. The next day, however, Delgado found herself in a chat with the head of the delegation and found herself recruited into TRES Corps that afternoon.

Delgado's skills at observation and analysis earned her a place in Delta Squadron, the intelligence arm of TRES. The few times she's been called to do something other than intelligence analysis, she has done well at those things, and maintained a steady progression through the ranks. She now holds the rank of Captain, and is in charge of overseeing one of Delta's four companies.

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 10 [0].

Secondary Attributes: HP 11 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 16 [10]; FP 10 [0].

Appearance: Hispanic female, 27 years old, 6'1" and 152 pounds; brown eyes and black hair worn medium length. When not in TRES duty uniform, usually wears jeans and UC-Berkeley t-shirt, or business casual wear when working with civillian operations.

Advantages: Acute Vision 1 [2]; Fearlessness 2 [4]; Military Rank 3 (Captain, TRES Corps) [15]; Patron (the Jihad) [40].

Disadvantages: Duty (to the Jihad) [-15]; Enemy (B'harne) [-60]; Light Sleeper [-5]; Phobia (Acrophobia) [-10].

Quirks: Attentive [-1]; Broad-Minded [-1]; Careful [-1]; Dislikes snow [-1]; Loves women's college basketball [-1]; Meticulous planner [-1]; Neat and orderly [-1]; Quiet and introverted [-1].

Skills: Administration-17 [12]; Area Knowledge (Los Angeles)-16 [4]; Area Knowledge (San Francisco)-16 [4]; Area Knowledge (TRES Corps HQ)-17 [8]; Beam Weapons/TL9 (X-Rifle)-14 [4]; Brawling-12 [1]; Broadsword-12 [2]; Computer Operations/TL9-16 [4]; Desponge-14 [4]; Driving/TL8 (Automobile)-17 [20]; Electronics Operation/TL9 (Jihadlinker)-15 [4]; Electronics Operation/TL9 (Spongescope)-15 [4]; First Aid/TL9-14 [1]; Guns/TL9 (Pistol)-14 [4]; Guns/TL9 (Rifle)-14 [3]; Intelligence Analysis/TL9-17 [16]; Judo-12 [4]; Knife-13 [2]; Leadership-15 [4]; Mathematics/TL9 (Statistics)-15 [8]; Psychology-14 [4]; Recognize Sponge-Minion-15 [1]; Research/TL9-16 [8]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-16 [4]; Shortsword-11 [1]; Sociology-16 [12]; Soldier/TL9-14 [2]; Sports (Basketball)-14 [8]; Strategy (Land)-14 [4]; Swimming-12 [4]; Writing-15 [4].



ership position to TRES Corps at the end of 1996. Although it is still recovering from the damage it took during the Invasion, the Empire still maintains a formidable military presence, second only to TRES in size and materiel.

The Doberman military organization chart is much looser than that used by TRES Corps, stressing individual combat prowess more than group tactics. Enlisted and noncommissioned officers follow a somewhat unorthodox ranking system based on American army or naval standards, up to the rank of Sergeant or Chief Petty Officer. At this point, the Dobermans abandon the standard and follow their own system.

Low-ranking Doberman officers are known as Troopers, who usually act as platoon commanders. Troopers are usually led by Warriors, company commanders who have more freedom of action and choice of assignment than the Troopers. The next combat grade is the Centurion, a senior warrior who usually is in command of a full battalion or other subordinate group within the Empire itself, not unlike TRES Corps' squadrons. Overseeing this are the Commanders, who are considered the flag-rank officers within the Doberman organizational structure. At the very top of the pyramid is the Fleet

Commander.

One peculiarity strictly Doberman in nature is the assigning of specific codenames for each member of the Empire's officer corps. When inducted from the noncom ranks, Troopers are all assigned a random codename, then as they rise through the ranks another codename is added to their "official" name. Once a Doberman reaches the rank of Commander, they are allowed the privilege of choosing the final codename to add to their name.

The Empire's commanding officer is Fleet Commander Aurelius Invid Manticore Samhain, one of the few active Jihaddi who was recruited during the reign of the High Prophet and the Seven. One of the most decorated Jihaddi ever, Samhain is the reason that the Empire didn't dissolve in the aftermath of the Invasion.

The Empire is less decentralized than TRES, having most of its forces under the main body of the JAO itself. However, it does have a number of more specialized branches that provide services other than simple infantry operations:

WEDJEE: Originally a separate JAO specializing in exotic weapons, WEDJEE was absorbed by the Doberman Empire early in its career and

now functions as the Doberman research group. WEDJEE is the oldest of the Jihad's R&D operations, and is responsible for much of the Jihad's current overtechnology, including the Jihadlinker network. They're also responsible for most of the more unorthodox weapons systems the Jihad has seen, such as the Burgermasterblaster cannon.

WEDJEE is commanded by Centurion Ashur Galand Cerberus, a well-respected veteran of every major combat operation since *WORLDWALK*. Cerberus was hand-picked by Fleet Commander Samhain to run WEDJEE, which was Samhain's creation to begin with.

DobIntel: While the Empire emphasizes straight military force over everything else, the command staff understands that sometimes there's a need for more subtle activities. DobIntel acts as the Empire's eyes and ears, usually in concert with TRES Delta Squadron, providing a lookout for enemy action.

Less publicized is DobIntel's interest in covert action. Troopers and Warriors in the intelligence branch receive extensive training in black ops, and it's the rare DobIntel mission that doesn't end up involving some form of wetwork. This tendency to reach for the sniper rifle is moderately worrying to other JAO spymasters, but until DobIntel jeopardizes the secrecy of the war they're willing to let it slide.

DobIntel is commanded by Commander Osiris Artemis Cyrene Inagei, also known as Windigo the Feral, leader of the Maenads. Windigo's drive to rid the planet of the enemy by any means necessary has been picked up by her subordinates, who come close to worshipping the ground she walks on.

Doberman Navy: It's one of the minor ironies of life in the Jihad that the JAO with all the naval ranks in its org chart doesn't have a navy, and is in fact well and truly landlocked. Naval opera-

They Just Fade Away... Or Not

Membership in the Jihad is as ad-hoc as the organization itself; Jihaddi don't serve for predetermined terms, and the consensus is that keeping someone in against their will is counter to the goals of the War. If someone wants out, they're allowed to leave. Liaisons, with the help of Jihaddi intelligence, will set up credentials for the veteran so as not to arouse suspicion when they (re)appear in society, and then let them go about their business.

As long as veterans don't seem liable to reveal the Secret, the Jihad usually has a strict hands-off policy towards them. It does, however, keep an unobtrusive eye on its alumni, in case they end up targeted by the enemy, get into the wrong type of trouble with Mundanes, or (very rarely) when the Jihad requires their services again in a crisis. In general, however, retired veterans are simply left to build their new lives.



tions in the Jihad are left to the Doberman Empire, for the very simple reason that they got there first.

Specifically, they got to the Ghost Fleet first. The Fleet (officially the Suisun Bay Ready Reserve Fleet) is a flotilla of warships mothballed by the United States Navy in San Francisco Bay during the Cold War. During the Dobermans' early expansion, agents of the Empire successfully managed to grab a hold of the Ghost Fleet and, under the guise of Navy contractors, upgraded the ships with WEDJEE arms and armor, preparing them for use under the Jihad's banner.

While the fleet was designed for open combat with enemy forces of similar caliber, the expected forces failed to properly materialize. The only time the Doberman Navy has ever seen action was during Operation PACIFICA, where it provided fire support and transport for the combined forces attacking the island. Since then, the fleet has remained on call at Suisun Bay, waiting for the Fleet Commander to order it into action against the enemy.

