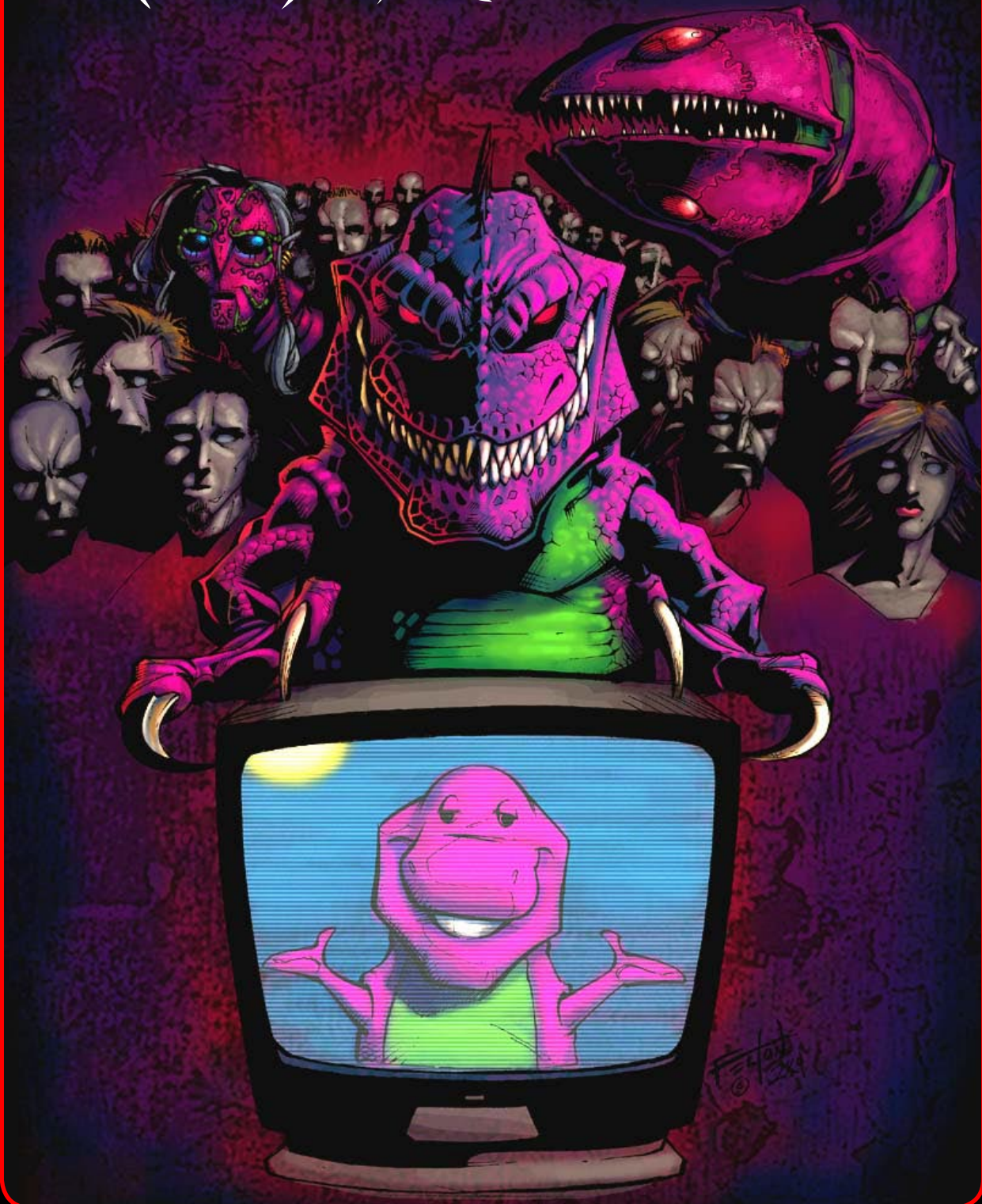


# The Jihad to Destroy BARNEY

ROLEPLAYING GAME  
AND WRITER'S GUIDEBOOK



COMPILED AND EDITED BY SEAN "MALACLYPSE" BREEN  
AND THE JU2 PROJECT TEAM

# The Critics Rave!

**...and rant, and rave, and generally make a lot of noise...**

(ALL QUOTES TAKEN FROM JIHAD.NET FANMAIL VERBATIM)

“My husband was stupid to bring this up. My daughter was scared when she saw this. You don't need to be saying such things when kids could accidentally see this.”

— travelwithtami@hotmail.com

“However made this site is a fuckin idiot. That goes to show you how many morons there are out there.”

— Anonymous

“I could not believe my eyes when I discovered this site. WHat a bunch of freaks you are. You obviously don;t have kids and don;t have Jesus in your life. I feel sorry for you. Barney sends a message of love for our fellow man, and all you are doing is showing hate and violence. I would be ashamed, and may God have mercy on your rotten souls”

— “Barney Lover”

“IF “JIHAD” AND BARNEY GO IN THE SAME SENTENCE, YOU ARE SORELY IN NEED OF A REALITY CHECK AS TO WHAT YOU THINK IS FUNNY. MY 10 YEAR OLD SON WENT HERE.....YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED. THE TWO HAVE NO CONNECTION TO EACHOTHER, AND YOU SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONTEMPLATE THE MEANING OF “IN GOOD TASTE”.....THIS, SURELY, IS NOT.”

— “Mine”

“I have never seen a group of people who so desperately need to “get a life” as you folks. Perhaps the recent events in the U.S. will give you an excuse to quit acting like such idiots.AB”

— “Abu Nidal”

“you should change your url. both in regard to the 9/11 attacks, and regardless of the attacks, your title is pathetic. it not only offends me, it probably is also offensive to members of the Islmaic faith.”

— “CP”

“you must have so much time and money to do such sad thing so why not spend this time and money wisely, you people are aged from 18 and above and you are doing such sad thing so why not use this brain and talent in a wiser way eg make a useful website. you people are way down the evolutionary stable and are as thick as a stick.”

“so well done for breaking the stupidity and sado record, congratulations you deserved it.so what are you sado's thinking of doing next, a terrorist attack on the teletubies hill!!!”

“oh yeah.....no offence”

“so please reply back on what you think!”

— “benadetto spera”

## Keep the Funny Coming, Guys!

*THE JIHAD TO DESTROY BARNEY THE PURPLE DINOSAUR*

*HTTP://WWW.JIHAD.NET/*

*MESSAGE BOARD: HTTP://WWW.JIHAD.NET/PHPAB4D/*



**The Jihad to Destroy**  
**BARNEY**  
**ROLEPLAYING GAME AND WRITER'S GUIDE**



*Discordian Sky Press 2006*



INTRODUCTION .....	IV	TRES CORPS.....	38
<i>ABOUT THE AUTHORS</i> .....	V	<i>THE SS EXPLAIN STAR</i> .....	39
FOREWORD .....	VI	DOBERMAN EMPIRE .....	41
CHAPTER 1 .....	7	<i>CAPTAIN MIRANDA DELGADO, TRES CORPS</i> .....	41
THE SECRET KNIGHTS OF EARTH .....	8	<i>THEY JUST FADE AWAY... OR NOT</i> .....	42
<i>DR. JASON CARMICHAEL</i> .....	9	M.A.U.L. ....	43
TIMELINE .....	11	VRDET .....	45
THE ADHOCRACY.....	19	CHURCH OF ST. DINO THE AVENGER.....	46
<i>WAIT A MINUTE... WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN!?</i> .....	20	JIHAD PRAXEUM VENIFICUS .....	46
LEADING FROM THE FRONT.....	25	MINOR GROUPS .....	47
THE TRUE HISTORY .....	29	<i>FORMER JAOS</i> .....	47
<i>PLEASE LEAVE A NOTE NEXT TIME, SIR</i> .....	29	JIHADDI GEAR .....	48
CURRENT EVENTS.....	32	ENERGY & POWER .....	48
CHAPTER 2 .....	33	COMMUNICATIONS .....	49
PALADINS OF THE PURPLE SHADOW .....	34	SENSORS & RECON EQUIPMENT .....	49
THE HIGH COMMAND.....	34	TOOLS AND SUPPLIES .....	50
THE THREE-FOLD TRUTH .....	34	ARMOR .....	51
THE BARNEY-SLAYER .....	35	WEAPONS.....	51
ALL OVER THE WORLD.....	36	VEHICLES.....	53
JIHADDI INSTALLATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA.....	37	COMPUTERS.....	54
JIHAD AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATIONS .....	38	OVERTECHNOLOGY .....	54
		CHAPTER 3 .....	56
		THE HELLWYRM BARNEY .....	57
		THE PURPLE HORDE.....	58
		INTERMEDIARIES: THE LIAISONS .....	58
		THOSE WHO SERVE: THE MINIONS.....	59

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This document was originally intended to be used with the *Jihad to Destroy Barney the Purple Dinosaur* roleplaying group located at <http://www.jihad.net> on the World Wide Web. The document may be used elsewhere, but if you do please let us know at [mrfnord@amigo.net](mailto:mrfnord@amigo.net) so we can keep track of our global fanbase. Thank you.

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The gaming material presented here is the original creation of the Jihad to Destroy Barney the Purple Dinosaur and is intended for use with the *GURPS* system from Steve Jackson Games. (<http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/>) This material is not official and is not endorsed by Steve Jackson Games.

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Offer void in Utah. Return unused portion to vendor for a full refund.



<b>CHILDREN OF THE HIGH MAGE: THE LYRANS.....61</b>	<b>CHARACTERS.....88</b>
Masks and Circles ..... 62	Jihaddi ..... 88
Dark Green Magic ..... 63	Armor Table ..... 89
<i>BJ and Baby Bop</i> ..... 58	Purple Forces ..... 92
Loved Ones ..... 59	Others ..... 94
Mikey Crawford ..... 60	Mundanes ..... 95
Saethrlins ..... 62	
Charn'el and the Barney Slayer ..... 64	
<b>CHAPTER 4..... 65</b>	<b>CHAPTER 7..... 96</b>
<b>THE ILLUMINATI.....66</b>	<b>CAMPAIGN ASSUMPTIONS.....97</b>
<b>ALIENS .....67</b>	Metaplotting ..... 97
X'hirjo..... 67	Parameters ..... 97
Salusians ..... 67	Physics ..... 98
<i>Why so few Aliens?</i> ..... 68	Character Ecology ..... 99
Greys ..... 69	Types of (Human) Magic ..... 99
<b>OTHER SHADOWY TYPES.....69</b>	Writing Jihad Campaigns ..... 100
Ancient Illuminated Seers of Bavaria..... 69	Genre & Style ..... 101
Planetary ..... 70	Crossovers ..... 102
Solos ..... 70	<i>Infinite Worlds Data</i> ..... 103
The Office of Special Plans..... 71	Adventure Seeds ..... 104
International Order of Mad Scientists..... 72	<b>FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ..... 104</b>
	The Canon ..... 105
	Making a Pitch ..... 105
	Credit Where Credit is Due ..... 105
<b>CHAPTER 5..... 73</b>	<b>CHAPTER 8..... 106</b>
<b>STAYING IN THE DARK..... 74</b>	William J. Keith ..... 107
Keeping the Secret ..... 74	Malaclypse the Seeker ..... 109
<i>The State of the Earth</i> ..... 74	Minerva Fnord..... 111
What Makes the World Go Round..... 76	Puppeteer ..... 113
Sample Shell Operations..... 76	Joseph Lacroix ..... 115
<b>TURNING ON THE LIGHTS ..... 77</b>	Diedre "Dee" Greist..... 117
In Days of Yore ..... 77	Rens Houben/Shadur T'Kharn ..... 119
<i>The Jihad Files</i> ..... 77	Kirk Felton ..... 121
The Brave and the Mad ..... 78	Aris Merquoni ..... 123
Blowback..... 78	
The Anomaly ..... 79	
<b>CHAPTER 6..... 80</b>	<b>FURTHER READING ..... 125</b>
<b>PROFILE WRITING ..... 81</b>	<b>APOLOGIA..... 126</b>
Character Generation..... 81	
<i>In re: Munchkins</i> ..... 82	
Profiling ..... 82	
<b>ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES AND SKILLS ..... 84</b>	
Advantages..... 84	
Disadvantages ..... 85	
Spongification ..... 86	
Skills ..... 86	
Weapons Table ..... 87	
New Spells..... 88	



*“So you want to know what’s really going on, eh?”*

*“What if I were to tell you that our world is under attack from a demon lord and his allies, a race of extraterrestrial sorcerers? That this unholy alliance seeks to either make us their slaves or destroy us utterly? And that the demon lord himself leads the invasion under the benevolent guise of the children’s TV host Barney the Dinosaur?”*

*“You’d think I was crazy, right? Well, that’s as may be. But it happens to be true.”*

*“If they were left alone, the enemy would’ve swept through and enslaved or destroyed us years ago. But they aren’t unopposed. Out there on the fringes of your everyday, ordinary mundane life, a group of special men and women have dedicated their lives to fighting this threat. They are, for lack of a better term, Earth’s first legion of superheroes: warriors, aliens, wizards, scientists, werewolves... champions all, the best and brightest from across the depths of space and time standing proudly against the darkness.”*

*“They are the Jihad to Destroy Barney the Purple Dinosaur, and they fight to hold back Armageddon for another day.”*

Welcome to the *Jihad to Destroy Barney RPG and Writer’s Guide*. This book serves as your one-stop source for everything you need to know in order to play a campaign in the universe of one of the Internet’s Longest Running Gags™. For role-playing purposes, the book is oriented for use with the *GURPS 4th Edition* role-playing system by Steve Jackson Games; you’ll need the *GURPS Basic Set* to use the straight RPG material, but the setting material is deliberately light on rules and stats, and can be used with any gaming system as the GM sees fit.

## OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One: The Hidden War is

an overview of the history of the Jihad to Destroy Barney from both the perspective of the Jihad and from a wider view, covering things the Jihad doesn’t know or understand.

**Chapter Two: Heroes of the Day** is an overview of the Jihad itself - major organizations, operations centers, chain of command and standard operations.

**Chapter Three: Black Hats & Bastards** is an overview of the Jihad’s enemy. The chapter covers both the motivations and general organizations of both Barney’s forces and his Lyran allies.

**Chapter Four: Fellow Travellers** covers other parties in the shadow world that the Jihad inhabits, and how they interact with the conflict between the Jihad and Barney.

**Chapter Five: Oblivious Spectators** deals with the mundane world that exists as battlefield and cover for the Jihad-Barney conflict, and how the situation is kept off the evening news on a regular basis.

**Chapter Six: Rules of Engagement** provides GURPS 4th Edition character templates and attributes, as well as a guide for creating free-form RP char-

acters for use with the Jihad.

**Chapter Seven: Marching Off to War** is a GM resource, providing information on running Jihad campaigns, crossover notes and a handful of possible adventure seeds for use.

**Chapter Eight: Dramatis Personae** provides GURPS character sheets for prominent Jihad members for use as potential NPCs in games or inspiration.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Normally, RPG books are divided along the lines of player information and GM information. Because the *Jihad to Destroy Barney RPG* is also intended as a writer’s guide for people who would rather write fiction about the Jihad than game it straight up, we’ve taken the somewhat drastic step of not really bothering to draw any lines. Aside from the campaign construction material in Chapter 7, everything in this book should be considered “fair game” for players and GMs. Forward all complaints to the home office in Walla Walla, WA. Thank you.

## What Is A Roleplaying Game?

This is the part of the book where we explain what a roleplaying game is, how it works, and maybe even provide a brief transcript of an ideal gaming session. This sort of blurb is considered important, if not fashionable, for roleplaying books.

But then we got to thinking. What’s the point of providing this thing, anyway? If you’re picking up an RPG book for almost any purpose, then you already bloody well *know* what an RPG is. Hell, half the damn planet already plays stuff like *World of Warcraft*, *Evercrack* and *City of Heroes*. Those are RPGs, only using fancy computers and you have sell your soul in monthly installments to continue playing. And everybody who isn’t playing one of those is usually playing *D&D 3rd Edition* or *Planet of Insufficient Light*.

So screw it. We’re going to respect your intelligence and assume that you have at least the basic understanding of what an RPG is and how to play one. Incidentally, if you’re one of those people who thinks RPGs are a tool of Satan, you’re absolutely right; a team of cultists will be over shortly to induct your children into our sex cults. Thank you.



**Sean “Malaclypse” Breen** has been, at one time or another during his life, an amateur writer, playwright, actor, occultist, conspiracy theorist, UFO chaser, political activist, gadfly, disk jockey, talk show host, Internet historian and comedian, as well as being a fully-ordained minister of the Universal Life Church. He’s a bit like Jamie Hyneman, except not quite as utterly cool and with more hair. These days, he roams the Earth like Jules Winnfield or Kwai-Chang Caine, seeking adventures and looking for work.

Sean lives in a suburb of Denver, Colorado, but eagerly awaits the day when he can finally buy that hobbit-hole on Olympus Mons he’s been dreaming of.

**Jim Yearnshaw** is the Jihad’s answer to men like Salinger and Rushdie. Brought into the project in 1999, he penned the original draft of the Lyran writeup and wrote a brilliant guide to creating heroic Jihaddi characters that don’t suck, all without anybody *ever seeing his true face*. Supposedly, he lives within a few miles of co-author Sean Breen, but has never met him face to face, for fear that the universe might implode if they met.

If you ask **Kat Templeton** to describe herself, the words she would probably use is that she’s ‘nothing special’. This is a lie. Kat is, among other things, an amateur historian, a good first baseman, a technophile, an avid bookworm, a blogger, and a part-time philosopher. Her friends seem to enjoy her scribbles and musings, though she’s not exactly sure why. Kat has somehow managed to talk UC Berkeley into giving her two degrees, a BA in History and a Masters in Information Management, and is currently doing the difficult task of attempting to find a job somewhere in the Sacramento area.

**Joe Schneider’s** biggest problem is figuring out how to prioritize. As a full-time system administrator for a large beer distributor in South-western Pennsylvania who also is trying to start a retail technology store and VAR while occasionally acting in various plays, comedies and other theatre while being a member of a local comedy troupe which performs weekly in a SNL-type show and performing his duties as a borough councilman, he somehow finds time to meet his deadlines (barely) to avoid imminent death at the hands of Kat Templeton.

Joe recently moved to a rural-ish suburb of Pittsburgh as a result of his girlfriend/unofficial fiancée getting a job out in the middle of nowhere. He loves it though, and looks forward to making it official sometime in the near future.

**William J. Keith**, player of the eponymous Jihad character, was a math grad student when he wrote for this book. He was born in Texas, graduated from UT Austin, and would like to return, preferably as a prof. He has been a member of the Jihad for nearly a decade, which should make interesting background if he ever runs for political office. It could happen. He insists on the middle initial because this keeps him from being confused with a sci-fi author who gets paid real money for his work.

**Amanda Van Rhyn** was, at the time the *Jihad to Destroy*

*RPG* project got off the ground, the entire Alaskan contingent of the Jihad to Destroy Barney. Enough of her contributions to this work remain to get her an author credit but sadly we’ve lost touch with her over the years. If anybody has good contact info for Amanda, drop us a line so we can at least get her a proper author biography.

**Dan DeRosia** grew up on a steady diet of science fiction and engineering texts, so it was probably inevitable that the two would combine. As long as he can remember, he’s been deconstructing things (sometimes imaginary things) and figuring out how they work. This has never abated and now he is working on his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering. In his free time, he works on cars, watches anime, reads, plays RPGs, and writes, including things like 3<sup>rd</sup> person biographies.

**Patrick Stewart** is quite a few things; in his civilian guise, he is an amateur writer, artist, worldbuilder, editorialist, futurist, activist, roleplayer, and patient zero for a number of small memetic plagues. Patrick’s other projects include expanding on his personal science-fiction setting and contributing to the multi-topic weblog Live From the Nuke-Free Zone. Patrick is currently being inflicted upon Halifax, Nova Scotia.

**Kirk Felton** was hatched in a small podunk town in western Washington that no one has heard of in the year of our Lord 1976. He joined the Jihad in 1996 while pretending to be an art student at the Seattle Art Institute. He currently lives in Connecticut with his wife (whom he met through the Jihad, go figure) and two children where, while he’s not destroying the sense of artistic self-worth of his fellow authors, he works as a graphic artist for a local commercial printer.

**Audrey Ritsema** was recommended as an artist when our lead illustrator fell afoul of a serious case of Real Life Stuff as the project was nearing completion. We don’t know much about Audrey, except that she’s a college student in Ontario, a good artist and a really good sport about all this. Thanks, Audrey.

**DragonFyre Jones** is a powerful spirit of the Land, and as such should be approached with great caution at all times. He also has a great singing voice. Go figure. DragonFyre was a member of the Jihad back at the beginning of this project, and has since moved on to more esoteric humor. Like Andy Kaufman, he blurs the line between reality and fiction. Unlike Andy Kaufman, he doesn’t like to wrestle old ladies for fun. Despite this character flaw, we still hang out with him.

**The Jihad to Destroy Barney** began as the punchline to a joke in alt.tv.criticism in 1993, and since that time has clung to life like an immature crab clings to a rock in the middle of a hurricane. Despite reorganizations, attacks by trolls, more internet drama than you can shake a stick at and the slow fall into cultural irrelevance caused by *Barney & Friends’* declining media spotlight, the Jihad has held firm. They fully expect to survive to the group’s 15th anniversary, at which point they’ll probably all commit suicide while wearing identical purple Nikes.



# FOREWORD

OR

## “REALLY, THIS ISN’T BULLSHIT”

We work and slave twenty-four hours a day, spill blood, set sponges on fire, chop them up into filet mignon, flatten their cities, destroy their planets, what have you, all so you can lie in bed at night and think to yourself, “Gee, I’m glad I’m not a mindless drone in the service of the Lord of Purple Hell”. And don’t you ever forget it.

The concept of a Jihad Universe has existed since the beginning of the Jihad, long before there was ever a written definition of it. The

High Prophet (pbuh), and his Band of Merry Funsters, would take their mostly suburban surroundings and on it play out a never-ending struggle between It of the One Tooth (Barney) and the glorious forces devoted to his demise, that is, the Jihad to Destroy Barney the Dinosaur. These first few freeform years were peppered with strange acronyms (CLITORIS, ORGASM, OSHIT), science fiction references (*Star Trek*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Ringworld*, and stuff even I’ve never heard of), and a regular stream of stories, long and short, all taking place in this nebulous reality spawned from the imaginations of those who posted to alt.barney.dinosaur.die.die.die.

The longest of these stories were known as Operations, and were equivalent to military advances, or drawn-out battles. While many Operations are known to have existed, only the ones after Operation: WorldWalk have been archived in much (indeed, any) detail. For many years, there was no unifying concept of a Jihad Universe, and humorous (and sometimes embarrassing) discontinuities were commonplace. The carrot-shooter comes to mind, and let’s just say that the laws of physics were given about as much

respect as the law that allows police officers in Paulding, Ohio, to bite a dog to quiet him.

The authors of this wholly remarkable work have put a lot of blood, sweat and caffeine into gathering together the best ideas of contemporary Jihaddi writers to form a coherent picture of the Jihad’s Universe. Well, that’s what I assumed they meant, anyway. They knocked on my door late one winter evening, followed by a line of ornery chimpanzees who obviously hadn’t eaten in days, and asked me if I wanted to write an introduction for a document whose details they began to foist under my gaze at a rate of knots. It was all printed on very nice paper, so I agreed. The chimpanzees burned down my kitchen.

I have since received compensation, including a fetching new blender and track lighting. But I digress. What you now see on your screen is a guide for writing Operations, and now serves as a canon for writing any kind of fiction based on the world of the Jihad to Destroy Barney the Dinosaur. Be assured that disregarding this frightfully important document will result in your being strung up on the clothesline outside Headquarters and left to dry after we dunk you in monkey urine and cover you with sprinkles. Mmmm... sprinkles.

—2ND CONSULATE BROTHER DRAGONFYRE JONES OF THE CHURCH OF ST. DINO THE AVENGER







# CHAPTER I

“So, I’ve been thinking...”

“Wow, I’m surprised.”

“Yeah, yeah. Anyway, there’s a question I’ve been pondering for a while now: Why are we here? I mean, I was busy with school, and everybody else had their lives... so why did we drop everything and come to join the Jihad?”

“That is a very good question. As it happens, I have a theory.”

“... You do?”

“Of course. I don’t know if it’s one you want to hear, though.”

“That *really* doesn’t give me a warm fuzzy, Mal.”

“Sorry.”

“Still, yeah. I’d be interested to hear your theory.”

“All right, but don’t say I didn’t warn you...”

*“There’s a story in Jewish folklore that the world continues to exist because twelve good people still live here. It’s sort of like the old story of Sodom and Gomorrah; when Lot couldn’t find one other good man in either city, God ended up destroying them all. Anyway, the story goes that at all times, there are twelve good people who live on Earth, and as long as they do God can look down from on high and see that humanity is still good enough that he doesn’t have to come down here and wipe everything out like he did during the Flood. These twelve people basically carry the weight of the world on their backs.*

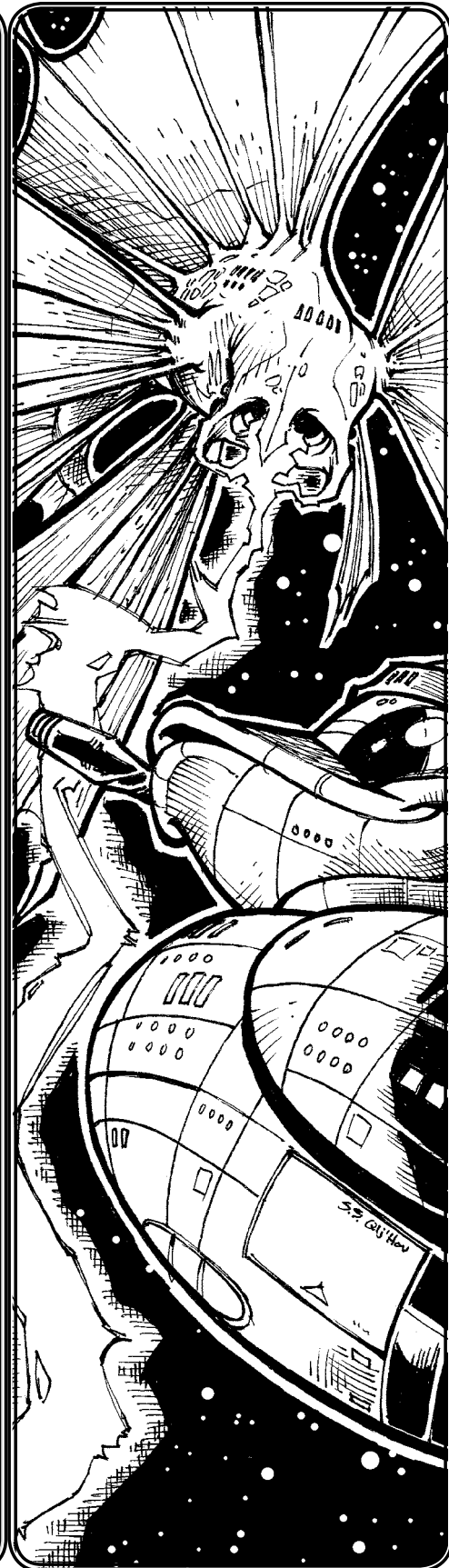
*“Now, the story itself has a few flaws in it, but that’s folklore for you. Still, over the years I’ve seen things that made me wonder if there wasn’t **some** truth to the legend of the twelve secret kings. There are times in history when exactly twelve people get together for some great event or to fight some great menace. It’s not always the same twelve — the identities change at least once a generation — and oftentimes they’re overshadowed by others, but without those twelve people, the cause would collapse or the event would go wrong...”*

“Waitwaitwait, you’re saying that somebody in the Jihad is some kind of... what? Angel? Saint?”

*“More like an immune system. An old girlfriend of mine would’ve called it ‘an automatic heuristic response by the planetary noosphere,’ which is **exactly** what it sounds like. When the world’s in danger, it creates people like us to deal with the threat, and it affords us with... something. I don’t know what, a special reaction to the danger maybe, or perhaps some special ability.*

*“One of Aris’ favorite pop-culture shows call it a ‘nexus.’ We turn one way, and the world has a tendency to follow. It’s the one special ability every mundane leader has dreamed about since the beginning of time. But... so far as I know, none of us has any interest in domination for the sake of domination. Which is, I think, why we get the brass ring in the first place.”*

## THE HIDDEN WAR





## THE SECRET KNIGHTS OF EARTH

*The following is a transcript of a lecture given by official Jihad historian Dr. Jason Carmichael to the incoming class of recruits at TRES Corps Headquarters on January 12, 1999.*

### WHO ARE WE?

At first glance, it seems like a dumb question. We're the Jihad! But, if a thoughtful Jihaddi approaches the idea, they find it's not as simple as it seems. We are an organization made up of many different types of sentient beings, recruited not only from the four corners of the world but of the multiverse, and we have a healthy respect for differences. With all this tolerance for the eccentric, how do we manage to keep the Jihad together?

It is simply thus: B'harne must be destroyed, all else is irrelevant.

This is the binding thought. However, a thoughtful man would ask why this is the binding thought. For that answer, gentlemen, you need a bit of a tour of Jihad history, and that is why I am here. I hope at the end of this tour you will have some idea of the nature of the Wyrms we oppose, why we — the Jihad — came to be, and how we got here from there. So with no further ado, let us begin.

We don't know a whole lot about the Beast we oppose. We don't know where he came from or even what he truly is. There is speculation he is a demon from the deepest pits of Hell or some truly malevolent spirit. We really don't understand his nature, or why he chooses to fight the way he does. Any attempt to answer any of these questions or even approach the Wyrms himself has one of three consequences: Either the Wyrms is slain temporar-

ily, or the one approaching the Wyrms has ended up either dead or spongy. We can surmise from the above fact that B'harne must be a very private whatever he is.

But some conjecture and piecing together what we do know, we find that first of all he is probably not of this Earth. Second, he has some kind of alliance with the Lyrans — although the details of the alliance are unknown to us. We also happen to know that the Lyrans hate and fear humanity to the point they wish to destroy us, but we aren't quite sure why. Third, B'harne cannot be killed permanently with any weapon we have short of Lord Owsen's Barney-Slayer — and even that is ambiguous as we've never really had a chance to test it. Fourth, he has two associates that are similar to what he is — B'haby B'hop and B'heeJ'hay. It isn't really a lot. But most importantly, we know the effects B'harne has on humanity — and if you haven't seen it, I hate to tell you that it isn't pretty. Luckily for us, he wasn't as much of an issue in the past as he is today... or human history may have taken a different and more unpleasant course.

Perhaps he didn't really get a chance to destroy this world as he so desperately wished because there was no simple way to destroy the world in those days. Communication between parties was slow and painful, and even the dual inventions of the telegraph and the radio still didn't change the fact that it was difficult to get a message out to a lot of people in a way that didn't involve them thinking about what they had just read or heard.

Ah... but then television came into the mix. You've heard all the derogatory names for it, I have no need to go into those. For the first time in human history, we had a medium that instead of encouraging thought, encouraged people to sit and look at the images





## Dr. Jason Carmichael

170 points

Jason Carmichael is one of those rare breed of Jihaddi who can claim to have seen the Golden Age. He joined the Jihad soon after its founding, supposedly recruited by one of the members of the Original Seven (although which one has been lost to time, and Carmichael refuses to tell). He served ably in the early skirmishes with the Hell Wyrms, but when the Jihad was forced slightly into the open in the early '90s, he fell into Liaison work (the first documented Liaison), keeping the Jihad safe from the pens of journalists and historians everywhere, a job which he performed ably.

Then came Worldwalk and Phoenix, and Carmichael's life was turned upside down forever. Carmichael had often noted that he was the only one keeping any historical record of the Jihad, and was often invited to different Jihaddi headquarters to lecture on the place of the Jihad in history. One of the days he had been invited to lecture, he had gathered up a few notes, leaving the rest of them carefully filed in his house. Before he could return to his notes, he had been sucked into the events of Operation World-Walk, and when it was finally over, he found one of the consequences of the near-collapse of the timelines was that his house was no longer where he had left it, and missing along with it were his piles of notes and memorabilia from the early days of the Jihad.

When this war was over, he returned to civilian life, only to find that research in the mundane sector no longer held any interest to him. He took a vacation to find himself, and after stumbling around in the mountains of Colorado for a few weeks, he decided that he wanted to become a permanent fulltime Jihaddi. To achieve this goal, Jihaddi higherups created a fiery car crash on the route to a job interview, and to the mundane world, Jason Carmichael perished in that accident, a few days shy of his twenty-eighth birthday.

However, Professor Carmichael remains alive, holding an honorary commission in TRES and a professorship in the MAUL War College, and still lectures newbie Jihaddi on their place in history. There have been recent efforts to commit Professor Carmichael's lectures to print, and the result has become known as the Carmichael Lectures.

**Attributes:** ST 9 [-10]; DX 9 [-20]; IQ 15 [100]; HT 12 [20].

**Secondary Attributes:** HP 9 [0]; Will 15 [0]; Per 15 [0]; FP 12 [0].

**Languages:** English (Native) [0]; Chinese (Accented) [2]; French (Accented) [2]; German (Accented) [2]; Russian (Accented) [2].

**Advantages:** Acute Vision 1 [2]; Alternate Identity (legal) (James Kimball, reporter) [5]; Ambidexterity [5]; Common Sense [10]; Eidetic Memory [5]; Language Talent [10]; Magery 1 [15]; Military Rank 3 [15]; Patron (the Jihad) 3 [40].

**Disadvantages:** Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Bad Sight (Nearsighted) [-10]; Duty (to the Jihad) [-15]; Enemy (B'harne) [-60]; Insomniac (Mild) [-10]; Nightmares [-5]; Squeamish [-10]; Workaholic [-5].

**Skills:** Acting-14 [1]; Beam Weapons/TL9 (X-Rifle)-10 [2]; Bicycling-10 [2]; Brawling-9 [1]; Diplomacy-14 [2]; Driving/TL8 (Automobile)-11 [4]; Electronics Operation/TL9 (Jihadlinker)-15 [2]; Electronics Operation/TL9 (Spongescope)-15 [2]; Expert Skill (Conspiracy Theory)-16 [8]; Fast-Talk-14 [1]; First Aid/TL9-15 [1]; Fishing-15 [1]; Games (Chess)-15 [1]; Hiking-13 [4]; History (American)-17 [12]; History (Jihaddi)-18 [16]; Hypnotism-15 [4]; Intelligence Analysis/TL9-13 [1]; Leadership-14 [1]; Literature-16 [8]; Navigation/TL9 (Land)-14 [1]; Photography/TL9-14 [1]; Research/TL9-17[8]; Shortsword-8 [1]; Sociology-13 [1]; Soldier/TL9-15 [2]; Survival (Woodlands)-14 [1]; Teaching-16 [4]; Typing-14 [1]; Writing-14 [1].

until their brains turned to pabulum. And it's really no surprise that we see the rise of B'harne in conjunction with the maturing of this technology.

Now, before we get into a debate over the merits of television, I want to point out that it is not completely an evil. It does serve a purpose for entertainment and education. However, in the form it has now, there is not much use for the imagination or the intellect. And that is the weapon that the Beast counts on... to be able to invade the

brain and take over without his victim even realizing what is going on.

It's hopeless, right? I mean, there's no way we're going to convince the mundanes to give up their television sets and go back to reading and listening to the radio. In fact, if you tried such a campaign in Mundania, you would be laughed out of your seat. And revealing the true nature of the Beast is an impossibility as well. I mean, c'mon, a children's television character is out to destroy humanity as we know it?

Even if you did get past the absurdity of your postulate, the panic that would ensue would play right into the Beast's hands.

So the war must be secret. But who can be trusted with that secret, and be willing to be the good guys, doing a job that must be done with absolutely no recognition?

### ENTER THE JIHAD

Unfortunately for students of his-



tory, there isn't much in the way of actual tangible history left from the early days of the Jihad. While I was present for a large portion of it, even my carefully kept notes were lost in an accident, and I only have the memories of myself and others to rely on. The problem with memory, especially in a literate culture, is that it tends to become myth rather easily, and the distortions from mythologizing something make it harder to make out what the original truth was.

But two facts seem most important in the lead up to the Jihad. First, the Wyrms seems to have decided that the best way to bring about his Purple Kingdom was to reveal himself to the world — not as the slobbering form of evil incarnate that we know him to be, but a sugary-sweet children's television show character. In some ways, this choice of guise turned out to be lucky for us, because it has helped us keep our War out of sight of the mundanes, but on the other hand, it also turned out to be unlucky because the primary audience for a children's television show is the young and impressionable minds of children.

Soon after B'harne's show went on the air, sometime in the mid to late eighties, a man whom we Jihaddi would come to know as the High Prophet, but who at the time was nothing more than your ordinary construction worker, would begin to have the first in a sequence of dreams and visions about some evil loose on the world that would destroy humanity if it wasn't checked. At first, he wasn't sure about these visions — would you have been if you were living a perfectly ordinary mundane life and you started getting odd visions about a kid's television show character being the incarnation of pure evil?

Luckily for the Jihad and the fate of humanity, the High Prophet was willing

to put up with these visions, and as they continued unabated, he began searching out others who might be having these same visions. It was made easier by the fact that his visions seemed to want him to search out these others. Over the course of a couple years, he found them all — a priest, a soldier, a doctor, a teacher, a physics Ph.D student, and an airline pilot, and from that humble Seven came the organization that you are all a part of today.

In 1990, after several meetings with those others who shared his visions, the High Prophet uttered what we know today as the Three-fold Truth, which included the statement I gave you at the beginning of this speech. With the arrival of the Truth, he was finally able to call forth that most noble undertaking. He called a Jihad — a Jihad against the Evil that had come to torment Earth. The war began at this point, the same war you and I are fighting today.

The early days were a pretty heady time to be part of the Jihad. Missions were taken on solo and in pairs. None of the structure that the current Jihad relies on to be able to function existed at that point, and people were pretty much cast to the wind, doing simply what had to be done in those days. Granted, the opposition forces weren't very well organized at that point either, which was probably the one saving grace for the nascent Jihad.

### THE STUDIO FOUR

In late 1991, an event happened that nearly broke the cover of the young Jihad, which would have destroyed the Cause. I mean, before, crimes were up as Jihaddi would take on minions of B'harne in less than subtle places and fashions, but this event was different because of the scale of the crime. Four young recruits to the Jihad decided that it was time to take the war to the enemy's lair. They decided that

they would break into the studios in which B'harne's show was filmed and find some way to make it impossible for B'harne to continue to tape the show.

Unfortunately for them, the cops showed up at the studio halfway through this rampage and the four people there were busted for breaking and entering and malicious vandalism. This would not have been so bad for the Jihad if one of the people responsible





for the job hadn't broken down and confessed exactly why and what he was doing there.

This event was, as you can imagine, front page news. Especially when it at first seemed as if the young man who had said this was turning out to be perfectly sane in all ways other than his rather interesting delusion. The other thing is that he knew a few names, and there was some pressure coming down from the other side to book these four away, as well as anybody else who might have been associated with the studio ransacking.

The very first Jihad cleanup crews were used on this mess. Some of us took spots as reporters to swing the reporting of this mess, and even one daring Jihaddi somehow managed to get himself put on the psychiatric team evaluating the Studio Four, as they became known.

There was lots of debate among Jihaddi in those days about what to do with these four young men, as it looked like charges were going to be filed by our opposition, hoping to strike a blow for their side against us. Finally, it was decided that we unfortunately had to abandon these people for the greater sake of keeping the war going. We also had to make it so that in the future, when the Wyrms and his minions tried to accuse us of existing, that it would make them look insane.

To accomplish this, we added notes to the file of the one that told everything that he was known to have schizophrenic breaks with reality, and we let the others know that if they so chose to join their friend in his testimony that we would do the same thing to them. The other three thankfully chose to be sentenced rather than make things any harder for the rest of the Jihad, and the crisis of exposure was over.

But it became clear that the ad hoc structure that we had formed to run the

## Timeline

**25,000 BC:** Rise and fall of Atlantis. The Illuminati is founded after the collapse of the Atlantean thaumocracy.

**18,000 BC:** Lyran mage Charn'El ascends to demigod status.

**1500 BC:** Charn'El has vision of human race destroying his people; Lyrans begin concerted effort to locate the threat.

**300 BC:** Lyran bioship stumbles across Earth; first attempt at conquest fails due to interference from Illuminati and Seleucid magicians.

**1776:** Adam Weishaupt founds the Ancient Illuminated Seers of Bavaria. Original Illuminati is mildly amused.

**1787:** First recorded conflict between the Maenads of the Holy Albino and the Lyrans.

**1947:** Human sorcerers guided by a Lyran magus open the Babylon Road in the California desert; first large-scale Lyran incursions on Earth; Grey ship attracted by the Road crash-lands in New Mexico; first contact with the Greys.

**1970:** First contact between the Salusian Empire and Earth during the *Apollo 13* mission.

**1975:** High Mage of Lyra summons demon B'harne as part of long-term campaign to enslave or eliminate humanity.

**1987:** *Barney and Friends* TV show debuts in the United States.

**Dec. 1988:** Maenads discover the origins of B'harne, vow to fight it.

**1988-1990:** The High Prophet and Original Seven Jihaddi begin having visions; gather together.

**1990:** High Prophet utters the Threefold Truth; Jihad to Destroy Barney formed.

**Dec. 1991:** Studio Four incident; armed takeover of Barney show ends with Jihaddi in police custody.

**Mar. 1992:** Studio Four incident resolved; first Jihad Autonomous Organizations begin forming along geographic lines.

**Nov. 1992:** First non-geographic JAOs, Dobermans and Resurgent Templars, formed.

**Jan. 1993:** High Prophet and five of Original Seven disappear, Tilden Owsen and Mystic Mongoose remain; WEDJEE research lab founded.

**Mar. 1993:** Jihadlinker first introduced.



### TIMELINE (CONTINUED)

**Apr. 1993:** Doberman Fleet Commander Serberus named first Leader (later Praetor) of the Jihad.

**Aug. 1993:** Dobermans become the Glorious Doberman Empire, the first JAO.

**Oct. 1993:** Midwesterners Against Ugly Lizards (MAUL) declares itself a JAO; Owsen takes command of the Templars, renames the group TRES Corps.