The Doberman Navy is commanded by Centurion Atreus Rakata Diomedes, a old-time Doberman recruited from the Royal Navy by Fleet Commander Serberus back at the beginning of the Empire. Diomedes is a patient soul at heart, and will wait with his ships until the bitter end.

WALRUS: The Water Attack Land Raiding Utility Soldier corps (somebody in the early Empire had a taste for odd and unholy acronyms) are the Dobermans' main marine force. Generally intended to work with the Navy like any good marine corps, WALRUS troops are more often used as shock troops in more traditional Doberman operations, given the general disuse of the Navy in the first place.

WALRUS was hit especially hard by the combination of the X'hirjq invasion

and the subsequent Pacifica mission. The old WALRUS operations base in Puerto Rico was completely destroyed during the invasion, and Centurion Baraka Tsunami Cadmus, the original WALRUS commander was killed during the first phase of the landing on Pacifica. Since Pacifica, WALRUS has been commanded directly by the Fleet Commander.

MEDIC: Of the combat JAOs, the Dobermans are the only one to have a dedicated medical unit. MEDIC's operations are mainly in support of combat missions, although the unit has a desponification platoon standing by at all times to assist with crowd control operations.

MEDIC is odd in terms of a JAO sub-unit in that it offers complete and unconditional support to any and all other JAOs that request its services during the course of a combat operation. This willingness to help has made MEDIC personnel extremely popular with the other JAOs, up to the point where MEDIC troops don't always have to pay for drinks at Jihaddi bars.

MEDIC is commanded by Centurion Aphrodite Persephone Selene, a former combat trooper who switched to the slightly less intense life of field medicine after Operation HOMEFRONT in Kansas. Selene, while not a medico of any sort, is respected as a skilled administrator and as somebody who will go the extra mile to protect her troops.

FERRET: Like the name suggests, FERRET is the Doberman Empire rapid-response unit. FERRET teams are designed for high-speed infiltration and elimination of enemy targets. Originally, FERRET was intended to be a strictly cold-climate response unit, suited more for operations in and around places like northern Canada and the Scandinavian countries, but the reduction in Doberman forces caused by the X'hirjq has forced FERRET to re-

deploy as a more general rapid response operation.

FERRET is commanded by Centurion Morrigan Ariadne Hemsut, an appointee of Fleet Commander Augustus. While she dislikes the redefined scope of her missions, she respects the Fleet Commander enough – and understands the extreme difficulties put on the Empire in recent times – not to complain overmuch when her troops bounce from Helsinki to Bermuda and back.

CAT: The Cloud Airborne Troopers (see what we said about acronyms?) act as the Empire's primary airborne infantry. While they didn't take as much damage from the X'hirjq as did WALRUS or the mainline Doberman troops, CAT forces got it in the neck during the Pacifica mission. Much like the airborne divisions at Normandy, they were the first in front, behind and on top of the enemy lines, and consequently they took the most damage. CAT has spent the time since the invasion rebuilding its forces and reorienting towards a combination of airborne infantry and air-superiority tactics.

CAT is commanded by Centurion Khonsu Ilma Horus, a former CAT Warrior appointed by Fleet Commander Samhain. Centurion Horus is extremely knowledgeable in the ways of aerial combat, and frequently pesters WEDJEE with suggestions for "improving" their aircraft.

The Doberman Empire's headquarters is Base Delta, an underground base located in the southeastern United States near the Ozark Mountains.

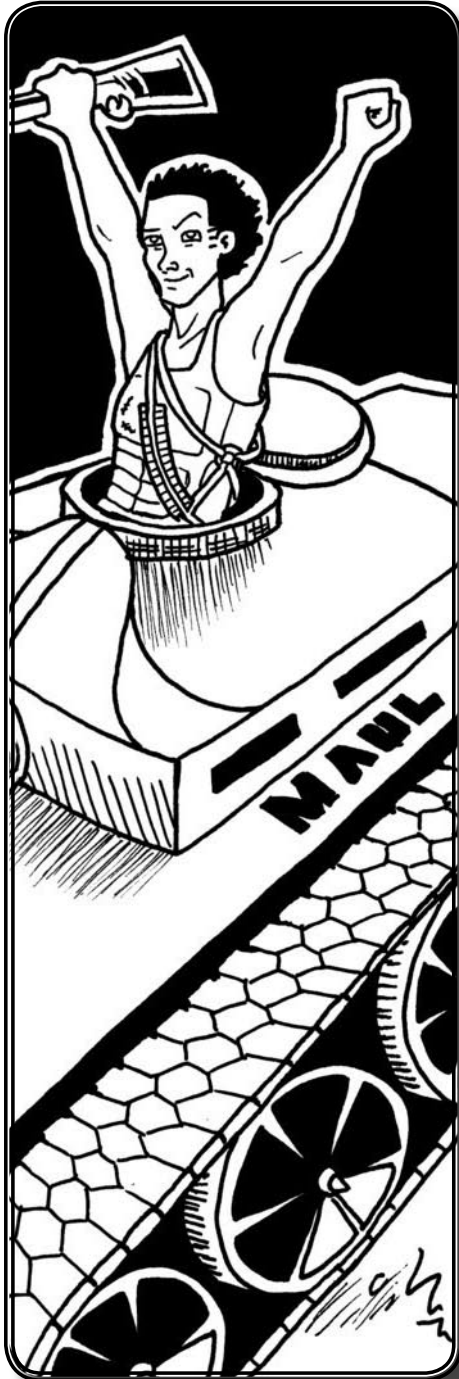
M.A.U.L.

Specialists in mundane mayhem and advanced tactics, the Midwesterners Against Ugly Lizards have one of the best combat success rates on record, as well as the highest amounts of col-



lateral damage on record.

In order to make an attempt at hiding themselves - and by extension the entire Jihad - from the prying eyes of the mundanes, MAUL has taken on a strategy of “hide in plain sight.” To that end, the entire MAUL command structure has been organized exactly as a carbon copy of the United States



Army, right down to the color schemes for the duty uniforms. The only way to distinguish a MAUL soldier from a US Army soldier would be to look at the unit patches and name tape on the uniform shirt.

The camouflage scheme is ingenious, as it allows MAUL to undertake operations in broad daylight that even the most macho TRES Kappa or DE officer wouldn't dream of doing in the dark. It's also very popular with the Jihad's liaison corps, as it allows them to pass off MAUL's more destructive activities as training maneuvers, surprise raids on militia groups, or other actions that wouldn't be too unusual to the average mundane. However, this ability has its limits, and as more and more people outside the Jihad wonder about strange goings-on with the Army, MAUL may be forced to scale back some of their more exuberant operations.

MAUL is commanded by General Most Holy (obviously a pseudonym — he won't tell anybody his real name), a long-term veteran Jihaddi and a respected commando force leader. He supervised the creation of the MHI and the War College, and is considered a major force in the modern Jihad.

Much like the Doberman Empire, MAUL is designed so that most of its forces are arranged under the central command of Most Holy and his general staff. However, there are a few units that don't fall directly under that chain of command:

Mobile Heavy Infantry: When most Jihaddi think of MAUL, they're thinking of the MHI. Disdaining the advanced weaponry the rest of the Jihad prefers, the MHI puts their faith in good old-fashioned American know-how, along with American tanks, rifles, troop carriers, artillery, bazookas and helicopters. Especially the tanks and helicopters, the more loaded down with explosive devices the better. MHI

attacks problems directly, in ways that mundane armies can only dream of.

MHI is commanded by General Nick Marquardt, a former mundane who stumbled on the war and eventually rose up to command through the tank battalions. Marquardt is a trooper's trooper, and has a deep and abiding love of making things explode, which makes him perfect to command MHI.