**Nov. 1993:** WEDJEE incorporated into DE; Legion of Doom founded; mercenary known as Trooper Anhur joins the DE.

**Dec. 1993:** Blood Jihad founded.

**Jan. 1994:** TRES Zeta Squad founded to compete with WEDJEE; Maenads discover, join Jihad.

**Jun. 1994:** Mikey Crawford gets his hands on a Jihadlinker, sets off an abortive invasion of Montreal; Jihaddi arrested by Canadian police.

**Jul. 1994:** Serberus resigns from the Jihad over the Montreal incident; names DE Commander Augustus as successor; Augustus begins probe into preventing future incidents like Montreal.

**Sep. 1994:** Augustus endorses probe recommendations; first Jihad spin teams formed.

**Aug. 1994:** Trooper Anhur chosen to join Maenads, given the name Serp the Feral.

**Oct. 1994:** Jon Marburger joins TRES Corps.

**Nov. 1994:** Malaclypse the Seeker joins the Blood Jihad.

**May 1995:** Malaclypse starts Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow, Inc.

**Jun. 1995:** Augustus retires, names Samhain new DE Fleet Commander and puts Praetorship up for election; Serp the Feral first (and only) freely elected Praetor.

**Dec. 1995:** Serp attempts to use Jihaddi as mercenaries in Africa and Central Asia; Samhain resists Serp's requests; Tensions between the DE and the Jihad leadership escalate.

**Jan. 1996:** Serp called into meeting with Maenad leader Windigo the Feral; Serp vanishes; JAO leaders appoint J. Foxglov as the new Praetor.

**Mar. 1996:** Operation WORLDWALK.

**Aug. 1996:** Ariana Mahtash joins the Blood Jihad.

**Aug.-Sep. 1996:** Operation PHOENIX.

Jihad was quickly being outpaced by the membership growth, and a couple of our founders had expressed an interest in returning to a so-called 'normal' life. It was decided that even though the High Prophet had done much good for the world by uttering the three-fold truth and calling a Jihad, it was time for a different way of organizing ourselves.

Before any of this work in rearranging could be done, though, the High Prophet and several of his closest associates turned up missing and could not be found anywhere. What exactly happened, we still do not know. Some of the more religious members thought that the High Prophet and the other missing had ascended for their role in bringing about the Jihad, some of the more pragmatic thought that they were simply tired of inter-Jihad politics in the wake of the Studio Four and thus had simply wandered back into mundane life without telling anybody, and some of the more conspiracy minded held that the Wyrms and his allies had captured them in a ploy to destroy the Jihad once and for all.

If it truly was the latter, it didn't work. From the original Seven, we still had Lord Owsen and the Mystic Mongoose around. While neither of them wanted to be the man in charge — they had seen the stress on their old friend during the bleak winter when it looked like we were about to lose everything — they did an admirable job holding the Jihad together until somebody else could be found to lead it.

### THE RISE OF THE JAO

To explain how the Jihad moved to this next stage, I have to step back a little and tell you of the rise of the proto-JAO. In the wake of the Studio Four incident, some Jihaddi thought it was wise to band together in groups and work towards the destruction of the Wyrms in that fashion. A group



of people had access to more resources than a single person. Also, the Jihad had learned the value of cleaning up after itself, and it was easier to be able to plan missions knowing that you both had a cleanup crew in place and that the cleanup crew was friendly. It also allowed for some flexibility for passing orders from the top to the bottom.

A lot of these organizations were set up around a similar geographical area, most notorious being the band clustered in and around Texas A&M University, which produced a number of well-known Jihaddi, and another band clustered around the upper Midwest that later became known as MAUL.

But a couple of these proto-JAOs took a slightly different approach to maintaining a membership base. First of all, they allowed anybody to become part of their organization, and made it less tied to geography. Second, they picked somewhat of an overarching theme for their membership to consider themselves part of. These two proto-JAOs called themselves, respectively, the Dobermans and the Resurgent Templar, and are the forerunners of today's Doberman Empire and TRES Corps.

It should be noted that some of this ability to transcend geography was in part due to the introduction of the Jihadlinker. Before, when one had to rely on ordinary methods of communication, there was less ability to coordinate what was going on with your fellow members when you had to rely on the plain old telephone service. But even at the basic stage, where Linkers acted as glorified pagers, there was a tremendous freeing of resources, and it allowed for the non-geographically linked proto-JAO to come into ascendance.

All of this leads to the leadership race which Owsen and Mongoose were overseeing, since neither of them

### TIMELINE (CONTINUED)

**Oct. 1996:** Operation PACIFICA; Owsen declared missing in action; Jon Marburger becomes TRES Grand Admiral.

**Dec. 1996:** Foxglov retires from Praetorship; Triumvirate formed by Windigo the Feral, Marburger and Shardik the Feral.

**Jan. 1997:** Blood Jihad leadership vanishes under mysterious circumstances; Verthandic Rangers formed from the remnants of the Blood Jihad and Evil Geniuses.

**May 1997:** First Triumvirate resigns, replaced by VR Professor Malaclypse, TRES Commander Shaharazad and TRES Captain Shadur T'Kharn.

**Jul. 1997:** Operation HOMEFRONT; VR incursion into alternate universe results in first enemy holding known to be totally freed from B'harnate influence.

**Aug 1997:** TRES Grand Admiral Marburger vanishes after an attack by spongin in San Francisco; TRES Admiral Melanie Davies named as successor.

**Apr. 1998:** Jihad Praxeum Veneficus founded to foster magical studies.

**Jul. 1998:** Admiral Davies takes extended sabbatical; TRES Admiral Kirk Felton named as successor.

**Nov 1998:** Malaclypse the Seeker resigns official positions in the Jihad, remains on as Civilian Advisor Emeritus.

**Mar. 1999:** Marburger returns to the Jihad and is court-martialed and demoted for dereliction of duty.

**May 1999:** Now.

wanted the job. And although they looked at the geographically based proto-JAOs, they took a longer and harder look at the two that were managing to transcend geography. Of the two, the Dobermans were both older and larger, and their leader, Fleet Commander Serbeus, seemed the wisest choice to lead the entire Jihad.

Thus Owsen and Mongoose named Serbeus the new leader of the Jihad. Serbeus, besides leading the Dobermans, was also somewhat a student of classics, and his first act was to rename his office to the Office of the Praetor, perhaps to confer upon the Jihad the

majesty of the Romans. Soon after he was named Praetor, Serbeus would add the appellate "Empire" onto the name of his organization. It is pretty much from the addition of this appellate that we declare the first fully fledged Jihad Autonomous Organization, the Glorious Doberman Empire.

The entire period I refer to here is now referred to as a golden age, though as a member throughout most of the period in question, I fail to see what is so golden about it. It was most definitely not as idyllic as later Jihaddi would make it out to be. This is probably partially due to the tendency of



memory to make myth, and the golden age is a time that has fled into myth. We have a little better idea of what was going on in the next period of history — a point in time that a current Jihaddi might actually recognize what's going on, a time of the first JAOs and the first attempts at working globally.

We have already discussed somewhat the rise of the Doberman Empire, so let us concentrate on what other major JAOs existed about this point. Those are, in no special order, TRES Corps, the Midwesterners Against Ugly Lizards (MAUL), the Blood Jihad, and the Legion of Doom. Also, at about this time we had the rise of a couple small R&D shops and the emergence of the Maenads, both of which had an interesting effect on the Jihad as we know it.

### GOING GLOBAL

As I mentioned, this is the first period where we were able to work beyond the borders of the United States in any coherent way, which is good because the Wyrms was starting to eye territory elsewhere. One of our first missions out of country was the Montreal Incursion in 1992, which is important for two reasons — it was one of our first missions outside the boundaries of the United States and it was the first time we met a certain sponge minion by the name of Mikey Crawford.

However, in late 1993 and early 1994, not only was the Jihad starting to attract recruits from other continents (most notably Europe and Australia), but we began having the manpower to stage skirmishes in those countries. Unfortunately for us, our adversary had found his way to England and Australia before us, and got somewhat of a head start in working his evils on those populations. Thus, we had to make up for lost time. Probably our worst blow came in 1994 when the Wyrms

announced that he would be translating all his shows into Spanish, French, German and Portuguese which meant that his influence would be spread that much further. With this threat, some of the JAOs tried to boost their capabilities to respond into Europe and Latin America, the two biggest targets for the Wyrms.

The Hidden War had grown from something ran out of a few American cities into this worldwide response team in just under four years. Divine interference or manifest destiny aside, this accomplishment is something for which the Jihad should be proud. The Doberman Empire was conducting operations in Australia, Europe, Brazil, the United States and Canada simultaneously in the Spring of 1994. The Doberman Empire was definitively the best equipped and largest fighting force the Jihad had ever fielded, and they were very good at their job. We'll come back to this thought in a second.

TRES Corps, which had emerged under the leadership of Lord Owsen from the struggling band of the Resurgent Templar, was less able to be involved in world straddling missions of great importance, so they decided to concentrate instead on being able to respond quickly to any threat in North America, and having good intelligence in place to be able to respond to those threats. When the DE picked up a formerly independent R&D shop known as WEDJEE, then headed by a man known simply as Captain Midnight, but who would later become Fleet Commander Samhain of the DE, TRES responded by starting their own in house R&D group that would gain the appellation of Zeta.

The Blood Jihad, from its very founding by a couple of the oddest people to ever grace the Jihad's presence — a pair known as Arsenal the Lone Warrior and Uplink — had an interest in

both space and R&D, and soon became known as the place in the Jihad to go if you had an interest in the mix of those two subjects. We are still not entirely sure how they managed to get their stuff in orbit, or just how they managed to establish a moon base without anybody noticing, but somehow they did. There are guesses that there were deals made with Russia, who, for cold hard American greenbacks, was willing to pass off Blood Jihad launches as their own, but this is a subject upon which the Blood Jihad High Command kept utmost silence.

The Legion of Doom prided themselves on their special operations skills. They also prided themselves on being one of the more extensively cross-trained troops in the Jihad. If you needed somebody who had an obscure skill-set, chances were that they called the Legion home. The Legion also excelled at desponification techniques, being one of the first groups to establish a division specifically devoted to studying ways to clean Barney's influence out of people's heads. They worked in small groups, and were masters of striking hard and fast — and were also among the first JAOs to really excel in cleaning up after themselves.

Lastly, there were the Midwesterners Against Ugly Lizards, or MAUL. The thing to keep in mind about MAUL is that they were the only JAO to survive from the time in the Jihad when people banded together because of their geography. Thus, they had a very strong association that the midwestern United States was theirs to protect. The other interesting thing about MAUL is that they refuse to use anything better than current technology in the mundane world — they really like their tanks — and they don't have much clue in the meaning of the word 'subtle'. Thankfully for the Jihad, the few times MAUL has gotten on





the wrong side of the cameras, they've been mistaken for the United States military.

And that is a brief look at how the Jihad stood going into the summer of 1994, unafraid of the world, taking on the Hellworm wherever he might strike, and thinking that nothing could seriously harm them. They had managed to avoid the news cameras for years, and perhaps it was hubris that caused the next big crisis of exposure. It started with a lost prototype Jihadlinker.

### MR. CRAWFORD'S LINKER

A Canadian member of the Doberman Empire was doing some normal work in Montreal when he put the prototype Jihadlinker he was entrusted with in his bag and then failed to zip the pouch he had put his Linker in. Of course, as he was wandering through Montreal, the Linker fell out of his bag.

Normally, this wouldn't have been a big problem, since Linkers were arcane things to use back in the day, but this was a new prototype with the simple to use interface and the bright shiny green Send button. It was simple enough that a spongie could figure out how to work it, and I suppose you can guess what happened.

Yes, the prototype Jihadlinker ended up in the hands of Mikey Crawford. Now Mikey was already starting to gain a reputation among both Jihaddi and his fellow spongies as a fellow who always walked away from Jihad operations, ever since his first appearance in the Montreal Incursion a few years back. Mikey typed out something along the lines of "hI al yu evul juhadee" and punched the shiny green send button. Little did any of us know at the time that this one action of Mikey's (somehow sent to the 'entire Jihad' distribution list) would very nearly lead to the end of the Jihad.

Mikey's message triggered a flurry of activity as to where a spongie had gotten a hold of a Jihadlinker, and how a spongie would have been able to figure out the arcane interface. Within a day, the Dobermensch who had lost the linker realized what had happened and pulled out his old one, only to find a flurry of activity over a sponge minion on the link. Wisely, or maybe not so wisely, he kept quiet for a few more days before he reported the prototype missing.

One mystery was solved when the prototype was reported missing — the question of just how a Sponge Minion figured out how to use a Linker. The prototype was much easier to use. However, there was the bad news that it was a prototype and thus contained the latest encryption schemes and other gadgetry that we didn't really want in the hands of the enemy. Thus, the Doberman Command decided that they would do an all-out raid on the McGill campus (which is where the signal from the Linker was consistently coming from — Mikey had decided that talking to Jihaddi was a pretty fun activity and was pretty consistently sending messages extolling the virtues of the Wurm) and take the Linker back from the spongie who had it by force.

Unfortunately, there were a lot of Dobermensch who wanted to participate in this raid since they were rather angry at the Sponge Minion who was polluting their link. Serbeus probably both invited too many soldiers along and assigned the wrong type of mission. This was definitely a case where a snatch and grab carried out by a small team would have been best, but Serbeus decided that Mikey was probably hiding in a Purple Forces safe house, which would mean rather a lot of manpower to take out.

Thus a large contingent of heavily armed Dobermensch were ordered





around the McGill campus one sunny June morning and ordered not to fall back until the Purple Forces base was found and cleaned out, and especially not to return until the prototype was back in their hands. Not only did the mission fail as Mikey Crawford was not where we expected him to be at that time, but two Dobermensch were less careful than they probably should have been as to whose face they waved their weapons into. The civilian couple they mistook for spongies were actually undercover RCMP officers who didn't really appreciate having illegal weaponry waved in their faces.

To be fair to the two Dobermensch who were not exactly as careful as they should have been, most of the invading force weren't exactly careful as to who they were frightening — enough so that several Canadian papers were screaming about the attack on McGill.

But the two Dobermensch caught by the RCMP were in a lot more trouble than their buddies, and the trouble doubled when the RCMP discovered that both of the terrorists they arrested carried American passports.

This fact, as you can probably imagine, caused quite an international uproar. Canada was not pleased with the prospect of terrorists slipping over the border to conduct operations against Canadian citizens, and there was some diplomatic tension between Ottawa and Washington over the whole matter.

Inside the Jihad, things were even more tense than they were in the relationship between the United States and Canada. There were two reasons for this — first, if either of the two that were caught in Canada decided to speak about what exactly they were up to, the entirety of the War would be put at risk.

Plus, there was a lot of finger pointing going on over whether MAUL (who had explicitly refused to jump in when the Dobermans realized they were in some trouble, stating a lack of jurisdiction) and TRES (who came up with some intelligence that Mikey may not be where the Doberman Empire expected him to be, but couldn't get anybody in Doberman High Command to listen) should have tried harder to stop the events that lead to crisis.

As the summer dragged on, we found that Canada was willing to drop the book on the two caught Dobermensch, which rather worried many of the higher ups in the Jihad, for all it would take is one person spilling the beans. Luckily, the two had learned something from earlier history, and they knew to keep their mouths shut as to why exactly they had been at McGill with heavy arms. Nobody, by some





freak miracle, had been killed, nor had anybody been shot. After some negotiation with liaisons in State, we managed to get the two a very good lawyer, and they were summarily found guilty, given a suspended sentence, and escorted out of the country with word that they were no longer welcome in Canada.

While the diplomatic crisis between the US and Canada was resolved upon the return of the two Dobermensh to the United States, the internal repercussions of this raid would resonate through the Jihad for months to come. The biggest of course, was Serbeus' retirement from both the Doberman Empire and from the Office of the Praetor. As his replacement in both, he named Commander Augustus, the one man in the DE high command that had recommended not going after Mikey Crawford in Montreal.

Augustus' first move was to start an inquiry into how the McGill raid could have occurred and suggestions as for how to keep it from happening again. His second was to court martial the two Dobermensh who had been unlucky enough to get caught, but to make the point very clear, he also court martialed their commander. Augustus was quoted at the time that "I want it to be known that this war is first and foremost a *secret*, and officers within the Jihad are to conduct themselves with that thought above all others."

The task force on how to prevent this sort of incident from happening again came up with a few very good solutions. Unfortunately, they also came up with one solution that would cause problems down the line. Among the good solutions they had is that we need to strengthen the Liaison program, which was working well in the US, to other countries in which there is a large chance the Jihad would conduct major operations — and first and foremost on

that list is Canada.

Second, it was recommended that there be spin teams in place to clean up after these sorts of messes. While every Jihaddi I've talked to hates spin duty, most of them acknowledge the importance of the job in keeping the world ignorant of their war. They know quite well that while they would love to expose their enemy for who he is, this is impossible, and that it takes just one piece of stupidity for their own cover to be blown.

Third, there were a few hints that the disaster at McGill could have been prevented if either TRES Intel had been able to get their findings to the DE or if MAUL had gone ahead and provided the backup requested. Thus, Augustus thought it might be all well and good to weaken the 'autonomous' part of the acronym 'Jihad Autonomous Organization'. It seemed like a good solution to stop a McGill crisis from occurring again, but the ramifications of this would soon play out for the Jihad. We'll come back to this in a minute.

### RISING STARS

I had meant to talk to you about two groups that would play an important part in the Jihad — the rise of the small R&D shop and the Maenads of the Holy Albino. Both reach their heyday in the period between the Second Great Exposure and the rise of Serp, so it is instructive to talk about them.

I have previously mentioned WEDJEE, the incorporation of which into the Doberman Empire gave Fleet Commander Samhain his original DE rank. I have also mentioned TRES Corps' Zeta Squadron, their own in-house group. The Blood Jihad also had their own R&D crew, known as the Skunk Works. The last of the independent R&D shops, a small operation known as the Evil Geniuses for a Better

Tomorrow, was started by my esteemed colleague, Professor Malaclypse.

The independent and JAO-based R&D shops play an important part in the rise of the Jihad. It dates roughly between the beginning of 1993, when WEDJEE was first formed to Operation WORLDWALK in March of 1996, a good three years, and those three years are best summed up by Professor Malaclypse when he once characterized them as 'The Age of Amuck Scientists'.

It was, from what I understand not being a techie-type myself, a wonderful time to have been a Jihad scientist or technician, for ideas were springing forth from all corners. Sometimes their inventions were useful — these were the folks who originated your Jihadlinkers, among other things. But sometimes, they were just silly — Admiral Keith's Mathattackius gun is probably the example you're most familiar with, but there were other crimes against science committed in this period.

Of course, the most vibrant period for the techies is the Fall of 1994 to WORLDWALK, in which thousands of oddities were produced randomly for the Jihad, some as desponge tools, some as sheer 'what the hell were you thinking?' curiosities. It should be noted that the brilliant minds most associated with their respective JAOS R&D shop — Admiral Svartalf of TRES, Professor Malaclypse of VR, and Centurion Ceberus and Fleet Commander Samhain of the DE — all got their starts during this time period.

As our opponent has no appreciable R&D shop whatsoever, but amazing adaptability to take on whatever we throw at them — or in the case of the Lyrans, to sometimes transcend it — our R&D shops have been one of the things that have kept us in the war for nearly as long as we have been fighting it. Even if they do have the occasional flight of fancy that leads to some tech-



nological atrocity.

Oddly enough, the other group that came to the forefront in the halcyon days of 1994 were the Maenads of the Holy Albino, a group that is nearly as diametrically opposite the pursuit of science as you can get and still be in the Jihad. I say this with some tongue in cheek, of course, as some of our best R&D minds are also Maenads, but the mysticism of the Maenads seems to collide in interesting fashions with the focus on science to fight the Hellwurm that the Jihad seems to have.

Thus, it is interesting to note that at the same time the High Prophet was beginning to have his first inklings of visions, so was the Chosen of the Holy Albino, as the story goes. For six years, they hunted the Wurm and the Lyrans on their own terms, but as time progressed, they found themselves running into more and more Jihaddi. As there were few in the Maenads, they realized an alliance would be beneficial and Windigo the Feral, aka now-Commander Inagei of the DE, led the Maenads in making themselves known to the Jihad.

Since then, they've been violent but effective warriors for the Jihad, and whether their mysticism is correct and they are selected by the Holy Albino, or if the skeptics are correct and they are simply picked by Windigo, it is mostly considered an honour to be invited to join the Maenads.

### THE RISE AND FALL OF SERP THE FERAL

Part of the reason I bring this up is that the Maenads play an important part in the next big event of the Jihad, which is the rise and fall of Praetor Serp. Serp was his Maenad name; his full DE rank and title was Centurion Anhur Spartacus Hades. He was, at the time of his induction into the DE

in December 1993, one of the Jihad's brightest young stars. He had served a good proportion of time as a mercenary, hopping between African bush wars before finding out about and joining up with the Jihad.

Once he was in, he demonstrated his knowledge of tactics to Fleet Commander Serbeus, and so impressed the Fleet Commander with his knowledge that Serbeus gave him one of the fastest promotions to Warrior that we have on record in the DE. He performed ably in all the missions he was assigned, and managed to bring back all his men from every mission. His biggest coup was during the Second Great Exposure, when his command was the only one to even somewhat succeed on the mission. They surrounded the safe house, entered, found it empty, and retreated. While this was technically in violation of his orders, it impressed both Serbeus and Augustus at his responsibility in a situation where everybody was losing their head, and his promotion to Centurion was both the last act by Serbeus in the DE, and confirmed as the first DE act of Augustus.

He continued serving as Augustus' tactician through the fall and winter of 1994 and doing a very good job at it. His promotion to Commander seemed all but assured once a spot was opened for him, as his only real competition he had was fellow-DE Centurion Manticore, and Serp was sure that his tactics and strategy would win him the position over an R&D geek. Besides, that very same winter, he had been inducted into the Maenads, something which Centurion Manticore had not managed to do.

While he was biding his time, waiting for the promotion he knew that he so richly deserved, his tactics skills were often requested for use by other JAOs, and so he would often go to help them do mission planning. Remember, the

task force studying the McGill Incident had recommended that JAOs be a little less autonomous, and part of that was involving high ranking officers of other JAOs in your battle planning. Thus, Serp found himself well-recognized throughout the entire Jihad.

In May of 1995, Augustus, proud of the work he had done for the Jihad, decided that it was time that he stepped down and went into a well-earned retirement. But before he did that, he announced that there would be a Jihad-wide election for the Praetor position in June, after he stepped down. The second thing he did was name a new Doberman Empire Fleet Commander. Much to the shock of Serp, his bitter rival, Centurion Manticore, was named Fleet Commander Samhain.

Worse, when Serp angrily brought up the unfairness of it all to Augustus, Augustus told Serp the reasons he had picked Manticore over him — mainly that Manticore was much more competent at the two tasks of dealing with lower-ranked officers and having a head for details that was important to the position of Fleet Commander. Augustus also made a point of telling him that if one of the two Commander slots had opened up, that he would have been the man, but that Augustus honestly believed that he wouldn't make a very good Fleet Commander.

Serp thought for a while about everything Augustus had said, and then decided that he would get the one position that could tell even the Fleet Commander of the Doberman Empire what to do — Praetor of the Jihad.

We now know that if Augustus had kept Serbeus' tradition of naming his successor, we probably would have never had Praetor Serp in the first place, as Augustus probably would have named either Samhain or TRES Admiral J. Foxglov to the position. But Augustus had a quiet love for democ-



## The Adhocracy

On paper, much of the Jihad is structured like a military or a fairly hierarchical corporation. In practice, this only fools the newbies. As often as not, the Jihad is that ultimate paradox - a large, capable military force *composed almost entirely of individualists*. Aside from direct combat situations or the occasional TRES Corps martinet, most Jihaddi view the rank structure as somewhere between “vague, unifying framework” and “polite suggestion.” This simply should *not* work, but it does.

This has its ups and downs. On the one hand, talented junior members can have impacts way out of proportion to their ranks or even age, leading to weird situations like Serp the Feral, a.k.a. *Centurion Hades*, having *Fleet Commander Samhain* as adjunct, or Katze Brenner joining the Triumvirate at less than half the age of many of its members. On the other hand, the lack of structure often causes nasty situations when two strong personalities dig in against one another. Over time, some rough mechanisms have evolved to handle this.

Most inter-officer snits remain just that as long as they don't affect the stability of the larger organization. When they *do*, things get serious very quickly. In at least two cases intra-Jihad conflicts have led to (apparent) loss of life - a solution which was seen as acceptable, if regrettable, both times. The current climate doesn't make a third such case likely - but the senior Jihaddi have never discussed ruling it out entirely.

racy, and he honestly believed it was truly the best way for the Jihad to pick its leaders. Unfortunately, the problem with democracy is that everybody gets to pick, and people often end up with exactly the government that they deserve. Such was the case here, as Serp was well known to the lower ranks in other JAOs, and they went overwhelmingly for him, despite the DE not really voting for him at all. Perhaps this should have been a warning sign to the rest of us that Serp may not have been the wisest choice. However, we were pleased that we made it through an election and we had our first elected Praetor, and Serp looked as if he would mend fences with his commanding officer as he named Samhain his adjunct.

And at first all seemed well with Serp. He was genuinely liked by the lower ranks, and he started a number of projects to make inroads on the Hellwurm. Some of these were massive multi-JAO projects, and the practice in collaborating would come in handy sooner than anybody imagined possible. The assault had the Hellwurm retreating. For the first time it felt as if the Jihad had the upper hand against their Opposition, by what seemed to be

their daring Praetor's doing.

Serp had a few good ideas as well. He was the first to think of the monetary aspects of running a huge war, and the International Jihad Treasury, the bane of Jihaddi everywhere, was one of his innovations. He was consistently looking for ways to make money for the Jihad as well as fighting the Wurm, and given his background, he hit upon the obvious solution — sending Jihaddi as mercenaries into the wars he had once fought in.

Unfortunately for Serp, an angry and violent reaction to this plan came from his commanding officer, the man he thought he could control by becoming Praetor of the Jihad. Samhain was so angry with Serp that he resigned his position as adjunct right then and there and blistered Serp's ears with invective that none had ever heard from Samhain before or since. Instead of taking no for an answer, Serp got the bright idea to try to oust his old rival from the Fleet Commander's chair in the DE so that he could take the job. The month of December was spent in a Jihad version of chicken — both Serp and Samhain trying to see who would blink first.

As the rest of the Jihad began to understand why Serp and Samhain were in this bitter feud, it was obvious which side they began to side with. None of them thought that sending their JAO's soldiers to fight in wars that didn't even have to do with the Hellwurm, whether it was for money or whatever else they could get in trade, was a very good idea. One by one, all the other leaders sided with Samhain. Serp, of course, tried to excommunicate all of them, but before he could name replacements, Windigo asked for him to come to her office for them to talk.

Serp walked into the office with Windigo, the door closed, there was the sound of raised voices, and then the door opened and Windigo was the only one to walk out. An inspection of the office behind her showed nobody in the room and no signs of the Praetor. The only comment anybody could get out of Windigo was, “Offended me, he did,” and to this day we have no idea what happened to Serp except that he was gone.

It was January 1, 1996. In a few days, the high command of all the JAOs got together and decided that they would first not repeat Augustus'



failed experiment in democracy, and they unanimously named Admiral J. Foxglov of TRES Corps their new Praetor. That was the beginning of the year that seriously got Weird.

### OPERATION WORLDWALK

Why was it weird? Well, in March of that year, the Hellwurm decided he was tired of this tickytack war of attrition with us and decided to bring it all to an end by collapsing all the known universes into one that he figured would be more favorable to him and not to us. He planned to accomplish this by the means of a device that would do this collapsing of timelines. Our attempt to stop this fiendish plot is recorded in Jihad archives as Operation WORLDWALK.

I will warn you, before I head into this section, that some of the stuff I am about to describe may not make much sense, but I assure you that the events I will attempt to relate to you really happened, and wasn't the result of the entire Jihad taking a hit of LSD all at the

same time — even if that's what it felt like at the time.

It was a sunny day in mid-March when things went haywire suddenly and without warning. I know most of you have probably seen the Matrix, when Neo experiences his bout of deja-vu, and that is how the first few permutations felt, as if we'd seen this before. But not realizing what we were up against yet, the Jihad dismissed these odd cases of deja-vu as nothing more than deja-vu and continued in our normal routines, which turned out to be the dumbest thing we could have done.

Since the whole episode is difficult to describe in any meaningful way in the third person, let me tell you what I was up to, since I found myself drug into this war. At the time, I was a young professor at Indiana University in Bloomington, and I had agreed to spend my spring break at the Doberman Empire headquarters so that I could talk to their young recruits in much the fashion I'm speaking to you all now. I had started out early in the

morning and made good time, and arrived at DE HQ about two hours before the first queasy feelings of deja-vu were reported.

I consider myself one of the lucky ones. DE HQ, along with several of the other Jihad bases had, in the age of Amuck Scientists, installed some equipment that nobody was really sure was going to work exactly as predicted. I suppose there's something to be said for preparedness, as the gadgets worked exactly as they were supposed, isolating Jihad bases in the storm the Wurm had cooked up.

What was that storm? Well, none of us had a clue what was going on except for the odd senses of deja-vu until suppertime. I recall having just sat down with Fleet Commander Samhain and the rest of the DE command staff when a young Dobermensch came running into the room with the news that they were getting a transmission from the Wurm. We were eating in a private dining room, so I was privileged to watch said transmission. It was typical Wurm insipidness, but the plans he detailed silenced the entire command staff of a JAO for five whole minutes.

What did he say? Well, he told us about his shiny new machine, that he had buried in New Mexico, and he told us that he was in the process of getting us out of his hair for the last time, because his shiny new machine was in the process of compacting the multiverse into something that would be more tractable to him than this one was. And he very specifically mentioned that there was nothing we could do to stop the Jihad from becoming obsolete and if we were to try, it would do no good, so we shouldn't even bother to stop him, and we might as well live our last few days in peace.

It was hubris at its finest, but as I said, the statement stunned the entire command staff of the DE, and I'm sure

### Wait a minute... when did this happen!?

Breaking kayfabe for a minute... at this point, if you're a well-heeled Jihaddi or have been reading through the fiction archives on jihad.net, you'll have notice that a lot of the stuff related in this potted history of the Jihad doesn't have a lot of evidence to back up that it actually happened. There's a reason for that.

You see, most - by which we mean 99 percent or more - of the original Jihad fiction that was written before *Operation Phoenix* has been lost thanks to a combination of poor archiving, authors getting bored and wandering off, and the vagaries of Usenet. Most of us have vague memories of the storyline for *Operation Worldwalk*, but nothing of the actual *content* of the story has survived to this day. This has led us to pretty much just recreating the entire backstory for the Jihad *ex nihilo* and in a manner consistent with the revisions originally planned for the *Jihad Universe RPG* project.

So, if you see something in here that doesn't jibe 100% with the story archives, that's why. The effect is probably most noticeable in Phoenix, and a little bit in Pacifica. And if you have a complete or even a semi-complete archive of Worldwalk or older Jihad operations, please please *please* contact us at mrfnord@amigo.net and share the bounty.



it had the same effect on other command staffs throughout the Jihad. A frantic teleconference was arranged by the Praetor, and the entire high commands of all the JAOs was frantically called together. It was a relief to see so many of the highest-ranking Jihaddi still around, but worse news was to follow when other Jihaddi reported that they hadn't heard from people who had been sent out on missions over the last few days and hadn't been under cover when the Wyrms flipped his machine on.

You see, when the Wyrms announced his plans to contract the entire multiverse into one universe that was much more favorable to him, he released a string of reality quakes. The first few were subtle, hence those odd sensations of *deja-vu* folks had been reporting all afternoon, but they were about to grow in both number and

magnitude. Somehow, by sheer luck and mad geniuses doing the science, the majority of the Jihad's bases had been equipped with dampeners that reduced the effect of these reality quakes on the folks inside. We didn't really know what would happen when we sent folks out into it, but of course we had to give it a try.

The boys in both TRES and Doberman Intelligence placed the signal around Carlsbad, New Mexico, probably somewhere in the massive cave systems nearby. So now the Jihad had an agonizing decision to make. Did they send people out in that time storm knowing that they might not be able to make it through, or did they hope the collapse of timelines would play out in their favor? The Jihad, being who we are, chose to go with the slight glimmer of hope, and organized a quick inter-JAO exploratory team to meet up near

Carlsbad and spelunk into the caverns from there. Warrior Ashur Galand (now Centurion Ceberus) was chosen to head this last ditch effort at stopping the Wyrms' evil plans, and they were sent out into the time stream with the hopes of the entire Jihad behind them.

Those who fought in this force tell me it was quite the experience, as they moved across country trying to get to where they belonged, with scenery changing in odd fashions and even their very transportation and clothing changing depending on which quake was rattling through. The scariest part, some of them told me, was when people would change or disappear in front of their eyes, as one time stream made it more likely that one person would be there instead of another. Somehow they fought through the geography and the quakes and what appeared to them as quite the acid trip and somehow





made it in one piece. One battle later, in which the opponents kept changing along with everything else, they were filing into the system of caves which is Carlsbad Caverns, desperately searching for the machine that was doing this all.

Now the thing was, as they had been making their way to Carlsbad, the machine had been speeding up as it had less and less universes to incorporate into the flattening, so the rest of us were seeing things outside as careening from universe to universe to universe in a rather quick fashion, almost like flipping through a TV set with millions of channels. Only it was the universe, and we had no control over the rate of channel-flipping.

The exploratory team found the Wyrms in the deepest cavern at Carlsbad, watching his machine near the end of its task, and gleefully celebrating that the Jihad would not pull a rabbit out of its hat this time and stop his nefarious plans. Unfortunately for the Wyrms, Galand and his company stepped out of the shadows just as he finished gloating to whoever could hear.

In the fiercest battle the Jihad had ever fought to that time, the machine was destroyed just before it could finish crushing the universes into one, and B'harne found himself temporarily inconvenienced. One of the more interesting unsubstantiated pieces of this battle was the conviction of some of the Jihaddi present that the Wyrms had killed Warrior Galand, but that Galand had somehow come back to life and returned the favor to the Wyrms. Reports like these were dismissed as the remnants of the acid trip like nature of the expedition, but it gives you an idea of the oddity of both *WORLDWALK* and the Jihad.

When Galand destroyed the machine, it unleashed one last massive reality quake that put things mostly back

the way they were as the timeline tried to heal itself from the damage the Wyrms had done. It wasn't perfect, though, as TRES Corps immediately reported in surprise that they had a small space fleet and Space Station *Ithaca*, and the Blood Jihad reported that Luna Base had somehow gotten larger.

Plus, there were many Jihaddi who had been in the world when the quakes had occurred and hadn't been heard from since. Occasionally, you'll find some older Jihaddi recognizing a friend who had battled next to him prior to *WORLDWALK* only to go missing in the chaos, only to later show up rejoining the Jihad but not remembering their prior Jihad career, which causes a lot of awkwardness on both sides. Thus, if you get recognized by an old-timer, be kind to him or her, for you might be their long lost friend — even if you don't remember it.

After the psychedelic mess that was Operation *WORLDWALK* came the aftermath. Most folks were fairly sure it the Wyrms' attempt to find a more tractable universe, just as he said when he was gloating to the Jihad's various commanders, but some of the more conspiracy-minded among the Jihad suggested it was the Lyrans attempting to make an end run around humanity. The collapse of the timelines might have simply caused us no longer to exist, and since the Lyrans want to see us dead, this would have worked just as well as killing us off.

It was time for a break from the Wyrms and it felt nice to know that Galand had iced him for us so that we could concern ourselves with preparing for the next war. For some reason, the Legion of Doom decided that they had to get in space now, and threw all their resources into creating a space fleet. The rest of the Jihad went on training and drilling, proud of how well they'd come out of *WORLDWALK*, and think-

ing there would be absolutely no way the Wyrms could top what he'd done.

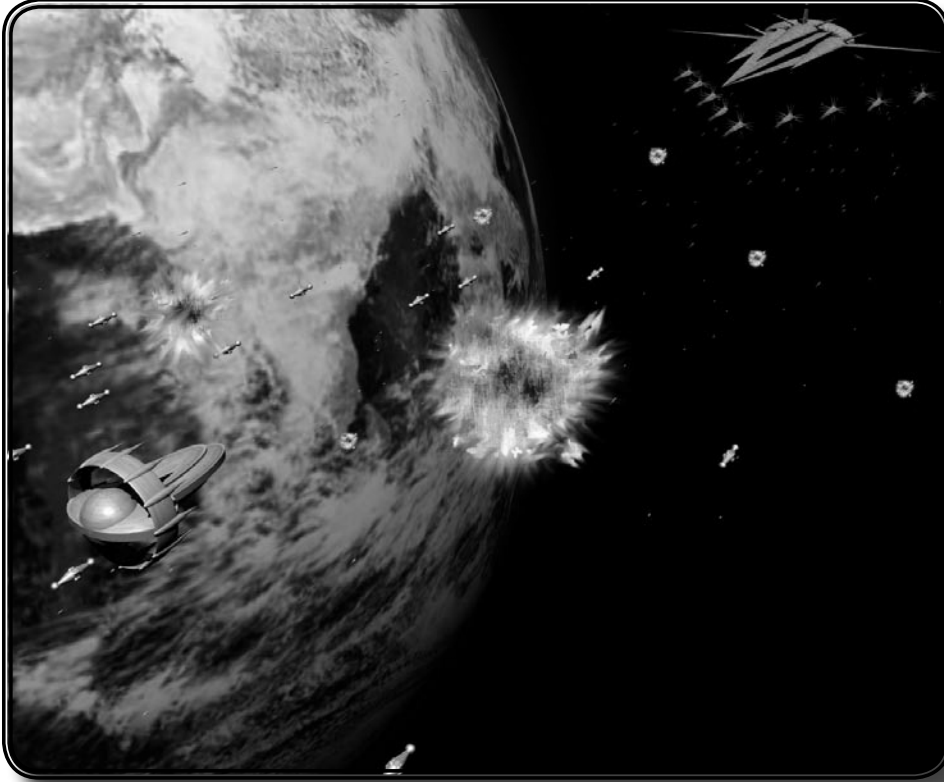
So we went through the spring and summer of 1996, blissfully content that we could take anything the Hellwyrms could throw at us. Thus, it came as a horrible surprise when we found ourselves under attack once again in mid-August — and this time the Hellwyrms had found allies. On top of it, the Wyrms, with help from the Lyrans, had put some sort of mystical spell on the top dozen of our leaders at the time that made it nearly impossible for them to hide.

### OPERATION PHOENIX

For the second time in the year, we were taken by surprise by the enemy. When the Wyrms returned to earth with his new allies — an alien race known simply as the X'hirjq — we were nearly sunk in the war before we started. The X'hirjq seemed impossible to beat because they were more technologically inclined and they were stronger, faster, and more adept than the humans they were fighting. And to make things worse, they had joined up with the Wyrms of their own free will, which meant that they had lost none of their faculties to spongification. Plus, at the time, we didn't know that the Wyrms had cast his tracking spell, so they kept popping up around the most important Jihaddi. It is a surprise that as many of them survived Phoenix as did, given the focused attention upon them.

It has been said that Jihaddi do not know the meaning of the word 'quit'. At the worst, when it looked as if many had been killed in their attempts to fight the X'hirjq, the Jihad still picked up and continued to fight ever onward. However, the losses racked up all over — in Scotland, in Atlanta, in Louisville, in Iowa, in San Juan, in space, all over the place, the Jihad was losing and losing bad. It was a bad time to be on





the home team. Somehow, despite all this, the Jihad kept fighting, sacrificing everything it could in a desperate attempt to make the impossible happen.

One of the most notable sacrifices made in the War Against the X'hirjq was that of Admiral Michael Davis and Captain Patrick Stewart of the Blood Jihad, and all the crew of their ships *Lexington* and *Defiance*. In the middle of the war, when it looked as if all hope were lost, the two ordered their fighters to do as much damage to the X'hirjq mothership as possible. Then, when it looked like they were about to be swatted, the two proceeded to make a kamikaze run on the mothership with their own ships, killing everybody aboard both the *Lexington* and the *Defiance*. It had about as much effect in the long run as a gnat colliding with an elephant, but for them even to attempt it showed the bravery of these two men and the crew of their ships.

The turning point for the Jihad, however, was probably the battle for

the new TRES Corps headquarters starting September 10, 1996. It started much as many of the other battles had — very badly for the Jihad — and got much worse before it was all over. The X'hirjq smartly sabotaged our communications medium before they started the attack in earnest. To make things even worse for the Jihad, the weather, which had been sufficiently odd since the start of *WORLDWALK*, delivered a surprise blizzard to Colorado the same night the X'hirjq and the Hellwyrms decided to bear down and take out TRES HQ.

The morning of the tenth dawned overcast and cold, with heaps of snow on the ground from the prior night's blizzard. It also looked like more snow was on the way. The fighting started out on the highway, but the Jihaddi fighting were pushed back towards the headquarters. It did not look good for the Jihad, and if the X'hirjq and the Wyrms were allowed to take TRES, the war would be over. Surprisingly, then-

Commodore Marburger showed his courage under fire by trying his best to keep the Jihad fighting and just not fleeing against an overwhelming show of strength by the opponent. The day progressed with the blizzard dumping more snow on the heads of those fighting, and the fight wore on.

About sundown, the Jihad managed to briefly turn things its way when it unleashed the artillery it had on the B'harnate heavy infantry on the field and a contingent of Dobermensch showed up to help spell the weary TRES soldiers who had been battling all day, and this combined force finally finished off all B'harnate troops on the field. But the battle was still far from over. The next morning, the morning of September 11, the X'hirjq took their spots and fiercely began attacking the TRES and Doberman soldiers on the battlefield. But in a miracle, the blizzard broke, and the sun shined through on all the snow and ice that had accumulated on the battlefield, and the X'hirjq put off their attack plans until nightfall because they were blinded from the reflection of the sun off the snow and ice.