Rapid Reaction Teams: MAUL's rapid reaction teams are strictly special-forces groups, meant to go places no one else can go and do things no one else can do. Despite lacking advanced Jihaddi technology, the RRTs are easily on the same skill level as TRES Omega or DE FERRET teams. In fact, their lack of reliance on supertech widgets may mean that the average RRT member is *more* skilled than their counterparts in other JAOs. RRTs specialize in counter-terrorism techniques, and are capable of making the most outrageous plans in order to accomplish their goals. A typical RRT operation may involve as many as a dozen different red her-rings for enemies to follow, two different smokescreen operations, and a team of ninjas standing by on backup.

Technically, the RRTs are under the direct command of CinC Most Holy, but for day-to-day operations they're placed under the overall command of General Jeracho.

MAUL War College: The War College is a school devoted to the study of advanced military strategy and tactics, especially those tactics that can be put to use by the Jihad. The War College has achieved a reputation for creating brilliant field tacticians, and many JAO officers have taken courses from there. College instructors are often “borrowed” by other JAOs to provide instruction for their own recruits.

The War College is commanded by General Jeffery Verzak, a highly-regarded philosopher as well as a tactician



on the level of giants such as Patton or Zhukov.

MAUL's headquarters is located near the town of Peoria, Illinois, cleverly disguised as an Army training camp.

VRDET

The Verthandic Rangers, Dimensional Exploration Taskforce (VRDET) occupies a unique place in the Jihad. While the larger JAOs focus primarily on infantry or armored combat, the Verthandic Rangers concentrate on scout and special forces commando operations. They can do

this because of VRDET's most unique asset: the Interdimensional Gateway Generator. With the Gate, VRDET can theoretically project their forces literally anywhere around the world, and into other worldlines as well. In order to keep their forces close to the action, however, the VRDET high command chooses to restrict interdimensional travel to simple Earth-based teleportation.

The Rangers were formed from the ruins of an earlier JAO, the Blood Jihad. The Blood Jihad was an infantry/armor military JAO until the core leadership vanished one bright January morning. This disappearance caused the JAO to collapse overnight, leaving the second-string officers with a huge mess to clean up. During the cleanup process, the Blood Jihad merged with a small R&D group called Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow. With the pooled resources of the two groups, the Verthandic Rangers were formed.

As VRDET isn't a combat JAO, the command structure has moved away from classical military ranking to

a more informal system. The command is split into three major structures, Operations, Explorations and Research, with Operations in overall command at the top of the pyramid. Ranks in Explorations are divided between Recruits, Field Operatives (junior and senior grade), Field Commanders, and the Division Director. Ranks in Research start with Recruits but diverge into Technicians, Senior Technicians and the Research Director. Operations is made up of equal parts members from the lower two organizations, depending on who was unlucky enough to not read the duty rosters that week.

Operations Division: Operations is where the majority of the old Blood Jihad's administrative functions ended up. The whole point of the division is to maintain the balance of power between Explorations and Research, while providing an office of sorts for the other JAOs to communicate with and coordinate Jihad-wide business. Since the division is made up mainly of people from the lower divisions who were shanghaied into office work as punishment or trainee duty or "a valuable life lesson," people involved in Operations tend to be a bit frazzled, and there's a high turnover rate. As a result of this, the Operations division is actually the smallest part of the Rangers organization, despite being the most powerful.

VRDET Operations is run by Director Nexxus Kline, the second-string Blood Jihad officer (formerly a colonel in the Blood Jihad's air force) who ended up inheriting the entire JAO when the core leadership vanished. Kline is a somewhat eccentric administrator and an established combat veteran. When Kline's eccentricity

overwhelms her administrative ability, VRDET Operations is run by the base AI, Minerva.

Explorations Division: The Explorations people are VRDET's analogue to combat troops. Highly informal even for the Jihad, an Explorations team is less like a platoon of soldiers and more like a group of highly-trained but slightly off-kilter superheroes. Despite this seeming lack of discipline, Explorations teams are designed to be very adaptive, because the circumstances into which a team may be jumping into are highly variable.

It's the job of an Explorations team, when the Research Division has located a new worldline or enemy base of operations, to jump through the Gate and find out what's on the other side, deal with it if they have to, evade it if not, and jump back. This is a hell of a lot more difficult than it sounds, and Explorations personnel are trained specifically to be able to do impossible things.

VRDET Explorations is run by Director Katze Brenner, one of the Jihad's prodigies - she also holds the rank of Rear Admiral in TRES Corps Alpha, and is a founding member of the JPV. Katze's relative youth makes her a bit unsure about her abilities, but the entire division is on record that they would willingly walk through Hell if she com-

manded it, a level of respect offered only to the greatest of the

Jihad's leaders.

Research Division: VRDET's heart is the Research Division. Without Research, the entire organization would not be capable of running. Formed from the resources of the Evil Geniuses, the Research technicians have





devoted most of their time to developing and refining the interdimensional transport systems that define the JAO. In their spare time, Research works on the usual round of weapons, vehicles and other assorted Jihad gadgetry.

There's one minor oddity about the Research Division; for some reason it has a higher per capita population of science-fiction and anime fans than any other part of the Jihad as a whole. This demographic anomaly is blamed on Research's unorthodox recruitment methods, using science-fiction conventions and other similar "geek" hangouts as places to drum up new and inventive minds.

VRDET Research is commanded by Director Quentin "Damocles" Wyatt, again a relative newcomer to the Jihad, but he has established himself as a steady administrator, if not the most inventive soul in the division.

Although not currently in control of anything related to VRDET, Malaclypse the Seeker is a formidable presence within their halls. Known and loved by the Research personnel as "the Professor" or "the Doc," Malaclypse is the former director of the Evil Geniuses, an elder Jihaddi, a veteran of the X'hirjq invasion and the mind behind VRDET's interdimensional technology. While nominally retired from active duty in the Jihad, the Professor remains in place as a senior advisor and "damned nuisance."

VRDET's headquarters is located buried under Blanca Peak, a very large mountain in the Sangre de Cristo range in southern Colorado.

CHURCH OF ST. DINO THE AVENGER

The CoStDtA holds that Dino (of *Flintstones* fame) is the definitive purple dinosaur and that Barney has attempted to usurp this position using his powers of spongification to subvert peoples' minds. Because of this, St. Dino has vowed to see Barney overthrown and have his rightful place restored in the hearts of the masses, thus, St. Dino the Avenger. Of equal standing in the Church's pantheon and friend of St. Dino is St. Rubble the Liberator (Barney, also of *Flintstones* fame), whose name has also been usurped and in addition to sharing St. Dino's vow to overthrow the Nagenta Demon and reclaim his name has also sworn to liberate those who have fallen under its evil thrall.

The Church is primarily dedicated to philosophical thought as opposed to military action to overthrow Barney, but they do support the military actions of their fellow Jihaddi in the more militaristically oriented JAOs. This support includes medical services, and the JAO's members are trained in both physical and magical methods of healing. Also, because of their focus on philosophical, nonviolent, life-preserving methods of action, members of the CoStDtA are sometimes sought by the Triumvirate and other JAOs as council for advice in the proper uses of their power.

The CoStDtA is a semi-public JAO, as they will welcome and help any who come to them for aid. Their existence is known publicly, although not widely because they tend not to evangelize. The full nature of their activities to fight Barney, however, is not. To those who know of them, they're probably thought of as sort of a commune-like group, a harmless if a slightly odd bunch who live on the lake and tend

to keep to themselves. They have no official uniform, members wear whatever is usual for them; the only outward symbol of membership is a small pewter pin, their logo of St. Dino and St. Rubble with the motto "resvrgam" underneath; a consulate's pin is backed by a nine-pointed starburst while an acolyte's is plain.