The night of September 11, and the morning of September 12, the Jihad contingent at TRES HQ fought as hard as they could, but there wasn't much they could do against the tactical and numerical superiority of the X'hirjq. Finally, the Jihaddi retreated back to the base itself, hoping that it could hold against the mighty force advancing against them. But the force overpowered the Jihaddi even at the gates of the headquarters, the power blew, and all was lost for the Jihad.

Except that the power had only flickered and not died, and when the power came back up, the Jihad guns at the gates were able to finish off the last of the X'hirjq. The sun rose on the morning of September twelfth with the



Jihad in possession of the battle that turned the tide. The battle for TRES HQ had carried a costly price for even the victors, as a large contingent of Jihaddi had perished trying to deliver a victory. This battle still remains to this day the costliest in Jihad history in the number of Jihaddi killed or injured in the fighting. It was, in all senses of the phrase, a Pyrrhic victory for the Jihad.

Strangely enough, three days later, many of the Jihad higher ups would fight perhaps the oddest battle they'd ever fought. They ended up fighting against B'harnate friendly copies of themselves, and after our guys defeated them to a man, we discovered that the X'hirjq had been conning both us and B'harne. We discovered that the X'hirjq weren't here to destroy us, but that they were here to test us. They had only joined in an alliance with the Wyrms as a way to get here and pull off this test because humanity meant something special in the X'hirjq belief system. So the bloodiest war the Jihad had ever fought was pretty much for nothing. Let me repeat that, nothing. All the sacrifice, all the bloodshed, all the fighting was for nothing more than a stupid test. If that doesn't make you angry...

In the end, the final toll was thousands of Jihaddi dead, thousands more wounded, the Legion of Doom all but destroyed, the Blood Jihad nearly without a command staff, the DE lost most of its worldwide bases, and TRES was forced to rebuild a headquarters mostly leveled to the ground. To make things even more interesting, the X'hirjq had oh-so-helpfully blasted humanity with an industrial-sized psychic blast, so that it would not remember the events of Phoenix, which was good for us in one fashion because it meant that the War would stay a secret, but combined with the events of Operation *WORLDWALK*, it meant quite a mess in terms of the

psyches of the mundane world.

Given a disaster of this scale, one would expect that the Jihad would take a large amount of downtime in order to rebuild, right? Nothing is ever that simple in the Jihad.

### OPERATION PACIFICA

In mid-October, roughly a month after the X'hirjq invasion, a young lieutenant in TRES Corps who was helping get JihadNet back on its feet noticed an odd anomaly out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Anomaly seemed the best word, because sometimes the structure would be there and sometimes it wouldn't, and this seemed awfully odd. So, he reported it to Admiral FoxGlov, who took an interest in the anomaly.

After closer investigation, it was confirmed that there was an island out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean that was not connected to the Earth in any significant fashion. Not only that, but it was full of sponge minions and Lyrans — and in another shock, life signs that matched up with a Jihaddi who was missing in action in Phoenix.

But before Admiral FoxGlov could report this to his higher ups — Admiral Marburger and Grand Admiral Owsen — Owsen went missing in a fight with the Hellwyrms that Marburger witnessed. Before Owsen was taken, he handed over the Slayer and his pistols to Marburger, which meant that the one weapon that might just be able to kill the Wyrms stayed in Jihad hands. Shaken by this, Admiral Marburger assumed the Grand Admiral's chair in TRES Corps — only the second Grand Admiral in that JAO ever — and as his first action determined that TRES would send an expeditionary force to the island.

However, since TRES didn't have a navy, he had to call in a favor. Luckily for the Jihad, the Doberman Empire

maintained a small navy, and the Pacific branch of the DE Navy, based in San Francisco, had seen very little damage from the X'hirjq invasion. Nobody was really quite able to explain how San Francisco had been rendered exempt from X'hirjq attacks, but explaining it took a back seat to just being thankful that there was a naval fleet to transport them in the first place.

So the Jihad descended upon Doberman Naval Base San Francisco for the long trip out to Pacifica, which is what the island had been dubbed. A large portion of Jihad higher-ups felt some obligation to make this trip, and it was probably the closest thing we have had to an all-star cast heading out to battle the Hellwyrms. This is probably the dumbest mistake the Jihad has ever made, and the Jihad has made quite a few mistakes over the years.

Of course, the war started out well. While there was some resistance, the trip out was relatively quiet, and the spongies in the city provided no challenge to Jihad troops. To make things more interesting, the Hellwyrms were culled from the battlefield early by an angry young TRES Corps officer, Lt. Geier. It was the first time the Jihad found itself with the upper hand early in a battle. Of course, the Jihad would quickly learn that early successes made the fall all that much harder.

You see, we found out too late that Pacifica was a trap set up by the Lyrans to lure Jihaddi to a place where they could be captured and destroyed — using MIA Jihaddi from the X'hirjq invasion as the bait in the trap. And we gave them a very large chunk of the command staff of all the remaining JAOs. To give our commanding officers the benefit of the doubt, it should be pointed out that they weren't going to leave MIA officers to rot, as that's never been the way the Jihad has operated when given a choice.



Given the mission objective — that is, find out if there were any of the Jihad's missing in action on Pacifica and if so, to rescue them — we were relatively successful in achieving those goals. PACIFICA turned out to be much less of a disaster than PHOENIX had been, and we were able to find out more about the Lyrans, that shadowy race that seems to be associated with B'harne.

The reason we're aware that it was a trap is that the Maenads, bolstered by the addition of four more to their ranks — Grand Admiral Marburger, Fleet Commander Samhain (which is ironic considering the role Maenadship played in the story of Serp), Admiral J-Rock of TRES, and then-Captain Felton, also of TRES — fought their way to the Citadel, where they took on Charn'El, the High Mage of Lyra.

The people who were present are notoriously reluctant to talk about it, given the death of their comrade, Lord

Tilden Owsen, at that battle. However, despite Owsen's demise, we were able to recover the Barney-Slayer, and it is being held in a safe location for when it might be needed again. The Maenads also, somehow, managed to banish Charn'El from this plane. Unfortunately, without Charn'El's power to hold up the island of Pacifica, it began collapsing into the sea, and the Maenads were barely able to escape with the Slayer and some Lyran books and artifacts.

In the end, PACIFICA occupies an odd position in Jihad history. It wasn't a victory per se, but it wasn't a defeat either. In the end, I suppose stalemate would be the best word. We lost some of our best in the fighting, but managed to deal a blow to the Hellwyrms and the Lyrans, and for good or for worse, Pacifica is the start of what we can now safely call the 'modern Jihad'.

## THE TRIUMVIRATE

After the events of PACIFICA, Praetor Foxglov was tired. He was tired of fighting pointless wars, tired of losing people, and the Praetor was probably reeling from the loss of Owsen on top of everything. He resigned from the Jihad which left the office of the Praetorship open again. A hastily convened conference of Jihad higher-ups decided that the office was too much for one person, and decided to dissolve the Praetorship and replace it with a Triumvirate. After a bit more deliberation, they decided the first Triumvir Praetors, the official title of those holding seats, would be Grand Admiral Marburger of TRES, Windigo, and Shardik the Feral (also known as Warrior Hephæstus of the DE).

The Triumvirate was a bold new direction for Jihad leadership, and it was one that was probably needed, because the Jihad had grown much more complex than it had been in the days when Owsen and Mongoose had chosen Serbeus for the job. There were more demands on their time, and although JAOs had winged back to being slightly more autonomous than they had been in Serp's time, people still looked to the Triumvirs for many things involving funding and general direction.

And the Triumvirate was needed pretty much right away when Blood Jihad Commander Theodore Brock (aka Arsenal the Lone Warrior) went, as best we can tell, absolutely and totally nuts. To understand this, you have to understand that it had been a very bad year for Arsenal. He had a reputation for being secretive at the best of times, and Admiral Davis had privately reported some concern about the mental state of his commanding officer after the events of WORLDWALK.

A total break with reality didn't occur until after the kamikaze run of Admiral Davis and Captain Stewart in

## Leading from the Front

The Jihad is a meritocracy, and an effective one at that. Jihaddi with clear talent are noticed and rise through the ranks *very* quickly, assuming they survive. Authority and ability scale with one another, which quickly leads to a large body of (still quite capable) troops backing up a small cadre of *extremely* dangerous senior Jihaddi. The problem is, the other guy has something similar going on.

The Jihad's rank and file can deal readily enough with their counterparts in B'harne's forces, but when more powerful servitors, Lyrans, or B'harne himself appear on the scene, most of the grunts are completely outclassed (Lt. Geier's experience notwithstanding). This effectively turns the senior ranks of the Jihad into a type of ordnance: if high-level foes are going to be present at a target, at least some of the Jihad's finest *must* along to face them. Not doing so would be as foolhardy as keeping armor or aircraft at home when an opponent is known to have them.

Jihad strategists have argued that Charn'El became aware of this tendency by Pacifica, and transformed the operation into a *double* lure. While the missing Jihaddi were brought there to draw out the bulk of the Jihad's conventional forces, Charn'El and several of his senior mages may have been present to draw out all of its most powerful members in particular. The Jihad's strategists continue to discuss how this should affect the Brass' roles in future major operations.



Phoenix. In the same battle, the ship that Arsenal had been commanding had been disabled and left for dead by the X'hirjq. By the time Arsenal and the people on his ship were able to bring the systems up and running again, the war with the X'hirjq was over. The combined guilt of being unable to help his officers fight the X'hirjq combined with the mental state that Admiral Davis had been concerned about led to a full blown psychotic break, and while the rest of the Jihad was out cavorting around Pacifica and, later, working on cleaning up from the mess of the X'hirjq invasion, Arsenal started making plans to, in his eventual words, 'get help'.

There was many odd requisitions for some types of experimental gear, which were somehow gotten without comment. This probably happened because there was so much going on in the Jihad that nobody really had much time to pay attention to what Arsenal was doing, and probably, in all honesty, nobody much cared. The Blood Jihad had become a broken shell of its former glory, and the fact that it was hanging on at all was somewhat of a minor miracle. The only reason anybody had any thought of the Blood Jihad at all is that the *Andromeda* remained our only significant space presence after Pacifica and there were more important things to worry about.

So, on January 18, 1997, Arsenal went to the *Andromeda* to make what he called 'a surprise inspection visit'. Within the hour, TRES Ithaca reported that the *Andromeda's* engines had fired up and she had left Earth orbit. They also noted that they had tried to hail the starship and got no response. Given this strangeness, and fearing the ship had been taken by enemies, they launched interceptors. The *Andromeda* wouldn't let the interceptors get too close, and repelled any that did with

non-lethal force, and so the TRES craft dropped into escort to watch what the *Andromeda* did.

After a few hours of escort duty, the *Andromeda* suddenly and without warning opened a portal in front of itself and dove in. It was all the TRES pilots could do in their surprise to take the readings, and in debrief, seemed as if they were almost unsure of what they had seen.

At four o'clock Eastern time, Lt. Colonel Ariana Mahtash, ranking Blood Jihad officer, who had been left in charge of Base One while Arsenal made his inspection trip, received a delayed message from Arsenal. It was in this message that he stated that he had gone to find help, and that she was to serve as ranking officer of the Blood Jihad until such time as he could return. She contacted the Triumvirate and was told to wait for a few days to see if Arsenal returned, and if not, then she was by all rights the commanding officer. The days passed, and on January 23, 1997, Ariana Mahtash, who had been a Jihaddi for maybe eight months at that point, became the new commanding officer of the Blood Jihad.

### VERTHANDI ASCENDANT

Things were in chaos. Mahtash knew that she needed some help. The base systems were in a mess, and she needed somebody with a head for detail. Luckily for her, she knew somebody who might be able to do the job, and her first act as the commanding officer of the Blood Jihad was to ask Grand Admiral Marburger to reassign her friend, Lieutenant Katze Brenner, to the Blood Jihad. Brenner, who had taken leave for two weeks to get es-

tablished in the semester, had already headed for Base One to see what she could get done unofficially, but the two friends were glad when Marburger acquiesced to this request.

The other piece was, when Mahtash and Brenner were trying to find out who was left in the Blood Jihad (the records at Base One were in a shambles after Phoenix), they were presented with the sudden surprise that Professor Malaclypse not only still had a Blood Jihad commission, but that he wanted to help them get the organization back off the ground.

For their parts, Mahtash and Brenner were glad to have him around as they both were relatively new to the Jihad and didn't always know what was useful and what wasn't.

While Brenner, Mahtash, and Malaclypse were putting in all this effort to upgrade and reform a JAO which sorely needed it, the Lone Warrior's close friend and former Blood Jihad R&D chief Uplink showed up, which surprised all parties because it had been assumed that he had gone with Arsenal. After some questioning, it was ascertained that he had been in South America investigating a slight rise in spongification rates in Rio de Janeiro, and the only way he could think of fixing the problem was to, in the words made famous in Vietnam, "destroy the village to save it." He was shouted down by both Mahtash and Malaclypse, but decided that the Blood Jihad was legitimately his command, and thus attempted to put his plan in action.

Luckily for the entire Jihad, Mahtash and Brenner had been working overtime to reform the Blood Jihad's requisition system, and the second Uplink's attempt to requisition the

### RUMORS...

*Some of the senior Jihaddi listed as KIA or MIA in Operation PHOENIX aren't really dead or missing. The other senior officers know exactly where they are...*



material and troops he would need to pull off his Rio scheme crossed the system, the new Blood Jihad command knew about it. When confronted with the evidence, Uplink still talked about the rightness of his crusade and how this would strike a victory against the Wyrms. Enraged, Malaclypse invited Uplink to “settle this in private.” What exactly happened in that meeting is unknown except to the parties involved — Uplink has not been seen since and Malaclypse refuses to discuss it — but it is believed that the Professor dispensed proper justice for Uplink’s crime.

In the wake of the Uplink incident, it was decided unanimously by Brenner, Mahtash, and Malaclypse that the Blood Jihad was better off being left in the past, and decided to merge its functions with Professor Malaclypse’s independent R&D shop, the Evil Geniuses. The Triumvirate, never overly fond of the old Blood Jihad in the first place, agreed to this change and the Verthandic Rangers came in existence, with Brenner, Mahtash, and Malaclypse leading in a structure very similar to the Triumvirate. They became known as the High Council, and Brenner and Mahtash both took the title Director. (Malaclypse preferred — still prefers — the title ‘Professor’ and was known to berate recruits who call him Director.)

The Rangers, as they became known around the Jihad, quickly established that they were, along with TRES Zeta and WEDJEE, home to some of the best R&D minds in the Jihad, and the Explorations staff became known as one of the quickest response teams in the Jihad despite their overly casual attitude towards command structure. The other thing they added to the Jihad was an ability to strike across dimensions, given Professor Malaclypse’s research interests. All of these pieces would come in handy in a few months.

### CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The time between early February, when the Rangers threw off all the old trappings of their Blood Jihad days and July, when things heated up again, was relatively quiet for the Jihad. The only interesting thing that happened during that time span was that in May the first Triumvirate stepped down, saying they were proof of concept only, and it was time for more permanent members to serve. The first triumvirate suggested Professor Malaclypse of VR, Captain Rens Houben of TRES Zeta, and Commander Shaharazad of TRES to serve as the new Triumvirate, and the heads of all the JAOs agreed to that. The three respectively named Commander Aris Merquoni of VR, Director Brenner of VR, and Captain Jones of TRES to serve as their respective adjuncts.

This brings us to July, in which excitement happened. Granted, the summer of 1997 wasn’t as exciting as the entirety of 1996, which had brought us *WORLDWALK*, *Phoenix* and *Pacifica* all in one year, but it was the summer of 1997 which brought the events of *Marraketh* and *Homefront* to our attention.

The events of *Marraketh* are less important than that of *Homefront*, but chronologically it comes first, so let’s touch upon it briefly. When I was interviewing the principals in this event for their take on it, Director Brenner laughed a bit and said, “You have to ask about the most embarrassing event in my life, don’t you?”

And Director Brenner is right, since the events of *Marraketh* begin with her indulging her curiosity and being kidnapped back to her homeland — the aforementioned *Marraketh*. The problem is, at the time of this event, *Marraketh* had been under the influence of the Wyrms for nearly twenty years of our time. So VR scrambled a team together and went into *Marraketh* af-

ter their wayward director. Of course, the team also happened to be Professor Malaclypse’s first beta of his machine, and the machine acted predictably under the circumstances, scattering the Rangers across *Marraketh* and the next country over.

However, everybody managed to get themselves to Rhye, where Malaclypse had scouted ahead, and things ended up turning out for the best for all concerned. They rescued Director Brenner (indeed, in the reports, it seems as if Brenner came through the ordeal rather well, which is probably why she can laugh at the whole thing now) and liberated *Marraketh* from the Wyrms’ thrall. Not bad for a few days’ work.

### OPERATION HOMEFRONT

Compared to *Marraketh*, *HOMEFRONT* turned out to be a much more difficult problem. For the first time in the Jihad’s history, we were confronted not with the Wyrms himself, or the Lyrans, or any real metaphysical threat at all. This time, we found ourselves dealing with one of B’harne’s elite Wyrms Minions — a group known as the Liasons (which are not to be confused with our Liasons). This particular Liason was named Rhyn, and the guy was a technical genius. Yes, there are geniuses working for the other side, as surprising as it might seem to you.

In fact, one of the ironies of *HOMEFRONT* is that for a brief time the Jihad and the Lyrans were on the same side — at least in the goal of shutting down Rhyn’s operation. The Lyrans were even less amused at the idea of some ingenious human coming up with a way to pacify the whole planet without using any magic whatsoever than the Jihad was at the idea of the whole planet being spongified. Thus, both wanted to do whatever they could to stop Rhyn’s plan.

Of course, the question is, what



was Rhyn's plan? It was really rather ingenious despite being overly complicated — technological solutions to create what is basically a psychological effect tend to be these days. He planned to spongify the world with technology. He stuck these devices that were like crystal radios all over the world, and what these devices would do is pick up a signal broadcast from their main base in Kansas and relay it to the next station. They would also amplify the signal over the local area, so that everybody within range would become spongified, thus achieving the goals of his Lord, and letting him be in a position to rule the world.

The Jihad made it a priority to take out as many of these array devices as possible when they discovered that the Lyrans were doing the same thing, and they discovered they were up against a time constraint. That and there were simply too many array devices to stop. To kill this thing, they had to descend upon Rhyn's base in Kansas and destroy the generator.

The leaders of this expedition were then-Commander William Keith (now Admiral) of TRES and Warrior Persephone (now Centurion Selene) of the Doberman Empire. These two were the first to scout out the problem, both did some individual work on taking out elements, and then both of them lead a team of mostly young and inexperienced Jihaddi into Rhyn's base and managed to take out both the generator and Rhyn.

While it didn't have the sheer total-war elements of PHOENIX, Operation HOMEFRONT goes down as one of the more ingenious plans the Wyrms or those allied with him have ever pulled off, and it has made us more interested in the Liaisons and what exactly they do. This is one of the more interesting things going on in Jihad intelligence at the moment, and it's something that I

strongly urge you to pursue if you find that you have any interest in that sort of thing.

### *THE STRANGE CASE OF THE MISSING MAENAD*

There was a month of relative quiet after the events of HOMEFRONT before the Jihad was confronted with yet another crisis. This was a smaller crisis than any of the operations, but any time a head of a JAO goes missing, it is a small crisis for that JAO. TRES Corps, by this time, had become the biggest JAO in the Jihad, taking the mantle from a struggling Doberman Empire still attempting to recover from its blow in PHOENIX and PACIFICA. And when the biggest JAO in the Jihad somehow comes up with a missing leader, the entire Jihad is somewhat affected.

We don't exactly know what happened, which seems to be a common tale to all these disappearances. All we know is that Grand Admiral Marburger had gone off to vacation in San Francisco, one of his favorite spots. When TRES needed to reach him on some matter of relative importance, and couldn't hail him on a linker, they sent one of the local TRES officers into San Francisco after him.

The TRES officer reported back that Grand Admiral Marburger was nowhere to be found, but that he'd left a trail of sponge minions on the way to wherever he went. It could have very easily been another mess of exposure except that the officer was very quick on her feet in coming up with a cover story on the spur of the moment, and she had some help in the form of a Jihad Liaison who worked in the San Francisco Coroner's office. The disappearance is still filed as an unsolved mystery with the San Francisco Police Department, and we duly hope it stays that way.

Soon after these events, Captain

Shaharazad would resign from her Triumvirate position and Captain Jones declined to replace her and stepped down from his own adjunct seat. In another near-unanimous decision (with one abstention, seeing as how she was the subject of the vote), the respective JAO heads named Grand Admiral Davies to the Triumvirate, and Davies named Commander Nolan of TRES her adjunct.

### *MYSTICAL UNDERPINNINGS*

Now, I've talked a lot about Jihad technology in this speech and not as much about magic, despite the Jihad being involved in fighting something that is pretty much a mystical war. While many Jihaddi over the ages have been mages, and some of them have been pretty adept at the magical arts, the study of magic has lagged behind. With the chief allies of the Wyrms being the Lyrans, a race of magic-users, you would have thought this lack of proper study would have become apparent to Jihad leaders early in the battle.

Sometimes it takes fresh eyes to point out the obvious, though, and that is exactly the case that led to the forming of the Jihad Praxeum Veneficus (or the Prax, as it is often referred to by its members.) It took a new Jihaddi in TRES Corps, one Lieutenant Joe Schneider, to make the point that what the Jihad really needed was a place for the mages of the Jihad to learn and gather information.

Lieutenant Schneider took his idea to Grand Admiral Davies, and Davies was delighted at the thought, and brought it over to the Triumvirate. Davies, Houben, and Malaclypse all agreed that a 'college of magic' such as Lieutenant Schneider was proposing was a good idea, and a vote was taken for Schneider's proposal. It passed easily, and the JPV became the newest organization in the Jihad, with Schneider



## Please Leave A Note Next Time, Sir

The senior staff put the best possible face on losses, but the disappearance of Arsenal and Marburger frankly frightens them. Marburger satisfied his colleagues' concerns that he at least stayed on the right side during his absence, but he has yet to say what he was actually doing during those two years. TRES Corps Delta, Minerva and DobIntel are keeping tabs on the rear admiral for the time being - completely off the record, of course.

As for the matter of Arsenal, things *feel* more settled, yet remain more ambiguous, despite the bureaucratic apocalypse of a six-week, inter-JAO inquiry chaired by Admiral Davies. In Malaclypse's final report to the Davies Commission, it was concluded that the *Andromeda* used a makeshift portal generator similar to VRDET's Gateway to seek out an alternate timeline undamaged by WORLDWALK. Since such a timeline no longer exists, Arsenal's mission is almost certainly a one-way one, assuming the ship even survived the jump in the first place.

On the other hand, the Commission could be wrong. Arsenal - and his materiel - could be anywhere, from oblivion to the laps of the Jihad's enemies. Officially, he is considered MIA, presumed dead. Unofficially, his ambiguous status plagues the Brass like a bad tooth.

bearing the title of Archchancellor and Admiral Keith of TRES Corps and Operative Lorin of VR as the two second in commands.

While the JPV has existed for about a year, they have already made a huge contribution to the magic knowledge of the Jihad in much the same way that the research and development folks made a huge contribution before WORLDWALK. While we hope there will be no 'Age of Amuck Mages' to go with the 'Age of Amuck Scientists', the mages of the Jihad have benefited hugely by being able to work with each other, and the Jihad has benefited from having its top magical minds working together, just as they had by letting its top technological minds loose. And JPV scored quite the coup when the Triumvirate decided that the Barney Slayer should be with the mages so that the mages could attempt to figure out how exactly it works.

In January of 1999, just after the new headquarters was finished, the Triumvirate called Archchancellor Sch-

neider and told him to get an honour guard together from JPV to escort a package from the airport. The honour guard did the job it had been called there to do, and the package turned out to be the Slayer, moved under secrecy to the new JPV base. The Slayer has been there since, in a heavily guarded room.

### CHANGES UPON CHANGES

During the summer that JPV was building their campus and expanding the horizons of thaumaturgy in the Jihad, Grand Admiral Davies grew tired of commanding the Jihad's largest JAO, and wanted to have the freedom to do other things. She talked with Admiral Felton, her second in command, and the two agreed to swap spaces. Felton became Grand Admiral Felton, only the fourth in Corps history.

In the fall of 1998, Professor Malaclypse also decided that it was time that he spent more time on his research, and he resigned all his Jihad commissions.

However, it turns out that the best place in the world for him to work on his research interests is his old JAO, so you can often still find him around VR HQ. For the first time since the Triumvirate had been formed, the adjunct agreed to take the vacated seat, and Commander Merquoni joined the Triumvirate. She named Grand Admiral Felton as her adjunct. At the same time, Davies named Archchancellor Schneider as her adjunct, as Nolan had resigned his adjunct position.

That brings us to the here and now. What history I will be talking about next year is the history that will be made by each and every one of you. Remember that relatively new folks to the Jihad, such as Grand Admiral Felton, Director Mahtash, Rear Admiral Brenner, Admiral Keith and Archchancellor Schneider have made huge contributions to the Cause, and while those five might seem rather imposing to all of you now, I once remember all five of them — all of them TRES Corps recruits — sitting where you are now, listening to me tell them about the past of an organization of which they would contribute the future. And their future became the past I now tell all of you about.

The future is yours. Make the Jihad proud.

Thank you.

## THE TRUE HISTORY

The history of the Jihad as presented by Dr. Carmichael is very thorough, but it doesn't cover the entire story. This section covers in brief the bits of history that haven't been uncovered just yet.

### ATLANTIS

The whole story began 27,000 years ago on the island city-state of Atlantis.



The Atlanteans were the first humans to figure out how to use advanced technology to manipulate magical energy, and using their synthesis they prospered.

At the high point of Atlantis' power and influence, something went drastically wrong. Surviving traditions suggest that somebody accidentally summoned an extradimensional entity of greater power than Atlantean mages could contain, and the ensuing conflict destroyed the city. What is known is that whatever happened, Atlantis was swallowed up by a reality quake that erased almost all traces of the city and the island from the earth.

When Atlantis vanished, the combined release of mystical and not-so-mystical energies triggered a sudden ice age. (If you've ever seen *The Day After Tomorrow*, you have our sympathies, but that's close enough to what happened.) The few surviving Atlanteans moved into central Asia and formed the core of what would become the Illuminati.

### APOTHEOSIS OF THE HIGH MAGE

The next important event in the saga happened several thousand years later, in the Eta Carinae star system. While Earth's population was in the process of rediscovering the whole "agriculture" thing, the alien race known as the Lyrans were engaged in their last big war of unification. That war was led by Charn'El, the most powerful sorcerer in the history of his species. When the dust settled, Charn'El had assumed the position of ruler and living god of his world.

A few thousand years after that, Charn'El had a rather disturbing vision



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of an alien race destroying his people. Seeking to do unto them before they could do unto him, Charn'El sent his people out into the galaxy to find and conquer the race from his vision: humanity.

The Lyrans first arrived on Earth in the middle of the Selucid dynasty in Persia. Their initial probing attacks were defeated by a combination of Persian magi and Illuminati mystics. Sensing that there was indeed a chance that humanity could be an existential threat, the Lyrans continued to make probing attacks down through the centuries. Most of these attacks were repelled, the few which succeeded adding to human lore about evil giants, magicians and monsters.

### THE WHITE DEATH

Nobody's entirely sure when or where the Maenads of the Holy Albino

originated; their own myths and legends suggest that they're a form of recurring nature-spirit, protectors of the ecosystem. Whatever the truth, it is known that the Maenads have existed in their current form since the fall of Troy. There have never been many of them, and it was only until they joined the Jihad that there was ever more than two Maenads in the same place at the same time.

The Maenads first became involved with the Lyrans in the late 18th century, when one of their own was sucked into an extended Lyran plot to convert a tribe of Native Americans into servitor creatures. It was this encounter (which ended with the very messy death of all the Lyrans involved, including a high-ranking 7th Circle) that enshrined the concept of the Cubs of White Death in

the minds of Lyrans everywhere. The High Mage, during an agonizing reappraisal of the whole scene, decided that since humanity gave birth to the White Death, this was the core of the threat, and the Maenads were to be priority targets.

Easier said than done; the Maenads and Lyrans only crossed paths rarely, and as a result conflicts between the two, while violent, were rare.

### THE BABYLON ROAD

For most of the first phase of the Lyran assault on Earth, the key strategic goal for the Lyrans was a way to create easier access from Lyra to Earth. While the Lyrans had starships, they didn't have many to spare, and Lyra was still a good 9,000 light years away. Previous attempts at creating a stable portal between the two worlds were stopped, usually by either the Illuminati or the





Maenads, before the portals could be finished or stabilized.

In 1947, a 7th Circle Lyran posing as a human archmagus successfully managed to keep his activities under the Illuminati/Maenad radar long enough to succeed. The Lyran convinced a small cabal of American magicians to go out into the California desert and conduct a series of rituals intended to “change the world.”

They did, although the magicians’ circle that conducted the ritual wasn’t quite expecting what happened. The spell - named “the Babylon working” by the magicians - opened up a portal that led straight from Death Valley to the capitol city of Lyra. With their new anchor point firmly in place, the Lyrans began to operate more freely on Earth. The Babylon Road wasn’t meant to transport armies, but the unrestricted flow of materiel and Lyran servants allowed agents in place to work without worrying about shortages.

### ESCALATION

The opening of the Babylon Road caused a serious stir among the Maenads when they finally discovered it in the 1950s. The fact that the Lyrans had managed to manipulate humanity into casting the spell concerned the White Death, as did the disturbing realization that the Maenads were unable to successfully close the portal.

This new situation caused the Maenads to come to a new strategy. In the past, the Maenads and the Lyrans had only crossed paths on an occasional basis; with the coming of the Road, the Maenads made the collective decision to seek out and destroy any and all Lyran operations they came across.

For the next three decades, the Maenads waged total genocidal war on the Lyrans. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Lyran presence on Earth dwindled rapidly. For a brief period

during the Summer of Love, the Lyrans had been completely driven from the planet. However, the continued inability of the Maenads to close the portal to Lyra meant that no matter how many Lyrans they killed, the High Mage would simply send more through to replace them.

On the other end of the Road, Charn’El watched the escalation in the Maenad conflict and decided to kick his own operations up a notch in response. In 1975, the High Mage of Lyra began a summoning ritual, in order to call up a powerful entity capable of destroying the Maenads once and for all.

### SUMMONING

Charn’El’s ritual worked far beyond his expectations. The first entity he summoned tried to resist, and when the High Mage made his displeasure known, the creature arrived in several fragments. The summons, still active despite - or perhaps because of - the condition of the first target, whipped out blindly and found a powerful demon sleeping in the void.

This creature, woken by the force of the spell and the first demon’s death throes, let the summoning ritual take it up and deliver it to Charn’El. The High Mage, sensing the power of the second demon, agreed to a deal: If the creature would help him destroy his enemies and subjugate humanity, it would get what was left of the species when they were finished. The creature agreed to the terms, and the new alliance was born, between the High Mage Charn’El and the demon lord B’harne.

It took a few more years, but once the alliance was ready to fight, they dove in with a vengeance. Using B’harne’s unnatural powers of influence, humans were hypnotized into becoming followers. This provided a base of operations that didn’t require expensive (and risky) Lyran sorcerers or servitors to run. The

new legion of minions were used to infiltrate the world of television, using the arcane human technology to spread B’harne’s influence far and wide.

### SHOWTIME

The TV show *Barney & Friends* debuted on American public television in 1987, followed shortly by a marketing blitz that spread the show from humble beginnings in Texas to nationwide success in only a few short months. The show presented a dumbed-down version of basic children’s educational fare, along with an equally dumbed-down message of universal peace and love. Children lapped up the bright colors and simple, repetitive music while adults were simultaneously attracted and repulsed by the show.

To the Maenads, the show blazed like a neon beacon of pure evil. It didn’t take them long to discover that the dopey mascot “star” of *Barney & Friends* was in fact a demonic creature. Sensing that their enemies were behind the creature, the Maenads added B’harne to the target list. Attacks on B’harne were infrequent, as the creature very rarely opened himself up for attack by lone agents like the Maenads. The Lyrans took advantage of B’harne’s protection to secure their own forces away from Maenad attack, further confounding the White Death.

### PREMONITIONS

At this point, greater powers began to intervene in the situation. From late 1988 through 1990, seven people from across the Western world began to receive precognitive dreams, showing them in detail the nature of the creature B’harne and his plans for the human race. These dreams increased in intensity and in detail, until the seven people “called” finally started meeting one another.



As they met, more and more people began to congregate around them. Many of these new people had paranormal powers, others had unorthodox scientific and engineering talents. Led by the Seven, these people began organizing into a force that could fight B'harne on an even footing. One of the Seven brought with him a magical sword that he claimed had the power to destroy B'harne. With this weapon at their head, the loose group of humans and paranormals set up shop and prepared to attack.

In 1990, the leader of the original seven dreamers proclaimed the three axioms that every member of their group would hold true, and then gave the group its name. After some thought and debate, the group became the Jihad to Destroy Barney the Dinosaur.

## CURRENT EVENTS

The Carmichael lecture provides plenty of history, but it's not very useful in terms of figuring out what's happening now. So for your use, here's what's going on as of the start of the *Jihad RPG* baseline campaign in May, 1999.

### THE JIHAD

Despite Dr. Carmichael's fairly optimistic picture of the Jihad, things don't look all that good for the group. The breaking of the Barney-Slayer in 1997 during Operation PACIFICA has left the group at an effective stalemate; without the one weapon capable of ending the war in their favor once and for all, the Jihad is forced to fight a series of holding actions. These holding actions, while small in scale, continue to erode the Jihad's ready supply of forces and equipment. From a peak membership of 60,000 just before the X'hirjq invasion, the Jihad has lost two-thirds of that force to combat or simple ennui in the last three years.

The lack of decisive action is slowly eroding morale in the lower ranks, particularly in the "grunt" groups like MAUL and the Dobermans. These older military operations lost most of their manpower, materiel and prestige during the one-two-three knockout punch of WORLDWALK, the X'hrijq invasion and the Pacifica mission. As a result, intra-Jihad disputes between MAUL and TRES, or the Dobermans and VRDET, are becoming more and more common as the stalemate wears on.

At the same time, shake ups at command level are keeping the more stable organizations from acting at full capacity. The recent return of former TRES Grand Admiral Jon Marburger to duty, and his equally swift demotion for dereliction of duty, has caused difficulties within the Admiralty as Marburger attempts to reestablish his old power base. The de facto resignation of Professor Malaclype from VRDET has also caused problems; his new emeritus status, and his continued presence, has generated friction between the Professor and Quentin Wyatt, his successor.

With the combination of unrest in the ranks and the lack of a decisive method of winning the war, the Jihad is stuck fighting a slow war of attrition, hoping that they can regrow the Barney-Slayer before they're worn down into nothing.

### THE PURPLE FORCES

If the Jihad's in bad shape, then the enemy is in worse. The Pacifica debacle damaged the Jihad's secret weapon, but at the cost of losing the High Mage of Lyra himself. With Charn'El out of the picture, the Purple Forces' strategic ability is reduced to pretty much zero. Barney is, frankly, utterly useless when it comes to long-term plans, and Charn'El's protégés are all too busy maintaining Lyra and making sure no-

body finds out the High Mage is missing to devote much thought to running the war.

On Earth, the majority of the Purple Forces operational planning is done by mid-ranking Lyrans and the Liaisons. Unfortunately, neither group is terribly interested in working together as a coherent unit. An aborted Lyran attempt to steal the Barney-Slayer from the JPV set off a round of purges and mistrust in both the Lyran and Liaison camps. Complicating matters, the Liaisons aren't fully united themselves; while the HOMEFRONT situation eliminated the most traitorous of the Liaisons, the majority are still more interested in carving out their own minor empires than trying to present a unified front to the enemy.

Worst of all, the primary recruitment tool of the Purple Forces is finally starting to fail. Ratings for the Barney & Friends show have declined over the last year, as newer and shinier children's programming becomes more popular. While the show hasn't been cancelled as such, its popularity is dropping to the point where it will be of only minimal use in collecting new sponge-minions and merchandising revenues.

The result of this mess is that the Purple Forces are relying solely on their numerical superiority when engaging Jihaddi targets. Spongin are spent like water on even the most basic of combat operations, and the damage shows. Barney is more and more prone towards flying into berserker rages whenever the subject of the Jihad is brought up, and Charn'El is still trapped in his prison.



# 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!*



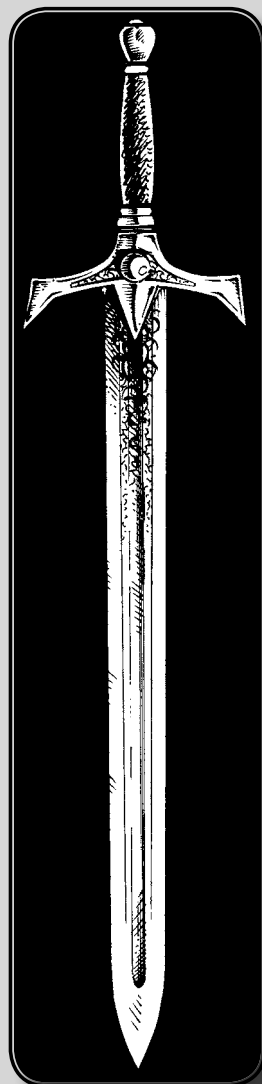
## The Barney-Slayer

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

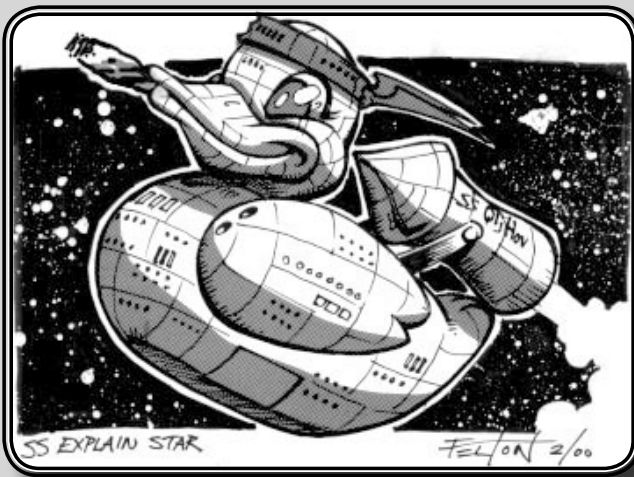
the latest intel on enemy movements and mundane activities that could pose a possible threat to TRES operations. The squadron has the largest number of liaisons of any other TRES operation save Chi, and can be counted to know what's going on at all times anywhere in North America. The common refrain 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 civilian 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.

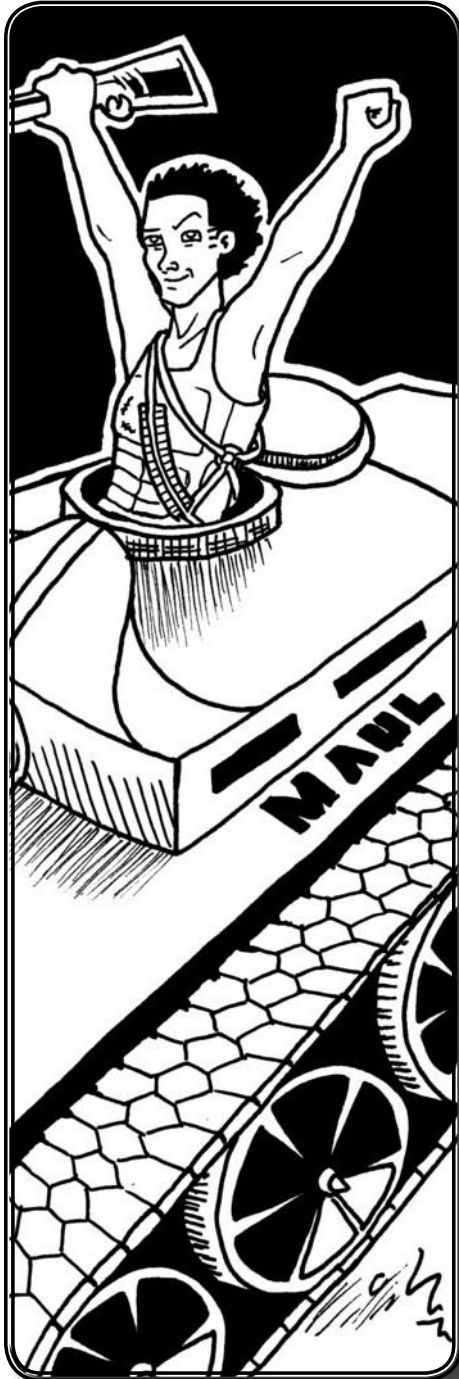
## M.A.U.L.

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<sup>+</sup> 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.

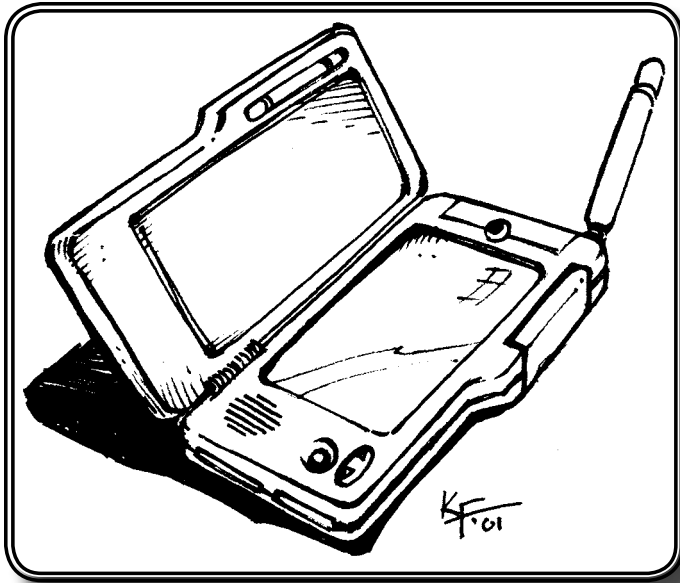
### POWER

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 ex-spongin. 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.