When not at the Church's headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan (the term church is used merely as a description of a group of people with a certain faith, beyond the headquarters which serves as a meeting place and living quarters there is no official church building or any similar thing) members are likely very scattered, either at other JAO headquarters (as some members belong to other JAOs) or simply travelling off on their own; they do have a fondness for amusement parks and ice cream though. Also, the Church, being in general a very relaxed and open-minded group of people is, to use another's term, "the medicinal herb supplier for Jihaddi with a loose grip on reality," though they tend to prefer the more simple "We get weed for the rest of the Jihad." Whether the Church grows this product themselves or has an outside connection is not known; the Triumvirate has decided not to question such things.

JIHAD PRAXEUM VENIFICUS

The only existing college of magic in the world, the Praxeum is also the newest JAO to be created. Dedicated to the study and use of pure magic, the Praxeum was formed in early 1998 to give Jihaddi mages training that they often sorely lacked — mag-





Former JAOs

The Jihad's history is filled with organizations that, for one reason or another, failed to survive to the present day. Most of these groups were small regional cells or bands of soldiers that ended up assimilated into one of the larger JAOs during the reorganization period in the early 1990s. Others managed to make it to JAO status before collapsing due to some misfortune or another. The list of now-defunct JAOs includes:

Blood Jihad: One of the original JAOs, the Blood Jihad's primary focus was on orbital defense, preparing a line in case enemy forces sought to attack from space. The Blood Jihad took the heaviest damage out of all the JAOs during the X'hirjq invasion, and ultimately collapsed when the command staff vanished. Folded into VRDET.

Church of the Anti-Barney Incarnate: The Church was one of the first religious groups to be founded in the Jihad, focusing on the incarnate form of what they claimed to be the anti-Barney. Ultimately dissolved shortly before the WORLDWALK crisis, members moving to the Church of Grimace and the Church of St. Dino.

Evil Geniuses For A Better Tomorrow: One of the rare R&D only JAOs, the Evil Geniuses were set up as an independent broker of high technology for anybody in the Jihad who wanted it. Their original headquarters was destroyed in the X'hirjq invasion, and the whole group later was folded into VRDET.

Guild of Jihad Philosophers: A group specializing in attacking enemy ideas and developing countermeasures. Absorbed into the MAUL War College after the X'hirjq invasion.

Jihad-ANZAC: Like the name suggests, the group began as an informal grouping of Jihaddi in Australia and New Zealand. Absorbed into TRES Corps.

Legion of Doom: The Legion started as the Jihad's special-forces experts. No job was too big, and no job too weird for the Legionnaires. As the larger military JAOs began generalizing their forces, the Legion's focus slowly was absorbed by TRES and the Dobermans. Their last major engagement was providing air support for Operation HOMEFRONT. The Legion's only remaining asset, the orbital defense ship *LDS Lydia*, disappeared shortly thereafter.

NEBULA: One of the last surviving regional JAOs, NEBULA was based in Nova Scotia and served as the Jihad's main staging base for operations in Atlantic Canada. The group eventually branched out into space operations, and was destroyed completely during the X'hirjq invasion.

Solar Ishtari: Led by the legendary crank Solar Warrior, the Ishtari functioned somewhat like the JPV, only with a deep reverence for velociraptors and a bent towards genetic engineering. The Ishtari went strange, demanding the Jihad support their attempts to engineer a new race of raptors, and then faded from sight shortly after the WORLDWALK crisis.

TAMUBGD: Another survivor from the regional JAO days, this group of Texas A&M students acted as the Jihad's front line observers in enemy territory; they also provided a fair amount of esoteric technology to the Jihad. Vanished during the WORLDWALK crisis; their technology wasn't esoteric enough, apparently.

ic being mostly unknown in the mundane world, and mage-born Jihaddi not having any real chance to learn their limitations before being thrust into combat.

While still a young organization, the Praxeum has gathered the senior Jihad mages as instructors, and has created a curriculum that allows even the most ignorant mage to learn more about his or her powers. In addition, the Praxeum boasts one of the largest collections of intelligence data on the Hellwyrn and his minions in the Ji-

had.

The Praxeum is run by Arch-Chancellor Joseph Schneider, a skilled mage and scholar, although something of a newcomer to the Jihad. The Praxeum's primary base of operations is a small campus carved out of the farmlands of western Pennsylvania.

MINOR GROUPS

In addition to the above JAOs, the Jihad also has a number of smaller organizations operating within the larger orgs.

Maenads of the Holy Albino: The Maenads are the super-elite warriors of the Jihad, hand-picked by the supernatural entity Feral Jackson to go forth and eliminate all Lyrans. Maenads (named after the ancient worshippers of Dionysius — and no, no one knows why) have traditionally been chosen from the upper ranks of the Jihad, especially officers with strong combat records. There have never been more than eight active Maenads at any given time.

All Maenads, regardless of ori-



gin, are given a transformational ability when chosen. This ability, called “warp-spasm,” allows the Maenad to become a werewolf-like creature with retractable metal claws; the metal being of the same composition as that of the Barney-Slayer, but without the sword’s special enchantments. Maenads are also given a “holy mission” to seek out and destroy any Lyrans that cross their path. As Lyrans are very tough customers, this is one reason Maenads are scarce.

The Maenads are a highly informal group, having no fixed meeting place. The nominal leader of the group is Slider the Feral, also known as Admiral J-Rock of TRES Corps.

Church of Grimace: The Church, a religious order composed mostly of Doberman Empire and TRES officers, worships Grimace, the big purple thingie in the McDonald’s commercials. It is the Church’s belief that Grimace is actually the Anti-Barney, and as such can tap into his power through prayer and study. While many of the more secular Jihaddi figure that the Church members have simply gone through too many combat missions, they must be doing something right, since the higher-ups in the Church have made reputations for themselves as warriors and healers.

The Church maintains chapels at both TRES and Doberman headquarters, while only initiates know where the central temple is located.

JIHADDI GEAR

While the tech level of the Jihad is remarkably higher than in the surrounding world, changing situations across the years have altered the emphasis of technology over its history.

In the beginning, equipment was as varied as its users. Before JAOs were formed, there was no coherent effort

at standardizing anything, and while some of the most advanced weapons were produced during this time, nearly everything was hand-built, one-off prototypes. So, while some Jihaddi were equipped with power armor, rail-cannon, and other technological marvels, most had to make do with nothing more advanced than mundane infantry weapons.

As JAOs were formed and membership grew, that approach was viewed as being less than ideal, especially by those members not armed with advanced weaponry. WEDJEE, formed by a collection of technically oriented Jihaddi, was the first group to set about solving the problem. They set up massive manufacturing facilities and began producing a variety of items, the most famous and enduring being the X-Rifle. There were still great disparities in equipment though, with officers requisitioning and receiving heavily armed and modified power armor and other prototypes while among infantry body armor of any kind was the exception rather than the norm.

For game purposes, the Jihad holds a comfortable TL9 advantage over the rest of the mundane world, which remains at an early TL8. The GM should feel free to provide Jihaddi with any TL8 gear imaginable from any *GURPS* sourcebook. TL9 gear is available (much of what’s listed below qualifies as TL9, after all) though anything that could be considered advanced TL9 or TL8⁺ technology will be highly experimental in nature.

Advanced Jihad technology is equipped with self-destruct charges to prevent capture by the enemy or discovery by mundane parties. These charges can be set off by the field user, or remotely by radio. Some equipment has even more stringent security measures implanted, as noted in the de-

scriptions.

ENERGY & POWER

Most large JAO facilities use WEDJEE-designed fusion reactors for power. A few that require more power than most (such as VRDET Blanca or TRES *Ithaca*) use zero-point or other esoteric bleeding-edge generator technology.

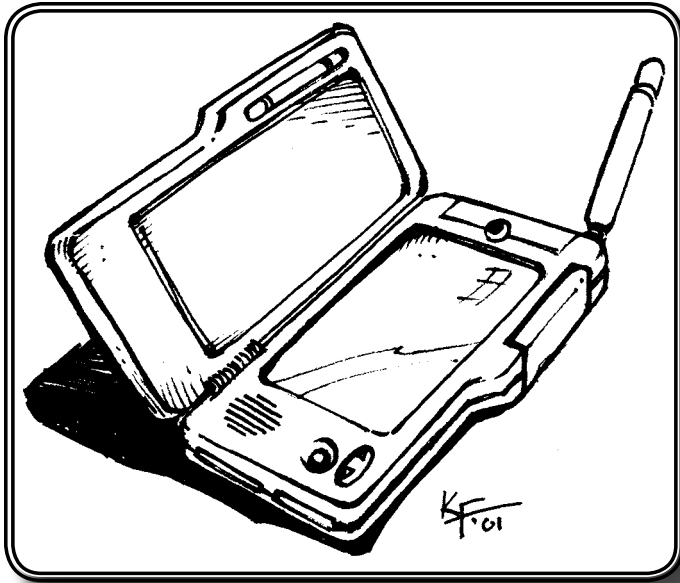
POWER

Jihaddi often get into situations where they need more power than the local grid can provide without attracting undue notice, so operative often have to either take the risk or rely on smaller “portable” generators.

Sonofusion Cell: These devices use a specially-designed ultrasonic chamber to compress bubbles in a working liquid until they begin to produce energy. The process is akin to cold fusion technology, but not quite as powerful as the WEDJEE hot fusion process. A typical sonofusion cell used in Jihad field operations generates 1 kilowatt for 1 hour before requiring changing the working liquid.

Fuel Cell: Jihad technology that needs a higher energy draw than a solar cell can provide and/or needs to be hidden uses a basic chemical fuel cell to provide power. Pure hydrogen and oxygen are stored in specially-designed nanofiber tubes and then combined to generate electricity. Fuel cells vary depending on the exact nature of the device being powered, but most will provide 1 kilowatt/hour for 1d6 weeks before needing refuelling.

Solar Cell: The Jihad’s access to advanced TL9 manufacturing technology means that they can produce photovoltaic cells that are much more efficient than the mundane varieties. While the need for solar power is



COMMUNICATIONS

Most Jihaddi electronics have a short-range ultra-wideband communicator (80-yard range) for networking information. This can be disabled if there are concerns about signal emissions.

Jihadlinker: The Jihadlinker is the primary communications device used by the Jihaddi on the street. Every Jihaddi, no matter how low ranking, is issued a Linker when first recruited, and the Linkers become heavily personalized as time progresses.

The standard-issue Linker is roughly the size of a mundane personal digital assistant; a plastic case (actually high-tech Kevlar composite) about six inches across by four inches wide by two inches deep. The case unfolds to reveal a small keyboard and what looks like an LCD screen.

There the resemblance between a Linker and a PDA ends. The Linker is actually a miniaturized communications platform, capable of connecting Jihaddi with voice, video, and e-mail, with minimal data loss. Linkers connect directly to the Jihad's private intranet (hooked up globally by a satellite communications network), from which they can access the mundane internet, send mail on the intranet, or call other Jihaddi. Calls can be either straight voice or video, although full video puts a strain on the Linker's power cell. The Linker can also be used as a remote terminal to various computer systems; it comes with the proper cabling, and em-

ulator software is available on JihadNet. Interestingly enough, the most popular software download is the Sony Playstation emulator.

Linkers, once assigned, are keyed to work only for their designated operators (usually through fingerprint/voiceprint or bioelectric scan locks). Built-in security features make sure that if a Linker is activated by somebody other than the designated user, it will self-destruct so the device can't be salvaged.

Panic Button: Jihaddi often get themselves into life-threatening situations without the time needed to call for backup. In an attempt to correct for this potentially fatal situation, the Jihad's technical geniuses created a concealable device that would send one signal and one signal only on all Jihad communications frequencies: "HELP!" Jihaddi operatives usually wear the panic button somewhere out of sight and where it's not likely to get damaged during combat. The button uses a biometric key like the Jihadlinker to prevent accidental activation. When activated, the panic button screams for help for 1 hour before the battery dies.

Responses to the panic button signal depends on the JAO and what assets are nearby, but with decent inter-JAO cooperation backup forces can be on the scene within ten minutes anywhere in the continental United States.

SENSORS & RECON EQUIPMENT

Spongescope: The one good thing about the nature of the Purple Forces is, it makes them easy to spot. The spongescope is a rare breakthrough in the blending of magic with technology. Basically, a spongescope is a specially prepared lens that can "see" the flow of enemy magic, in the same way that an infrared filter can "see" heat. The infor-

minimal - Jihaddi who need juice tend to need more than the sun can provide in a hurry - the Jihad's solar technology offers an easy way to recharge less energy-intensive equipment or provide power for long-term operations like remote sensors. Jihad solar cells provide 0.5 kilowatts/yard.

ENERGY

The Jihad uses an advanced form of nanocomposite battery technology for most of its equipment. The batteries are designed to retain charge for as close to as an indefinite period as possible. To keep the logistical burden to an absolute minimum, only two types of power cells are in general use, and both are fully rechargeable.

C cell: These batteries are used to power most Jihaddi gear, and experienced and paranoid operatives carry several backups, "just in case." Stores 90kJ (25 watt/hours)

D cell: The larger battery is used in more power-intensive sensor and electronics systems. Stores 900kJ (250 watt/hours)



mation is then run through computer enhancement and turned into a false-color image for analysis. Because of their innate magic-filtering properties, spongescope lenses are a pain to manufacture, but their immense utility to the Jihad means that there are more than enough to go around, in all shapes and sizes from binocular-sized to orbital spy satellites fitted with spongescopes.

WORLDWATCH: The WORLDWATCH satellite network was originally developed by the Blood Jihad as a compliment to their space-based weapons platforms. Those platforms were destroyed (along with most of the rest of the Blood Jihad's assets) during the X'hrijq invasion, but the WORLDWATCH satellites survived. They were later reactivated by VRDET as part of their reorganization and then turned over to the High Command for use by the entire Jihad.

WORLDWATCH is composed of a constellation of 24 orbital reconnaissance platforms, capable of imaging the surface with 10cm resolution in visible and infrared wavelengths. The satellites also carry a basic radar imaging array and spongescope lenses.

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Sponge Kit: This kit, designed along the same lines as a field first-aid kit, is designed for field operatives to use in deprogramming anybody hit with enemy mind control. The normal field despongification kit is a shoulderbag containing five syringes pre-loaded with desponge antitoxin (a cocktail of mild stimulants, sugar and specially-enchanted distilled water), tranquilizer skin patches, a set of ear and eye baffles to block out spongification signals and a spongescope-equipped medical monitor. Kits

One in ten Jihaddi are despongified. They prefer to stay clear of combat positions.

supplied by the more mystical groups also contain the basic materials needed for a minor exorcism and a taser to contain the exorcisee. The kit has a limited supply of antitoxin, which usually means that any affected Jihaddi have to be sedated for transfer to base medical facilities for more comprehensive despongification.