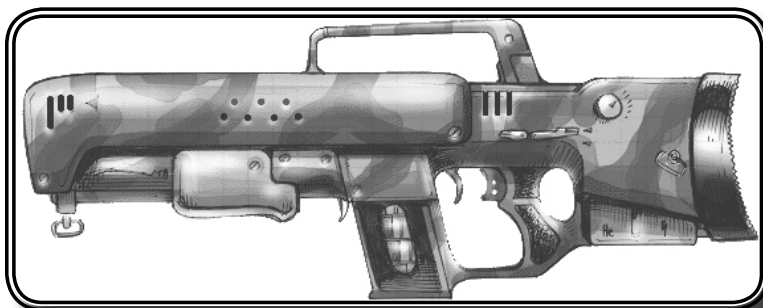
*X-Rifle Mk.2:* Much effort was put into improving the Mk.1 X-Rifle's de-

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.





# CHAPTER 3

El'Rahn waited. He waited as only a Lyran can. Wrapped in his deep purple robes, he peered through his mask at the slightly bloated creature enveloped in its artificial environment on the other side of his lab. "A Lyran's patience transcends even time," the High Mage had often counselled, "There is a moment for everything, the overeager will miss these moments, and thus fail to properly exploit them." El'Rahn knew this moment was fast approaching; still, he waited, almost immobile, silent and pondering.

Suddenly, almost unexpectedly, a muffled squeak from the creature signalled, at long last, the arrival of El'Rahn's moment. He rose finally and approached the creature, the words of incantations barely escaping his lips to make only the slightest of sounds as he carefully guided this creature he'd created through this, the final but most delicate stage of its development.

When it was done, El'Rahn carefully reached into the enclosed environment and lifted the new creature free, allowing himself only the slightest satisfaction as it survived outside the carefully controlled conditions its parent required. A wave of his staff toward the nearest wall activated a viewer which displayed the waiting face of one of his apprentices. "Prak'Al," he called the apprentice's name, knowing he had been waiting just as long for this summons as El'Rahn had for the birth of the creature he now held. "Come now, it is time."

"Yes, Master."

Prak'Al hated Earth. The entire planet somehow stank, he imagined, from the sheer inferiority of its occupants. He still had great difficulty accepting what he'd been told on ascending to the fifth circle, that such unevolved creatures could pose a threat to Lyra, but the High Mage had foreseen just that.

"Welllllll, we're all here. Shall we start?" the gravelly hiss somehow managed to sound saccharine sweet at the same time. Prak'Al regarded the orange and yellow demon with distaste that his well-worn magenta mask concealed. Having to be on Earth was bad enough, having to keep company with B'harne's chief lieutenant was irritating, having to do both of these and interact directly with sponge minions in this awful overlit room was nearly unbearable. "Of course. At your pleasure." he replied in as even a voice as he could manage.



## BLACK HATS & BASTARDS



## THE HELLWYRM

### BARNEY

The Jihad's primary adversary, the top villain, the great demon B'harne sits on a throne of skulls in a well-secluded hideout, plotting the downfall of the human race. The Jihad has many theories about the true nature of B'harne; some say he's a particularly powerful extradimensional, some call him a minion of Satan, Ogdru Jahad, or some similar religious figure, and some say that he's a manifestation of Evil itself. To date, nobody's ever gotten a straight answer on which theory is correct, but then nobody's ever thought to simply ask, either.

#### ORIGINS

The entity that calls itself "B'harne" began as a nameless, formless creature of indeterminate nature somewhere dark, cold and empty. Whether this place exists within our own universe or is actually some sort of interdimensional boundary zone is unknown. The original B'harne creature was by nature parasitic; it required some form of host to provide food and mobility. Being where it was, the creature didn't have much opportunity to feed or move as the centuries passed.

During the time of Atlantis (see p.29), one of the city's sages accidentally opened a portal to the place where the B'harne creature was hibernating. The shock of the portal opening, and the richness of the energy on the other side, moved the creature into action. It attempted to latch itself to the entire city and suck it dry. The attempt caused a massive feedback loop, catapulting the creature back into its hole and causing Atlantis to vanish in a reality quake.

The effects of the quantaclism on



B'harne were equally dramatic as the vanishing of Atlantis; the creature was given a reptilian form, its parasitic nature was shifted so that it no longer needed a host to remain active, and it received powerful new abilities. Despite these new powers, B'harne was still stuck out in the middle of an entropic wasteland with very little to do, so it returned into hibernation.

#### THE DEAL

B'harne slept in the void for a very long time, until — much like the last time — something woke him up. The Lyran High Mage Charn'El, in the midst of a summoning ritual, opened a portal to his resting place in search of a demon to use in destroying humanity. The original demon Charn'El was attempting to summon had resisted, and when the High Mage tried to force the argument, the demon emerged a bit too ripped up to suit his purposes. Before the portal to Lyra could close, B'harne forced his way through.

Charn'El, an opportunist if nothing else, saw potential in this new, unsummoned creature. B'harne was far more powerful than the pathetic specimen that has resisted the High Mage's

call, and that power could be put to good use. Charn'El quickly struck a deal with B'harne; assist him with his task of subjugating humanity, and he could have whatever was left of the species as his own empire. To a creature like B'harne, a planet full of slaves, subjects and potential food was too great a prize to turn down. The Wyrm accepted, and the two began working on a plan to use B'harne's powers to subjugate the masses.

#### NATURE OF THE BEAST

Though he appears physically quite often, there must be some part of B'harne's original formless nature that does not incorporate itself into his various manifestations, because he is always able to appear again if a particular manifestation is struck down. Eventually, B'harne will be somehow forced to draw even that remaining formless part of himself into a physical manifestation and while the resulting manifestation would be quite powerful, it would also enable the Barney-Slayer to destroy him completely.

Most prominent and most used among B'harne's abilities are mesmerization, or spongification as the Jihad calls it. B'harne's ability to mesmerize and stupefy humans is very strong, both through direct contact or intermediaries (such as toys and television). This power is strong enough that a completely mesmerized human, a sponge-minion, will not only fight for B'harne but sometimes will completely forget whatever personality he or she might've had before. How he does this is through a combination of tone of voice, movement and what he says; though there is also likely something intangible and possibly magical that helps him sway the will of human beings, especially through when used at a distance through recordings or toys.



## BJ and Baby Bop

B'hee J'hay and B'haby B'hop, as they are alternatively known, are B'harne's chief lieutenants. Subordinate manifestations of the same force from which B'harne draws his corporeal form and power, their existence and power are an extension of his will. Their functions are many: they have skills in magic and mesmerization similar to B'harne's (but of lesser strength, they have been known to oversee important operations or lead troops for B'harne both individually and together, working in conjunction they can greatly magnify B'harne's ability to mesmerize and spongify a large group of people. Because their entire existence is subject to B'harne's will, neither BJ nor Baby Bop can be truly destroyed until B'harne himself is; they can be struck down (and have been many times) with conventional or magical weapons, but eventually return if B'harne still exists. When B'harne is finally and completely destroyed, BJ and Baby Bop will either disappear along with the power that sustains them or, more likely, their power will be greatly diminished and they will be easily defeated.

As magic is part of his being rather than a force he draws from around him, B'harne is also quite adept in using many forms of magic, with spells that spongify among them. And though he is likely quite physically strong, he prefers to use sponge minions or other servants or allies in direct, physical confrontations.

B'harne is, in actual fact, not all that bright. While not the mindless beast of his earliest days, his physical incarnations are not strategic geniuses in any sense of the word. This lack of intelligence shouldn't lead PCs to underestimate him, though; B'harne still has a good measure of cunning and a nasty temperament to boot.

### MOTIVATION

B'harne wants to rule the world, it's that simple. The parts of B'harne that remember the early days drool at the prospect of billions of lives, billions of minds for the taking. The parts of him changed by the Atlantean quantaclism have come up with concepts like "command" and "total rule," ideas that intrigue B'harne the more he thinks about

them. The mindless adoration he's instilled in his minions provides another reason to not simply devour everything like he used to in the old days.

## THE PURPLE HORDE

When it comes to conquering humanity, B'harne tends to rely on his hypnotic powers to recruit minions and eliminate resistance. As a result, most of his centers of power exist in the mundane world as businesses, youth centers and other seemingly ordinary institutions run by his loyal servants. B'harne's covert assets aren't intended for use on the general population (though they could very well be used for that, if push came to shove) but as opposition to the Jihad. In a sense, it's a logical conclusion; the Jihad expects opposition in terms of military action, and if B'harne gives the Jihaddi what they expect they won't concentrate their forces on his mundane infrastructure or B'harne himself.

To this end, B'harne created the Purple Horde. The Horde consists of

a band of B'harne's most loyal human minions, backed up by servitor spawn known as Loved Ones and a variety of Lyran servitor creatures. The Horde was designed to match the Jihad's combat strength, but not surpass it unless told otherwise. There are 25,000 dedicated members of the Horde scattered all over the world, protecting ten times that many of B'harne's servants engaged in non-combat roles.

Command of the Horde lies in the talons of B'harne himself. To call the Wyrms leadership style "autocratic" is a massive understatement: B'harne rules in the grand tradition of human leaders like Caligula and Ivan the Terrible. Orders are intended to be obeyed instantly, and anybody - except for a handful of Lyran "advisors" - who screws up or speaks out of turn is dragged off to be tortured to death, if they're *lucky*.

While this method of command is effective at keeping the troops in line, it doesn't help B'harne's image as the cute and cuddly friend of children. As a result, only a handful of people are allowed to see B'harne's true face and relay his orders to the rest of the Horde. These people are known as the Liaisons.

## INTERMEDIARIES: THE LIAISONS

The Liaisons are a rare breed of human. They're a small pool of people who can stand in B'harne's presence without being affected by his powers, and they're amoral enough to know that being second fiddles to a demon beast means potentially big rewards in the future. In a way, these Liaisons are the Horde's equivalent of the high-ranking Jihaddi superheroes. Becoming a Liaison is the highest post that a human can achieve in B'harne's service. As his most trusted generals, they can operate



independently and move troops and materiel around without scrutiny from others. Orders given by the Liaisons are treated with the same weight as orders given by the Wyrms, and everybody in the Horde knows that the Liaisons are to be obeyed just as quickly.

Each Liaison commands an important unit of the Horde. There are a few other humans of near-equal standing, but without the skills or near-total lack of morality. To be a "Liaison to Command" indicates command ability, long-term service and exceptional talents. They are the rank where the non-human forces interface with the human troops. Collectively referred to as "the Brass," the Liaisons work closely with B'harne and his Lyran allies to keep the Horde under control and aimed at the Jihad.

There have been only a few changes in the Liaisons since the beginning of the Horde. Mostly this is due to the trouble of finding people who can survive B'harne's presence with their skills and sanity intact. Jihaddi action has also resulted in the loss of Liaisons in the past. The Jihad's Operation HOMEFRONT successfully killed two of the Horde's most powerful Liaisons in one blow.

The current Liaisons to Command are:

*Kajj:* A very traditional battlefield captain who commands mostly sponge minions. His tall, tanned and bald profile has been seen at numerous battle sites. His traditionalist streak includes foregoing most modern equipment in favor of simpler weapons such as bows and swords, along with plenty of shock troops and human wave attacks. The Jihad's normal understanding of Horde tactics comes almost entirely out of Kajj's playbook.

*Arill:* The ultimate hedonist, Arill cares nothing for command or wealth beyond the necessities for his dreams of

Sybaritic excess once B'harne's conquest is complete. To pass the time between now and then, he heads the Horde's research department. Arill's well-developed streak of sadism, and his nasty imagination, have created things that have impressed some Lyrans on occasion.

*Gherin:* Much like Kajj, Gherin is another fighting Liaison. His responsibility is to train and lead commando groups. Once he's through with them, Gherin's men are a tightly trained, insanely strong group of soldiers capable of standing up to the Jihad's best. Gherin is best known in the Horde for despising sponge-minions and refuses to consider them for his strike teams.

*Linna:* The Liaison in charge of maintaining the Horde's hypnotized state looks like somebody's mother, complete with sunny smile and straight-out-of-the-50s wardrobe. In truth, the smile and those petticoats mask a mind that is warped beyond recognition. Linna is considered completely insane by the other Liaisons, most of the Wyrms' minions and quite possibly B'harne. However, she's still capable of performing her duties, so nothing changes.

*Painter:* A code name and the only one anyone has from him. Painter's true name and function are shrouded in mystery, but the Jihad believes him to be in charge of the Horde's internal

security. Intelligence reports following Operation HOMEFRONT suggest that Painter has been "gifted" by B'harne with some unknown power, and has been moved from the Liaison role into the ranks of the non-humans. The reason for this "promotion" is unknown.

*Winston:* The most aggravating member of the Liaisons, Winston is in charge of keeping B'harne's public holdings intact. In this role Winston is a known public figure, much to the Jihad's chagrin, and maintains a perfectly clean public image in order to keep up appearances. The Jihad would love to shut Winston down, but to date he's developed a reputation for being untouchable.

*Serevan:* An organizer and paper pusher of superhuman talent, Serevan is in charge of keeping the Horde's minimal bureaucracy in order. His rigid orderliness is held up by the other Liaisons as an example to the troops, as is his complete lack of empathy and ruthless devotion of efficiency.

## THOSE WHO SERVE: THE MINIONS

The ranks of the Purple Horde are made up of two types of soldier - those who have been exposed to B'harne's hypnotic influence, and those who haven't. The Jihad calls these soldiers

### Loved Ones

The Loved Ones are unusual creatures, bipedal lizards with mottled purple and pink skin and vaguely humanoid facial features. They apparently have some sort of direct connection to B'harne, but the nature of the connection isn't as yet understood. Loved Ones have most often been found in the darkest parts of enemy strongholds, usually guarding or serving spongine colonies. Although they seem to understand human languages, they don't actually *speaking* them, instead communicating in a series of sharp clicks, grunts and squeaking sounds. A Loved One will defend itself and any spongine in sight to the death - and the creatures do not surrender at all - with a variety of bladed weapons (for some reason they're not fond of guns).



## Mikey Crawford

4 points

Mikey Crawford is the oldest and luckiest sponge-minion in Barney's army. Mikey has survived more direct encounters with the Jihad than any other minion in history, and despite this still returns to "play with his Jihaddi buddies."

Where Mikey comes from isn't exactly known - he first appeared in the vicinity of Montreal in 1992 as part of an infiltration force sent to undermine the city's universities. When a NEBULA strike team took out Mikey's compatriots, he managed to evade death by slipping down into the steam tunnels beneath McGill University. When he emerged, he was rewarded by his master with command of the second attempt to infiltrate Montreal.

This particular dance continued through to the X'hirjq invasion, as Mikey slowly but surely became more and more famous in the Purple Horde as the Man Who Could Not Be Killed. He even managed to gain a small amount of respect from his Jihad adversaries - but only a small amount. Mikey played only a minor role in the invasion, mostly in keeping the other sponges out of the way of the wyrm-minions and alien warriors. For his efforts, Mikey was crowned Supreme Commander of Barney's Special Friends in 1997.

Today Mikey stays behind a play-desk at the Church of Barney HQ in Washington, D.C., directing Special Friends in their activities over the phone. He also harasses the Jihad on a regular basis using a captured Linker. Since no wiser minds in the Purple Horde have managed to figure out how the Linker works, all Mikey can do is use it to talk to his "bestest buddies," who tend to ignore him 90% of the time.

**Attributes:** ST 9 [-10]; IQ 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].

**Secondary Attributes:** HP 9; Will 8; Per 8; FP 12; Speed 5.5; Move 5; Damage Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d-1; Dodge 8; Parry 8.

**Advantages:** Administrative Rank 3 (Spongion leader) [15]; Hard to Kill 2 [4]; Patron (Barney, special abilities; 15 or less) [60].

**Disadvantages:** Easy to Read [-10]; Enemy (The Jihad) [-40]; Short Attention Span [-10]; Spongified [-60].

**Skills:** Driving/TL8 (Automobile)-9 [1]; Fast-Talk-8 [2]; Guns/TL8 (Pistol)-10 [1]; Guns/TL8 (Rifle)-10 [1]; Intimidation-7 [1]; Karate-10 [4]; Shortsword-9 [1]; Singing-14 [4]; Stealth-9 [1]; Strategy (Land)-6 [1]; Urban Survival-10 [8].

sponge minions and wyrm minions.

### SPONGE MINIONS

Sponge minions (plural spongion) are humans who have been enthralled by B'harne to the point where they've lost most of their cognitive ability. The name "sponge minion" comes from an old Jihaddi joke about their brans hav-

ing turned into sponge from one too many episodes of Barney & Friends. The average sponge minion has very little intellectual capacity beyond "Barney is my friend," and for that reason they appear most often as a source of simple, expendable labor: foot soldiers, propagandists, cannon fodder or just as a simple distraction for Jihaddi troops. Oftentimes, spongion are simply just

*there*, having been brainwashed and then just left to wander around Horde installations until somebody puts them to work or kills them out of hand.

If caught early enough, spongification can be cured and a sponge minion returned to complete functionality as a human being. The Jihad calls the process despongification, and uses a number of different methods to accomplish it. Most despongification methods involve completely isolating a minion from B'harne's influences, then surrounding it with influences that run contrary to B'harne's teachings. The favored influences are junk food, high-caffeine drinks and loud rock music. Because it seeks to save and protect humanity, the Jihad expends considerable effort towards despongification.

### WYRM MINIONS

People who are exposed to B'harne, discover his true nature and either don't become spongified or attempt to fight him are known as wyrm minions. Wyrms fight alongside the Horde for any number of reasons, most of them being fairly mercenary in nature. The average wyrm minion is convinced that B'harne can and will conquer the world, and that it's better to be an oppressor than the oppressed. Dreams of power, ego or simply sadism drive other wyrm minions. They are far more dangerous than spongion, as they still retain all their faculties and have no problems with pesky moral qualms driving them.

Where spongion are the "enlisted" ranks of the Horde, wyrm minions are the officers. They are placed into positions where their skills and native intelligence are required, often in technical or advanced combat roles. Many wyrm minions rotate in and out of B'harne's mundane holdings as combination managers/guardsmen, watching out for Jihaddi attacks. The more ruthless and successful a wyrm minion becomes, the



higher in rank they go until they are second only to the Liaisons in the over-all Horde.

### THE CHANGED

Little is known about the creatures collectively known as “the Changed.” Neither the Liaisons nor the Jihad have any real data on who or what the Changed were to begin with, though it’s suspected they were high-functioning spongin or wyrm minions that caught B’harne’s eye one day.

The Changed are weapons of war. Most of them show some signs of human intelligence, but beyond that there is little to distinguish any Changed as human. They are warped monstrosities, similar to mutated Lyran animals but without the sense of elegance or efficiency Lyran tools have. The one distinguishing characteristic the Changed all share is their skin; a bilious bright purple that resembles B’harne’s hide in color and texture. Aside from that one mark, each Changed is different in size, configuration and power from the others.

To date, B’harne has used the Changed only sparingly, and only when he personally goes into the field. Jihaddi intelligence has assumed that the Changed exist as a sort of Praetorian guard, beings tied directly to B’harne and capable of protecting him from even the more powerful Jihaddi warriors like the Maenads. Whether or not B’harne will create more Changed remains to be seen.

## CHILDREN OF THE HIGH MAGE: THE LYRANS

A tremendous distance from Earth, a most remarkable world orbits

an equally remarkable star. The inhabitants of that world, known as Lyrans, are a race of natural mages of incredible power. Ruled by Charn’El, a wizard so powerful he raised himself to the level of a living god, the Lyrans have spent millennia honing their talents to the point where they can do almost anything, from manipulating simple objects to reshaping living beings. Eschewing technology - because a Lyran only needs his will to bend reality to his whim - the Lyrans live in a society which is primitive only at first glance.

A closer look shows the extent of the Lyrans’ power. Attuned to magic on the most basic levels, the Lyrans have spent their entire history reshaping their world to serve them. Based on a love of order and control, the Lyrans have reshaped everything they come into contact with; their planet’s mana networks engineered for efficiency, their culture redesigned in ways to best use them, and changing the ecology itself to suit them if need be. Without the use of so much as a steam engine - or a hammer, for that matter - the Lyrans have ascended to the level of a mature interstellar civilization, centered on their god-king, surrounded by advanced biotechnology.

They are also a race at war.

Three thousand years ago, Charn’El had a startling vision of the end of his race during a routine meditation. In the vision, a primitive and unknown foe came to power beyond the furthest reaches of the Empire and challenged Charn’El’s people in battle. With a combination of strange and alien tools, led by a being the vision only referred to as White Death, the people of this mysterious race would topple even the citadel of the High Mage. They would scour the Lyran homeworld of all life - and all Lyrans - and rule over a desolate moonscape where once the Lyrans flourished. There was still time, how-

ever. Shocked by the vision, the High Mage prepared to turn fate on its head by preventing it from completing its course. The Lyrans would track down the threat, prepare their move, and destroy it before the natives could scourge Lyra.

Their target is a world named Earth.

The Lyrans’ search for Earth took thousands of years and hundreds of ships searching in the long dark of the galaxy, but eventually the fleet returned with an answer; the race of the High Mage’s vision - a species of jumped-up primates calling themselves “humanity” - had been located, still primitive but capable of deflecting the first assault. Earth’s great distance from Lyran space gave Charn’El a bit of breathing room. The High Mage ordered ships to make the journey and study this new enemy, but refrained from more immediate action.

Centuries passed as the Lyrans studied, prodded, poked and occasionally killed humans as they sought to understand how they could possibly be a threat to the mighty Lyran Empire. It was a result of these studies that the Lyrans came to the attention of the Maenads of the Holy Albino. For the two bands of nonhumans, it was loathing at first sight. The Maenads and the Lyrans clashed many times as the years wore on.

The opening of the Babylon Road in 1947 (see p. 30) allowed the Lyrans to reinforce their scout parties, but also led to a serious escalation of hostilities by the Maenads. The now-constant warring between the Cubs of White Death and the Lyrans ultimately led to Charn’El taking drastic action: the summoning spell which ended up bringing the demon beast B’harne out of the void.



## THE EMPIRE

Charn'El's empire is centered around Eta Carinae, a highly variable star some 8,000 light years away from Earth. Eta Carinae would normally be considered one of the worst pieces of galactic real estate possible; several times the mass of our sun, the center of a gigantic eruption of gas and firing off natural laser light in multiple directions, the star is the example of a supernova waiting to happen. Most of Eta Carinae's planets are uninhabited, Mercury-like cinders, gently glowing in the stark radiation. The Lyran homeworld however, through some lucky confluence of the incredible energies given off by its parent star, exists in a stable bubble, protected from the heat and radiation. This bubble is soaked in magical energy, which accounts for the Lyrans' magical aptitude. Through magical manipulation, the Lyrans have managed to stabilize Eta Carinae somewhat, so that from the Homeworld it currently looks like a slightly larger and brighter version of Sol.

From the Homeworld, the Lyrans rode their living starships out and conquered the worlds within easy reach. The first of these was the Saethrian homeworld, where the Lyrans had

their first encounter with the power of technology. While the initial encounters didn't go well for the Lyrans (their initial attack fleet was knocked out of the sky by nuclear missiles), in the end the Saethrians were conquered and the survivors modified. The conquest of Saethria triggered the expansionist phase of the Empire, which lasted for a thousand years and eventually resulted in two dozen planets under Lyran rule, as well as a dozen or more worlds sterilized by the Lyrans when they proved too difficult to bring under control.

## MASKS AND CIRCLES

Lyran society is caste-based, the castes corresponding to the level of magical power a Lyran can muster on his own. There are nine Circles, going in order from the First - the rank of newborns and toddlers - to the Ninth, the rank of the High Mage himself. Most of the adult Lyran population levels off in the Fourth and Fifth Circles, while prodigies may attain the rank of Sixth, and a small selection of hero figures may reach Seventh unaided. A handful of Charn'El's personal assistants and acolytes have been granted the status of Eighth, and are commonly known as



the Ascended, inferior only when compared to the High Mage.

A curious part of Lyran culture is their use of masks. No living Lyran, not even Charn'El, knows where the tradition originated, but over the years it has become an integral part of Lyran society. Every Lyran owns an elaborately carved mask, most often made of wood. The carvings on the mask act both as a symbol of the Lyran's status within his Circle and as a subtle net of protective spells and good luck charms. No Lyran will willingly remove their mask in the presence of a non-Lyran, and cultural norms make it extremely bad manners to display their bare faces in public.

When unmasked, Lyrans physically resemble human legends of elves; slightly taller than most humans (a trait more exaggerated when compared to humans from earlier times), very slight builds, narrow faces and pointed ears. Lyran skin tones are fairly homogeneous, usually settling on a light gray tone with only minor variations. Lyrans tend towards having dark hair, the few naturally light-haired Lyrans will use dye or modify themselves in order to maintain social customs. A Lyran's

## Saethrians

Saethrians are twelve to fifteen foot long winged and tentacled serpentine creatures. Long ago they were a very powerful race of warriors who fought against the Lyrans, eventually lost, and suffered the fate of most races that war with Lyra and lose (which to the Jihad's knowledge constitutes all of them thus far): they were enslaved and manipulated down to a genetic level to suit the needs and whims of the Lyrans. Independent intelligence and magic resistance bred out of them, they are now shock troops and commandos for the Lyrans; mindless but clever soldiers whose only ability and purpose is to kill with single-minded abandon at the command of a Lyran.



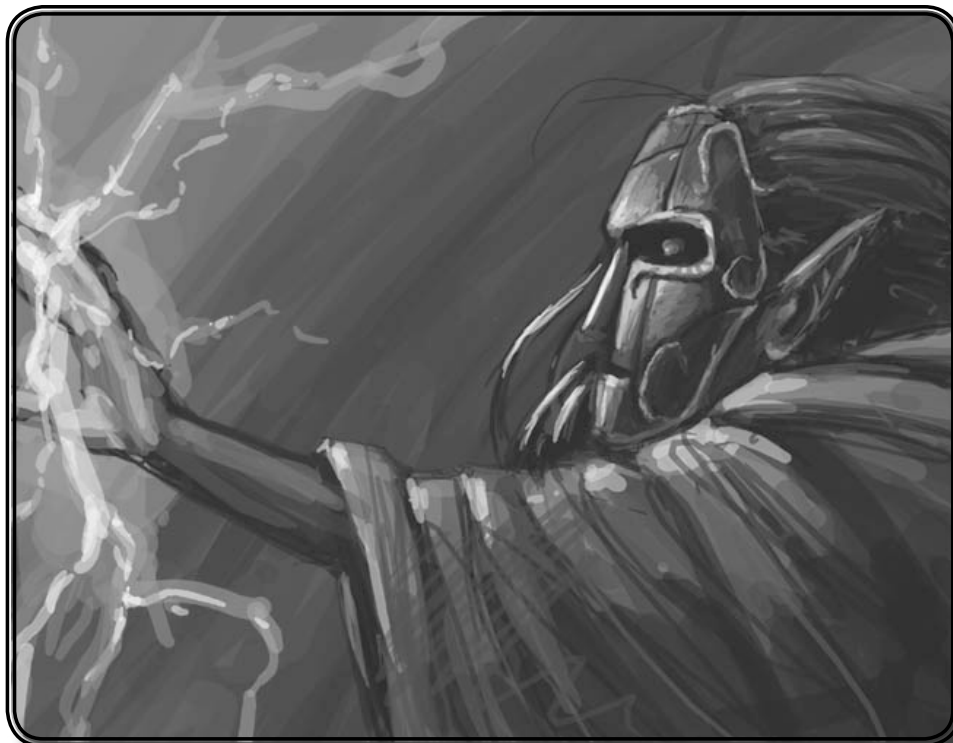




magegift often manifests as a subtle glow in the eyes, which can change color depending on mood or stress.

Lyrans are, for the most part, cruel, mean bastards. Manipulative behavior, arrogance and extreme tenaciousness are rooted in the foundations of their culture, and most Lyrans will display these traits almost to a fault. The Lyrans believe without reservation that they are the universe's perfect lifeform, often citing the immortality and power of the High Mage as the only proof they need of their superiority. In accomplishing their goals, which they regard not only as supreme but generally as the only goals with any value at all, they very rarely involve themselves directly, preferring instead to work at a remove with tools or servant races manipulated to fit their needs. Though tenacious to the point of obsession, Lyrans are also very patient beings, and think nothing of waiting years for a plan to develop or for a goal to be achieved. If the end result can be accomplished without a Lyrans' direct intervention, then they will remain plotting in the background while slaves and fair-weather allies do the dirty work.

On the rare occasions when a Lyrans emerges from the shadows to do battle, they tend to be arrogant to the point of overconfidence. If it wasn't for their overpowering magical skills, the average Lyrans could easily write checks his butt couldn't cash. With their abilities, however, Lyrans can quickly become terrors in open combat. Their arrogance and unfamiliarity with human technology has caused a few Lyrans to fall thanks to quick-thinking Jihaddi gadgets. And of course, the Maenads of the Holy Albino can force a Lyrans to retreat.



## DARK GREEN MAGIC

The Lyrans are - in the most literal sense possible - creatures of magic. Lyra is a planet steeped in mana, and as a result the natural evolutionary processes that gave birth to sapient life selected for magical ability as well as intelligence. Since the species' beginning, almost all Lyrans have been born with some level of innate magical ability; the very few who are born without the magegift are shunned as outsiders, barely considered members of the same race. Technology as humans understand it is something alien to the Lyrans mindset, a tool used by servants or barbaric inferior beings. The very *idea* of forcing inanimate materials into a shape by means of clumsy and inelegant manipulation of heat and light strikes the average Lyrans as utterly repugnant. The Lyrans pride themselves on being able to *will* materials into the shapes they want, without resorting to crude outside means to accomplish the job.

The pinnacle of the Lyrans' command over their world is their mastery of biotechnology. An offshoot of the earliest uses of magic (to lure or domesticate food animals, hunt predators and grow crops) Lyrans prefer to use specially modified plants and animals as tools for specific goals. For high-caste Lyrans, even something as simple as a mask or a staff will be a living creature. When the animals being modified started out as sapient beings, their sapience is warped until only a mindless subservience to the Lyrans is left.

The most spectacular example of Lyrans biotech are their fleet of starships. The Lyrans have little use for a "space fleet" as depicted in science fiction, as they rarely have a need to dominate space and only need a small number of vessels to maintain their Empire, but the ships they do have are incredible to behold. Long ago, the Lyrans encountered a pod of lifeforms that travelled through interstellar space without the need for protection. These creatures were, in effect, giant spacecraft them-



selves. These creatures were quickly herded, domesticated and regrown to meet the needs of Lyran explorers. Their minds were rebuilt to accommodate a Lyran pilot, their interiors were rebuilt to permit passengers and the ship-beings were equipped with special magical “batteries,” all the better for Lyrans to use as an aid to the ship-beings’ natural methods of propulsion. The ship-beings became the vanguard wave of Lyran expansion, first expanding the High Mage’s realm into the stars, then becoming the means through which the Lyrans touched their destined enemies.

### SPELLCRAFT

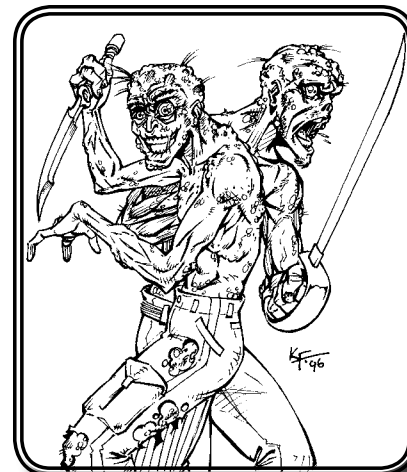
The needs of Lyran magic shape everything about them. While the average Lyran has an innate ability to use magic, it is another thing entirely to use it skillfully. Lyran languages have been carefully designed over the course of centuries to reflect the need for precision and accuracy required for successful spellcraft. As a result, the Lyran language is highly scientific in nature; complex clauses in a terrestrial language can be reduced to one or two words in Lyran, and there is no redundancy in vocabulary. Given sufficient command of the language, it is *impossible* to mis-

interpret a statement made in Lyran.

Using this language, a skilled mage can craft elaborate ritual workings capable of completely unweaving local reality and putting it back together again.

*The Babylon Road:* The best-known Lyran working on Earth, the Road is a wormhole that connects the Nevada desert to a designate staging base just outside Charn’El’s capital city on Lyra. The Road was designed as a ritual that could be initiated by a single mid-caste Lyran working with a handful of human dupes, and then strengthened and sustained by specialized mages and ritual circles on the Lyran side of the wormhole. With the Road open, traffic between Earth and Lyra no longer depends on the relatively slow starships, which allows the Lyrans better access to reinforcements. Unfortunately for the Lyrans, the Jihad knows that the Road exists, and has set up a watch to ensure that nothing comes through unnoticed.

*Thanatins:* An example of one of the more sadistic Lyran biological experiments, the thanatins were first discovered by the Jihad during Operation PACIFICA. In the middle of the rescue mission, TRES advance teams discovered that Jihaddi POWs taken



during the X’hirjq invasion had been transformed into Lyran soldier drones. Reports were vague as to the method, although it seemed to observers that it involved a series of ritual tortures where control spells were carved into various parts of the body. The resulting thanatin was a zombie-like creature, retaining only a desiccated mockery of its former human form, and driven insane by the torture. Worse, the thanatin retained almost all of its skills, which meant they could fight against Jihaddi just as effectively as they fought spongin. Most of the thanatins were killed during PACIFICA, but rumors about high-ranking MIAs turning up as zombie generals in the Lyran ranks continue to haunt the Jihad.

## Charn’El and the Barney Slayer

The Barney Slayer was broken in a battle between Lord Owsen and Charn’El at the conclusion of Operation PACIFICA. When the battle finally ended, the Maenads succeeded in magically sealing Charn’El into a dimensional pocket, but were unable to recover all pieces of the Barney Slayer. Because of their observations that the recovered pieces of the Barney Slayer are very slowly regenerating what has been lost, senior Jihaddi mages and scientists believe that the lost part is regenerating as well and, more significantly, that it is likely that the other piece was drawn into the dimensional pocket with Charn’El as the portal there closed itself.

The effect such an environment would have along with the presence of the Lyran High Mage on the blade and what it will regenerate into is unknown, but the JPV believes that a mage of Charn’El’s power could not only greatly speed up its regeneration but remake it into a powerful magical tool for his own use, a “dark” Barney Slayer, for those of a more melodramatic bent. The full extent of what Charn’El could do with such a weapon can only be guessed at by even the JPV’s most experienced magic users, one of the most probable guesses though is that it would enable him to far more easily escape from his interdimensional prison.



# CHAPTER 4

From his office on the second level of VRDET HQ, Malaclypse the Seeker, mad scientist at large and all-around Mysterious Person™, was practicing the ancient art of “pretending to work.” This was not to say that he wasn’t being even remotely *productive*, simply that he wasn’t working at it. In front of his desk, several viewscreens floated unsupported. In the center, a collage of screens showed various terrain maps, each screen displaying a different country. To the right, a fair-sized display was running the latest episode of Babylon 5. Mal was alternating between paying attention to the screens and making notes in a thick book entitled *SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE; 5th Standard Edition*.

One unused viewscreen flared, the screen displaying multicolored fractal spirals, from which a shadowy figure regarded Malaclypse’s back.

“Seeker, report,” it boomed. Mal didn’t flinch, twitch, or even turn around.

“Oh, hello,” Mal said evenly, “what can I do for you today?”

“You can give me a report. The Five are getting anxious, and you know what happens when they get anxious. There are some concerns that the Project may be in jeopardy, and your... reluctance to submit critical information on a regular basis has not consoled them.”

Mal sighed. “Look, stupid in the first place, the information needed for the Project isn’t available to the last damn decimal place. Second, if I go looking for the info, high-ranking Jihaddi or not, somebody will get suspicious. Finally, the Project has been moving along for nearly ten thousand years, it sure as hell can wait six weeks for my reports.

“Tell the Five that I’ll have a report, along with as much information on known military capabilities as I can locate without arousing suspicion, within the next week, barring accident. Will that keep the Five from panicking and doing something stupid like, say, destabilizing global economy or weather patterns?”

“I believe it will, Seeker. I suggest that you get that information to them. Otherwise, I might have to show up in person.” The flames died down, and the Watcher vanished. Mal turned around, made sure that the brazier was burning low, then pushed a key on his desk.

“Yeah, like that’s a threat.”



## FELLOW TRAVELLERS



There are a few groups that live in the shadows and on the edges of Mundane civilization. These people are not active participants in the war, preferring to sit on the sidelines and wait for a clear victor to emerge. Their goals are not the same as the Jihad's, but sometimes they intersect favorably...

## THE ILLUMINATI

*"The Jihad is a distraction from the real work. No, that's perhaps somewhat uncharitable. The Slayer is important. The Praxeum is important, the duck is important, as are the research divisions of your Jihad. The soldiers, the guns and the bombs and the rest of it are illusions; sound and fury intended to distract the Enemy. We know that people are dying, and we regret it. But it must happen, and it must continue to happen. It is cliché to say that humanity's future depends on it, but sadly life often likes to emulate clichés."*

The original World's Oldest Conspiracy, this group has gone by many names over the centuries, but the one that's stuck in the modern day is the Illuminati. They aren't *too* unlike the cabal imagined by mundane conspiracy theorists, but their motivations and methods of control are very different. The Illuminati don't have the level of direct control that most conspiracists think, only extending their reach into a few select areas of everyday life, like the Freemasons, the European Union and the Science Fiction Writers of America. Most of the Illuminati's influence is felt indirectly, and it has guided the physical, mental and spiritual development of mundane civilization.

The Illuminati has existed in one form or another since the fall of Atlantis, some 25,000 years ago. The

conspiracy's archives are sketchy about the nature of Atlantis and the founding of the Illuminati, the consensus among Illuminati historians is that the original conspirators came together to preserve as much of the Atlantean's advanced technomagical knowledge as possible. Over the years, the Illuminati has refined and added to their store of knowledge, combining the Atlantean fragments with discoveries made in the intervening years.

This vast store of knowledge gathered on the fringes of reality has been honed into a plan for the human race. This plan, called the Project by those Illuminati in the know, has been operating for a thousand years with only minor hiccups. The ultimate end goal of the Project is only known to the highest levels of the Illuminati leadership, the five Illuminatus Prima; all other Illuminati are aware of the Project, its means and its importance, but not to the final objective.

As the Project progressed, the Illuminati have picked up connections into the mundane world; indirect guidance was tricky at best and dangerous at worst, and the Project's intricacies require a steadier hand on the controls. Most of these connections are not dissimilar from the Jihad's liaisons; having the right person in the right office to rubberstamp the right form at the most opportune time. Only in the rare occasions where a group is absolutely essential to the Project will the Illuminati instigate a takeover and exercise direct control.

(It is an exercise for the student to figure out why the Illuminati controls the SFWA.)

Illuminati agents, when not engaged in Project-related work, also act as protectors of the fringe landscape that exists underneath and at the far reaches of mundane civilization. Extraterrestrial and ultraterrestrial incur-

sions, mythical creatures, Fae, mad scientists and other similar wildlife that don't fit into the rather staid mundane world fall under the eyes of the Prima, and they direct their minions to protect the mundanes from the fringe and vice-versa.

Between the Project and policing the weirdness underground, the Illuminati don't have the time to act as the all-powerful conspiracy that most people expect. However, they do enjoy giving the *appearance* of the all-powerful conspiracy. At its heart, this shadowplay is part stress-relief therapy for busy Illuminati and part defensive technique. The conspiracy is actually quite small - no more than 2,000 members are alive in the modern world - and by looking like they control the entire world, the Illuminati can prevent shadow wars from breaking out that might threaten the Project or even the Illuminati's existence. It also occasionally comes in handy when recruiting new members, though the inevitable discovery of the truth is a bit of a letdown.

### RELATIONS WITH THE JIHAD

To understand the Illuminati's stance on the Jihad, we first need to look back to the group's founding and the fall of Atlantis. According to the fragmented histories the Illuminati still possess, a being not unlike B'harne was present at the final destruction of the island. The Atlantean documents call this creature "the Enemy," a tradition the modern Illuminati have continued.

When the modern Illuminati discovered the occult nature of Barney the Dinosaur, they immediately made the connection to the Enemy. Combined with the sudden appearance of Lyran mages in large numbers, the Prima came to the conclusion that their charges were under attack by the same (or a similar) force as that which destroyed Atlantis at its height. The Il-



luminati in general have accelerated the Project's timetable, in an attempt to get the mundane population ready before the Enemy can destroy them again.

This is where the Jihad comes in. The Prima don't know who or what sent the prophetic dreams to the High Prophet and his comrades, but the fact that they *were* sent suggests that other, more powerful forces are at work countering the incursions made by B'harne.

The Jihad as a group is considered both a potential threat and a valuable asset; the concentration of human superscience and parahuman force represents a potential existential

threat to the Illuminati, and at the same time their relaxed organization suggests a potential willingness to come to terms with the conspiracy. In other circumstances, the Illuminati could not tolerate a threat to themselves and the Project on the Jihad's scale; the last time any esoteric group grew so powerful was the Ahnerebe, during World War Two. The Nazi sorcerers were eliminated to the last man, and the Prima wouldn't hesitate to do the same to the Jihad.

With the threat of Barney and his allies still hanging fire, however, the Illuminati has decided to use the Jihad as a tool instead of trying to eliminate them outright. Placing a handful of their senior field operatives into ranking positions in the Jihad (see *Malaclypse the Seeker*, p. 109) the Illuminati have ensured that the Jihad will not discover them or - in the event that they *do* - attack them. If the Jihad succeeds before the Project is complete, then the survivors will be welcomed into the Illuminati fold.

The average Jihaddi - indeed, none of the command staff save the actual moles themselves - know anything

about the Illuminati or its goals beyond what they might read in the nut literature. This is as the Illuminati would have it; to reveal themselves might set off a panic in the Jihad, much like the Jihad's existence might set off panic in the mundane world. It's a strange dance of shadows, but if the Project completes as planned it will have been worth all the difficulty.

*For several thousand years now, they've worked behind the scenes,  
They laugh when we buy Dockers — we've all got designer genes!  
They know if you'll get the girl or pass the SAT,  
It's kinda like The Truman Show combined with D&D.*

—TOM SMITH, "THE ILLUMINATI POLKA"

## ALIENS

The Hidden War has the potential for incredible ramifications away from the Earth. After all, should Barney win the war, it is likely that he would turn his attention towards other worlds to conquer.