Jihaddi are trained in the basic use of desponge antitoxins. More specialized training involves field medic training, as well as offensive uses of the desponge antitoxin, such as using the antitoxin as an area-effect weapon, most often as gas grenades or deployed from aircraft.

Tacshades: Tacshades were a fairly simple outgrowth of technology developed for power armor vision displays. They resemble nothing so much as wraparound sunglasses, but the lenses are actually armor ceramic. While complete opacity is usually a downside in eyewear, the reason for the Tacshades existence is the coating of photoreceptors on the outside mated to a high resolution OLED coating on the inside. This allows the shades to not only do the mundane job of pretending to be transparent, but various types of image enhancement. The most basic sorts are amplifying ambient light and magnification, but the control software

in the computer built into the right temple was intentionally designed to be easy to modify to do any number of other

things that the users can think of. The other basic function is to interface with weapons or vehicles to provide targeting information or with Jihadlinkers or other PDAs to act as an additional screen. Gives DR10 to eyes, Protected Vision, Infravision, Night Vision 9, 1 level of Telescopic Vision, and a heads-up display compatible with "smartgun"

electronics (B278). 11b.

Intruder Cloak: The intruder cloak is an attempt to give soldiers a way to blend into terrain as best as possible. The main way it does this is by recording the environment it's in through an array of microcameras and, when available, an uplink to stored data on the terrain. Sensors in the cloak determine how it is folded and it uses this information to either work a series of chemical dots on the outer surface, or liquid crystals over them. The color changing chemicals are far more power efficient as they only need to be told what to change to once, but the liquid crystal display is capable of coping with certain levels of movement. This is more a form of very effective camouflage than a cloaking device, especially when moving quickly, but when stationary it is nearly impossible to spot. Next, a layer of thermal superconducting foil is integrated, which is either cooled by a bottle of cryogenic gas or heated to maintain a temperature over the whole cloak within a degree or two of ambient and thus foil thermal imagers. Incidentally, the thermal superconductor also works quite well to mask electromagnetic radiation from any electronics the wearer might be carrying. The cloak also incorporates a layer that absorbs sound, both from the wearer and from ultrasonics aimed at it. Finally, of course the base material is radar absorbent.

All this comes at the price of weight, bulk, and price. The fabric of the cloak is close to an inch thick, and including the backpack unit with the computer and cryogenic gas weighs approximately 40 pounds. The fabric is stiff and hard to move quickly in, and the difficulties of making it means that they're not nearly as common as people would like. Still, they quite effectively do what they were designed to.

Electronic Lockpick: Some branches of the Jihad find it necessary to gain en-



try to places that are locked, and various tools exist to make their jobs easier. The most subtle is the E-Pick, which resembles nothing so much as a pen with a button on the side and a slot on one end. When the button is pressed, hundred of hair-fine micromanipulators extend and begin feeling out the pins in the lock tumbler. By twisting at the same time, enough friction force is acting on the pins that the force resisting them moving in their holes can be measured and used to determined when they are in the right position. The whole process is, usually, only fractions of a second slower than using a key. Like the SMR, the E-Pick is not universally issued for obvious reasons. E-Pick: Works at skill of Lockpick-25. 0.25lb.

Blasting Paste: Blasting paste is another useful tool for getting into things that were intended to keep people out, though it's obviously less subtle than the E-Pick. It was specifically designed to be far more user friendly, quiet and safe than conventional explosives though. The paste comes packaged in a can resembling nothing so much as shaving cream and is applied directly to the obstacle. As it reacts with air, the outer layers harden as they draw a stabilizing agent from inside, and after a minute the inside spontaneously ignites. The explosive detonates at a very high velocity, but has comparatively little power, and the outer shell is able to contain and focus most of the blast towards the surface of the obstacle. The velocity means that the sharp impact is sufficient to shear through most materials, leaving a fairly clean cut with little collateral damage. The common technique is to simply draw a doorway on the obstacle with the paste. Blasting paste is also available in various other formulations capable of causing far more destruction, but they require blasting caps or other initiators to deto-

nate.

ARMOR

Infantry Armor: The design for the standard infantry armor came from TRES Zeta, who were comparatively unaffected by the invasion of the X'hirjq. Other JAOs have modified the basic design in details, but the basic structure is universal. The torso, arms, greaves and joints are armored in replaceable ceramic plates, with ballistic cloth covering the rest of the body. Thermal superconducting fibers are integrated into the cloth to try to dissipate the blast from energy weapons. Helmets too are made of ceramic, with integrated communications devices and optional transparent alloy faceplates that include heads up displays. The standard issue version is biased towards mobility and light weight, but the ceramic armor plates are designed to be able to be swapped to various other configurations, ranging from a setup with the plates removed completely favored by scouts, all the way up to suits outfitted with thick ceramic plates overlapping each other which are useful for extremely close quarters environments.

Concealed Armor: Another basic variation involves having the armor in concealable form. This mostly does away with the hard ceramic plates, and depending on circumstances, may only consist of a vest. The superior materials available to the Jihad still render this far more durable than mundane Kevlar bulletproof vests.

Wrath of Arioch: The *Wrath of Arioch* was one of the last battlesuit designs by WEDJEE before its facilities were demolished, and is one of the few designs of power armor still in use. It stands a full 8 feet tall and weighs in at close

to 600 pounds. The main weapon is a 3mm railgun mounted over one shoulder, which provides a substantial anti-armor punch, with secondary weaponry including a cut down 50 calibre heavy machinegun incorporated into the right forearm and a 30mm grenade launcher in the left. The hands end in hardened alloy claws, and the vast strength augmentation means that it is capable of tearing through steel and lifting a car. The armor itself is no less formidable, consisting of layered ceramics and superalloys.

While the *Wrath of Arioch* suits are capable of dealing out incredible amounts of damage, the expense involved in their manufacture is equally incredible and means that no more are being produced for the foreseeable future. Several dozen suits survive to this day, a testament to their durability. Because of their rarity though, they are carefully maintained and rarely used.

WEAPONS

X-Rifle Mk.1: The Mk.1 X-Rifle was revolutionary when it was fielded. It was the first time a magnetic containment bottle was fit into a man portable weapon system, and the stream of plasma bolts it fired allowed infantry to bring an incredible amount of firepower to bear on any problems. A magazine with a powerpack integrated into a cryogenic deuterium storage bottle fed its prodigious rate of fire. The integrated grenade launcher was icing on the cake, adding versatility in the types of damage unleashed.

It was not without its disadvantages. Because it was rushed into service shortly before PHOENIX, there was little testing done. Each plasma bolt generated massive amounts of heat, and at

MAUL has a particular fondness for blasting paste. They also prefer to shave with electric razors...



its maximum rate of fire there was no effective way to cool the rifle, despite the use of powerful cooling systems. This was little problem for soldiers in power armor, but conventional infantry were forced to be very careful on how often they fired, or improvise solutions such as welding gloves. Also, range was shorter than conventional weaponry because the first generation miniature magnetic containment bottle was limited in the amount of energy it could impart to each bolt. Finally, it was also extremely heavy. Still, it proved a key edge in the battles against the X'hirjq.

Even now, a smattering of Mk.1 X-Rifles remain in service. Though the heat, range and weight issues still remain problems, some troops feel the astonishing rate of fire to be worth the drawbacks.