As the war expands and contracts, the struggle has drawn the interest of several different types of extraterrestrial. Some of them are content to simply watch, while a few have been drawn into the conflict.

## X'HIRJQ

*"Every action, thought, and deed by every X'hirjq for the past 400,000 of your years has served this one purpose without error. It is religion, as humans understand it, the base of our culture and reason for our survival. It is what defines us, give us purpose, and demands our actions."*

The X'hirjq are a mysterious race of nomadic aliens who have been wandering the galaxy for the better part of half a million years. They are best remembered for their invasion of Earth in the fall of 1996, when they engaged the Jihad at the behest of their temporary ally, Barney.

X'hirjq are between seven and nine feet tall, heavily muscled reptilian beings with the prerequisite sharp teeth, claws, and lizard's tail. As a race, they possess strong psychic and magical powers, and have a sizable amount of TL11 and TL12 devices with which they can defeat almost

any foe. X'hirjq value honor above all other things, and desire nothing more than a good, clean fight (or a challenging hunt).

The X'hirjq invasion of 1996, while initially inspired by Barney, was in fact an attempt to *test* the inhabitants of Earth for worthiness; the X'hirjq Empress wanted to know if humans were worthy of living in what is, apparently, a "sacred" solar system. Very little is known and less understood about X'hirjq motivations, although it seems that humanity passed the Empress' test, as the invasion was cut short and every X'hirjq vanished again into outer darkness within a month of the invasion's start. Nothing has been heard of the X'hirjq since that time, not even rumor.

## SALUSIANS

The Milky Way galaxy is home to a surprisingly large number of sentient races. The most technologically advanced species are linked together in a loose alliance known commonly as "galactic civilization." Of the races in this



alliance, the one regional power that has any interest in Earth and the goings-on there is the Kingdom of Salusia.

The Salusians rule a modest empire of a dozen worlds and twice as many frontier outposts some 1,500 light years away from Earth. The Kingdom of Salusia itself has been in intermittent contact with Earth since the early 1970s, when an anthropology field study turned into an impromptu rescue of the *Apollo 13* mission. Since then, the Kingdom has maintained covert diplomatic contacts with several human nations, mostly through Illuminati intermediaries.

Physically, the Salusians are upright bipeds averaging around six feet tall, with digitgrade legs and vaguely canine facial features. The average Salusian is covered in short black or dark brown fur, and has a long mane of black, white or red hair running down their head and neck.

Salusians have most of what we would consider the normal human emotional traits, along with a somewhat quirky sense of humor and a deep love of irony. Most Salusian who come into contact with humans end up liking them, and vice-versa. Emotional bonds between members of the two races can

form very quickly, and be (at times) extremely intense. Realizing the potential trouble this can cause, the Salusian government does their best to ensure that only the most level-headed members of their species are sent to Earth.

Technology in the Kingdom is a mature TL10 in most things, edging into TL11 in the field of biotechnology; while not as naturally adept at biotech as the Lyrans, Salusian geneticists can do some impressive things. The most common application used around humans is cosmetic - turning native Salusians into near-perfect lookalikes of humans. While the modified Salusians may *look* human, they're unable to interbreed with humans without the help of major genetic surgery. (This practice has been proscribed by the Salusian government, but some rules were made to be broken: a small number of Salusian expatriates, including a few human-Salusian hybrids, settled in the Pacific northwest in the mid 1980s with the Illuminati's blessing.)

## Why so few aliens?

At first glance, there would seem to be barely any alien beings in the Jihad Universe. As a rule, there are plenty of aliens running around the Jihad Universe — it's just that barely any of them come to Earth. While this might put a crimp in the plans of some players, the aliens have a number of good reasons for avoiding Earth and the rest of the solar system.

The important thing to understand about galactic culture is that the galaxy is a very, very big place. Even the races and empires most involved in galactic politics - like the Salusians - can only extend their influence so far. Most of the species in our general area of the Milky Way are far too busy with their own affairs to bother with a backwater planet that hasn't cured the common cold or developed FTL travel. Despite the potential apocalyptic outcome of the Hidden War, barely anybody offworld knows about it; the few races who *do* know have conspired to keep it as quiet as possible, for fear of sparking genocidal attacks on Earth to contain the threat.

The Greys and Salusians are the only races who have any permanent installations in the solar system (mostly diplomatic and scientific stations) and even those are very lightly staffed. As a general thing, both Grey and Salusian operatives in the Sol system do their best to keep their people as uninvolved in the War as they possibly can, and go about their business with a wary eye cast on the participants.

Other races (ones not involved in the Salusian quarantine, freebooters, culture pirates, etc.) who feel like wandering around our solar system stand a good chance of running into the *Explain Star*. The crew of that noble ship, with nothing better to do and a great deal of time to do it in, tend to enjoy stopping and boarding every unauthorized ship (read: anything that moves and isn't an asteroid) that crosses their path. After the sixth or seventh boarding action by a bunch of pirates flying a rocket-powered rubber duck, even the most stubborn of alien races gets the point and stays the hell away from Earth.

## RELATIONS WITH THE JIHAD

In regards to the Hidden War, the Salusians consider themselves neutral within certain limits. The Kingdom recognizes the threat posed both by B'harne and Lyran expansionism, but without a formal alliance of the regional powers they can't act openly. The necessary alliance is highly unlikely to ever actually happen. (see box, *Why so few aliens?*)

As a compromise measure, the Salusians have instituted a quarantine zone around our solar system. If the war should expand beyond the quarantine, the Salusians will aid the Jihad with all the resources at their disposal, but not a moment before. In theory, the Kingdom would be willing to offer "lend-lease" equipment to the Jihad (in the form of weapons, spacecraft parts and other sundry high-tech items) but



so far Salusian diplomats have been unable to find a good way to approach the Jihad without setting off an adverse reaction.

To this date, the Jihad as a group is unaware of the Salusian presence on Earth, and unless the Kingdom makes an overture is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

## GREYS

*“You... interest us. Normally we would not bother with contact. There is something here we must continue to study.”*

You’ve undoubtedly seen the pictures. Thanks to mundane pop-culture, they’re the most recognizable “alien” form on Earth today. However, most of the rest of what pop-culture has to say about the Greys is amazingly inaccurate.

The real Greys are not on Earth in any large numbers, nor do they abduct random rednecks from isolated trailer parks to conduct experiments on. Most Greys on Earth are starship crew or research physicists, and “buzzing” the locals is considered bad form.

Grey civilization is very old — it predates the existence of almost every other known galactic civilization. For all their abilities, the Greys have never been expansionist in any way. They seem content to cultivate their homeworld and the other planets in their home solar system, without putting much thought to colonizing other star systems. The Greys have achieved a mature TL12, and have been so for at least 10,000 years. The Greys are highly respected by the other galactics, especially for their near-impossible defeat

of a X’hirjq invasion force 2,000 years ago.

The Greys have been on Earth since 1947 (one thing UFO pop-culture has gotten right), when a research ship was dispatched to investigate readings of an unusual wormhole developing in the Sol system. On a low-altitude pass over the supposed wormhole, the ship was damaged by a Lyran defense system, and crashed several hundred miles away in the New Mexico desert (again, something reported accurately by the mundanes, but little believed).

The surviving Greys were rescued by the United States government, and

since that time, the Greys and Terran powers (mostly Illuminati agents using the US as a cover) have had a limited scientific exchange program going. In exchange for allowing a small contingent

of Grey scientists access, the Greys will slip a few small advances into human technology — nothing fancy, mostly computer-related, or microelectronics.

### RELATIONS WITH THE JIHAD

The Greys, as a rule, are a deeply isolationist people. Only their curiosity about the Lyran dimensional gate has kept a Grey presence on Earth. Like the Salusians, the Greys are aware of the Jihad’s existence, but unlike the Salusians, the Greys are firmly neutral. However, they are interested in the possible connections between the Lyrans and the wormhole. As a rule, unless one side or another starts shooting at the Grey delegation on Earth, they will not help or hinder anybody in the Hidden War.

## OTHER SHADOWY TYPES

While intruders from the stars hover above the landscape, watching both Mundanes and Jihaddi with avid interest, others move in between the “normal” world and the shadows. These people all have a vested interest in the activities out on the bleeding edge of human existence. Some of them are fairly harmless, some are possible sources of help or hindrance in the Hidden War.

### ANCIENT ILLUMINATED SEERS OF BAVARIA

*“We are the shapers of human destiny. Those who would attempt to usurp our power will find us quite formidable opponents.”*

While the true Illuminati works deep in the shadows of human society towards the completion of the Project, the AISB work in the mundane realms to further their own personal power.

As all good conspiracy theorists will tell you, the Ancient Illuminated Seers of Bavaria were founded in 1776 by one Adam Weishaupt, defrocked Jesuit and professor of law at Ingolstadt University. Weishaupt had conceived a plan to unite Europe under the leadership of a rationalist cabal, with himself naturally at the head. To this end, he formed the original AISB with a number of German freethinkers, and ran a mostly public organization until 1785, when the Bavarian government found out about Weishaupt’s ultimate goals and shut down the public fronts of the Illuminati.

Of course, you can’t keep a good

#### RUMORS...

*If you go to the right part of rural Kentucky at the right time of year, you’ll meet a woman who will tell you exactly why the world’s so fucked up. But if you listen to her, you’ll never go home again.*



## Solos

Solos are people who, for one reason or another, have cause to fight Barney or the Lyrans, but have no connection to any group. Some solos are expatriate Jihaddi, former members who left for varied reasons (disagreement with authorities, personal vows, psychotic temperaments, etc.) but have not given up the fight. They wander around the world, striking at their enemies whenever they can, expecting to die at every moment.

In fact, most solos *do* die — the average life expectancy of a solo who has taken up arms without the support of others is less than a year. Only the wisest, strongest and most dangerous solos become veterans, and there are no *old* solos. The solo lifestyle — which involves taking on entire armies of otherworldly beings single-handed — tends to quickly take its toll on the mind, body, and available resources. Due to this, solos as a rule are not the most psychologically stable of people.

Solos tend to have some amount of personal wealth, that they would use as a bankroll for weapons, equipment, headquarters, weapons, clothes, weapons, food and weapons. However, some solos will liquidate all of their possessions in favor of simply dropping out of sight and living in the underclasses of the world, where they keep alive by performing less-than-upright jobs for less-than-upright people. Solos of this type tend to have a *very* loose moral framework.

If a solo has had enough of fighting alone, or is approaching the end of their supply base, then they may approach the Jihad and ask for admittance. The Jihad has taken in solos in the past — many distinguished Jihaddi, including the Original Seven, started their careers as solo warriors — and as long as the solo agrees to follow the Jihad's chain of command, they will be accepted and respected by other Jihaddi.

conspiracy down, and the Illuminati went underground, slowly but surely infiltrating as many political movements as possible through the late 18th Century. It wasn't until the mid-1800s that the AISB had achieved any real sort of power in Europe and the Americas, however. By the beginning of the 20th Century, the AISB had managed to take control of a large portion of the political and economic structure of the Occidental world, and had made serious inroads into controlling several East Asian and African nations.

Interestingly enough, the AISB has often eschewed the use or even investigation of paranormal or "fringe science" phenomenon. Consequently, the AISB is only marginally more advanced than

the Mundane governments it rules, currently standing at a mature TL8. This is partly because of the AISB's hyper-rationalist dogma originally set down by Weishaupt, which dismisses everything that can't be explained "scientifically." But a good part of this blind spot is due to agents of the true Illuminati, who have managed to keep the power-hungry AISB under control this way since the French Revolution.

### RELATIONS WITH THE JIHAD

The AISB considers the Jihad to be a bunch of upstarts, a group of power-mongers like themselves, who are trying to build an impressive hoax in order to seize control of the mundanes the AISB considers to be *their* rightful ser-

vants. The Jihad's activities in co-opting certain members of the American Congress have not made the AISB any less paranoid.

As such, the AISB are distinctly hostile to anything they can pin down as Jihaddi in nature, although they will not make any direct assaults (usually because the Jihad can easily outgun even the best-equipped AISB soldier). The Jihad, in turn, is dimly aware of the AISB's existence, and attempts to avoid their close scrutiny much like they would for any other mundane organization.

The AISB, affected by their particular form of mundane blindness, doesn't believe in the evil of B'harne or the Lyran forces. This has played quite nicely into the hands of the Enemy, especially those wurm-minions who work mainly in the mundane world, as it's in their (supposedly) mutual best interest to foil the Jihad at every turn.

## PLANETARY

No matter how well the Jihad (or the Illuminati, or the AISB, etc.) try to keep things totally undercover, things will be discovered.

Living on the fringes of mundane society, an underground network of the most unlikely individuals has sprung up, dealing with the scattered information and discarded technology the various conspiracies running across the world have left behind them.

This network (called "Planetary" by the younger members, after a recent comic book series dealing with "mystery archaeologists") is made up of a loose coalition of conspiracy theorists, arms dealers, information brokers, hackers, crackers, and UFO enthusiasts. The theorists are interested in using the data gathered by Planetary to expose and destroy The Conspiracy. (That is, whichever The Conspiracy they're con-





vinced is to blame for the world, any resemblance to the actual Secret Masters being mostly purely coincidental.) The arms dealers and info brokers use Planetary on a far more pragmatic and amoral basis, looking for new weapons and secrets worth selling on the open market. The members of the hack community who have joined the Planetary network have done so more out of a love of the thrill of going places they shouldn't, doing things that they aren't supposed to. The UFO watchers, of course, use Planetary to figure out "what's really going on."

The group has no set meeting place, or even a set organization. Members typically have recognition signals (usually consisting of a gesture or key code phrase), and usually know at least one place where members can meet personally and haggle for artifacts. Meeting places are often businesses owned by Planetary members, or highly public areas, train stations or public parks, where the risk of getting killed out of hand are less. For more shady deals, members use the network to locate only the best, quietest back alleys from which to swap money for hardware.

The main information network is set up — like most things in the Age of Information — using the Internet extensively. Members have at least one secure, encrypted e-mail account through which data swaps can be arranged. Rumors of `alt.marketplace.planetary` are wholly unsubstantiated, and are most likely a hoax put on by a member hacker. Really.

### RELATIONS WITH THE JIHAD

Both sides are very well aware of Planetary, although the network is itself mostly ignorant of the Hidden War. While the network as a group has large sections of the puzzle available, no one member has managed to fit together the whole puzzle, and Planetary is far

too fragmented to ever be able to comprehend the Hidden War as a group.

The Jihad often exploits both this fragmentation and the wealth of knowledge Planetary represents. An observant Jihaddi with contacts in the Planetary network can use them to chivy almost anything from a handy member. The best use of the network involves finding a place to lie low for a night, to get a floorplan for a high-security government facility, or arranging a meeting with weapons dealers to score a few quick guns.

The Enemy, on the other hand, is more interested in the transfer of information and *disinformation*. Wyrms Minions with previously established contacts in Planetary do their best to spread tweaked propaganda around the network. A group of crackers working for Liaison Winston has managed to subtly convert a Planetary-connected cell of UFO cultists to the enemy cause, creating a group of near-Sponge Minions by altering the data they collected to suggest that B'harne was one of their Space Brothers. Planetary's wide variety of individuals makes it a good recruiting ground for the Jihad as well. Almost anything can come out of the group, and sometimes does.

## THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL PLANS

Despite the raging mundanity of most of the American government (a state of affairs carefully tended by the Bavarians) sometimes the most bizarre projects can be started up under their very noses.

The Office of Special Plans (OSP) was originally founded during the Harding administration, as a way to maintain the United States' regional power in the face of a potential united world under the League of Nations. As with

many things in the Harding government, the OSP was quickly corrupted and subverted by a cabal of high-ranking military officers and industrialists. For the first years of its life, the OSP was used primarily to fund pro-American governments and regimes in the western hemisphere.

In the 1930s, the OSP found itself funding more and more bizarre projects, as good old American know-how combined with its backer's money and the knowledge of expatriate European scientists to produce very weird results. Very little of what OSP produced was useful; it was mainly a great deal of fodder for insane asylums, and some things fit only for disposal in fire. They were learning, though.

1937 brought a new focus to the group, with the rise of the Ahnerebe, Nazi Germany's agency for occult research. Fearing that the Ahnerebe could succeed where the OSP had to date failed, President Roosevelt ordered that the OSP begin development of a project to nullify the (theoretical) magical power that the Nazis were bringing to the table. The new program, Project KILLJOY, succeeded in creating a subject immune to direct magical attacks, only to find that when completely isolated from mana energy, the test subject went violently insane. OSP mad scientists couldn't come up with a solution to the problem before the war ended, the project was cancelled in 1945 as Hitler and his cabal of magicians had been rendered powerless anyway. They were left with vast areas of understanding of genetics, the key to unlocking some very weird abilities and scores of additional patients clogging various mental hospitals around the country.

As the Cold War began to settle over the group, the OSP turned towards the creation of an oracle. Supposedly in order to aid US strategic planning, the OSP had decided a long time before



that a being blessed with the gift of prophecy would be an invaluable asset. Especially if you wanted to make yourself filthy rich. To make a long story short, the next 25 years saw an alarming increase in asylum inmates, to say nothing of the *really bad* experiments.

Finally though, the OSP produced a useful result in 1973. Or a somewhat useful result, anyway. The subject screamed out several predictions of the future, followed by an anguished cry of *“Oh God! The wizards have landed!”* over and over before committing suicide. The predictions proved true, and the OSP science teams began to take serious notice of this after the next three test subjects did the exact same thing. When they reduced the fifth subject to a brain in a jar, they were able to get a little more data before it managed to self-destruct: a date of 2004.

Instead of creating a method to see their enemies actions ahead of time and make themselves incredibly rich, the OSP's ruling cabal had apparently uncovered the end of the world. As the prophecies all had “wizards” or the like in common, they decided to revive Project KILLJOY as a possible counter-measure.

### RELATIONS WITH THE JIHAD

The OSP is, to date, mostly ignorant of the Jihad or its movements. One of their KILLJOY success stories joined up with TRES Corps in 1997, but as the operative wasn't instructed to send back regular reports the OSP doesn't know this. As far as the Office is concerned, they're the only people who know that something big and bad is approaching, and that their ability to stop it isn't all that great. Right now, the OSP is focusing on developing a stable oracle, in an attempt to get more data about the impending danger.

## INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF MAD SCIENTISTS

*“For us, the laws of physics are mere guidelines, there to confine the unimaginative. Hey! Don't touch that button—”*

Existing out on the fringes of mainstream mundane science, the International Order of Mad Scientists works to advance the cause of human understanding of the universe, preferably by disassembling portions of it in the most creative way possible.

According to legend, the Order was founded in 1898 by Nikola Tesla, considered the God-King of modern mad science, and an immortal Leonardo Da Vinci, for reasons that remain shrouded in mystery. Regardless of the truth of this story, the Order has certifiably existed for the whole of the 20th Century, attracting scientists and engineers whose theories have been dismissed by mundane authorities as mere crankery.

The Order has mechanisms in place (mostly funded by patent royalties from successful members) to help keep experiments running, but the most important function the Order performs is the annual Mad Science Convention. The convention provides a place for fringe science aficionados from around the world to exchange notes, learn the latest developments and otherwise relax from the rigors of a world that doesn't like them much. Every year at the convention, the assembled members of the Order decide which of them gets to win the coveted Victor Von Frankenstein Award.

### RELATIONS WITH THE JIHAD

The Order doesn't have any real understanding of the Hidden War or the nature of the Jihad or Barney. Several

members of the Order have run across the Lyrans in the pursuit of scientific truth, but none of them ever made the connection to the Hidden War.

For the most part, this suits both the Order and the Jihad just fine. The Order doesn't feel obligated to engage in mere politics (internal politics are much more fun) and the Jihad doesn't have to worry about an independent group of loose cannons barrelling into the conflict. A not so surprisingly large number of the Jihad's research and development groups also have membership in the Order, and the annual convention is considered a good place to relax away from the pressure of saving the world on a daily basis.



# CHAPTER 5

Laurel Eisenhower, a brisk woman with sharp mind, wasn't considered one of the department's hot prodigies, but she had gained respect for her ability to put seemingly unrelated facts together into a coherent narrative. She had spent her first couple of years at State working the wacko pile. She'd finally managed to get off that detail and into a field unit once, but ended up transferring back after only a few months. Office rumor had that her first and last serious field op went sour, something about somebody killing an ambassador's aide somewhere. The most vicious whispers suggested that *her* casefile ended up in the wacko pile, and this was Eisenhower's punishment for screwing the pooch in a way the bosses couldn't understand.

This, as it turned out, wasn't too far from the truth. The case Laurel had worked on ended in spectacularly bad fashion, and she *did* see something that, as far as she knew, shouldn't be possible. Her encounter with the unusual convinced Laurel that, in the end, she ought to go back to desk work; less chance of seeing things there.

Laurel sighed faintly, pushing back unpleasant memories, and picked up the next file to check. Something interesting stuck out at her. There were lots of interesting things in the files down here, especially if you were of an extremely open mind, but this was interesting in the manner of not belonging.

"This shouldn't be here..." she mused.

"This" was a satellite image from one of the CIA's fleet of spysats. Orbital imagery was one of the most highly-prized things in the intelligence community, so why was this photo sitting here in the middle of the nut files? The picture showed a convoy of ships, including an aircraft carrier, leaving San Francisco Bay. Maybe someone took a picture of Fleet Week? The next item in the file was another photo, this time a more conventional surface shot of what looked like the same ships anchored in San Francisco, although the mooring didn't appear to be near any of the Navy ports, or even the shore. The third photo in the stack showed the fleet approaching a small island with a single port city. Smoke rose from places on the island as if they were on fire, especially around the city. A battle? Laurel tried to recall what islands the United States had invaded in the time these satellites had been around. It wasn't Grenada; the island's overall shape was similar, but there was a difference in scale and no sign of settlement beyond the harbour. The final photo in the file was another surface shot of the moored fleet in San Francisco, dated two months after the original picture according to the stamp on the back. The fleet wasn't all there, and the ships that were seemed to have suffered a fair amount of damage.

The files' content was by all appearances totally unrelated to the photos. It was as if someone had dropped the pictures into random files. Interesting. Laurel added a new category to the database for these pictures using the only written notation on any of the photographs, that word someone had hastily scribbled on the one picture: PACIFICA.

## OBLIVIOUS SPECTATORS





## STAYING IN THE DARK

The war remains in the dark because that's the best place for it. For B'harne's forces, the reason for staying covert is obvious; the deeds they do in the dark would not be willingly borne in the light. Brainwashing the masses is something best left to the shadows, after all. The old saying that "the devil's greatest trick was convincing the world he doesn't exist" applies very strongly to B'harne.

For the Jihad, the reasons for staying covert are a bit less obvious. While having the mundane population on their side would be a big push towards ending the war, the Jihad fears what might happen if the secret was revealed. Putting aside the issue of mass hysteria and the likelihood of panic in the streets, almost everything the Jihad does to further the war effort is illegal, immoral or at the least highly questionable. If mundane authorities knew what was happening could result in overregulation of the Jihad's activities (bad), freezes on Jihad activity (worse) or potentially legal or military action against the Jihad as terrorists, the real fight be damned (apocalyptically bad).

## KEEPING THE SECRET

Since both sides believe that they have something to lose by taking the war public, they work to keep the war hidden from prying mundane eyes. The main way they do this is by simply covering their tracks.

## HOW NOT TO BE SEEN

For the Jihad, this involves careful selection of when and where they go to battle, and then taking as many precautions as they can to avoid being seen by

mundane witnesses. Cleaning up after a large, public battle is the nightmare every Jihaddi officer dreads, because it often involves trying to convince several hundred people that they didn't see what they thought they saw.

Much of this type of cleanup duty is taken care of by carefully abusing "Men In Black" folklore. If things go wrong in a public area, specialists from a JAO cleanup detachment like TRES Corps Chi Squad will arrive dressed in identical black suits, and proceed to be subtly menacing to everybody in the area who's been speaking out about strange goings-on. While effective, this brute-force intimidation method isn't

popular with the Jihad, which prefers a more subtle approach to taking care of problems.

The subtle approach is to use the Jihad's network of liaisons to spread stories about the area. For example, if a JPV mage uses a powerful spell to swat aside a Purple Forces strike team, whoever the local liaison in the media is will spread a story about a gas leak causing either an explosion or hallucinations, depending on what's appropriate. This method of dealing with the evidence takes more time, as it relies on mundane media organs to spread the word, but preliminary studies by Chi Squadron suggest that it's more effective.

## The State of the Earth

Earth in the year 1999 is, on the surface, very much like Earth was in 1999 in the "real" world. The Cold War has finally stopped being a daily reality and is rapidly becoming something taught in history classes. The world on the whole is enjoying a state of relative peace and prosperity for the first time in decades. The Internet boom is in full swing throughout the West, as investors begin looking to computers and communications as the future of humanity.

This doesn't mean things are perfect, by any means. Low-level wars are being waged throughout the Third World, and the spate of ethnic violence in the former Yugoslavia has suddenly flared up. Politicians in the most powerful nation on Earth have gone strange with media overexposure en masse. The environment is on the wrong side of a desperate holding action, poor people are getting poorer while the rich get richer almost everywhere you go, and above it all terrorist groups are starting to make a big comeback in the Middle East.

Everybody's waiting for the next shoe to drop, or the hammer to fall. The Millennium is less than a year away (never mind the pundits who are complaining about the correct date being 2001, not 2000) and everybody's expecting something Big to happen when the clock strikes midnight. Whether it's Hell or Heaven on Earth, everybody in the world is waiting to see what happens next. It's a time of great atrocities and great acts of grace, a time of incredible turmoil as the world prepares for the next century.

In short, it's the perfect time for the Hidden War to be fought. The mundanes are all full of their own problems, leaving the Jihad and the Purple Forces a perfect opening to work in. As long as the mundanes don't know about the war, both groups can operate with impunity, so it's in their best interests to keep the war well away from the mundanes. They may be mundane, but they still outnumber the combatants by millions to one.



tive at keeping rumors from spreading than the brute-force approach.

B'harne's most effective method of concealing his true nature closely follows another old saying, he hides it in plain sight: Barney and Friends. Even the majority of the public that doesn't like B'harne's TV show consider it harmless, just another saccharine kids' show to be mostly ignored. With *Barney and Friends*, he not only manages to reach a large number of the most vulnerable and impressionable minds available, but instantly created for himself the most innocuous of all possible images with those he didn't immediately reach. The end result is that the vast majority of all humans would consider the idea of Barney as any sort of real and threatening or malevolent being laughable at best.

Television is B'harne's primary means of concealment, but not his only. Realizing that Earth's major religions and secular communities often dismiss or even ostracize smaller religions of differing beliefs, Barney used his influence and began to create several smaller religions early on in his campaign against Earth. When bits of the truth about Barney's nature crop up through incidents that can't be otherwise explained, there are various occult or alternative religious groups who identify the incident with whatever their mythos happens to be and latch onto it with religious fervor, gaining its immediate dismissal along with whatever group is trying its hardest to keep it from being dismissed by the majority of the public. Barney has a multitude of these groups ready and willing to help him keep his secret, and they don't even know the secret they're helping to keep. And these

groups, with a constant supply of what they perceive as proof of their beliefs, never question any of it.

### THE LOST

Sponge-minions present a major problem for Jihaddi cleanup operations. They may seem to come from nowhere — and for the Purple Forces they're merely inexhaustible cannon fodder — but they're really missing people. For every sponge minion, there's probably a family searching for them. This isn't 100% accurate (B'harne's minions often recruit from runaways and other desperate people on

the fringes of mundane society) but it is a depressingly common event.

With this in mind, the benefits of the Jihad's attempts to emphasize desponification over killing are obvious; if you kill a sponge, you have a dead missing person, and the investigations resulting from this may not shine favorably on the Jihad. With a desponged minion, though, you have a missing person who's probably going home, which means one less mundane search team. Fewer mundane search teams means fewer Jihaddi who have to work cleanup and more Jihaddi who are ready for active duty.

### BOUGHT AND SOLD

Sometimes, localized cleanup operations or hiding in plain sight just aren't enough to prevent the eyes of those in power from swinging in the war's direction. When this happens, the Jihad and the Purple Forces turn to directly influencing the centers of mundane power.

Both sides have a number of infiltrators in most levels of the American government. Most of them are well blended in, and to the outside observer would be nothing more than the same sort of pleasantly bland middle-management bureaucrats who inhabit government centers all over the world, utterly unnoticed but managing to see all, and who stop reports of purple dinosaur—related violence before they can get any higher. Many of the Jihad's liaisons are government workers of one type or another, and many of the wyrm-minions under the command of Liaison Winston do much the same thing. In these areas, it's not totally unusual to find Jihaddi and wyrm-minions working together to bury a particularly egregious incident.

When infiltration becomes impossible, then both sides turn to the other time-tested method of influencing government officials: bribery. The Jihad bribes government officials from behind the screens of false organizations; the officials aren't exactly sure of the organization's motives, but that's not really important. What's important is that the Jihad has lines of control on a number of politicians across the United States, but especially in Colorado (where the Jihad has a number of important bases); each of them is under the impression that there's a different corporation paying the bills, but they all know what to do. With their help, most of the higher levels of the government never learn anything about the Jihad, even that which slips through the fingers of the other operatives.

In contrast, the bribes B'harne pays out are often very centralized; the politicians in question know that they're getting kickbacks from a particular subsidiary of a particular corporation, and they know that they're being paid to look the other way. They don't know that their benefactor is planning on en-

### RUMORS...

*Certain McDonalds restaurants - not all of them, just some - have secret access tunnels to underground empires hidden in their walk-in freezers. One even has a huge underground cathedral devoted to Ronald McDonald. You can tell by the way the indoor play-rooms are arranged.*



slaving humanity, but then it's possible that they wouldn't really care as long as they keep jobs in their districts. Since most of B'harne's bribe money goes to ensuring that the *Barney & Friends* show remains on the air no matter what, that doesn't seem to be a problem.

## WHAT MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND

Keeping the war running goes beyond having the most guns or spells; there's also the question of money and raw materiel.

The Jihad makes most of its money off of mundane investments and assets. New recruits will occasionally have significant assets to bring to the Jihad, but this is not accounted for in budgets. Other assets include actual corporations that the Jihad has set up for specific purposes (see box). One of those purposes is, of course, to add funds to the Jihad's treasury — struggle of good versus evil or not, the troops still like to be paid. Another is to provide an extra layer of safe areas for Jihaddi looking to stage attacks or hide out from enemy or mundane prying eyes.

The Jihad also has a series of investments in some of the less-legal parts of the global economy. Jihaddi operatives are actively involved in smuggling operations, most often gunrunning and "soft" drugs like marijuana, hashish or assorted psychedelics. The money involved in these activities is actually relatively minimal (the Jihad makes more on a daily basis playing the markets, anyway), but the connections made in the underworld are far more valuable than the money involved. The Jihad's underworld connections provide extra safe areas and other resources for field operatives caught out in the open; mention the right names and you've got a bed for the night, anonymous transportation, false ID, or any number of other things readily available in such circles, no questions asked. There has been some considerable debate in the Jihad's upper ranks about the morality of the Jihad's illegal activities. Some Jihaddi have taken a stance that the group should be as upright as possible, while others have taken a more pragmatic stance. Currently, the Triumvirate has leaned towards the pragmatic stance; this may change as its membership changes, however.

The Purple Forces make their money off of merchandising, PBS fees, revenues redirected from other divi-

## Sample Shell Operations

*ETI Technosystems:* ETI is a producer of specialized electronics and software for the consumer and industrial market. In truth, ETI is one of several Jihad-held companies that trades (less-advanced) Jihad technology for cash. The company is based out of Alamosa, CO, previously a sleepy ranching town that is slowly becoming a model of post-industrial prosperity.

*IJT, Inc.:* The International Jihad Treasury holds many of the Jihad's mundane financial assets. Based out of Halifax, Nova Scotia, IJT is a "black box" investment firm which acquires funds for the Jihad and distributes them under the guise of charity work and other non-profit outlays.

*Verthandi Import/Export:* This New Mexico-based company does a modest business transporting exotic goods around the Americas, but more importantly it provides covert transport for Jihaddi equipment and operatives, as well as maintaining supply caches and boltholes for Jihaddi caught out in the open.

*Templar Mining, Inc.:* Based in San Francisco, the Templar Deep Sea Mining Corporation is a publicly-owned operation, with the JAOs as majority shareholders. Templar Mining provides 10% of its daily production to the Jihad to maintain the resource base for the production of war materiel.

*The Church of Barney:* The primary enemy face to the public, the Church presents itself as a stereotypically dippy New Age religion, while insinuating into everything it possibly can. The Church's proper headquarters are in Washington, DC, but "temples" can be found in almost every major city in the United States. Also, the Church has a compound in the swamps on the Texas-Louisiana border near the town of Port Neches. The place, known by the locals as "the Loony Bin," is being cautiously investigated by the police, fearing another Waco.

*FunCo Toys:* This company produces most of the toys, dolls, playsets and all the other many types of merchandising available based on the *Barney & Friends* TV show. The vast majority of the enemy's legitimate funds come from FunCo products. The Chicago company has, as such, been completely taken over by wyrm-minions.

*Happy Time Studios:* The "official" production studio of the *Barney* show, Happy Time also does a brisk business renting out sets to television shopping channels, televangelists, direct-to-video movie producers and other similar members of the bottom rung of entertainment society. The studio's main stages outside Dallas have plenty of clients, as well as plenty of Barney episodes to film.



sions of the Lyons Group, and black market sales of looted and stolen goods from battlefields and sponged people's possessions. Also, there is a public (if weird) "Church" of B'harnii, which solicits donations and usually takes as much of new members' money as possible. The mastermind and organizer behind the cult, Winston, keeps his role as such secret. The cult encourages donations and support from causes. They do certainly get kids and troublemakers off the streets — it's just that they don't keep them out of trouble afterward.

## TURNING ON THE LIGHTS

For all that the Jihad and the Purple Forces do to keep the war out of the public eye, they can't be sure of everything. Though nothing truly catastrophic has leaked out — yet — small things occasionally slip through the cracks and into the public consciousness.

## IN DAYS OF YORE

The Jihad's battle is only a decade old, barely enough time for it to be proper history, much less mythology. But elements of the war have existed for hundreds of years prior to the High Prophet's revelation and the call to arms.

The Lyrans have had a sporadic presence on Earth since the third century BC. Most of this time was spent researching humanity and devising new and better ways of eliminating them. Remnants of western European and northern African folklore from this time period about masked faeries, cloaked demons, djinn and strange monsters suggest a pattern of Lyran involvement in that general area. Similar patterns show up along the fringes

of Qin Dynasty China and in stories from aboriginal Australia. (Interestingly enough, the Australian stories say that the masked demons were rather soundly defeated, then they never show up again.) In more recent history, stories of alien abduction and experimentation have a definite feel of Lyran activity, although most abductees blame the Greys for their encounter.

Maenads, or Maenadesque creatures, appear again and again through old legends. Obviously the name "Maenads" has a Greek connection to the old Dionysian mystery cults and their often

violent behavior, but there's no real evidence one way or the other whether or not the Maenads were active in Greece around that time. The stories of the Benandanti — shape-changing Italian witches who fought with the Devil (see p.STii61) — suggest the possibility of active Maeand conflict in the area during the Renaissance. Shapeshifting nature spirits who, if they aren't friendly to humanity are at least neutral, appear in the folklore of just about every culture on the planet. How many of these were actual Maenads, and how many were just stories, not even the Maenads

## The Jihad Files

The pop-culture TV phenomenon *The X-Files*, launched shortly after the Jihad began, has tackled every single form of conspiracy theory known to Man, and made up a few of their own. So naturally there have been episodes involving the Jihad, though the name "Jihad" has thankfully been absent.

Early in the second-season mythology, the show aired an episode titled "Die Hand Die Verletzt," where Mulder and Scully track apparent "witch killings." The rituals shown on screen were amazingly similar to known Lyran rites, and a little investigation by a Jihad spin team learned that the episode was patterned on an incident which occurred in 1987 in upstate Wisconsin. Naturally, individuals on both sides were somewhat disturbed.

Jihad lore appears again during the fourth and fifth seasons, as Mulder and Scully cross paths with a group of "alien hunters" equipped with beyond-state-of-the-art weapons and tracking gear. Mulder's hunt for the Truth (with a capital T) was often stymied during those seasons by the "Hunters" wasting the alien/government conspirator before he could ask any questions. As television went, the Hunter arc varied between pretty bland to pretty godawful. Still, for some unknown reason the mysterious alien hunters became cult figures in the X-Phile fan community.

What Chris Carter knows (or doesn't know) has never been conclusively proven. Jihaddi telepaths have pronounced him free of Enemy influence, and have suggested that Carter has merely pieced together various bits of Jihad lore already in the conspiracy-theory mainstream. However, Psychic Research students at the JPV have suggested that some of the details of Jihad lore may have been left behind in Carter's brain by the telepathic scans, possibly indicating that the producer/writer is in fact a latent sensitive.

Whatever the rationale, references to Jihaddi technology or tactics have not appeared since the end of the fifth season, as *The X-Files* moved into trying to focus on alien invasions, men smoking cigarettes, and who's sleeping with whom. Overall quality and credibility has plummeted, and for everybody in the Hidden War, that's a good thing.



really know.

Stories of Atlantis and the Illuminati are quite common, especially since the Theosophical movement of the 19th century. Most of these stories are, of course, horribly wrong when it comes to the details, but this has never stopped a good story from being told. Many of the stories are popularized by the Bavarians who have a vested interest in keeping people chasing myth and not looking in their direction. Hints of what the Atlantean Illuminati has been up to through the time of recorded history can be found in Taoist legends, pre-Islamic folklore from West Africa and the story of Quetzalcoatl. Or at least, that's what *they* want you to think...

## THE BRAVE AND THE MAD

Because they're so close to the fringes where most of the war happens, conspiracy theorists are often the first ones to make contact with the detritus left behind by the Jihad's struggle. None of them actually *know* the origin of the artifacts collected — more often than not they're attributed to their pet cause, be it the Zionist One World Order, the UFOs, the Illuminati or the Invaders from Planet Q.

Artifacts loose on the fringe market range from the most basic personal weapons and communications equipment to the hulks of wrecked vehicles, samples of frozen (and extremely dangerous) Saetherian tissue, and even a complete prototype of a WEDJEE mecha. Many of the Jihad artifacts out there have fallen into the hands of the Planetary network which has noticed a common origin, if not an actual pattern.

As a result of all of these leaks, various aspects of Jihad procedure and activity have leaked into the canons of

conspiracy groups. Those Jihaddi who enjoy pop culture extrapolations of conspiracy theories may be surprised to see familiar weapons and technology featured in the arsenal of completely different foes! (see *The Jihad Files*, p.77)

The important part of this is that, for all of the tiny details that have leaked out, the big one is still firmly secret: the Jihad is the only organization that knows about B'harne and his plans. The idea has lurked into popular humor, which may or may not make the situation better; although it destroys any mainstream credibility the Jihad might have, were it to need such credibility, it does mean that most evidence about B'harne will be laughed off as a hoax by mundanes.

But not by all mundanes. Theories behind Jihaddi activity can be extrapolated into calls to action by groups otherwise unaffiliated with the war. MAUL, with their habit of disguising operations as US military maneuvers, is particularly vulnerable to this sort of misinterpretation. Several militia and neo-Nazi groups have video footage of MAUL operations, and are using it as "evidence" that the UN is making its move towards one-world government even as we speak. It's possible that the Jihad may be used as a pretext to start another round of militia-related violence in the US.

## BLOWBACK

Sometimes, despite all attempts to keep it quiet, an operation will explode completely out of control and land full in the public view. When this happens, the entire conflict will come screeching to a halt as everybody redirects their forces to try and contain the secret.

*The Studio Four and Montreal Incident:* The most well-known blowback incidents happened early in the Jihad's

career when overeager operatives managed to successfully raid a Purple Forces TV studio and then cause an international incident in Canada, respectively. These incidents led to a complete overhaul of the way the Jihad conducts operations in the public eye, as well as laying the groundwork for the first JAO command structures.

*Operation WORLDWALK:* This particularly nasty incident came close to lifting the veil on the war, but for reasons that nobody's entirely sure of, the veil slammed down immediately afterwards, more secure than before. Most Jihaddi put it up to dumb luck and continue on their merry way.

*Operation PHOENIX:* The X'hirq invasion by all rights *should* have blown the lid off the war once and for all. The X'hirq invaded in full force, attacking targets all over the planet. By some accounts, major *cities* in North America were nearly reduced to rubble by the ferocity of the X'hirq attack. Add to that the lightshow as the Jihad's orbital defenses slugged it out with the alien attack fleet, and there is no logical way that the secret could be kept.

And yet, it was kept. "How" is still something of a mystery, but apparently the X'hirq - as part of their "test" - decided to essentially reboot the entire planet, using a powerful magic working to repair all of the damage to mundane property and remove the memories of the invasion from mundane minds. This working, and the incredibly patronizing arrogance it showed, is just another reason among many that the X'hirq are quietly loathed by PHOENIX veterans.

*Operation HOMEFRONT:* While most of Operation HOMEFRONT was kept well under cover, there was one nasty blowback incident in Austin, Texas; part of the mass-spongification array was concealed in the University of Texas belltower, and was protected by a





wyrm-minion with a sniper rifle. The resulting firefight between the wyrm-minion, a local TRES Corps operative sent after the array element, and the police nearly ended up with the Jihaddi in jail and the top of the belltower sheared off by an exploding piece of Wyrmttech.

*The Milpitas Incident:* A smaller incident happened in late 1997 when a VRDET scout on weekend leave ran into an overeager spongin strike team, a vacationing TRES soldier, and a Lyran cone-of-power ritual, all inside the giant shopping mall in Milpitas, California. The resulting hilarity ended with the spongin eliminated, the Lyrans foiled and a large chunk of the mall in ruins. In the end, Jihaddi liaisons cast blame on shoddy construction in order to prevent the secret from getting out.

*Candlestick Park:* Not every blow-back incident is combat-related. Case in point: the command staff of VRDET Explorations decided to go Dutch to a San Francisco Giants home game. Unfortunately, a botched invisibility spell meant that their better-than-most seats (on top of the scoreboard) got them a bit more attention than they really wanted. The whole incident was resolved peacefully, although a bit flashier than most Jihaddi cover stories.

## THE ANOMALY

Not every person who notices Jihad activity is a madman, however, and not every government official is a dupe or a plant. Like it or not, the Jihad's movements across the planet make ripples that can be picked up and analyzed.

Officially, the pattern of odd movements and transactions left behind by the Jihad is called the Anomaly. The Anomaly represents a black hole in the modern intelligence community; they know *something* is going on in there, but they don't know *what*, and that worries

many people in high places. When the US Air Force finds a mole in Space Command that vanishes before they can make an arrest, or when a BATF investigation hits a wall when looking into gunrunning activities in Texas, these events go into the Anomaly file.

Anomaly activity is noticed worldwide, but the lack of active intelligence inside the Anomaly itself precludes any mundane agency from figuring out what the hell is going on. Occasionally intelligence operatives or special ops teams are tasked with following the Anomaly's trail back to the source and reporting on what they find. To date, none of these operatives have returned; they're usually written off as "casualties of war" or "training accidents" when convenient, and their spymasters start another ulcer.

Response to the Anomaly is something akin to controlled panic. Without a better estimate of how the Anomaly works, no mundane force has any real understanding of how to counter it. This leads to occasional bursts of rampant paranoia in the halls of power, as people who have only recently been given clearance find out about the Anomaly and try to Do Something about it. Doing something often leads to experienced people falling down the rabbit hole, which ultimately leads to the person who made the original demand to Do Something getting demoted or fired.

The complete lack of any data about the nature or motives of the Anomaly spawns numerous conspiracy theories within the intelligence community itself. While the theories are a bit more grounded in reality than most mundane speculation, they don't come as close to the capital-T Truth. The Jihad's fantastic nature is beyond the more pragmatic outlooks of mundane intelligence analysts, and as such any analysis that ignores the Anomaly's apparent super-

natural abilities will ultimately fail to get to the heart of the matter. Despite this lack, the mundane military-intelligence community has come to the conclusion that the Anomaly is one large group, probably terrorist in nature, working towards an unknown goal.

The situation is ultimately unstable, and something has to give. Eventually somebody on the mundane side of the equation will attempt to force the issue of the Anomaly in public, and what happens next, nobody knows. It's possible that the Anomaly will remain mostly-unbreakable by the intelligence community, or it's possible that the Jihad may finally end up with the secret compromised, and forcing the War onto a new footing in the glare of public opinion.

GMs with an interest in spy games can easily upset the status-quo by sending their players down the rabbit hole of the Anomaly to find the Jihad's war, and then give them the tough choice: go back, report on the Jihad and spark a new conflict with the mundanes, or vanish like all the others and join up with the War?



# CHAPTER 6

Dee lay on the deck, doing an excellent impression of a corpse (other people's blood, and a crude patch over the right arm helped matters) as she watched the X'hirjq sweep the area. In reality, she was hyperventilating and would have been soiling herself if she hadn't done so already. The lizards had already killed most of the other techs and gutted the base; almost the whole thing had been opened to hard vacuum, some parts while people were still at work.

*Parts. Don't think about parts. Don't think about parts.* Bad word, in the context of having to crawl through the mangled bodies of friends to get where she was, some torn apart, or burned, or killed from decompression. Too many bodies. Try not to think about it. If she thought about it, she'd throw up again, the lizard would see her move, and she'd die. Or maybe the lizard would decide she looked suspicious anyway, and she'd die. Or, if it didn't come near her within about ten minutes, she'd run out of air and die. She wasn't even 13 yet, and desperately didn't want to die.

But then, even if the next part of her harebrained idea worked, she rated the odds of her not dying in the process of it as pretty low. Some of the evacuation pods had been taken, some disabled, and even if they weren't, there was the problem of the huge space fleet to contend with. The only way she could think of was to steal a X'hirjq landing craft, which meant killing the rear guard left on board and then figuring out the controls and bluffing her way past the fleet. If she hadn't been spent all the time since the lizard mailbomber killed the Jihadlinker network and when they broke in working on cracking their interfaces and crypto, there would be no chance. As is, the odds were not much better, but it was that or give up and die.

*Now if the goddamned lizard would just come closer!* She wanted to cry, but then, as if by magic, the fucking thing looked her way and approached. Possibly it had noticed a new corpse on the pile. Maybe it wanted lunch. Dee really didn't give a damn, just that it was coming closer. She watched it in the reflection of the helmet of Technician Darren Johnson, who last week had shown her some of the tricks to optimizing *Doom* on the Jihadlinkers, and now was missing his lower half. The lizard approached, peering at the tiny space suit, and finally coming to the position she had been hoping against hope it would stand in. Hidden under her body, her mass bracing her arm to stop the recoil, she emptied her pistol's armor piercing rounds into the lizard's face.

Dee more than half expected that that would be the last thing she ever did, and was cringing for a few seconds before she could make herself look. It had worked; the rounds had cracked the faceplate of the lizard's space suit open and decompression had done the rest. Knowing that the rest were spread around the station and she had a little bit of time, she took the luxury of throwing up in terror. Then, wasting as little time as possible, she scrambled down, got the access panels off of the alien plasma rifle and started tearing out wires...

## RULES OF ENGAGEMENT





Roleplaying in the Jihad Universe has evolved from a freeform game that worked like a combination between a MMORPG and a writing circle. As a result, characters can be a bit difficult to properly map to a points-based system like *GURPS*.

(Not that anything like that has ever stopped us before, you understand. Just giving you fair warning.)

In this chapter you'll find a guide to creating a classic freeform Jihad character, as well as information that will help create *GURPS*-based characters for most of the sides in the Jihad's war.

## PROFILE WRITING

### A BRIEF GUIDE FOR PROSPECTIVE

#### JIHADDI

BY JIM "FIREBALL" YEARNshaw

Jihad roleplay, being mostly freeform, was never really based on the concept of character points. Instead of rolling up a character, Jihaddi traditionally just wrote up a character profile. This sounds a great deal easier than having to puzzle out a character sheet in *GURPS* or *AD&D*, right?

Well, it isn't. Creating a freeform roleplay character can be just as tricky as creating one for a tabletop game. In this section, Brother Fireball provides a guide to writing up a Jihad character that's easy to use for everybody involved in a game.

There are two basic steps to getting a character into Jihad roleplay, generation and then profiling.

## CHARACTER GENERATION

Make a reasonable character, if not human than at least with some human-seeming qualities; immortals and all-powerful types of almost any kind are rejected out of hand. Everyone has someone better than them at a given

talent, and munchkins should never be forced to demonstrate someone being better.

A character with interests in specialization should not have more than one specialty. For example, being a world-renowned mage capable of building a supercomputer with match sticks, a roll of aluminum foil, and silly putty looks silly.

Now it's time for another episode of "Good Idea, Bad Idea."

**Good Idea:** *"A wide variety of magic to choose from, but very little of it fully controlled. One bit of magic she can control is the ability to open a portal to virtually any destination. The portal can get her there instantly, but she loses time with each use of the portal ranging from about a minute (for short jaunts) to 15 minutes (for a trip halfway around the world). She has all the vulnerabilities of normal humans, and is a poor non-magical fighter."*

One or two interesting skills which she is adept at, with plenty of room for the character to grow and be developed in stories should the character's owner want.

**Bad Idea:** *"He is a competent hand-to-hand combatant, Mech pilot, aerospace fighter pilot, marksman with both handguns and rifles, and a decent swordsman. He is very well acquainted with commanding a large fighting force, and has had experience with both land and aerospace combat command. He possesses extremely powerful pionic abilities..."*

Now that's just too much, looks kinda silly doesn't it? And that's only a small excerpt from the rather bland skills listing in that particular profile.

The prohibitions against creating a character based on yourself that run throughout most fanfic circles don't really exist in Jihad role-play. A vast majority of the characters are at least

partially based on the people that play them, just don't give yourself too many extra or enhanced abilities.

Try to come up with something reasonably original. Just as you shouldn't steal technology from another fictitious universe and import it to the JU, you shouldn't steal people; a Jihaddi Jedi or Terminator or Romulan or *Highlander*-style immortal or whatever would just end up looking lame. There are some exceptions, just using more vague concepts from outside sources can be acceptable. There have been Jihaddi vampires, dragons, werewolves, elves, and characters from various tabletop RPGs that've all successfully integrated into the Jihad Universe.

**Good Idea:** *"Can become insubstantial at will. Can change appearance at will. Can absorb energy attacks, magical or otherwise."*

Can't even tell what that's lifted from, can you?

**Bad Idea:** *"Went hiking in the mountains once, got lost, found some old guy, studied Jedi stuff, found my way home."*

Honest, that's not a summary. It's not only a poorly done borrowing from another (very well known) fictitious universe, it's a rather spectacularly bad job of profile writing too.

Another note on excessive abilities and borrowing from other fictitious universes: The choice of borrows and concepts that get accepted has to do with good writing more than anything else. If you've got one of those sorts of ideas and think it might work you can go ahead and try it, just be sure to take extra care in your character generation, profile, and story writing; ask lots of advice.

You need some sort of explanation as to why your character has joined the Jihad (and "just sorta dropped in" won't



cut it, it's just being sloppy and lazy and won't make for good roleplay). Maybe your character's a conspiracy theorist type who discovered some of the Jihad's secrets and was inducted that way, or maybe you've got some outside grudge against Barney or Lyra in whatever dimension you happen to come from. This also helps to create a more well-balanced character, one with some sort of outside life that isn't just killing spongin or Lyrans or various other things 24/7. Parents/friends/relatives/pets killed by Barney has started to become a little overused though, so if you do that type of story just be careful you don't end up sounding cliché.

**Good Idea:** *Kidnapped by a scientist loyal to Barney and altered for use as a living weapon against the Jihad. Rebelled, managed to escape, and joined the Jihad to use what he'd been made to fight the horrors he'd seen.*

Creative and original. Can be said briefly but also lends itself well to a more detailed origin story. One of my

favorites and better than anything I've ever come up with.

**Bad Idea:** *"After one such tour, he found himself channel-surfing and wiped out when he hit the B'harnii and Fiends television show. So disgusted by what he was witnessing something snapped."*

Something like that could be a possible start, but it's very thin. This is more of a real life reason than a role-playing one. As J. FoxGlov often said, Barney is very easy to hate.

If you do use preexisting Jihad canon in your character's background, be sure to run your idea by the editorial staff to make sure that idea doesn't violate any canon or step on another writer/player's toes.

**Good Idea:** *A thief caught in the middle of a battle between spongin and TRES Corps forces in the midst of attempting to steal an artifact the spongin wanted for a weapon. Injured in the fight that also kills his best friend and partner,*

*he is rescued by TRES and ends up joining their ranks to fight the newly discovered (to him) Purple Menace and avenge his friend's death.*

I like this. Creative, original, establishes discovery of the Jihad and reason to join using just the most common and easy to write parts of canon.

**Bad Idea:** *"but he is reluctant to divulge any details about his life before he jumped into the solar system in a stolen Lyran space fighter"*

Now this, this is *bad*. Unless you're a group of Maenads, you wouldn't steal a Lyran ship, you would maybe get within sight of a Lyran ship before the lower-circle Lyran mages guarding it caught you and spent a few decades torturing you just to impress a superior. Or the ship would eat you.

Along that line, reading through some of the profiles of current Jihad characters before you get too far into creating your character is a good idea, not only just to see what other characters look like and how people have developed them, but so you don't unknowingly do something too many other people have done and end up looking cliché.

## PROFILING

You write a character profile to define him/her/it/them within the Jihad Universe and also to help others understand and possibly write about your character.

As with all other writing, grammar is god. Care should be taken for description, development, history, etc. Good writing, and hence good stories and roleplay, depend on solid character development.

**Good Idea:** *"Personality notes: [She] is stubborn as hell. She only listens to you when she wants to, and will often disagree*

## In re: Munchkins

Earlier versions of this book had, among other things, a number of dire warnings and rules regarding the use and abuse of the rules for the purpose of powergaming. Or in simpler terms, being a munchkin.

Most of these warnings and rules have since been removed, as they were really meant to correct problems with the internal freeform game that have long ago been solved. Beating people who aren't in the internal group over the head with the No-Munchkin stick seemed, well, a bit insulting.

As far as munchkinism in and of itself goes, frankly we're not fond of it, but as vices go it beats acting out hyper-violent fantasies with loaded weapons, so we let it slide. As far as munchkinism goes in the freeform roleplay, our rule of thumb is "if it's written well, we'll be more likely to let it go through than otherwise." We figure that if your players are bright enough to create a munchkinistic character and then play it well, they should be allowed to.

It's open season on nitwits who like to max out their stats and act like the Punisher instead of actually roleplay, though.

(For more on munchkins, their habits and methods of controlling the evil little buggers, we highly recommend *The Munchkins Guide to Power Gaming*.)



for the sake of being ornery. Has a horrible temper when she gets upset or frustrated.”

Great. Brief but still descriptive; the sentences that should be short are short, the sentences that should be longer are longer. The profile goes on, but just this bit very quickly and easily establishes an image of what the character's like. And the spelling has been checked. (Special note: contrary to what your eighth grade teacher told you, starting a sentence with and is kosher, you just have to know what you're doing.)

**Bad Idea:** “Nearly always in a pseudo uniform, generally wears a Black vest w/ lots of pockets over a Gray Long sleeved shirt, Woodland camo BDU pants, pistol belt, Black leather combat boots.”

This person never learned sentence combining, or proper capitalization. Compare that with “Prefers clothing which looks as if it could be part of some sort of uniform. A black multi-pocketed utility vest worn over a grey shirt and BDU-style camouflaged pants with standard-issue black combat boots are his normal.” A bit more wordy perhaps, but it does far more to evoke an image. As with several other things, grammar problems can be fixed easily. Review your own writing a while after you've written it, and also find a couple other people to review it for you.

Also important is how you write a profile, that it's structured properly to give the right information in the right way. Just lists of abilities, skills, attributes, and weaknesses are pretty lifeless and boring and don't really give that



much useful information about the character. (Listing your character's abilities and such is important, but it has to be incorporated into a profile the right way, it doesn't make up a good profile on its own.)

A good way to get a good profile down is to think of your character in the third person. Try to think about what you think other people should know and what you want them to know in order to write about your character and role-play with him/her/it, not necessarily everything you've personally thought up about the character. When in doubt about something to include in your profile, ask yourself “Do I want people I role-play with to know this about my character when they write?” or “If I was writing about somebody else's character, would I want to know this?”

A suggested format is the one I used for my character available at <http://www.jihad.net/ju2rpg/profile.txt>

written from the perspective of a Jihad-wide personnel department. Give some important statistics for the character (with some explanation and description), write a short history, then use a third-person analysis to cover personality and anything else that didn't come out in the rest of the profile (such as weaknesses, they come out much better written about as personality traits than just listed somewhere). This format isn't a requirement though, just a suggestion for those who might be having trouble because it worked well for me.

That covers one **Good Idea**.

**Bad Idea:** “Profile: A slightly out of order character history that relies heavily on context that isn't written into the profile (this sort of thing is common, but gives no information that would be really useful to somebody writing about the character).” “Skills: He has a shrewd business sense and a great understanding of economics. He can understand several languages. He is a skilled marksman. He is a competent swordsman. He is a skilled pilot.” (While marginally useful information, the profile I took this from was only slightly more descriptive and less bland.) “Other abilities: Blah blah blah...” (Now this is just silly, a second bland skills list.) “Weapons/paraphernalia:” (Another list, with a little explanation this time. This sort of thing can occasionally be made to work but usually doesn't, most of the time it works better when integrated into other parts of the profile.)



Read some of the profiles out there for yourself; it should become quickly apparent which work and which don't, and what sort of format would suit you best.

Usually, your character needs a history. If your character's background changes from story to story, it not only gets confusing for the reader but it makes for pretty bad gaming. At the same time, don't spend all your time developing your character's personal history, only a minimum is required to fit a profile into Jihad canon. If you have a more complete, detailed personal history for your character, that's great, but it's usually better off in a separate origin story.

And when you have a draft of your profile done, find a couple people to look at it and edit it for you. Not just somebody who'll read over it once and say it's fine, but people who are going to seriously review it for you, people who are going to be critical about grammar and willing to tell you if you created a munchkin. Your profile will benefit the same as anything else you write, if you've got people who are willing to critique it somewhat harshly and if you do a few revisions based on that critique.

Writing and roleplaying is about being creative, having fun, and enjoying yourself. Other players and writers should be able to get a feel for your character's nature after interacting, or reading about it.

## ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES AND SKILLS

This section discusses advantages, disadvantages and skills as they apply in a Jihad Universe campaign. As usual, the GM has the last word when it comes to interpretations, modifications

or what have you in the campaign.

### ADVANTAGES

#### **PATRON (THE JIHAD) SEE P. B72**

The Jihad takes care of its own, and since the Jihad as a group is fairly small compared to most militaries, that applies to everybody in it.

As a Patron, the Jihad is a powerful organization (20 points) with special abilities above and beyond the standard mundane norm (+100%), resulting in a 40-point Patron. Independent operatives working away from the Jihad's organizational structure (see *Solo Warriors*, p. 70) may take the Jihad as a Secret or possibly Unwilling Patron.

The Jihad's patronage comes at the price of a Duty, and of having Barney & Friends as a formidable Enemy. Many new Jihaddi had Barney as an Enemy beforehand, though, so this might not be as onerous as it would first appear.

#### **PATRON (FERAL JACKSON)**

SEE P. B72

Maenad characters can, in a pinch, call for help from their demigod Feral Jackson. Jackson however doesn't always like to be called, and will not respond well (-1 to all reaction rolls, -2 if it doesn't involve Lyrans) if called for a non-trivial reason.

If the GM feels like it, Jackson's patronage may be held as a secret Advantage should the character be considered a candidate for Maenadship.

#### **PATRON (GRIMACE) SEE P. B72**

Members of the Brotherhood of Grimace can call on the Lord of the Fries (don't look at us like that, we just report this stuff) in a tight situation. Grimace, however, is not somebody who is summoned lightly, and doesn't always come when he's called,

so treat him as an infrequent Ally (roll a 6 or less) unless Barney himself is in the area. If Barney is nearby and the Brother knows that, any attempt to summon Grimace will automatically succeed.

#### **PATRON (ST. DINO) SEE P. B72**

Members of the Church of St. Dino the Avenger can call on their patron saint for aid in an emergency. The saint will respond in person if the situation is dire enough, but for less-dire problems St. Dino is more likely to create a distraction by remote, such as causing every television within 2d hexes to start playing *Flintstones* reruns. Abusing the privilege of calling on St. Dino's protection may result in the awarding of the Weirdness Magnet disadvantage.

#### **A NOTE**

For the purposes of gameplay, the divine Patrons listed should be considered as 20-point Patrons with the Minimal Intervention or Unwilling limitations as described on p. B74.

**HARD TO SPONGE +5/LEVEL TO +15**

#### **(0 FOR MUNDANES)**

You have a natural resistance to the effects of spongification; it takes more than a few dozen repetitions of the I Luv You Song to break your mind. Characters with this advantage get an extra +2 to Will rolls against spongification per level. Mundane characters (which aren't going to deal with sponges or spongification on a regular basis) can take this advantage for zero points



at the GM's discretion.

## ILLUMINATED SEE P. B60

Illuminated characters instinctively know what's going on, so they make lousy mundanes. An Illuminated character doesn't have to be a member of an Illuminated organization, but it's likely that the organizations will seek that character out as a potential member. The Jihad prizes Illuminated people as master strategists in the Hidden War — they know instinctively where the enemy is plotting, and where to strike.

## MILITARY RANK SEE P. B29

Rank is respected by members of the Jihad (an automatic +1 Status for any superior-ranking Jihaddi meeting another), although that respect may not necessarily equate to respectful behavior.

## UNUSUAL BACKGROUND

SEE P. B96

An Unusual Background is almost

standard procedure for most Jihaddi PCs. Looking through character profiles dating back to the Golden Age, it's hard to find a character that *didn't* have one form of Unusual Background or another. GM's option to let less powerful characters have Unusual Backgrounds, but for ex-mundane characters the cost should be at least 15 points.

## DISADVANTAGES

### ENEMY (BARNEY AND FRIENDS)

SEE P. B135

Barney may love you, but he has a funny way of showing it.

High-ranking Jihaddi may take Barney and his minions as formidable (-30 to -40 points) enemies, who will always show up on a 9 or less. You may adjust that point value depending on how often your character is involved in field work. Lower-ranked Jihaddi who deal more with the minions than the generals may decrease the point cost as needed.

Example: A team of rookie Dober-

mans may regularly cross swords (on a 12 or less) with the local cell of sponge-minions (a -10 point Enemy group), so they would have a -20 Enemy in that sponge cell. Meanwhile, Most Holy, enigmatic commander of MAUL, leads his troops into combat (literally; they're often racing just to catch up to him) against the Purple Forces' best armor divisions (a -30 point Enemy) quite frequently (on a 12 or less), thus making Barney and Friends a -60 point enemy for MoHo.

### SPONGIFIED -60 POINTS

You are completely under the thrall of the Demon Lord B'harne, and are completely unable to think for yourself. A character with this disadvantage has the cumulative effects of Cannot Learn, Chummy, Confused, Dull and Extreme Fanaticism. You cannot buy this disadvantage off without somebody else desponging your character.

### RECOVERING SPONGE-MINION -5 POINTS

## MILITARY RANKS IN THE JIHAD UNIVERSE

RANK	JIHAD HIGH COMMAND	TRES CORPS	DOBERMAN EMPIRE	VRDET	MAUL	JPV	PURPLE FORCES
6	Triumvir Praetor	Grand Admiral	Fleet Commander	Director	Commander In Chief	Arch-Chancellor	B'harne, Charn'El
5	Triumvir Adjunct	Admiral Vice Admiral Rear Admiral	—	Deputy Director Director Emeritus	Colonel	2nd Torus	8th Circle Lyran
4	Liaison Coordinator Inspector-General	Commodore Captain	Commander	Field Commander	Lt. Colonel	3rd Dodecahedron 4th Cube	Lyran Mages (5th-7th Circles) Lyran Liaison
3	Senior Liaison	Commander	Centurion	Senior Operative Senior Technician	Major Captain	5th Diamond	Thinker Wyrmin-Minion
2	Quartermaster Liaison	Lieutenant Lieutenant j.g.	Warrior	Field Operative Technician	Lieutenant Lieutenant j.g.	6th Rectangle	Friendly Boss
1	—	Ensign	Trooper	Junior Operative Junior Technician	Sergeant Corporal	7th Oval 8th Square	—
0	—	Recruit	Recruit	Recruit	Recruit	9th Triangle	"Special Friend"



The character has just recently come out of an extended period of spongification, and has yet to readjust to their normal IQ. Creates a -1 penalty to all IQ-related rolls and +10 for any attempt to respond while the character is afflicted. This disadvantage can be bought off after 3d days and a successful Will roll.

## VULNERABILITY: SPONGIFICATION

**-5/LEVEL TO -15**

**(0 FOR MUNDANES)**

For whatever reason, you have a natural susceptibility to the siren call of B'harne's spells; you will fall into spongification far faster than the people around you. Characters with this disadvantage get a -2 penalty per level on Will rolls against spongification. Mundane characters (which aren't going to deal with sponges or spongification on a regular basis) can take this disadvantage for zero points at the GM's discretion.

## SKILLS

### BEAM WEAPONS/TL9 (X-RIFLE) (DX/AVERAGE)

This is the ability to use the Jihad's primary infantry weapon, the TRES X-Rifle plasma blaster. Add 1 to your skill for a DX of 10 or 11, and 2 for a DX of 12 or better. *Modifiers:* -2 if you're used to a similar weapon (e.g., the Blood Jihad laser pistol that's been your close companion since you started adventuring); -4 for an X-Rifle that's in poor condition; -4 or more if you're used to 20th-century handguns and not Jihad-make energy weapons.

### DESPONGE (IQ/HARD)

This is the ability to remove the

## Spongification

Spongification is the process through which Barney enslaves his minions and keeps them otherwise under his direct control. This is usually accomplished through repeated viewings of the Barney TV show, along with singing the theme song over and over until the subject's brain begins to ooze out of his ears. It can also be done through magic, psionics, or a direct encounter with the Hellwurm itself.

When under the gun of active spongification attempts (as opposed to a minion idly humming the theme song under his breath or something; this has to be an actual attempt to spongify somebody), make a Will roll every 2d minutes that you're in the area or the spongifying material is active. Each failure erodes your Will by 1. When your Will is 5 points below your IQ, you become Spongified and require either rescuing or a quick death. A critical success on any Will roll during this contest means that the attack has failed. A critical failure means that the attack has succeeded.

influence of B'harne from an affected person. This skill is different from the Desponge spells in that no magic is required, only an understanding of the spongification process and the most common mental antitoxins (rock music, high-sugar/fat foods, caffeine, etc.). On a successful skill roll, you can desponge a single individual with the speed of the Instant Desponge spell. A critical success will also desponge any other minions that happen to be within 2d hexes! A failed skill roll will not affect the target.

### RECOGNIZE SPONGE-MINION (PER/AVERAGE)

You can see sponge-minions! The telltale mannerisms of the average spongin are revealed clear as if they were wearing a big neon sign on their foreheads. On a successful skill roll, you can determine if the person you're looking at is a sponge-minion or not. On a critical success, you will determine the spongin status of everybody within sight. However, on a critical failure, you will mistakenly tag a non-sponged person as a minion, and act accordingly.

### SAVOIR-FAIRE (JIHAD) (IQ/EASY)

This is the skill of knowing how the Jihad works; the customs, traditions and regulations of his JAO and the Jihad in general. It also details the unwritten rules: what's acceptable and what's not, even if there's no regulation about it, how to horse-trade for specialized equipment, how to rise in the ranks and why VRDET really keeps that slacker elf on the Mt. Blanca night desk.

### RITUAL MAGIC (LYRAN) (IQ/VERY HARD)

*Prerequisites: Magery 2, Thaumatology-15 or higher*

This skill allows you to understand the spiritual and intellectual basis of Lyran rituals. Lyran magic is very literally millennia more advanced than anything humans have created to date, and as such it is incredibly difficult for a human mage to understand. On a successful skill roll, you will know exactly what is being attempted. On a critical success, you will know the exact particulars and will be able to attempt the ritual yourself.

For a human performing a Lyran





## Weapons Table

### BEAM WEAPONS (X-RIFLE) (DX-4, OTHER BEAM WEAPONS -4, OR GUNS (RIFLE) -4)

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	ROF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Notes
Mk. 1 X-Rifle	3d(5) burn	10+2	300/900	21/3	15!	150(3)	10	-5	1	[1, 2]
Mk. 2 X-Rifle	9d(5) burn	10+2	700/2100	14/3	3	80(3)	7	-4	1	[2]

### BEAM WEAPONS (X-PISTOL) (DX-4, OTHER BEAM WEAPONS -4, OR GUNS (PISTOL) -4)

X-Pistol	4d(5) burn	5	160/470	1.6/0.5	3	20(3)	4	-2	1	
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### GUNS (GRENADE LAUNCHER) (DX-4, OR MOST OTHER GUNS AT -4)

Under-Barrel 30mm	7d cr ex[3d]	4+2	650	-1.8	3/1	3(3)	10	-	3	[3]
Autochunker	7d cr ex[3d]	3	900	75/40	10!	80(6)	20M	-8	2	

### GUNS (LAW) (DX-4, OR MOST OTHER GUNS AT -4)

APATHy	6dx6(10)cr ex	3+2	350/1800	16/6	3	3x5(4)	13	-7	1	[4]
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### GUNS (RIFLE) (DX-4, OR MOST OTHER GUNS AT -4)

RG-47	6dx2(3) pi-	7+5	2300/15000	43/7	1	30(3)	12B	-7	4	
SMR	7d(0.5) pi+	4+2	400/1800	10/2	8	45(3)	9	-4	c	[5]

### GUNS (PAW) (DX-4, OR MOST OTHER GUNS AT -4)

PAW	6dx6(10)cr ex	3	600/2600	7/1	2	2(3i)	18	-3	4	
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### GUNS (W-RIFLE) (DX-4, OR MOST OTHER GUNS AT -4)

W-Rifle	Special	-	75/400	18/3	1	1(4)	11	-6	3	[6]
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### NOTES:

[1] Overheats; the third turn that it is fired at the full ROF and every turn after, the firer takes 1d of burning damage to their hands, with DR protecting as normal. Once overheating, it takes 2 rounds without firing at all until the rifle is cooled. If more than 90 shots are fired continuously, roll 3d; on a 15 or higher the internal mechanisms of the rifle fuse. Every additional turn fired while overheating, the target number decreases by 1.

[2] Fitted with integral 30mm grenade launcher standard.

[3] ROF 3 for semiautomatic Mk.1 X-Rifle, 1 for pump action Mk.2 X-Rifle. Otherwise identical.

[4] 3 magazines total; each can be loaded with a different ammunition type and reloaded independently.

[5] Damage includes modifier from fragmenting ammunition.

[6] Attack is a cone that spreads to 10 feet tall by 30 feet wide. Any target within the cone takes 7d (plus or minus 1d for each size modifier greater or less than 0) 1d6(10) cuts. If any of these cuts are stopped by armor (penetrate less than 2xDR) the net travels no further than that target.

ritual, roll against Ritual Magic again - a critical success will mean the ritual worked. A success will not trigger the spell but will also not affect the mage or the surroundings. A failure will mean the ritual backfires on the mage, causing 1D6 damage. A critical failure will

mean a catastrophic backfire, causing the mage to explode and 3D6 damage to everything in the surrounding area (the room, bystanders, objects, etc.).

**SYMBOL DRAWING (LYRAN) (IQ/  
VERY HARD)**

This is the art of understanding and creating Lyran magic symbols as used in their spellcraft. This skill determines the character's knowledge of the symbols and his ability to draw them; people with the appropriate Ritual Magic skill may understand the symbols, but



may be unable to draw them properly.

The symbols help in conducting rituals. For every 2 points by which the practitioner makes his Symbol Drawing roll, add +1 to the ritual conducted over it. Symbols must be redrawn each time it is used for another ritual. Lyran symbols can be drawn with non-traditional materials (and considering the “traditional” materials used by the Lyrans, this is a very good thing indeed), but they are usually less effective: +1 for every 3 points of success.

## XENOLOGY (LYRAN) (IQ/HARD)

This is a basic overall knowledge (at least what the Jihad has been able to determine) of the Lyran species: biology, history, culture, mores and psychology. This information is extremely limited in the Jihad Universe, as the Lyrans come from so very far away and don't leave much in the way of talkative captives (if they leave captives at all). A successful Xenology roll will give +1 to any Tactics or Strategy roll if the opposing force is believed to be led by Lyrans. Maenads get an automatic +1 to their Xenology rolls, as the servants of Feral Jackson have much more familiarity with the Lyrans than normal humans or parahumans.

## XENOLOGY (BARNOID) (IQ/HARD)

This is a basic overall knowledge (even sketchier than the Lyran information) of the extradimensional entities that B'harne has imported from wherever he came from originally. This includes Loved Ones, the Changed, the Hellwyrms' subordinates and even Barney himself. As above, a successful Xenology roll will give +1 to Tactics or Strategy rolls in combat situations involving any of these creatures.

## NEW SPELLS

### GRADUAL DESPONGE

#### REGULAR

Lets the caster remove the spongification effect from a person gradually. After one hour of exposure to this spell, target is fully and permanently relieved of the effects of spongification. As a side bonus, the subject gains a permanent +1 to save against future attempts at spongification.

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Cost:** 1 to cast; 1 to maintain.

**Time to cast:** 5 minutes

**Prerequisite:** Wisdom

### INSTANT DESPONGE

#### REGULAR

Removes the effect of spongification from the target very, very quickly. Target does not, however, gain the +1 bonus to save against future spongification attempts.

**Duration:** 10 seconds

**Cost:** 4 to cast; no maintenance

**Time to cast:** 10 seconds

**Prerequisite:** Gradual Desponge

### MASS DESPONGE

#### AREA; RESISTED BY IQ

Lets the caster attempt to desponge large numbers of people at one blow. Each sponge in the area affected is given one chance every 10 minutes to roll against their natural IQ to shake off the effects of spongification. Has the additional effect of engaging all beings in the area who fail a save vs. IQ — and the caster automatically — in some naturally-desponging activity: music, discussion, etc. Nonsponged beings shake off the effects in seconds; sponges must wait until desponged or until the spell ends, whichever is first.

Expensive, complex, dangerous, and less certain of result, it is of use in limited situations, but can have dramatic effects when used appropriately.

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Cost:** 1 per hex to cast; 1 per hex to maintain

**Time to cast:** 5 minutes

## CHARACTERS

This section discusses concepts for characters in a Jihad Universe campaign. Most of these character concepts were developed for a standard human adventurer, but they don't automatically have to be strictly human. The GM is perfectly within her rights to prevent players from adapting the Jihad templates to any species she deems unacceptable for her campaign.

## JIHADDI

The Jihad as a group tends to have a pretty exotic roster, non-mundane advantages like Cybernetics, Magery and Illuminated can be taken, though it might require extra points in Unusual Background depending on the extremity of the advantages.

### BASIC JIHADDI -25 POINTS

This is the “basic training” template that every Jihaddi gets a crash course in when they sign up. Depending on previous experience or existing character quirks, some of the listed skills (but *not* the advantages or disadvantages!) may not apply, be swapped out for similar skills, or may be taken at higher levels. The GM has final say on who can take what skills above and beyond this basic list.

**Advantages:** Patron (the Jihad, special abilities, +100%) [40].

**Disadvantages:** Enemy (Barney & Friends, 12 or less; Hunter) [-60];



## Armor Table

Type	Location	DR	Weight	Notes
Concealed	torso	12/4	2	[1,2,3]
Infantry	full suit	20/10	10	[1,3]
+addon plates	torso	+20	5	[4]
+arm plates	arms	+10	4	[4]
+leg plates	legs	+15	6	[4]
<i>Wrath of Arioch</i>	full suit	180/80	550	[5,6,7]
+helmet	head	140/60	25	[5,8]

### NOTES:

[1]Split DR: use the first, higher DR against piercing, cutting and burning attacks; use the second against all other damage types.

[2]Concealable as or under clothing.

[3]Stats given without addon armor... typical issue is with one layer of plates though many only wear the torso plate.

[4]Addon plates are modular: up to 2 layers may be added.

[5]Split DR: use the higher DR only if the attack strikes the torso (if body armor) or skull (if headgear).

[6]Requires Battlesuit skill. Gives Lifting ST+20, Striking ST+20 and Super Jump 1. With its helmet in place, it also grants Doesn't Breathe (for 12 hours), Protected Smell, Sealed, and Vacuum Support. Do not count suit weight towards encumbrance.

[7]Integrated weaponry. Includes HMG (as B281 except range reduced to 800/3500), 30mm grenade launcher (as integrated grenade launcher for Mk.1 X-Rifle with Shots of 20(3i)) and 3mm railgun (DMG: 8d(3)pi-, Acc: 7+2 Range 1200/4800, ROF: 3, Shots: 40(3i)) All weaponry includes smart-gun electronics.

[8]Provides Protected Hearing, Protected Vision, Radio, Absolute Direction (requires signal) Infravision, Night Vision 9, 1 level of Telescopic Vision, and a heads-up display compatible with "smartgun" electronics (B278).

Duty (to the Jihad) [-15].

**Skills:** Soldier/TL9-IQ [2]; Beam Weapons/TL9 (X-Rifle or JAO-standard equivalent)-IQ [1]; Electronics Operation/TL9 (Jihadlinker)-IQ [2]; Electronics Operation/TL9 (Sponge Detector)-IQ [2]; First Aid/TL9-IQ [1]; Melee Weapons (Shortsword)-DX-1 [1]; Brawling-DX [1].

### SOLDIER

Without soldiers, the Jihad would

not exist. Since the Jihad is a paramilitary operation at heart, soldiers make up the bulk of the forces. Many of the Jihad's troopers have had some experience with mundane militaries prior to joining, usually as volunteers straight out of high school. (The Jihad tends to attract young people to the rank and file.) A handful are retired military personnel brought in to provide experienced leadership, often as a favor to one or another of the commanding officers. Others are adventurers from the fringes of mundane society who stumbled into



a Jihad operation and decided to join for their own reasons.

Every single man at arms is different — magic, psionics, odd combat styles, and other things never found in a "normal" military unit are very abundant in the Jihad's standing army. Surprisingly enough, this diverse group of people manages to work well as a single, cohesive group under combat conditions, despite all the differences they have when not working.

**Advantages:** Acute Senses, Combat Reflexes, Damage Resistance, Hard to Kill and Rapid Healing are traditional choices for a soldier. Allies are a good choice as well. (Though squadmates shouldn't be taken as Allies in anything but non-combat situations; when you're in the field you're *supposed* to back each other up!) Trained By A Master, Weapons Master or Gunslinger are good skills for high-level soldier characters.



*Disadvantages:* Mental disadvantages like Bad Temper, Bloodlust, Cal- lous, Flashbacks, Fanaticism, Loner or Obsession are common in Jihaddi combat personnel, as are various Ad- dictions and Alcoholism. Most Jihaddi soldiers have a military Code of Honor, and often take a Vow or a Duty above and beyond what they sign on for with the Jihad. Most of the really serious mental and physical disadvantages are weeded out pretty quickly, though; mil- itary duty with the Jihad is very hard on the unfit.

*Skills:* Weapons skills - projectile and melee; the Jihad has as many sword- swingers as it does gunslingers - are an obvious choice, of course. Strategy and Tactics are also pretty obvious choices. Survival and Urban Survival are useful, especially if combat involves long slogs through empty country. Specialists can take Driving(Armored Vehicles), Pi- loting, Crewman, Leadership, or other skills to distinguish, say, a combat pilot from an ordinary ground pounder.

## VRDET SCOUT

Scout troops differ from the main- stream soldiers primarily in their mind- set. As members of VRDET's "first in" force, scouts tend to have to move faster and more covertly than the av- erage Jihaddi military member. Also, given VRDET's unorthodox approach to military affairs, there is a great deal more variety in the average scout team than in any other Jihad military unit. Scouts often have to deal with situa- tions that other Jihaddi wouldn't go into without massive amounts of back- up, and they have to do it *quietly*.

*Advantages:* Scout troops have many of the same advantages as the av- erage Jihaddi soldier. VRDET scouts may also develop more unusual Allies, Contacts or Contact Groups - partic- ularly if their missions take them off- world on a regular basis. Beyond the

usual military advantages, scouts would find social skills like Cultural Adapt- ability and Language Talent very useful on their missions. Scouts with enough of an Unusual Background could take the Jumper advantage; that kind of ability is highly prized by VRDET.

*Disadvantages:* Again, most disad- vantages the VRDET scout would have are mostly mental in nature; the nature of field duty with the Jihad weeds out the physically unfit. VRDET scouts tend to be Unique in nature, or happen to be Weirdness Magnets. (which is often how they found the Jihad in the

first place!)

*Skills:* Beyond the usual gamut of Soldier and weapons skills to taste, the VRDET scout ought to know Survival, Urban Survival, Scrounging, Piloting (VRDET Scout Aircraft), Leadership, Tracking and Mechanic. Expert and wildcard skills, particularly in fields re- lating to the care and feeding of VR- DET equipment or VRDET's area of operations are also good for high-level scout characters.

## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT





As the war progresses, the Jihad needs to keep itself current with the enemy. To accomplish this end, each JAO has a sizable staff of researchers and technicians, devoted to creating new weapons, collecting and sorting through intelligence reports, and generally ensuring that the Jihad can defeat the worst that the Hellwyrms and its comrades can throw at them.

Researchers are often recruited at occult gatherings, science-fiction conventions, or other places where large numbers of educated and intelligent people with an interest in unusual phenomenon gather. Often, the recruit will have learned of the Jihad through his own studies and interest, and be asked to join.

*Advantages:* The nature of research and development in the Jihad often means that things can get hectic very quickly. As a result, advantages like Danger Sense, Combat Reflexes, Damage Resistance and Daredevil are extremely valuable in keeping researchers and inventors alive. Mental advantages such as Lightning Calculator and Language Talent also can come in handy. Talents of all shapes and sizes are also highly sought after by Jihaddi research divisions.

*Disadvantages:* Researchers are one of the few jobs in the Jihad that allow for physical disadvantages; even if the bodies are Unfit, the brains behind them are the critical asset. Researchers also tend to be Curious, have some of the classic nerd stereotype disadvantages like Clueless and Oblivious, and may have Obsessions about their work. Thanks to backfiring experiments, many weapons inventors have Brontophobia or Pyrophobia. Pacifism is also possible, but only occurs in the most sheltered researchers in the Jihad.

*Skills:* Scientific and technical skills are at the forefront. Armoury, Electrician and Mechanic are important parts

of keeping the Jihad's technical base operational. Computer Operation/TL9 is an absolute must, as is Research. Professional Skills from mundane lives may be of some use, especially if the character was a practicing scientist or engineer in her "day job." Wildcard skills (particularly the ever-popular Science! skill) can come in handy if the PC is supposed to be a polymath like Reed Richards or Doc Savage.

### OCCULTIST

Occultists are a specialized variant on researchers. Their job is to sift through the masses of folklore and mystical dross that 10,000 years of human civilization have produced in order to find the bits that actually *work*.

For the longest time, the Jihad didn't have a specific occult branch, despite the obvious mystic power of their enemies. When the JPV was founded, they quickly began working to separate the true mystic knowledge from the legends. Occultists also are the ones called into attempt to unravel the mysteries of B'harne.

*Advantages:* Occultists have much in the way of advantages as less esoteric researchers, but the nature of their work means they get a few more. Magery is, of course, the most obviously important one; without it, no occultist could prove that their project worked. Analyzing rituals from all over the world and history means Cultural Adaptability and Familiarity become important to sorting through ritual magic. Occultists also often pick up divine Patrons during the course of their researches. Psychic advantages such as Telepathy or Telekinesis are also valuable of the Jihaddi occultist.