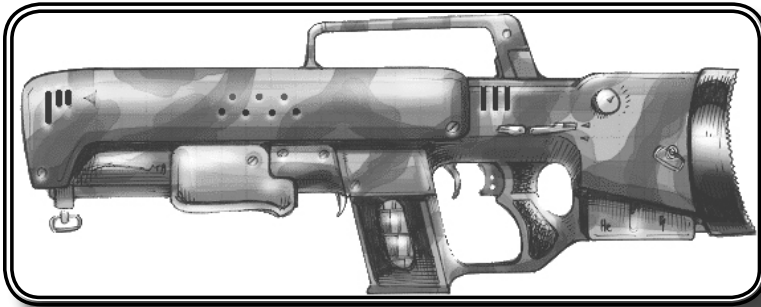
X-Rifle Mk.2: Much effort was put into improving the Mk.1 X-Rifle's de-

ficiencies. While the overheating was of little importance to troops in power armor, the vast majority of power armor suits were destroyed in PHOENIX and PACIFICA. The occasional tendency to burst into flames was not widely appreciated either. Weight was a source of considerable complaint, especially among soldiers of smaller stature, and the range was inconvenient as well. A final nail in the coffin of the original design was the fact that the complexity of the rifle, coupled with the destruction of the manufacturing facilities, made it impractical to easily replace the many that were destroyed.

A breakthrough in range came when a modification was found that allowed increasing the power feed into the containment bottle and injecting more

deuterium. This also greatly increased the damage, but also increased the heat generated. By circulating the cryogenic fuel around the weapon's core and barrel before injecting it, the massive cooling system could be dispensed with and a bit more efficiency was gained. These changes meant that the rate of fire had to be considerably reduced, but the more powerful bolts caused the overall power output to be only slightly lessened. The whole firing mechanism was reconfigured for better balance, and a pump action grenade launcher replaced the previous semi-automatic grenade launcher for even less weight, and the whole thing was judged to be a successful redesign.

The Mk.2 X-Rifle is current stan-



dard issue, and while not all Jihaddi prefer it and some are in roles where it is seldom used, all are expected to maintain at least basic proficiency.

X-Pistol: There has been an ongoing attempt to make a practical plasma sidearm work. Unfortunately, reducing the size of the core reduces efficiency greatly, and dealing with the heat is far more of an issue given that there is just less space to put everything. Miniaturizing the component drives the cost up to more than the current generation X-Rifle, and obviously they must use specialized clips. A few prototypes and proof of concept models exist, mostly in the hands of the engineers who have been working to perfect them and officers who abused their ranks to get a hold of one. They're well liked for the

damage they can inflict, but given the costs involved, working the kinks out of the design has not been a top R&D priority and most Jihaddi make do with more conventional sidearms.

W-Rifle: The W-Rifle was a simple idea with horrible results. One WED-JEE tech had the idea of a monowire net fired out of something like a commercial net gun. When the prototype demonstrated the ability to turn target mannequins (and various other things, some intentional) into 1-inch cubes, the go-ahead was given for an improved version.

The final version consists of four low powered railguns around a central box from which the net is fired. Each of the railguns fires a dense, low velocity slug that has one corner of the net attached to it. It expands to a rectangle approximately 10m wide and 3m tall, and continues on a ballistic arc until it encounters something durable enough to not be diced into pieces, or the slugs at the ends hit something solid. Thus they are most useful against large groups of lightly armored infantry, where they produce rather grotesque casualties.

The fairly indiscriminate damage and short range limited the W-Rifle's use, but they proved their value during the siege of TRES during Operation PHOENIX. Limited supplies are still kept in inventory, though suitable situations have been far less common than when they were designed.

APATHY: The Armor Piercing Anti-Tank/Hellwyrm model Y was an attempt to field an effective man-portable heavy weapon system. The 25th and last revision consisted of a shoulder fired 50mm recoilless rifle, fed from 3 5-round magazines. Each magazine could be loaded with a different warhead type, and the firer could select between them as they went. The light caliber, compared to conventional anti-tank weaponry, was selected because



the armored threats the Jihad encountered were typically less well armored than main battle tanks, so the ability to carry and fire more ammunition was judged to be of more value. The semi-automatic mechanism allowed a soldier to lay down a deadly barrage of fire against mecha, tanks, or various biological horrors. Warheads were widely varied, but the most common were high explosive shaped charge, an anti-armor hyperacid, proximity or impact fused fragmentation rounds, and buckshot canister rounds.

Because the technology behind the APATHy system is only advanced over mundane weaponry in the area of materials science, they are still in limited production and in inventory. The comparative lack of overt engagements and armored threats compared to the time before PHOENIX and PACIFICA has limited their use.

PAW: Personal Artillery Weapons were a simple offshoot of the APATHy project. If a recoilless rifle shell is enclosed in a conventional breech, the ports on the side of the case are blocked and the shell acts like a conventional round. Because the large portion of propellant that is normally used to counter recoil force is instead being used to push the projectile out, much higher muzzle velocities and ranges are attained. Of course, recoil is considerable, and sufficient to break or dislocate the arm of normal humans... but with some design work, within the realm of what power armor can cope with.

Thus a simple double barrel, break action weapon was created. The PAW looks like nothing more than a giant sawn-off shotgun. The short barrels both enhance portability and vent much of the propellant while it is still burning, which limits velocity and recoil but also causes the weapon to produce enormous muzzle flashes. They use all standard APATHy ammunition

and have greater range, though usually less accuracy.

PAWs are still in service, being fairly trivial to manufacture. Since they are only usable by people wearing power armor or those with superhuman strength, they are far from common. Still, they provide massive firepower from a compact package, and a prized by those few who can wield them.

RG-47: The RG-47 is not in itself a sophisticated concept. It is a railgun over a meter in length, with the barrel running most of that length. Much work went into controlling the recoil from firing, and the whole barrel and receiver assembly is mounted to the stock through hydraulic buffers, similar to large field artillery pieces. The weapon's mass also helps out. A power-pack slots into the stock, and slugs are fed from a standard AK-47 magazine, which lends the weapon the second half of its name. The magazine was used on the prototype because of availability, and subsequent testing revealed no real reason to change, so it stayed.

The heart of the RG-47 is the scope, which possesses both very high quality optics and sophisticated microelectronics. The scope not only calculates projectile deviation due to gravity and wind drift to a fair degree of presentation, but is capable of enhancing the image and displaying in alternate spectrums such as thermographic. This, and clever microactuators controlling the barrel and cancelling out tiny movements from the user, contribute to phenomenal accuracy. The power of the weapon itself is such that line of sight is usually more of a limitation than projectile range. It is capable of engaging and destroying most light armored vehicles, and against unarmored personnel it is rather excessive. Rate of fire can be as high as once per second, but the electronic systems need on average 5 seconds to recalibrate and realign ev-

erything after firing.

While the RG-47 is in limited production, its use is restricted to designated marksmen and snipers with the training to both make use of its capabilities and not accidentally shoot through the target to hit innocent bystanders.

SMR: The Silent Magnetic Rifle was a recent development for a covert rifle. Unlike railguns like the RG-47 that shoot a small projectile at hypervelocity speeds by putting it between two conductive rails, the SMR uses a solenoid coil to fire a large, dense projectile at below the speed of sound. Because nothing touches the projectile, there is no noise as it fires, no streaks of eroding rails blasting out of the muzzle, and no trail of atomized projectile behind. The dense projectiles are shaped into ring airfoils to generate a certain amount of lift and extend the range past normal subsonic weapons. Upon hitting the target, they break up into smaller pieces to increase damage. The rifle is fitted with a smart scope, similar to that of the RG-47, but with far less powerful optics. Because it is lower powered, the rate of fire is higher, firing as fast as the user can pull the trigger.

By its very nature, the SMR is not a standard issue weapon; the X-Rifle is far more powerful, and most soldiers do not need an utterly silent weapon. The people who do are obvious, and it should be said that while it was developed by VRDET, the SMR has become very popular among TRES's Omega squad.