*Disadvantages:* Occultists suffer from many of the same disadvantages as researchers, and often the same sorts of more unusual disadvantages as VR-DET scout troopers. Furthermore, the

occultist can pick up Enemies outside the normal scope of the Jihad's mission, not to mention the occasional Curse, from poking around in spots where Man Was Not Meant To Go.

*Skills:* Magical and outside-the-mainstream skills like Alchemy, Ritual Magic, Religious Ritual, Hidden Lore and Esoteric Medicine dominate the occultist's skill list. Research is, again, an important skill. Depending on the nature of the occultist's research, more mundane skills like Anthropology, Archaeology or Forensics may come in handy.

### LIAISONS

The liaison walks a very fine (and oftentimes dangerous) line between the Jihad and the rest of the world. Liaisons are Jihaddi who operate safehouses and dummy corporations, or work as members of a mundane organization (such as the police or local government). The liaison's main job is to keep the Jihad's operations safely undercover, protect any Jihaddi who are dumb enough to get caught out in the open, and spread enough misinformation about the Jihad that nobody in the mundane world knows the truth.

Liaisons are usually people who still have families outside the Jihad, or some other obligation that prevents them from going completely underground. This makes the liaison something of a security risk, since should the enemy find out about a liaison and his/her loved ones, it could make life very dangerous for that liaison.

*Advantages:* Liaisons have Contacts and Allies. Lots of them; it is, after all, their job. They also tend to build up on social advantages like Claim to Hospitality and Alternate Identity. (All Jihaddi liaisons are Zeroed to begin with, just to make it easier to place them as needed.) Many have Appearance modifiers that make it easier for them to win



friends and influence people.

*Disadvantages:* More than any other type of Jihaddi, the liaison is burdened with the Secret disadvantage. Since liaisons are expected to work in the mundane realm without getting caught, they are the most “at risk” members of the Jihad for getting caught. To compound the problem, some liaisons also end up with mundane Dependents as part of their cover.

*Skills:* The liaison needs skills like Acting, Fast-Talk and Politics to survive. Weapons skills aren’t as emphasized in liaison training. (Except for the ever-important Holdout.) Investigation skills like Forensics, Interrogation and Intelligence Analysis can be used by liaisons who are new on the job or investigating a specific threat. When working with non-liaison Jihaddi, skills like Diplomacy, Leadership, Counterfeiting and Pickpocket can come in handy when getting out of a tight spot of three.

## INSTRUCTOR

Often, new Jihaddi are young and very inexperienced. In combat, this can be an incredibly dangerous situation — for themselves and the people around them. So, to cut down on the number of rookies getting themselves killed on their first mission, each JAO has a group of experienced officers whose job it is to train the younger recruits in the ancient arts of killing other living things.

At the same time, research and technical staffs have teachers as well. In addition to getting the new people up to speed with the Jihad’s existing technology (which is, on average, around 50 years ahead of current state-of-the-art, with few exceptions), the research/tech instructors hold frequent seminars to allow the entire staff to stay current structure of whichever field they’re involved in.

*Advantages:* Instructors in the Jihad tend to be military first and foremost, so they will have the usual advantages given to a line soldier or scout. Higher-level advantages like Trained By A Master or Weapons Master are also popular among instructors - they’re often passing along skills to the new folks. Since most instructors are expected to at least pretend to be stereotypical drill instructors, Penetrating Voice is carefully cultivated.

*Disadvantages:* Mental disadvantages like Callous and Bully are part of the stereotype, although it should be noted that these are *not* prerequisites for an instructor! Jihaddi instructors are often recalled from the field after some sort of injury, so physical disadvantages like One Arm or Bad Sight are possible (though they may be rectified by cybernetics) as are the usual gamut of battle-field-related mental problems.

*Skills:* Teaching, obviously, is a major component of what makes or breaks an instructor. Military-oriented instructors will also have Tactics, Strategy and Leadership, along with a range of weapons and martial arts skills. Research or occultist instructors will have skillsets according to their specializations. Diplomacy and Politics are also helpful when dealing with large inter-JAO classes.

## MAENAD 222 POINTS

*Advantages:* Alternate Form (Maenad: ST+16; DX+2, HT+2; Enhanced Dodge; DR 2; Claws (Talons, Armor Divisor (2) on damage inflicted, +50%); Uncontrollable, -10%) [222]\*; Patron (Feral Jackson, base 20; Accessible by supplication, +50%; 6 or less, x1/2) [15].

*Disadvantages:* Bloodlust (12 or less, Lyrans only) [-5]; Stress Atavism (mild) [-10].

\*Each Maenad has a slightly different set of advantages in their alternate

forms, but the listed stats here represent the basic setup of strength, agility, claws and bad attitude.

## PURPLE FORCES

Barney’s armies aren’t nearly as diverse as the Jihad. The Purple Forces break down into two major groups; sponge-minions and wyrm-minions. Or as the Jihad likes to term it, “cannon fodder and actual threats.”

## SPONGIN

The lowly sponge-minion is the most common element in B’harne’s forces, and all are simplistic in the extreme. Even a “smart” sponge minion would only be capable of operating extremely simple machines, and most can merely simple follow orders. “Are you my friend?” and various things about B’harne being good constitutes most of what sponge minions would say; there is little character template for them because they have little character.

*Advantages:* They’ve got B’harne as a Patron, and if they’re lucky, they’ve got Hard To Kill and Damage Resistance. Otherwise, they’re out of luck.

*Disadvantages:* All spongins come with Spongified, which is more than enough of a disadvantage as it is. Still, they often have Social Stigma (drooling lunatic) among mundanes and non-spongins.

*Skills:* They’ve got the barest understanding of ranged and melee weapons, and they know how to sing the Barney song. That’s about it.

## WYRM MINIONS

Wyrms far more varied than spongins, as they serve as mercenaries or quislings instead of as hypnotized slaves. They can be scientists, engineers, soldiers, businessmen, lawyers, and some of the nasty ones are even



politicians.

A wyrm minion might join B'harne's cause out a lust for power, greed, a general hatred of humanity or some darker impulse only known to them. More independent-minded mercenaries join for the chance to become rich, or to acquire some sort of powerful technology or occult knowledge.

These mercenaries make up the middle ranks of the Purple Forces, filling niches where the mindless behavior of the spongin or the esoteric alienness of the Lyrans can't. They are all dependent on B'harne, as they can't fulfill their goals without his support, but they can't be fully trusted, either - backbiting and intrigues between wyrm minions are as natural as breathing to many of them, and quickly learned by the rest.

While most wyrm minions start out as mundane humans, there are a handful of more esoteric creatures in their ranks. Non-mundane wyrm minions are quickly swept up into the higher ranks, becoming Liaisons or Changed at B'harne's whim.

## LYRAN LIAISONS

The Lyran Liaisons are the most skilled wyrm minions, and are often highly specialized. They don't have a specific template as such, but should instead be built as individual characters. The only thing each Liaison has in common is a high Military Rank (see chart, p.85) in the Purple Forces and a specialized Patron in B'harne.

## LOVED ONE -4 POINTS

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+2 [20]; DX+1 [20]

**Advantages:** Acute Hearing 2 [4]; Acute Taste and Smell 2 [4]; Claws (Sharp) [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Damage Resistance 2 [10]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Nictating Membrane 1 [1]; Rapid Healing

[5]; Teeth (Fangs) [2].

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Monstrous) [-20]; Bad Sight (near-sighted) [-25]; Cannot Speak [-15]; Slave Mentality [-40].

## SAETHERIAN 2 POINTS

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+3 [30]; DX+1 [20]; IQ-1 [-20]; HT+2 [20].

**Advantages:** Acute Hearing 3 [6]; Acute Vision 3 [6]; Breath-Holding 1 [2]; Claws (Talons) [8]; Constriction Attack [15]; Double-Jointed [15]; Hard to Kill 2 [4]; Teeth (Sharp) [1].

**Disadvantages:** Cannot Speak [-15]; No Fine Manipulators [-30]; No Legs (Slithers) [0]; Slave Mentality [-40].

## LYRAN 177 POINTS

The following is a basic racial template for an average Lyran on Earth duty. Skills, advantages, disadvantages and even attributes can vary depending on specialization, but this template covers a "natural" Lyran:

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST-1 [-10]; DX+1 [20]; IQ+1 [20].

**Secondary Attributes:** Will+2 [5]; Per+2 [5]; FP+5 [15].

**Languages:** High Lyran (Native) [0]; Vulgate Lyran (Native) [6].

**Advantages:** Animal Empathy [5]; Appearance (Attractive) [4]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Flight [40]; Magery 3 [35]; Unaging [15].

**Disadvantages:** Code of Honor (Lyran: Serve the High Mage to the best of my abilities, do not allow myself to look weak to my inferiors.) -2 [-10]; Duty (to the High Mage) (15 or less (almost always); Involuntary) [-20]; Intolerance (humans; total) [-10]; Paranoia [-10]; Vow (Major; to destroy mankind) [-10]; Weakness (Owsenite-2) (1d per

minute; rare) [-10].

**Skills:** Alchemy/TL4<sup>-</sup>-11 [8]; Artist (Illusion)-11 [4]; Body Sense-10 [2]; Breath Control-12 [12]; Flight-11 [4]; Innate Attack (Spell)-12 [2]; Meditation-13 [8]; Occultism-13 [8]; Religious Ritual (Lyran)-12 [8]; Ritual Magic (Lyran)-11 [8]; Symbol Drawing (Lyran)-12 [8].

**Spells:** The stats above list a Lyran without his grimoire. The amount and number of spells a Lyran knows is determined by his circle:

**First Circle:** 40 points in basic spells from the Animal, Plant, Air, Earth, Fire, Water and Protection colleges.

**Second Circle:** 40 additional points in more advanced spells from the 1st Circle colleges, plus an additional 20 points on 1st Circle spells.

**Third Circle:** 40 points in spells from Body Control, Communication/Empathy, Enchantment, Healing, Illusion, and/or Knowledge, plus another 20 points on 2nd Circle spells and 10 points on 1st Circle spells.

**Fourth Circle:** 40 points in spells from Light, Meta, Mind Control, Necromancy, plus another 30 points in spells for the pervious circle spells.

**Fifth Circle:** All spells from previous circles should be IQ+2 at a minimum.

**Sixth Circle:** All spells from previous circles should be IQ+2, plus player-determined specialization in college (anything but Tech college) at IQ+3.

**Seventh Circle:** All spells from previous circles at IQ+3 minimum, plus specializations at IQ+4.

**Eighth Circle:** All spells from previous circles at IQ+4, plus advanced spells in their specialization at IQ+5.

**The High Mage:** Charn'El isn't so much an active character as he is, like B'harne, a force of nature, and he should



be handled as such by the GM. You can assume that he has *all* the spells in *every* college (except Tech) at an effective skill of 30.

A character sheet for Charn'El is possible in theory, but the paper (and points!) involved would make this an exercise in futility, much like trying to write up Yves for an *In Nomine* setting. We like futility though, and at least attempted to work the High Mage out. In *GURPS 3rd Edition*, the High Mage is a 26,750 point character. *GURPS Powers* might - *might!* - be able to bring him down to a playable level, but we're skeptical.

## OTHERS

### ILLUMINATI

There are many legendary rare creatures in this world: ivory-billed woodpeckers, thylacines, sasquatches, honest politicians, the Loch Ness Monster and Elvis. Rarer still are genuine, bona-fide agents of the Illuminati.

The world's oldest conspiracy doesn't have very many roaming operatives; while they recruit from all walks of life, the recruits tend to stay in one place through their tenure. The Illuminati agent can be a quintessential Man in Black, or he could be the homeless guy sitting across the road from your favorite coffeeshop; the one thing they will all share are connections and information nobody else has.

Members of the Illuminati are the ultimate deus-ex-machina NPCs, lurking in the background with some bit of data or offering to help a party of Jihaddi out in cases of dire need - for a price. GMs should remember this and treat Illuminati agents like the powerful weapons they are.

### BAVARIANS

The *Bavarian* Illuminati, on the other hand, are far more flexible as NPCs. The Bavarians are, for the most part, midlevel goons with a power structure a bit more widespread but not as advanced as the Jihad's. They exist mainly as a way to jam up liaison or mundane-focused campaigns with false leads and harassment by authentic Men in Black. GMs are encouraged to use the Bavarian agents as roadblocks if the players get too close to the mundane power centers, or are just screwing around too openly for the Jihad's security.

### ALIENS

As a general rule, we intended the alien species described in Chapter 4 to be NPC races only, acting as Allies or Patrons to player groups since their presence is potentially very destabilizing to the Jihad Universe as a whole. However, recognizing that players like playing alien characters if given the chance, here are templates for creating characters based on the major races in the Jihad Universe.

### GREY 70 POINTS

*Attribute Modifiers:* ST-2 [-20]; IQ+3 [60]

*Advantages:* Absolute Direction [5]; Absolute Timing [2]; Eidetic Memory [5]; Intuitive Mathematician [5]; Nictating Membrane 2 [2]; Telepathy Talent 1 [5].

*Disadvantages:* Bad Sight (nearsighted) [-25]; Pacifism (Self-defense only) [-15]; Sexless [1]; Sterile [0]; Slow Healing -1 [-5]; Truthfulness (12 or less) [-5].

### SALUSIAN 50 POINTS

*Attribute Modifiers:* DX+1 [20]; HT+1 [10].

*Advantages:* Acute Heating 2 [4]; Acute Taste and Smell 1 [2]; Acute

Vision 2 [4]; Claws (Blunt) [3]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Cultural Adaptability [10]; Teeth (Sharp) [1]; Temperature Tolerance 1 [1].

*Disadvantages:* Impulsiveness (12 or less) [-10]; Xenophilia (12 or less) [-10].

### SALUSIAN HYBRID 19 POINTS

This is the baseline form of an "undercover" Salusian, using TL11 biotechnology to appear in the guise of a human. The template also works for a true human/Salusian hybrid, although those are exceedingly rare creatures worth several dozen points in Unusual Background.

*Attribute Modifiers:* DX+1 [10].

*Advantages:* Acute Hearing 2 [4]; Acute Taste and Smell 1 [2]; Acute Vision 2 [4]; Animal Empathy [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Cultural Adaptability [10]; Temperature Tolerance 1 [1].

*Disadvantages:* Impulsiveness (12 or less) [-10]; Secret Identity [-20]; Unnatural Feature -2 [-2]; Xenophilia (12 or less) [-10].

### X'HIRJQ

Okay, all the races but *one*. The X'hirjq were listed because of their influence on the Jihad Universe's history. In practice, the race of super-powerful high-tech magic users with a strong honor kick are simply too powerful for any but the most high-powered Jihaddi to take down (that's what they were designed for) and frankly we're of the opinion that they're rather embarrassingly munchkin, even by our standards. So consider the X'hirjq writeup to be purely historical in nature, not something suitable for PCs or NPCs.

### MUNDANES





So, you want a mundane onlooker? A relative or friend of a Jihaddi? A conspiracy theorist or other sinister plotter? Well, here's how you do it. As with all character descriptions, you should include a physical description: height, weight, hair and eye color, age, clothing worn, and other such niceties. This is fairly essential for those trying to write your character, so don't skip it.

All of these archetypes are meant to be 100-point characters; after all, they aren't called mundanes for nothing. Points may be spent as the player sees fit, although mundanes as a rule will not have knowledge of TL8+ science or technology beyond what they've read about in science-fiction, and buying an Unusual Background means the character isn't mundane; the whole point of being a mundane is you have no unusual backgrounds whatsoever! Secret Advantages (p. IOU20) or Secret Disadvantages (p. B120) are allowed, but make sure the GM knows in advance if you have something specific planned for that advantage/disadvantage. GMs are wily creatures at heart, and love to fiddle when given an opening, so be on your guard.

**Witnesses:** Unless the witness becomes the main focus of a game, you don't need much here. Things you will need, however, include:

How exactly the character witnessed a Jihad action. Did they have the bad luck to be hiking through the woods near a sponge minion camp on the day of a siege? Are they a relative or friend of a sponge who went searching one day, only to find them in the midst of on-duty Jihaddi? In other words, why is the character in this position?

The character's basic reaction to what they saw. This can be anything from contacting law-enforcement authorities to hiding and running for their life to actively seeking Jihaddi or

B'harnates. Whatever the character does, it should have coherent motives and reasons.

**Allies:** This includes characters like a Jihaddi's mundane loved ones and other assorted mundanes the Jihad may contact. If you're writing profile about a Jihaddi who has close mundane loved ones (at least, those who'll probably come up in the story), writing one of these for those loved ones would be highly useful. Once again, you'll need information on physical attributes, personality, and skills, but you'll also need some others:

The character's exact relation to the Jihad. Any specific Jihaddi that the character is associated with should be mentioned here, along with their relationship.

How much, precisely, does the character know about the Jihad? This should be kept to a minimal level barring extenuating circumstances, no mundane would know that much about Jihad workings but one closely associated with a Jihaddi would know that that Jihaddi is involved in something unusual.

What the character's reaction would be to learning about the Jihad and its workings. In other words, if the character was placed in a witness-type situation, what would they do? After all, anyone too close to a Jihaddi is far more likely to learn some piece of the truth than a more random Mundane.

**Enemies:** This is the realm of conspiracy theorists and those other people who may fight against the Jihad although they may not know their enemy as such. You'll need the basic character information, as well as:

Full details on how the character found out about Jihad activities. This is essentially character history, and it should be similar to that provided for a

witness character.

What exactly does the character know about the Jihad? Have they found any Jihad technology? And if so, what is it, and do they know how to use it?

If they don't attribute what they've seen to the Jihad itself (which is quite likely), who do they attribute it to? This highly depends on the character's precise conspiracy theory; different characters could attribute the same incident to the UFOs, the Men in Black, the government, or strange weather.

Given a chance to act against the Jihad, what would the character probably do?



# CHAPTER 7

*The following call was taken on the Art Bell Show, September 11, 1997. WEDJEE sound technicians have matched the voice to a known Jihad informant from the West Coast:*

MALE CALLER: Hello, Art?

ART: Yes?

CALLER (SOUNDS FRIGHTENED): I don't have a lot of time.

ART: Well, look, let's begin by finding out if you're using this line properly or not.

CALLER: Okay, in Area 51?

ART: Yes. Are [sic] you an employee or are you now?

CALLER: I'm a former employee. I, I was let go on a medical discharge about a week ago and, and... (chokes) I kind been running across the country. Damn, I don't know where to start, they're gonna, they'll triangulate on this position real soon.

ART: So you can't spend a lot of time on the phone, so give us something quick.

CALLER (VOICE BREAKING UP WITH APPARENT SUPPRESSED CRYING): Okay, um, um, okay, what we're thinking of as aliens, Art, they're extradimensional beings, that an earlier precursor of the space program they made contact with. They are not what they claim to be. They've infiltrated a lot of aspects of, of, of the military establishment, particularly at the Area 51. The disasters that are coming, they, the military, I'm sorry, the government knows about them. And there's a lot of safe areas in the world that they could begin moving the population to now, Art.

ART: So they're not doing, not doing anything.

CALLER: They are not. They want those major population centers wiped out so that the few that are left will be more easily controllable...

ART (FRAGMENT): ...discharged...

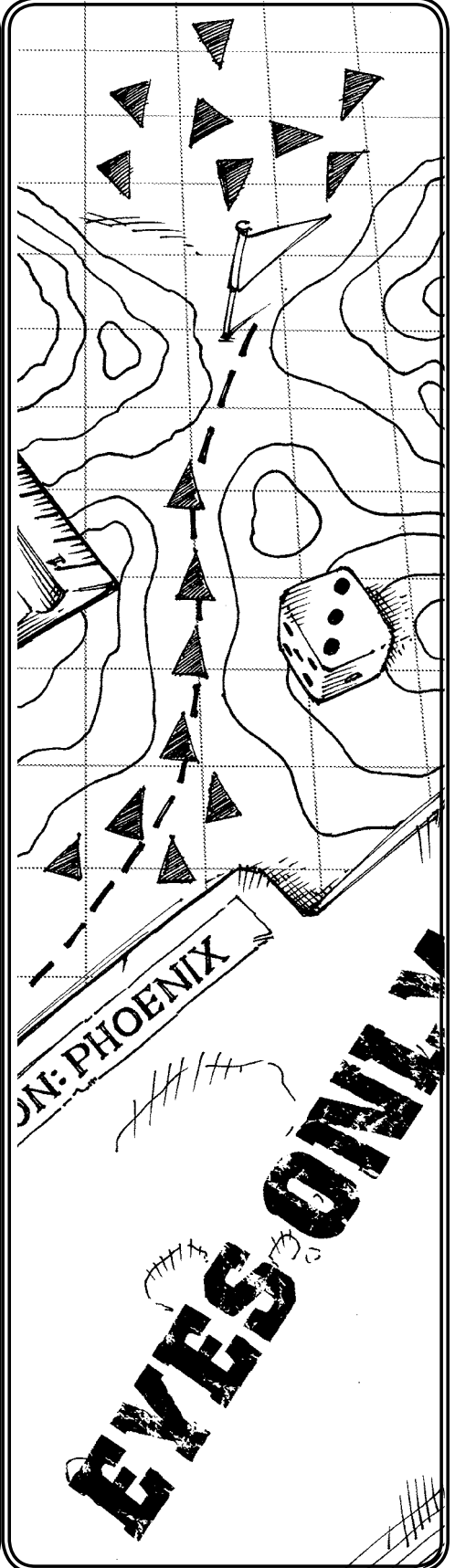
CALLER (SOBBING, THEN FRAGMENT): I say we g.....

<Transmission was cut off at this point.>

*At this time, investigation has not revealed any enemy presence within the United States military, although it may very well be masked beyond our normal means of penetration. We suggest that a team be assigned to investigate this more closely.*

—Classified report to Commander Samhain, 20 October 1997.

## MARCHING OFF TO WAR





## CAMPAIGN ASSUMPTIONS

The universe of the Jihad to Destroy Barney isn't very large, but it is fairly complex, and it's very easy to get confused and turned around by the depth of detail and other lunacy brought about by many years of free-wheeling campaigning on the part of your humble authors.

We understand that this can make campaigning in the Jihad's playground a difficult task. Since we like to consider ourselves helpful sorts, this chapter discusses ways to help set up a framework for campaigning in the Jihad Universe.

The first step to developing a Jihad Universe campaign is to get some nice rules, or at least a guideline, for your campaign. The Jihad Universe is a relatively constrained setting out of the box, which helps your players get a feel for where the edges are.

## METAPLOTTING

### THE CANONICAL CAMPAIGN

A "canon" campaign is one that closely follows the official *Jihad Universe RPG* continuity, as detailed in this book and the adventures written by the Jihad.Net gaming group.

In such a campaign, the outcome of the conflict between the Jihad and Barney is still very much up in the air, with neither side feeling it has a clear advantage. Both sides have settled into a sort of Cold War-style stalemate, unable to press any significant advantage without ensuring mutual destruction. The defining line between the two sides is pretty clear from an outside perspective, but sometimes it can get blurred when viewed from the inside.

Both sides attempt to keep the war

hidden from the mass of humanity, and usually stick to small, quiet operations (except when one or another of the major players gets a burr up their backside and tries something grandiose). Mundanes greatly outnumber Jihaddi and spongin alike.

The Illuminati is out there, but they have their hands full keeping humanity from driving itself over a cliff and are thus not interested in playing with the Jihad. Likewise, the handful of alien races that have encountered Earth are busy with their own agendas and otherwise unwilling to enter the game on either side.

Of course, there's a number of ways to vary this. Some are stylistic changes; where the demarcations between the sides are clearer or more vague, the balance of the conflict is different, or the overall tone of the game is different. Other variations include minor deviations from Jihad Universe continuity, and major ones, such as altering the Jihad's history or adding to the list of JAOs. Such variations will have the Jihad Universe "feel," though they won't be fully canon.

### MODERN, WITH DINOSAURS

Another type of campaign is one where the Jihad Universe background is subordinated to another type of campaign, or where large changes are present.

The big example is a campaign where mundanes are aware of the Jihad and Barney, and that the war is happening. This particular campaign style was used early on by the Jihad.Net group (as you can see if you look at the Jihad-Web fiction archives). The campaign frame totally changes the methods used by both sides, and makes mundanes a significant wild card in the balance of power, instead of simply a backdrop or a source of pawns.

Another interesting variant is the

modern conspiracy campaign, where the PCs are looking into - or part of - groups seeking power over the mortal masses. The Jihad Universe can fit into the background of such a campaign (see *The Anomaly*, p. 79) as yet another shadowy group with suspicious motives.

And then there's the "weird modern" campaign, where the levels of high weirdness are right out in the open, various supernatural beings are household names, and paranormal powers like magic or psi are so common that they don't rate a notice in the local paper. The traditional superheroes setting is one example; so are some forms of "urban fantasy" fiction. Putting Jihad Universe characters into this kind of setting is a bit risky; with so much happening it's possible that they would get lost in the background. The GM might have a difficult time keeping the campaign even somewhat balanced - but some players prefer a more straightforward setting.

See the section on *Crossovers* for more ideas on mixing and matching genres for your Jihad Universe campaign.

## PARAMETERS

The first thing to do, once you've picked a metaplot, is to set up the parameters for the campaign. The metaplot is the story that you want to tell, and the parameters are how you're going to tell it. Or at least how you're going to present it to the players, who'll then proceed to build on and (hopefully) within the bounds you've set.

### SCALE

Scale is where your characters interact with the world, and how the world reacts to what they do. Are the characters acting on a prosaic scale, where they're living on a day-by-day basis and



doing small heroics on the side, or are they acting on an epic scale, saving the planet (or planets!) on a regular basis and fighting against the Big Guns on their own terms?

Normally, scale maps to character power. That doesn't have to be the case, though, as the GM can create a compelling adventure by throwing underdogs into the middle of Armageddon. Or a high-point game can be done on a small scale, as the Jihaddi higher-up can do their own version of *The Office* or *The West Wing* (depending on how charitable you're feeling at that particular moment).

The default Jihad Universe is about midway between a local and global scale, edging towards the latter. A Jihad strike force may be involved with a surveillance operation in Texas one day, then fighting to close a hellmouth underneath the Vatican the next. It's not done by design, but it helps keep the situation from getting too predictable. For a local-scale game, the staff of one of the Jihad's global watch houses (see p. 36) would make for decent Cold War-style protagonists. A truly epic game requires the use of highly skilled Jihaddi (see Chapter 8 for a few examples) and equally powerful bad guys.

The Jihad gaming group has over the years developed its own system for developing the scale of a particular campaign:

*The Operation:* This is the classic form of the Jihad campaign, a huge all-out battle with the forces of Good and Evil clashing. The trigger can be something small (a chance encounter with an enemy base in Operation HOMEFRONT) or something truly cosmic (the Multiversal Doomsday Device in Operation WORLDWALK). Either way, almost the entire Jihad will get involved in an Operation when things finally come to a head. Operations are the most chal-

lenging form of campaign in the Jihad Universe, so GMs should be prepared in advance and ready for the players to shift gears unexpectedly in midstream.

*Skirmishes:* When only one JAO has to deal with a problem, it's a skirmish. This can be a globetrotting adventure or set in the back alleys of a major city. All the sides are treading a great deal more carefully than usual when fighting here, and all the bloodshed is kept out of sight of the news cameras. This is the arena of the Liaisons and the spin teams, who keep the wheels of war running relatively smoothly.

*Downtime:* When slam-bang action involving the movement of armies gets a little tiring, it's good to drop down a gear and engage in a quiet little story. Short character interaction between battles in the Hidden War, the occasional investigation into unusual activity and maybe a "What I Did On My Summer Vacation" story or three, set anywhere in the Jihad Universe.

### SCOPE

Scope is the range the PCs have in doing what they do best. While scale usually takes care of the "why," scope deals with the "what," "who" and (occasionally) "how." A campaign that deals with one neighborhood, or even only one city, is much smaller in scope than a campaign that has ramifications all the way from Earth to Lyra. Increasing the scope often involves increasing the scale, but not always. For example, the *Marraketh Connection* campaign jumped from VRDET's Colorado base all the way to another universe, all for the relatively prosaic stakes of Katze Brenner's life... or a Jihaddi on leave can be in the right place in the right time to stop a Lyran portal from opening.

The default Jihad Universe setting is fairly broad in scope. Characters are expected to be ready to go wandering

around the world on short notice, and the Jihad has some pretty wide-ranging responsibilities in order to protect the planet.

### BOUNDARIES

Scale answers "why." Scope takes care of "what" and "who." The boundaries define "where." Where's all the excitement happening, and where's the "off-screen" stuff? Boundaries also constrain the possibilities; do the PCs have magic or psi abilities available to them, and what happens then?

The Jihad Universe has fairly sharp boundaries; the war between the Jihad and B'harne takes up most of the oxygen in the room, after all, and the GM can easily make that conflict the center of attention. Conversely, the GM could shift the war off towards the sidelines and focus on the activities of the various other fringe parties like Planetary or the Office of Special Plans. Particularly adventurous GMs can slice the Jihad down to an almost invisible presence compared to the pulse of mundane life.

### PHYSICS

The question of the campaign's underlying physics is a boundary question. What will work, and what won't work? The key to answering the question is to keep the rules transparent to the players, and get them to agree to accept them. Or, failing that, making sure that any serious attempts to undermine the rules are part of the campaign so you can prepare accordingly. A good way of setting the campaign's parapsysics is the touchstone rule; describe your physics in terms of a setting already familiar to your players: "Interdimensional travel is like *Stargate*; you go through the portal and then have to redial in order to get home." But make sure you don't get suckered into using a



touchstone that your players know better than you - playing “*Star Trek* time travel” with a group of devoted *Voyager* fans would get out of hand very quickly. (Where you find a group of devoted *Voyager* fans is beyond our knowledge. Even the Illuminati don’t know if those exist. Fnord.)

The Jihad Universe’s default physics are fairly solid: FTL travel is possible but very rare; there’s no reliable method to time travel; interdimensional travel is possible through the VRDET Gate but not through other methods (i.e., not without the GM’s permission); bouncing around multiple universes is considered too cumbersome to really

have any point to it. It then casually mentions the occasional loophole (such as the Doomsday Device from *WORLDWALK*), should the GM wish to explore them or needs a handy McGuffin.

### MAGIC VS. SCIENCE, THE ETERNAL BATTLE

The Jihad Universe is a setting where magic and technology exist side by side, in something of a Cold War-style balance. The War itself is set up with the magical powers of the Lyrans on one side and the mostly-technological base of the Jihad on the other. So, which side is more powerful?

Our default answer is “neither.” The question of technological skill versus magical skill isn’t one of competing powers, but of genetics and memetics. Certain species in the Jihad Universe are predisposed to making tools to impose their will on the cosmos (in this case, humans), while some have the genetic predisposition towards imposing their will directly through the use of magic (the Lyrans, among others). Mutant tool-users or magic-users crop up in both populations, of course.

For similar reasons, magic and technology have never been integrated on any significant level. Our default answer for this is that there’s a level of conceptual blindness that prevents anybody (aside from the occasional mad scientist, alchemist, or other individual at the GM’s discretion, of course) from figuring out how the two paradigms fit together. As the Jihad is the main player that uses both science and magic as weapons, they’ve spent a fair amount of their time trying to analyze magical powers and incorporate them into a scientific mindset (see box, *Types of [Human] Magic*).

It should be stressed that this is our *default* answer, and doesn’t have to be written in stone if the nature of the adventure or campaign demands it change.

## CHARACTER ECOLOGY

### CHARACTER INVOLVEMENT

The world of the Jihad is pretty well set, so the GM (with a little help from the players) needs to decide the role the PCs play in the Jihad Universe. Are they part of the System, or on the outside looking in?

*Seeking the Jihad:* The Jihad can be glimpsed at a distance from here, as the PCs are trying to find the group and figure out what’s going on. The Jihad’s

## Types of (Human) Magic

The Jihad Praxeum Veneficus spends large amounts of their manpower and materiel on figuring out all the ways that magic has been practiced on Earth, and then sorting through all the empty ritual junk to get to the stuff that actually works.

JPV mages have refined the standard working model for combat magic down to the *GURPS Magic* level of “know spell, cast spell, repeat.” Their research into human ritual magic have found the following systems work reasonably well on repeat performances:

*Hermetic:* Magic and ritual based on Victorian distortions of Eastern and Greek philosophy. Alister Crowley and Helena Blavatsky are the prime examples of Hermetic thought.

*Neopaganist:* A middle-path school based in elements taken from pre-Christian Europe, often involving nature rites. Neopagan mages tend to mix fictional (and often erroneous) elements with remnants of actual rituals to create a unique form of magic.

*Neo-Shamanic:* Mages who follow a middle path, blending modern neurology and theoretical physics with traditional shamanic rituals (and the use of psychotropic drugs).

*Rationalist:* A totally new school founded in the JPV, intending to try and condense magic into purely scientific terms.

*Sacred Geometers:* Mages who use Pythagorean geometric mysticism, the Egyptian pyramids, or networks of “ley lines” (mana paths) to do magic.

*Shamanic:* Mages who follow the traditions of pre-industrial societies, such as Celtic or Native American religious ceremonies.

*Synergists:* Another new school from the JPV, the Synergists attempt to collect *everything* from the known schools and create a working understanding of magic from that.

*Taoist:* Magic based on the writings and philosophy of Hung Mung, Lao Tzu and the Chinese thinkers that came before them.



## Writing Jihad Campaigns

The Jihad, like Life, is never easy to cope with. In the past, all the Jihad's roleplaying has been done in prose format — the characters write the story according to a plotline set down by the GM, instead of doing real-time gaming the way most RPGs are devised. Now, we provide information on running a Jihad game for the *GURPS* system. If that's what you want to do, then the information should be helpful. If, however, you want to do a prose campaign, we'll provide some tips on running one properly.

*Know where you're going before you set out.* You may not know how the whole thing is going to end up, but you should at least have some idea of the campaign's goal, prominent bad guys, prominent good guys, time scale, that sort of thing. Make notes, because they are your friend. Having a great concept is knowing the rough destination, but that's not enough to make a good story. Fill out your concept before you start shopping for players.

*Cut down on redundant segments.* If you look at *The Marraketh Connection*, Operation PACIFICA, etc. you'll see a lot of segments where the same battle/scenario is replayed with a slightly different point of view. Avoid this. Get people who're in the same thing together and consolidate segs. Having the different POV is often a good thing, but cluttering up a newsgroup or web board with fifty different 2KB stories from fifty different people is considered poor form. It's best to have just one 100KB story with all the pertinent players contributing.

*Have framing pieces,* spots along at the beginning, end, and through the length of the story where you (as GM) keep the plot moving. They don't have to be long, and they don't have to be filled with tons of the dreaded expository dialogue; just remind the readers that there is a central storyline. This is very helpful when your players are taking their sweet time getting past the introduction.

*Keep the story fast-paced.* This ties back to the first point. You want to keep the readers interested, something

that the big Ops really failed at, because they got bogged down in excruciating detail and too many segments. If you have five or six big-assed multi-author story segs, it'll read faster and most likely be better written than a twenty small single-author segs.

*Set and be a hardass about deadlines whenever possible.* Accept delays based on real-world problems if they arise (as a rule of thumb, reality should always take precedence), but if the story/seg/section is not mission critical, don't be afraid to pass that author over.

*Never have more authors than you could successfully run a tabletop RPG with.* That's what you're doing in essence, after all — role-playing without the dice. Table RPGs get difficult to play past 6 players / 1 GM. So 7 should be the top player/author limit. However, you should use as many other people as NPCs as possible, to give the Op the proper feel.

*Expect the unexpected, and plan accordingly.* Over the course of the story, your players may come to you with an interesting digression they want to add to the story. Since you are writing for an audience, you should be willing to indulge digressions. While it's nice to keep the story moving at a good clip, if speed is making you boring you ought to slow down a little. Or conversely, one of your players may devise a better ending to the story than the one you came up with. If this happens, swallow your pride and go with the better ending. Prose campaigns, like traditional RPG campaigns, are organic creatures, and the players should be able to influence the story. The GM Is Always Right, but sometimes he's wrong.

These are just basic tips for getting together a prose campaign. There are other things, of course, but most relate to rules of grammar, spelling, characterization and other literary devices. We recommend looking up Strunk & White's *Elements of Style*, or the *Associated Press Style Book* for further suggestions on how to improve the quality of your writing.

role may change from game to game, or over the course of many games as the players learn about the Hidden War and the available sides.

*Joining the Jihad:* The heroes may even learn enough that the Jihad welcomes them into their ranks. The 401k is decent enough, and you get to travel. Conversely, the PCs may be Jihaddi

from the start; it's a strange world out there, and the Jihad stands by its men. And women. And aliens. And whatever.

*Fighting the Jihad:* The again, the heroes may not approve of the Jihad. Even if you aren't a member of the Purple Forces, the Jihad makes for an intriguing enemy of all the outside

world considers good and pure. It does, after all, consist of a massive terrorist organization that is responsible for numerous incidents of vandalism, assault and murder all over the world. And to top it all off, the Jihad lies to outsiders — and justifies their actions by saying that mundanes can't handle the truth.



## POWER LEVELS

The Jihad Universe can support an impressive range of power levels, from innocent bystanders to high-invulnerable superheroes.

*Run! It's Godzilla!:* At this level, the PCs are the classic expendable extras; the guys who run screaming from the scene of the disaster, the nameless spear carriers that die under the Hero's (or the Villain's) guns. Now, we all know that your players aren't necessarily going to go for extremely low-powered PCs, although stranger things have happened, especially with *Bunnies & Burrows* fans. Still, it might be interesting to play ordinary mundanes that have to run away from danger, eventually becoming aware of the whole stranger world around them, and maybe wanting to get some payback in. Mundane dependents of Jihaddi PCs (spouse, kids, pets, etc.) would work well here as well.

*Something's Happening Here:* At this level, the PCs are all talented mundanes who have been hipped to strange happenings. Planetary members searching for clues to who dropped that power-armor in the middle of downtown San Diego, mundane adventurers looking for archaeological artifacts of power, and the traditional "person seeking vengeance against mystery beings who offed a loved one" are all viable character templates at this level. These adventures tend to emphasise investigation, if only because the players aren't quite powerful enough to charge into a situation and wreak havoc.

*The Corps Is Mother, The Corps Is Father:* Here, the PCs have more than likely joined the Jihad (or are in the process of joining), and are undergoing training in one of the main tracks. This is the "grunt level" of the Jihad, and anybody who doesn't measure up fast runs a risk of getting killed. Missions at this

level are divided between combat and investigation; sending out a few grunts to do forward observation isn't an uncommon event. This power level can also start to support heavy magic-users, psis, or other parahuman characters.

*Who You Gonna Call:* At this level, PCs are mid-ranking Jihaddi in good standing, often commanding a group of lesser-ranked members and/or newbies. Here the more impressive PC concepts can come out to play: Heavy-duty human wizards, martial-arts masters, pulp-hero engineers, interdimensional travellers and agents of the Illuminati. The mayhem from here on out gets set to overdrive and never looks back.

*Badasses in Black:* Now we're cooking with liquid hydrogen. PCs at this level are all high-ranking members of the Jihad, people who have been around the block an uncountable number of times, as close as the players will ever get to becoming Secret Masters themselves. Here, the PCs are leading entire divisions of JAOs into mortal combat with Lyran sorcerers and the dread Hellwyrms himself.

## GENRE & STYLE

The genre of the game is the most basic type of story you're telling, and sets the direction the game will be pointed in.

The baseline Jihad Universe setting is written to spec with a Conspiratorial Fantasy/Superheroes genre: The world is a lot stranger than the average person knows, and only by digging deep and asking a lot of questions will the players ever get to the bottom of it all. Once the heroes cross the barrier between the mundane world and the Jihad's world the Fantasy and Superhero elements kick into high gear, throwing the players into a world where dragons and rayguns exist side-by-side (in some cases, the dragons are using the rayguns!).

## SETTING THE STYLE

The tone is how you'll approach the genre of your campaign, helps set the overall goals, and what kind of flavor you add. Each tone is like an adjective; you can use as many as you like, but it's a good idea to avoid too many in one shot.

*Action:* Boom boom, baby! The classic "hack and slash" setting, featuring high-speed pursuits, John Woo gun battles, martial-arts action, desperate battles, explosive climaxes, deathtraps and narrow escapes. Action works well for military or special-ops games. Chasing wrym-minions through the back streets of LA, guns a-blazing, things like that.

*Camp:* Take every cliché you've ever heard, and run with it. Drama and swashbuckling permeate the surroundings, Capital Letters are thick upon the ground, and every hero and villain gets a dying soliloquy. Played either for laughs or for sheer sense of wonder, camp is for just letting go and enjoying the world in black and white (or maybe a rich plaid).

*Cinematic:* Realism takes a hike and the perfect scene is everything. Directed by Jerry Bruckheimer with an unlimited effects budget and all the great Hollywood stars, there's always just a few seconds left on the bomb, the hero's girlfriend gets jumped by spongin, and the whole thing is set to a sweeping soundtrack featuring Howard Shore and Hans Zimmer. Just remember not to be the plucky comic relief.

*Dark:* The world is going to hell, and all Barney does is speed it along. The Jihad may be able to stop him and Charn'El for taking over, but the mundanes are all corrupt anyway. The Lyran plans may not be the worst thing to happen to the world after all, and the Jihad will learn the price for neglecting their own souls to stop the evil...

*Gritty:* The game doesn't quite con-



form to reality — after all, in a realistic game extradimensional aliens don't exist and most of the Jihad's devices don't work — but realism gets first shot at everything. Shoot a spongin and go to jail. Barney's evil works on the shadowed streets the Saethrians slither through. Joining the Jihad means abandoning your friends and family, and wetwork leaves deep psychological scars.

*Illuminated:* You're not cleared for that. Fnord.

*Silly:* Not even bothering to play it straight at all, silly campaigns take the strange and twist it into laughs. Joining up with the Jihad to protect the penguins of the Ross Ice Shelf from the evils of Barney, magical girls created in R&D accidents and other like things can happen in a silly campaign. See *GURPS Discworld* for a more exhaustive description of silly campaigning.

*Superheroic:* Similar in nature to the cinematic tone, but with a lot more color. Full-fledged four-color action involving parahumans, regular humans with superscientific devices, the aliens they fight and the civilians who have to get out of the way. Suspense, action, and good clean fun with a simple but effective narrative thrust is the core of a superheroic game.