VEHICLES

Van In Black: The Jihad, as a covert military force, is often unable to field the kind of large combat vehicles that make up modern fighting forces (MAUL being the major exception to the rule). As such, while tanks, fighters and other such and sundry hard-



ware are kept in reserve, the Jihad relies on smaller disguised vehicles for basic troop movement and urban assault missions.

The basic Covert Action Assault Vehicle — better known by field operatives as the Van in Black (ViB) — is based on the frame and body paneling of an average Ford van, the kind used by cable installers, plumbers, and other service personnel worldwide. The interior of the ViB however is very different.

A basic ViB runs on a specialized TL8 high-powered gas turbine engine, tuned to sound similar to a normal gasoline motor — and gives the ViB the raw power necessary to outrun anything found on the Mundane roads. The turbine powers an electric motor which turns the wheels. All of the major systems in the ViB run on the turbine. The frame and body panels are constructed out of carbon composite sandwiched between layers of Kevlar and titanium mesh for armoring. The interior is designed to be as modular as possible, with room for eight Jihaddi in combat gear for transport missions, doors for weapons ports, and power outlets designed to take surveillance and communications equipment.

As the name suggests, the ViB is usually painted a glossy black, with smoked glass windows to prevent easy identification of the driver and passengers from a distance. When appropriate, logos of Mundane companies can be applied to the ViB. For example, surveillance or “spin team” ViBs sometimes will be painted with the logo of a local TV or radio news station, especially if the equipment involves using large antennae on the roof of the van.

VRDET S-1 “Penguin” Scout: The unique nature of the Verthandic Rangers’ global reach requires unique forms of transport. The Penguin transport aircraft is a modified lifting body

roughly the size of a Cessna 675 turboprop transport, just large enough to carry passengers/cargo and fit through a standard VR wormhole. Instead of relying on speed and its airfoils to keep it aloft, the Penguin uses electromagnetic levitation to provide lift; thrust is generated by electric fan turbines in the rear of the vehicle, with a total cruise speed of 200 knots. The aircraft is powered by a set of three standard fuel cells, which give it a total of eight hours of flight time under cruise conditions. If the Penguin needs to move faster (to evade capture or combat) it is equipped with secondary solid rocket motors that will allow it to move in excess of Mach 1 for a brief period.

The standard payload for a Penguin is reconnaissance equipment for overflight missions of enemy territory. Other missions include moving VR Exploration teams in and out of remote areas, and providing close air support with standard gunship modifications. Penguin transports were designed for maximum adaptability, and can be modified for nearly any circumstance. They are *not*, however, designed to be fighters.

COMPUTERS

WEDJEE Lapframe: In order to provide high-powered computers to Jihaddi in the field, the boffins at WEDJEE developed their CRAIT lapframe, a TL9 portable computer with the equivalent computing power of a TL8 supercomputer. The lapframe is essentially the same size and outward design as a traditional Mundane laptop, and frequently ‘frames are given fake brand labels in order to keep outsiders from suspecting anything is out of the ordinary.

Inside, the lapframe is very similar to the Jihadlinker, the major difference being the ‘frame is designed as a gen-

eral-purpose computer as opposed to the dedicated communications systems inside a Linker. Lapframes are used primarily by science-minded Jihaddi to investigate enemy-related phenomenon, although they can prove useful in hacking Mundane computers. Dedicated lapframe processors are often used to run automated tasks in R&D facilities or inside specially-modified buildings.

OVERTECHNOLOGY

On first glance, the Jihad’s advanced technology might seem, from a player’s perspective, just a fun way to fight a secret war against an extradimensional menace. However, and especially in cases such as the Gateway and the Explain Star, its presence has a deeper meaning to the Jihad Universe, reaching into the origin of the conflict. Earth and Lyra exist as two sides of the same coin, each the ultimate expression of one of the two paths to dominance an evolving race can take: magic and technology.

The planet Lyra came into being at the heart of the most concentrated node of magical energy in the universe. The ancient ancestors of current Lyrans were hominids who used rudimentary magic to make their way in the world rather than the simple tools of stone and wood employed by humanity’s predecessors and it is magic which is responsible for their current power as well as the immortality of their leader.

On the other side of the coin, there is extremely little background magical energy on Earth; the potential of its inhabitants lies in the development of technology. Contrary to Lyra’s magic though, it is currently manifested only as innate potential. A relatively small number of humans possess a gift that can’t be consciously controlled for making occasional intuitive leaps of logic in



the development of science and technology. While examples of this gift in the mundane world are numerous and include Albert Einstein and Carl Sontheimer, there is a much higher concentration of such people in the Jihad not only because it recruits them but because they tend to lead less mundane lives in general. It is because of this gift that humanity may be able to one day counter Lyra's magical power.

Artificial Intelligence (TL10+): With all the advances in computer technology available to the Jihad, it is not terribly surprising that artificial intelligences have been developed. In fact, it is probably more surprising that AIs are not nearly as common in the Jihad as they are!

Jihaddi AIs are traditionally the realm of WEDJEE, the original R&D group and fount for most of the common devices in use in the current Jihad. The WEDJEE AI code was developed by DE Fleet Commander Samhain (at the time calling himself Captain Midnight), as a way to provide for autonomous vehicles. The code

itself is still highly classified, and nobody outside of WEDJEE knows how or even *why* it works. All that is really known about the WEDJEE AI code is that it is capable of generating sentient programs with unique personalities. Most of the AIs created by WEDJEE act as sysadmins for Doberman Empire bases or vehicles.

Non-WEDJEE AIs are found scattered through the Jihad, usually they are coded by senior research staff using a variety of programming techniques. Most follow the path of their WEDJEE brethren, becoming sysadmins or majordomos for Jihad bases.

The most interesting exception to this rule is TRES officer Cdr. Daniel Wood. Cdr. Wood is an artificial intelligence, but he is *not* the creation of any Jihaddi. While the story is unclear and at times outright contradictory, it appears that Cdr. Wood was the accidental creation of a group of mundane cybernetics researchers that escaped into the Internet and eventually found refuge in a TRES database. Cdr. Wood currently serves as both Zeta Squad majordomo

and (with the help of a modified combat mecha) infantry officer.

VRDET Interdimensional Gateway Generator (TL9^): Buried deep in the heart of the VRDET command center Mt. Blanca lies the ultimate expression of Jihaddi overtechnology and the unbridled creativity of the human mind.

Inside a large chamber sits the world's only functional interdimensional wormhole generator — known simply as the Gateway. The Gateway takes up most of the chamber, leaving a stage in the center for people to access the wormhole. Mission control for the Gateway is in a nearby room with windows to look into the main chamber. From here the wormhole can be generated, connected to any known point (or lock on to a strong beacon signal) and monitored for signs of collapse. All this requires incredible amounts of power, so the Gateway is connected to the base's four fusion reactors, and even then can cause temporary brownouts through the rest of the base.

The Gateway is the brainchild of Professor Malaclypse, who developed the initial theory for interdimensional travel while still working with the Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow. Construction of the Gateway was delayed several times due to the X'hirq Invasion and subsequent reorganization of the Evil Geniuses into VRDET. However, once the Gateway was completed, it became the backbone of the Rangers, giving them unprecedented mobility, far above that of the other JAOs.

Since inception, the Gateway has been brought to full power only a few times, the most notable of which being the rescue of VR Director Katze Brenner from the alternate-medieval nation of Marraketh. Beyond that, the Gateway has been used to map alternate universes in search of the Jihad's number-one potential target: The home realm of the Hellworm B'harne.