*Technothriller:* It's all about the chrome-plated HK 99s. The technothriller takes cues from the action and cinematic styles, but there's always time to stop and lovingly inventory all the toys in detail. Building the perfect X-Rifle, devising a ritual to stop a Lyran sorcerer in his tracks, or springing the perfect ambush on a group of spongin soldiers — that's the fun in technothriller gaming.

## CROSSOVERS

### GURPS ATLANTIS

The Atlantis frames presented in *GURPS Atlantis* don't match the Jihad Universe's Atlantis, but the information is helpful for those who wish to search for the ruins of the sunken Atlantis, and maybe a helpful McGuffin or three still in the ruins. The possibility of Atlanteans still living is remote, but a creative GM might have some different ideas...

### GURPS ILLUMINATI

The Jihad and its enemy fit nicely into a "warring Secret Masters" Illuminati game. Using the Illuminati as presented in the text or something more traditional is also an option. The Hidden War also makes for an interesting turn of events for a traditional game... imagine what the PCs would do if instead of finding the Bavarians, they found Barney hiding behind events?

### GURPS INFINITE WORLDS

The crosstime scope of the Infinity Patrol means that it's entirely possible that the I-Cops will sooner or later stumble on the Jihad's Earth. For one possible frame for that, see the *Infinite Worlds Data* on the next page.

### GURPS SPACE

The galactic ban on travel to Earth effected thanks to the War isn't 100% perfect; between the Greys and the Salusians, there's still a fair amount of covert extraterrestrial activity going on.

Also, it's not unimaginable that the Jihad may attempt to make a long-distance strike against the Lyran homeworld. Such an attack would be more symbolic than effective tactics, but a space strike mission would suck up a lot of the Jihad's technical resources for

a non-inconsiderable amount of time.

### GURPS ILLUMINATI UNIVERSITY

If the leaders of the Jihad *aren't* Illumni of IOU, we'll eat our hats!

On a halfway more serious note, IOU is the sort of thing that can exist in some out of the way corner of the setting, and is perfect for any PC requiring an Unusual Background to round out their character. The War may sometimes crash the campus, but more often than not, the two sides can manage to coexist peacefully — well, "peacefully" as defined by IOU, so the bloodfeuds are kept to a minimum.

### GURPS BLACK OPS

Argus and the black ops make for a good "second-string" group, dedicated to keeping the mundanes safe from evil aliens. The Greys have more of an agenda than previously claimed, and there are other conspiracies running around the Jihad may not be aware of.

The average black op may be a little overpowered for a Jihad game, but in a ten round match with the Jihad's finest.. they'd probably call it a draw. Use Argus sparingly, if at all.

### GURPS IN NOMINE

If you favor *In Nomine* over the Jihad, then B'harne could be a high-ranking Balsegraph of Nybbas (Demon of the Lowest Common Denominator), backed up with some very high-powered Vapulan gadgets, and the Jihaddi are Soldiers of War/Sword/Faith/Lightning, commanded by senior non-Wordbound Servitors of their respective Superiors.

If you favor the Jihad setting over *In Nomine*, then B'harne might not necessarily be part of the conflict between Heaven and Hell, perhaps being a particularly powerful ethereal (After all, Barney *is* a dinosaur from our





## Infinite Worlds Data

*Clio-1, 1999*

### Current Affairs

In the aftermath of titanic reality quakes, Infinity tries to research how the world was changed, without noticing the secret war happening underfoot.

### Divergence Point

Unknown; could be anything from three to three billion years ago, but the aftermath of the quantaclism makes it impossible to tell one way or the other.

### Major Civilizations

Same as Homeline ca. 1997; Western, Chinese, Islamic

### Great Powers

United States, China, European Union, Brazil, India, Japan

### Worldline Data:

TL: 8 (Jihad, TL9; Lyran biotechnology, TL(4<sup>^</sup>))

Mana Level: low    Quantum: 4    Infinity Class: R3(\*)    Centrum Zone: Inaccessible

(\*): *As yet Infinity has not discovered the Jihad or its opponent. When they do, it's likely that Clio-1 will be reclassified as a Z(1-3) worldline.*

### OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

Infinity's interest in Clio-1 is purely scientific. Really. When the anchor worldline was first discovered two

years ago (1997 local time), the Survey team discovered that the worldline had been the epicenter of a massive reality quake in the not too distant past. While Infinity had seen reality quakes before, the one on Clio-1 had all the earmarkings of a true red-letter quantaclism. Moreover, it appeared that somebody or something had successfully *smoothed over* the fracture zones, leaving only the barest trace marks that a quake had happened. The level of power that implied scared Infinity, but the otherwise benign surface of the worldline lulled the board into opening a limited cliodynamics research operation.

The Infinity presence on Clio-1 hasn't yet discovered the Jihad proper, although they've found the occasional scrap of evidence. If and when they eventually do run into each other, life on both sides will get immensely complicated. The Jihad's existence - to say nothing of what they're fighting! - will cause shockwaves almost as bad as what happened when Reich-5 got loose into the timestream, and forget about trying to keep the Secret; VRDET's possession of a fully functional nexus portal generator means that they are *completely* unfettered by "normal" parachronic physics.

From the Jihad's point of view, Infinity running around isn't that big of a deal; just another drop of weirdness in a very big bucket. Except for one small problem. In recent months a Paralabs team has been in Death Valley, looking for a potential natural nexus point in the desert. They don't know that the nexus they're looking for is the Babylon Road, and it doesn't lead to another worldline. To make matters worse, an Armenen Order mule jumped in dangerously near the Road a month ago. No reinforcements have arrived, but Infinity expects that it's only a matter of time before the Nazis come looking for a new nexus point to seize.

imagination) looking to move up in the world, and the Jihad may be a group set up by both Celestial realms to combat this upstart third threat.

And a lot of the Jihad ubertech looks suspiciously like *Eli's* craftsmanship.

### GURPS TECHNOMANCER

*Technomancer* is a good setting for a more overt Jihad. The main bases sit firmly in the normal-mana zones cre-

ated by Trinity, and with Barney's demons running about, the Jihad would be a larger, more organized group of monster hunters. It's a pretty aggressive change from the setting as presented here, though. Not to say that a Jihad/*Technomancer* crossover campaign isn't impossible, but it'd take some serious work.

### GURPS INTERNATIONAL SUPER TEAMS

Setting the Jihad in the IST universe is just adding more grist to the mill. In a world of supers, the Jihad may be somewhat redundant. Or it could be the IST's Covert Operations Group, fighting horrors the main body of supers would have trouble confronting, with their special blend of magic, powers and superscience.



## GURPS Y2K

**Y2K** is *the* book on post-apocalyptic gaming, and if the PCs should FUBAR in particularly impressive fashion, a game in a **Y2K** setting where the Jihad lost the war could be very entertaining. Further crossovers with Time Travel are possible here as well, as the players try to find a time machine that will take them back and correct mistakes.

## ADVENTURE SEEDS

Okay, so you want to run a story/realtime game, but don't have the time to really come up with a good, original storyline. So, in the interests of your sanity, we've come up with a few mini-adventure plots to help you out.

*Rock, Meet Hard Place:* The PCs are a group of civilians who haven't the slightest clue about the Hidden War. At least, they didn't until a botched MAUL operation against one of B'harne's safe houses made things more war than hidden. As the dust settles, the PCs come across two combatants - one a MAUL captain, the other a wyrm minion - who were separated from their men and in need of aid. While they aren't busy glaring daggers at one another, each tells their own side of a baffling, impossible story. Who, if anyone, will the PCs believe? What will they do about their "guests," or about their discovery of the War? And most importantly, what will either side of the conflict do to *them* when word - as it always will - gets out?

*The Blair Barney Project:* Unless you've been living in a cave for the last couple of years, you know the story: Three students making a documentary vanish in the Maryland woods, and a year later the footage is found. What they didn't tell you was that those

unfortunates didn't find a witch or a ghost, they instead stumbled on a nest of enemy soldiers — and the less said about what happened next, the better. The PCs are a team of rookies, commissioned to find the mutant spongin and wipe them out. But the FC didn't expect that a low-ranking Lyran magus was riding herd on the creatures!

*Return to the Pacifica Adventure!:* The WORLDWATCH satellite network has picked up a series of odd disturbances out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, near where the Lyran island stronghold of Pacifica sank in 1996. The PCs are sent out with the latest in Zeta Squad/VRDET R&D/WED-JEE underwater combat and exploration gear (Scuba mecha, anyone?), to find out What's Going On. Is it Lyrans trying to salvage the citadel? Equipment-strapped spongin looking for remnants of Lyran biotech? Or is it something else?

*The Enemy of My Enemy:* A group of PCs, cornered and out-gunned by a group of wyrm-minions, are rescued by a shadowy figure, who then turns on the Jihaddi! After the fight, the PCs learn that their erstwhile "rescuer" is (or was, depending on how frisky the PCs got during the fight) a member of The Order of Asissi, a secret cabal of warrior/monks, devoted to cleansing the Earth of "inhuman creatures." Of course, since a good number of people who qualify as "inhuman" are Jihaddi, this naturally puts the Order on bad terms with the Jihad. Can the PCs (or some other group of PCs) manage to make peace with the Order to fight the common enemy? Or will the Jihad forever have to watch it's collective back against an ambush by rampaging monks?

*In Memory Yet Green:* Cleaning up

after a raid on a spongin base, tantalizing clues are found, providing some idea of where the Blood Jihad vanished to in the aftermath of the X'hirjq invasion. Immediately the PCs are told by the Triumvirate, in full official capacity no less, to follow the trail until they either run out of leads or find the Blood Jihad. Of course, this could be a trap, set up by the Liasons, but the only way to find out is to follow the road.

*Endgame:* Several major victories have put the enemy on the ropes. His troops in disarray, many Liaisons purged or dead, B'harne's forces are on the verge of collapse. Even the veterans are feeling optimistic about the War's prospects. Realizing that it may never have a better chance, the Jihad brings out the Slayer and prepares an attack against B'harne's compound/fortress at Port Neches. The problem is, the compound is *very* well-guarded. On top of powerful normal defenses, a Lyran artifact installed in the base by one of the Ascended prevents VRDET from opening a gateway within ten miles of Port Neches. The PCs' mission is to penetrate the compound, find the interdictor, and destroy it so the final assault can begin. Can the Jihaddi penetrate the compound and destroy B'harne once and for all, or does B'harne have more tricks up his sleeve-equivalents? And, perhaps even more ominously, could the Jihaddi force Charn'El's hand, provoking an open Lyran invasion of Earth?

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In this section we're going to deal with things that are important to you as a writer or as a gamer, but don't have any significant bearing on the campaign setting in the earlier chapters.



## YOU \*\*\*\*! WHY IS THIS FAQ IN THE BACK OF THE BOOK!?

It's a fair cop.

When we started revising this book for the third time, we made a decision that we were going to focus on the setting first, and then deal with smaller fiddly bits like dealing with rules and regulations that really only applied to the original group of gamers/writers responsible for the book. As a result, the information that seemed so all-fired important to us back in the beginning when we started writing (basically, the rules of etiquette for the Jihad to Destroy Barney) became less and less so, as the Jihad changed from a large Internet organization to a small group of gamers.

Everything in this FAQ is strictly here for informational purposes. We're presenting it partly for the hell of it, but also because it could be of some use to players or GMs.

## THE CANON

The official baseline setting of the *Jihad to Destroy Barney RPG & Writer's Guide*, as laid out in the preceding chapters, is what we call the canon. This is the campaign setting that the core writing/gaming group use and abuse right this very second.

## WHY WORRY ABOUT CANON?

There's a long, boring story involving a series of internal (real life, or at least as real as Usenet gets) Jihad political struggles connected to this, but the short form is that at the time we started writing the *Jihad to Destroy Barney RPG & Writer's Guide*, the in-group game was very chaotic and difficult to understand even by insiders. We ended up deciding to "reboot" the campaign world to make it easier to understand,

keeping as much stuff from the older campaigns as we could.

## DO I NEED TO GET THE JIHAD'S PERMISSION TO USE THE BOOK?

Hell no. *The Jihad to Destroy Barney RPG & Writer's Guide* is intended to be a general role-playing resource; you don't need to ask permission of the Jihad group to use it as a resource, any more than you need to ask permission of the writers of *Rifts* or *In Nomine* or *Silver Age Sentinels* to use their books. However, if you do use it as a resource we'd love to hear about it. We're ever so lonely...

## CAN I GET MY CAMPAIGN/STORY ADDED TO THE CANON?

More than likely, no. Sorry.

Okay, let's qualify that. The "canon" Jihad campaign - background, metaplot, all that fun stuff - is set by the members of the Jihad to Destroy Barney. They're the group that does the heavy lifting when it comes to making stuff up. In order to be considered part of the canon, you have to be a member of the group. As of this writing, the group has stopped seeking out new members. It's not impossible to be accepted into the Jihad to Destroy Barney, but it's very unlikely.

## MAKING A PITCH

If you're dead-set on joining the core writing group, or have a brilliant idea that you feel just *has* to be included in the canon material, you can make a pitch to the group and see what they think.

Here's what you need to do to make a pitch:

First off, check to make sure that you're not duplicating anything in the

current canon. The best way to be sure is to read this book.

Next, write up a short sketch of the idea in general. This can be anything from a few paragraphs of a story featuring your idea to a brief timeline of how it fits into the Jihad Universe. The important part of a sketch is to get as much information as you can into it. Don't, under any circumstances, just submit something that's lifted whole cloth from an existing fictional source. Stuff like "Barney finds the One Ring," or "Captain Kirk joins the Jihad" can make for a funny one-shot story, but it's not something that the Jihad group is interested in adding to the canon.

When you've got your sketch ready and willing, take it over to our message board at <http://www.jihad.net/phpab4d> and post your sketch with the header "Audition." We'll take it from there, and probably have lots of questions for you.

## CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

The characters, concepts, stories and whatnot used in the Jihad belong to their creator and traditionally cannot be touched unless the original creator has given permission.

For purposes of the *Jihad to Destroy Barney RPG & Writer's Guide* as a public gaming resource, all characters, items and situations profiled or mentioned in this book still belong to their creators, but permission has been given for their general use. As a matter of form, if used elsewhere and posted publicly, users should provide credit to the creator when possible, or to "The Jihad to Destroy Barney" if you can't figure out who the creator was.



# CHAPTER 8

**From:** "Minerva" <adMin@core.vrdet.net>  
**To:** "Malaclypse the Seeker" <mal@alumni.vrdet.net>  
**Subject:** Your Winnings, Sir.  
**Date:** Fri, 14 Mar 1999 15:56:00 -0700  
**X-Authword:** pyramid

Boss,

Here's all the personnel data that I could grab on short notice. The bios are a bit spotty, but that's the sort of thing you have to deal with when you're running a secret organization that doesn't worry too much about background checks, ne?

Anyway, have fun with this stuff. If you need me, I'll be here. Oh.. before I forget; Admiral Yearnshaw wants to get together with you about Project Starfire, and Katze said she'd be in to bug you about something related to your retirement package this evening. (Told you you should've gone with the 401K!)

Ja mata,  
Minerva

—FILE ATTACHMENTS FOLLOW—

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE



## WILLIAM J. KEITH

ADMIRAL, TRES CORPS / 2ND TORUS, JIHAD PRAXEUM VENIFICUS

*"Self-knowledge is the beginning of all wisdom. I've also found strong math skills a great help."*

Will started out in the science labs. When he found out about magic, he also found out he had a knack for it, and took to the study eagerly, making it his MOS. He is carefully trying to learn all he can about the Lyran magical tradition and develop defenses against it, leaving the bulk of the Jihad's troops secure to do their job. Still the dedicated academe, he hopes -- should he survive the war -- to oversee the gradual introduction of magic into the Mundane world. He's well aware that the major powers of the Jihad probably have strong objections to this, so the establishment of a strong tradition to preserve the knowledge uncorrupted will have to do.

The Admiral worked his way up from Ensign rank in TRES. His first serious command was a field promotion in Operation HOMEFRONT, and he has since made more stable command rank as the CO of Chi Squadron. He is also a Councilor in the JPV.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 15 [100]; HT 14 [40]

**Secondary Attributes:** HP 10 [0]; Will 15 [0]; Per 15 [0]; Fatigue 14 [0]; Speed 6.5; Move 6; Jihad Rank 5 (TRES Admiral, Chi Squad CO, JPV 2nd Torus) [25]; Damage Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d; Dodge 6; Parry 12 (Staff); Block 7

**Advantages:** Patron (The Jihad) [40]; Alternate Identity

(Howard Dunham, number-cruncher at low-profile tech firm in San Francisco) [15]; Alternate Identity (Joe Phillips, traveling salesman, home in Houston suburb) [15]; Contact: U.S. Senator (identity varies with elections; skill Politics-18, fairly often, usually reliable) [6]; Contact: Li Taifeng (practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine in Chinatown, doctor to the underworld; skill Streetwise-18, quite often, somewhat reliable) [6]; Voice [10]; Magery 3 [35]; Psi Static (Resistible, -50%) [15]; Ally (Kit: 360-pt. psionic entity with a Mindlink to the Admiral, base 3; constantly, x4) [12]; Security Clearance (Jihad, any "need to know" information) [10]; Mathematical Ability 2 [20]



**Disadvantages:** Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-60]; Duty (to Jihad, almost all the time, sometimes hazardous) [-15]; Bad Sight [-10]; Code of Honor (a straitlaced personal ethic) [-10]

**Quirks:** Teetotaler [-1]; Tends to babble about his latest attempt to "scientifically organize magical theory" [-1]; Left-handed [0];

**Languages:** English (native) [0]; Chinese (Spoken (Accented) / Written (Broken)) [3]; Lyran (Spoken (None) / Written (Broken)) [1]

**Skills:** Acting-16 [4]; Administration-15 [2]; Area Knowledge(San Francisco)-15 [1]; Area Knowledge(Houston)-16 [1]; Artist (Illusion)-14 [2]; Beam Weapons(Rifle; familiarities X-Rifle, Wildmon Plasma Rifle)/TL9-15 [8]; Beam Weapons(pistol; familiarities, Mathattackicus)/TL9-15 [8]; Computer Operation/TL9-17 [4]; Computer Programming/TL9-15 [4]; Current Affairs(Headline News)/TL8-16 [2]; Diplomacy-15 [4]; Driving(Automobile; familiarities, beat-up unmarked undercover jalopy)/TL8-11 [1]; Driving(Motorcycle; familiarity, Kappa-issue



personal transport)/TL9-12 [2]; Electronics Operation (Comm; familiarities, Jihadlinker, TRES HQ systems)/TL9-15 [2]; Games (Chess)-15 [1]; Games(Go)-15 [1]; Guns(Pistol;familiarities,Glock 9mm)/TL8-13 [2]; Hidden Lore (the Anomaly)-15 [2]; Hiking-13 [1]; Innate Attack (Spell projectiles)-14 [4]; Karate-10 [1]; Law(U.S. Criminal)-15 [4]; Leadership-15 [2]; Mathematics(Pure)/TL9-19 [12]; Occultism (Lyrans magic)-15 [2]; Physics/TL9-18 [8]; Research/TL8-15 [2]; Singing-14 [1]; Soldier/TL9-16 [4]; Staff-14 [8]; Strategy-14 [2]; Streetwise-14 [1]; Swimming-14 [1]; Tactics-14 [2]; Teaching-15 [2]; Writing-14 [1]

**Magic:** Thaumatology-23 [28]; Meta College-23 [8]; Knowledge College-23 [8]; Protection and Warning College-23 [8]; Force Dome-17 [6]; Force Wall-16 [6]; Enchantment College-22 [4]; Staff-15 [7]; Powerstone-15 [7]; Light and Darkness College-20 [1]; Sunbolt-20 [8]; Air College-21 [2]; Water College-21 [2]

**Equipment:** Expect the Admiral to be in uniform and carrying his staff whenever possible, and to always have at least one small Powerstone secreted for emergencies. His transport is a Jihad-issue motorcycle; it has been so long since he used the thing's mecha form that he has almost forgotten it has one.

**Total Points:** 500

*Character Design Notes:* Will used to have Honesty. He's bleakly figuring the Jihad is a bad influence on him. His ally Kit (a nickname for an unpronounceable psionic transmission) is usually quiet and undetectable, employed with as much subtlety as possible. Will's magic is the result less of study of any particular spells than academic interest in the nature of magic itself; given enough time and a few tries it's possible for him to work up complex spells, but his preference is for simple, reliable effects and a few reluctantly-honed battle spells.

As a ranking Jihaddi, Will can be used as a scenario-motivating NPC, and as a well-educated mage/physicist, can perform usefully as an offstage analyst

and advisor. As the leader of Chi Squad, his normal duties put him in contact with Mundania, so he will be able to speak knowledgeably about the current status of the Jihad's relationship with the mundane world or point a character in the direction of associated resources. On-screen, he will deal with matters earnestly and with as much attention to ethical niceties as is possible in a war zone.



## MALACLYPSE THE SEEKER

DIRECTOR EMERITUS, VRDET RESEARCH DIVISION

*“To the rational mind nothing is inexplicable, merely unexplained.”*

Mal was born under a different name somewhere in the western United States between fifty and seventy years ago (even this much he refuses to disclose), where he had a mostly-normal childhood. At some point in the late 1960's, Mal was pulled into the world of the Illuminati. He became one of the premiere Fortean investigators of the time; while he never received any of the press attention other investigators (like Erich von Dankien) got, Mal's field research advanced the Illuminati cause by leaps and bounds. He was placed on the fast track for Secret Master status, and thus spent the years tracking down weird things and securing them for further study or sequestering in Warehouse 23.

In 1992, while on a routine phenomenon investigation, Mal stumbled upon a Jihad/Hellwyrn combat zone in the forests of Maine. Faced with the knowledge that some unknown enemy was apparently invading the Earth, and here was already a group combating that enemy, Mal called in his report and waited for further instructions.

Those instructions were: “Investigate, infiltrate and keep them out of serious trouble.”

In 1994, Mal had acquired enough data on the Jihad that he felt safe to join. He used his personal resources to set up a base of operations, then contacted the Praetor at the time, asking for admittance as a formal research lab., the Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow, Inc. His quiet demeanor and rational way of thinking made him something of a “mentor” figure to many lower-ranking Jihaddi. Deserved or not, Mal quickly became a leader of the group, all the while reporting on

it to the Illuminati.

The X'hirjq invasion of 1996 effectively destroyed the Geniuses. When the Blood Jihad collapsed in 1997, Mal combined his resources with that burned-out org and created the Verthandic Rangers.

Mal headed up the Research division of the Rangers until his recent retirement. Since then, he has acted as a senior advisor to the Jihad leadership, as well as continuing his own research into paranormal phenomenon and the nature of reality. While not strictly a combat officer, Mal has no hesitation to fight if the goal of the Jihad (or his Illuminati patrons) is threatened.

**Appearance:** Caucasian male, approx. 30 years old, 5'9", 180 lbs, blue-gray eyes, brown hair and beard. Usually wears Hawaiian print shirts and blue jeans, with topcoat varying between lab-coat (scientific work), sport coat (“blending with the mundanes”) and black duster coat (field work). Also wears wire frame glasses with zero-prescription lenses and black cowboy hat.



**Attributes:** ST 12 [20]; IQ 20 [200]; DX 14 [80]; HT 13 [30].

**Secondary Attributes:** HP 12 [0]; Will 20 [0]; Per 20 [0]; Fatigue 13 [0]; Speed 6.75; Move 6; Jihad Rank 5 (Director Emeritus, VRDET) [25]; Damage Thrust 1d-1, Swing 1d+2; Dodge 9

**Languages:** English (Native) [0]; Japanese (Native) [6]; Navaho (Native) [6]; Latin (Accented) [4]; Atlantean: Spoken (None) Written (Accented) [2].

**Advantages:** Gadgeteer (quick cinematic) [50]; Illuminated [15]; Patron (the Jihad) [40]; Security Clearance (Jihad, any “need to know” information) [10]; Penetrating Voice [1]; Schtick (never loses his hat or glasses) [1]; Unaging [15]; Unfazeable [15].



**Disadvantages:** Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Code of Honor (Soldier's) [-10]; Curious [-5]; Duty (to the Illuminati) [-10]; Duty (to the Jihad) [-20]; Enemy (Barney & Friends) [-60]; Secret (member of Illuminati) [-30]; Sense of Duty (to humanity) [-15]; Vow (to build a better world) [-15]; Weirdness Magnet [-15].

**Quirks:** Collects unusual and anachronistic artifacts; leaves his pipe unlit; no patience with stupidity; obsession (classic science fiction); wears eyeglasses even though he doesn't need them; won't talk about his past.

**Wildcard Skills:** Engineering!-20 [24], Gun!-17 [60], Pilot!-17 [60], Science!-24 [96].

**Skills:** Administration-19 [1]; Area Knowledge(VRDET Blanca)-21 [2]; Computer Hacking-19 [4]; Computer Operation-20 [1]; Computer Programming-20 [4]; Conspiracy Theory-20 [4]; Current Affairs (Headline News)-20 [1]; Current Affairs (Politics)-20 [1]; Current Affairs (Science & Technology)-20 [1]; Driving (Automobile)-17 [12]; Driving (Motorcycle)-17 [12]; Driving (Tracked)-17 [12]; Fast-Talk-19 [1]; First Aid-20 [1]; Games (Poker)-19 [0]; Games (INWO)-19 [0]; Games (Baseball)-17 [0]; Hidden Lore (Secret History)-19 [1]; History (20th Century Europe)-19 [2]; Intimidation-19 [1]; Judo-14 [4]; Leadership-20 [2]; Literature-18 [1]; Meelee Weapons (Staff)-16 [8]; Mind Block-19 [1]; Occultism-20 [2]; Philosophy-18 [1]; Research-24 [16]; Savior-Faire (Military)-20 [1]; Stealth-16 [8]; Survival (Rural Colorado)-19 [1]; Survival (Urban)-19 [1].

**Equipment:** Mal usually carries several small and extremely useful tools (like the perennial favorite of Time Lords and eccentric inventors everywhere, the sonic screwdriver) in his coat pockets. He also has access to a hyperspace storage system that allows him to grab just about anything man-portable in 1D6 seconds.

**Total Points:** 666

*Character Design Notes:* Mal's gone through a number of different incarnations through the canon of Jihad stories, though they've all remained pretty close to the original concept. This one represents the most recent version, as used in the *Marraketh Connection* and *Jihad Universe 3.0* campaigns.

In a general Jihad campaign, Mal would be a good Patron for a group of VRDET PCs, especially if they're oriented towards the research end of the spectrum. His semi-official standing as Director Emeritus provides a PC group the opportunity to have "off the books" analysis done offstage, though a request like that may result in the PCs getting into more trouble as they deal with a complete wildcard. On-screen, he will attend to a situation in as efficient and quickly a matter as possible; the overall effect may seem brusque.





## MINERVA FNORD

CHIEF DATA SYSTEMS OFFICER, VRDET

*“Everything that’s stored on a computer, I can ferret out. Le Internet, c’est moi.”*

Minerva is one of several sentient computer systems currently allied to the Jihad. The brainchild of Professor Malaclypse, Min was originally a computerized helpmeet, and helped run the Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow, Inc. during Malaclypse’s early years in the Jihad. When the original Evil Geniuses complex was bombed out during the X’hrijq invasion, Min rode with Malaclypse through the fight in a spare lapframe, up to their reckless and mostly-fatal engagement with the Lizard’s invasion fleet. The original Minerva died in low orbit over California.

After the invasion, Malaclypse used backup copies of Minerva’s personality-generating code and a few scattered memory backups to rebuild his friend. However, Minerva 2.0’s personality was markedly different from her 1.0 persona. Instead of creating a fully adult personality, the generator created one more closely resembling a teenager. This “new” Minerva immediately formed a bond with Malaclypse, proclaiming him her father, and Mal responded in kind. The two remain close, and any injury or insult to either one often results in retribution from the other.

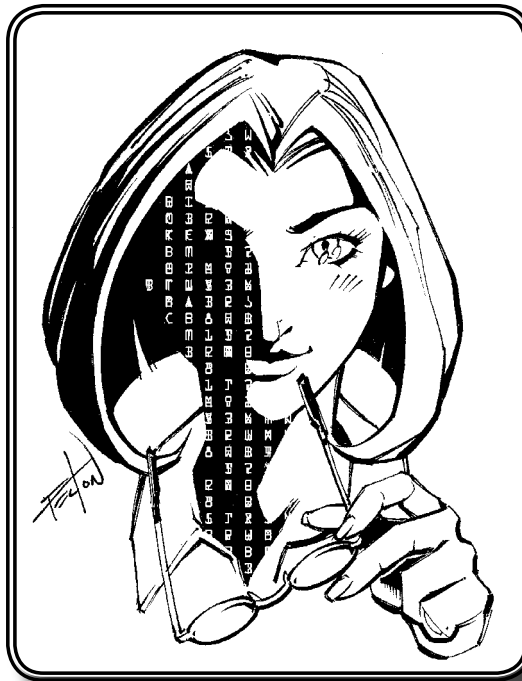
Minerva primarily resides in a Complexity 9 TL 13 megaframe in the basement of VRDET’s Blanca Mountain complex, with the official duty as Chief Systems Control Officer.

Recently, Mal and Min have quietly undertaken a project to give Minerva a “proper” humanoid body. So far, both Min and Mal have been keeping their “Project Galatea” under wraps for the time being, as they have

some doubt as to how well the rest of VRDET, much less the entire Jihad, will react...

*(Note: Minerva’s stats are for her completed bioshell.)*

**Appearance:** Caucasian female, 25 years old, 5’10”, with a fairly slender build that makes her look a little taller than she actually is, pale skin, light blue eyes and dark brown hair worn shoulder length. Minerva’s otaku tendencies have influenced the design of the bioshell’s DNA to the point where the face has a strong resemblance to a character from *Final Fantasy* - not the heavily exaggerated features of a “traditional” anime character, but the smoother, more realistic renderings done in the later games.



**Attributes:** ST 9 [-10]; IQ 23 [+260]; DX 11 [+20]; HT 11 [+10].

**Secondary Attributes:** HP 9 [0]; Will 23 [0]; Per 23 [0]; Fatigue 11 [0]; Speed 5.5; Move 5; Damage Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d-1.

**Languages:** Chinese (Native) [6]; English (Native) [0]; Japanese (Native) [6]; Navaho (Native) [6]; Atlantean: Spoken (None) Written (Accented) [2].

**Advantages:** Alcohol Tolerance [1]; Appearance (Beautiful) [12]; Absolute Direction [5]; Absolute Timing [2]; Fearlessness(1) [2]; Resistant to Disease(+8) [8]; Eidetic Memory [5]; Extra Life (digital backup) [25]; Lightning Calculator [2]; Longevity [2]; Mathematical Ability 3 [30]; Patron (the Jihad, special abilities +100%) [40]; Unaging [15]; Visualization [10]; Voice [10].

**Disadvantages:** Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Curious [-5]; Honesty [-10]; Overconfidence [-5]; Proud [-1]; Reprogrammable [-10]; Sense of Duty: Mal [-2]; Shyness [-5]; Unnatural Features 2 (Animeesque



Facial Features) [-2].

**Wildcard Skills:** Computers!-25 [48]; Electronics!-22 [12]; Engineer!-22 [12].

**Skills:** Accounting-25 [12]; Acting-21 [0]; Administration-23 [2]; Area Knowledge (Cyberspace)-23 [1]; Area Knowledge (Denver)-24 [2]; Artist (Video)-23 [4]; Current Affairs (Headline News)-20 [1]; Current Affairs (Politics)-20 [1]; Current Affairs (Science & Technology)-20 [1]; Driving (Automobile)-16 [20]; Fast-Talk-21 [0]; First Aid-22 [0]; Guns (Plasma Pistol)-14 [8]; Mathematics (*n*-Dimensional Geometry)-23 [4]; Physics-21 [2]; Physics (Temporal)-20 [1]; Piloting-21 [0]; Poetry-23 [2]; Research-23 [2]; Sleight of Hand-11 [4]; Singing-12 [2]; Survival (Urban)-22 [1]; Teaching-21 [0].

**Quirks:** Obsession: New anime DVDs; wears eyeglasses even though she doesn't need them; cautious and deliberate; would like to have children someday; very sentimental. [-5]

**Total Points:** 551

*Character Design Notes:* For all her computing power and the addition of a adult bioshell, Minerva is still very much a kid at heart. Her curiosity and hacking skills (to say nothing of her Overconfidence) can lead her into some serious trouble, especially if she decides to go sniffing around in mundane networks. PCs may end up being tasked by Malaclypse to go retrieve a runaway cyborg before she makes a mistake and gets arrested.

Min's primary duty as the VRDET majordomo AI means that she will have more contact with players than most of the other high-ranking NPCs in VRDET. She connects the calls, provides briefing material and will be the first person on the line if the players feel a need to call in for backup. For the average PC, she's the helpful voice on the other end of a speaker, or the person who keeps beating them stupid at *Unreal Tournament* every game. PCs who've earned her enmity (difficult, but not impossible) will find that Minerva can make their lives very difficult indeed, especially if they're full-

time Rangers. She won't do anything to actively disrupt the Jihad's mission, but she will lock them out of their quarters, forget to connect personal calls, etc.

One last thing. The bond between Minerva and Malaclypse (and her and her adopted sister Dee Greist, see p. 105) is very strong, and it can have unexpected side effects if used in a campaign. Players whom Minerva takes a liking to may end up with Mal as an Ally or Patron, while players that end up really on her bad side may end up making a number of extremely powerful Enemies.



## PUPPETEER

### ARCH-CHANCELLOR, JIHAD PRAXEUM VENEFICUS

Pupp joined the Jihad initially by becoming a member of TRES Corps. He rapidly worked his way up the ranks, and is now a Lieutenant Commander in TRES Corps.

Recently, also, he created the Jihad Praxeum Veneficus. He is the Arch Chancellor of the JPV, and has a rank of 1st Parallelogram.

Pupp is a large man, appearing to be roughly in his early 20's. Built like an American Football linebacker, he looks like someone not worth messing with. However, he is usually smiling, or at least wearing a smirk, always radiating good cheer.

He prefers to, and usually does, wear vintage clothing. His ensemble of choice is: any one of his many bowling shirts, a pair of loose-fitting slacks, and his TRES-issue combat boots. He doesn't go anywhere without a black well-worn trenchcoat. The coat has been magically enhanced by Pupp to be able to store (and summon) most anything reasonably sized that he likes.

Always one to keep things light, even in a bad situation, Pupp is well-known as a smart-ass and general dirty-mind by most Jihaddi. It takes quite a deal to get him worked up, and even more to make him lose his temper. However, when forced to act, he tends to over-react or get himself up to his neck.

Pupp is always willing to help a friend, usually going out of his way to do so. Also, he will lean towards a devil-may-care attitude if someone he knows and likes is in trouble. It takes heavy convincing, and sometimes force to make him see reason.

On long campaigns, tense battles, or just any time to goof around, he carries around various magic tricks, cards, etc. to amuse whoever he's with. He'll pull them out randomly, or if he's bored, or if someone looks bored, etc.. He also plays with various cantrips he always has

ready just to amuse himself, like pulling a hat out of a rabbit.

Pupp's chief weapons are his magical abilities. He is primarily an illusionist, and as such, can generate convincing images, smells, and sounds of most anything he's ever been in contact with or has a concrete idea of. This is limited by range, his stamina, and the intelligence of the target. For example, he can easily convince a sponge that a horde of killer rabbits are approaching, but would have a hard time convincing the Wurm of the same.

His second primary magical weapon is the ability to conjure. He can produce small non-living objects of his desire easily, and large ones with great effort. The stipulation is that they are non-living, and have to be able to exist in this plane.

Pupp spends most of his time commuting between the JPV headquarters in Pennsylvania and TRES Corps main base in Colorado.

**Attributes:** ST 13 [30]; IQ 17 [140]; DX 14 [80]; HT 14 [40]

**Secondary Attributes:** HP 13 [0]; Will 18 [5]; Per 17 [0]; Fatigue 14 [0]; Speed 7; Move 6; Jihad Rank 5 (TRES Admiral, Chi Squad CO, JPV 2nd Torus) [25]; Damage Thrust 1d, Swing 2d-1; Dodge 11; Parry 14 (Staff); Block 9



**Advantages:** Ally Group (The Jihad) [90]; Ambidexterity [5]; Charisma [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Magery 3 [35]; Musical Ability [5]; Resistance (Psionics, +3) [10]; Security Clearance (need to know) [10]; Unusual Background: Magic (Family) [10].

**Disadvantages:** Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Arachnophobia (resist on 9 or less) [-7]; Code of Honor (Soldier's) [-10]; Duty (the Jihad) [-15]; Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-80]; Impulsiveness [-10]; Secret (Member of the Jihad) [-10]; Stubbornness [5].



**Quirks:** Is a bit of a dirty mind; plays magician tricks (card tricks, etc.); trademark (Coat of Many Pockets); fan of vintage clothing, music, etc.; Obnoxious Drunk; [-5]

**Languages:** English (native) [0]

**Skills:** Administration-16 [1]; Area Knowledge (JPV HQ)-20 [8]; Area Knowledge (Tri-State - PA, WV, OH)-17 [1]; Battlesuit/TL9 (familiarities exoskeleton, mecha)-15 [4]; Beam Weapons (X-Rifle)-15 [2]; Breath Control-14 [4]; Broadsword-9 [0]; Carousing-14 [1]; Computer Operation/TL9-13 [0]; Crossbow-15 [2]; Driving/TL8 (Automobile)-15 [4]; Driving/TL8 (Motorcycle)-17 [12]; Driving/TL8 (Tracked Vehicle)-13 [1]; Electronics Operation/TL9-12 [0]; First Aid/TL8-17 [1]; Fishing-13 [0]; Guns/TL8 (Pistol)-17 [8]; Hiking-15 [4]; History (Magic)-18 [8]; Illusion Art-19 [12]; Innate Attack (Projectile)-19 [16]; Leadership-17 [1; includes Charisma bonus]; Mechanic/TL8 (Motorcycle)-19 [8]; Musical Instrument (Saxophone)-16 [1; includes Musical Ability bonus]; Navigation/TL8 (Land)-16 [1]; Occultism-20 [12]; Performance-16 [1]; Research/TL8-19 [8]; Ritual Magic (familial tradition)-14 [1]; Sports (Baseball)-13 [1]; Staff-17 [12]; Stealth-14 [2]; Survival (Forest)-16 [1]; Teaching-17 [2]; Writing-16 [1]

**Spells:** Alter Voice-18 [1]; Amulet-18 [1]; Analyze Magic-18 [1]; Apportation-18 [1]; Aura-18 [1]; Block-18 [1]; Blur-18 [1]; Bravery-18 [1]; Catch Missile-18 [1]; Catch Spell-17 [1]; Colors-18 [1]; Complex Illusion-20 [4]; Conceal Magic-18 [1]; Continual Light-18 [1]; Control Illusion-20 [4]; Cook-18 [1]; Copy-18 [1]; Cornucopia-18 [1]; Counterspell-18 [1]; Create Fire-18 [1]; Create Food-18 [1]; Create Object-18 [2]; Dark Vision-18 [1]; Darkness-18 [1]; Deflect Missile-18 [1]; Delay-18 [1]; Detect Magic-18 [1]; Dispel Illusion-20 [4]; Divert Teleport-17 [1]; Duplicate-17 [1]; Enchant-17 [1]; Enlarge Object-17 [1]; Extend Object-17 [1]; Extinguish Fire-18 [1]; Find Weakness-18 [1]; Fireball-18 [1]; Flash-18 [1]; Hideaway-18 [1]; Identify Spell-18 [1]; Ignite Fire-

18 [1]; Illusion Disguise-19 [2]; Illusion Shell-19 [2]; Imitate Voice-18 [1]; Infravision-18 [1]; Keen Eyes-18 [1]; Know Illusion-20 [4]; Know True Shape-18 [1]; Lend Energy-19 [2]; Lend Vitality-19 [2]; Light-19 [2]; Lighten-19 [2]; Link-18 [1]; Mage Light-18 [1]; Mage Sight-18 [1]; Magic Resistance-18 [1]; Maintain Spell-17 [1]; Minor Healing-18 [1]; Night Vision-18 [1]; Perfect Illusion-20 [1]; Power-18 [1]; Recover Energy-18 [1]; Remove Enchantment-18 [1]; Reshape-18 [1]; Restore-18 [1]; Return Missile-18 [1]; Scroll-18 [1]; Scryguard-18 [1]; See Invisible-18 [1]; Seek Food-18 [1]; Sense Emotion-18 [1]; Sense Foes-18 [1]; Sense Life-18 [1]; Shape Fire-18 [1]; Shield-18 [1]; Simple Illusion-21 [8]; Sound-18 [1]; Spell Shield-18 [1]; Staff-18 [1]; Suspend Enchantment-18 [1]; Talisman-18 [1]; Teleport-17 [1]; Test Food-18 [1]; Throw Spell-17 [1]; Trace Teleport-18 [1]; Transform Object-17 [1]; Voices-18 [1]; Weaken-18 [1].

**Total Points:** 601



## JOSEPH LACROIX

*ENSIGN, TRES CORPS / OPERATIVE, VRDET*

Joseph Philippe Lacroix was a sophomore at McGill university, studying English literature, when he first came to the notice of the Jihad. Just after his twentieth birthday in 1994, Lacroix stumbled over the Jihad's existence in a discussion with a member of the Church of Saint Dino the Avenger. When he responded to the group's existence more with intrigue than disbelief or paranoia, the CoStDtA acolyte maintained communications with him for a few months before successfully recruiting him in October of 1994 after a simple cover-up for his disappearance from mundane society.

Lacroix's early months in the Jihad were fairly uneventful. His training period passed without much incident, and his position as a common soldier left him largely untouched by the disputes in the Jihad's rarefied brass areas between December 1995 and January 1996.

In the wake of those events, Lacroix proved himself a solid soldier in the skirmishes of the day, earning a promotion to sergeant and a squad command in July 1996.

Lacroix was still getting used to being addressed as "Sergeant" by fellow Jihaddi when the X'hirjq invasion occurred in August 1996. He handled his men admirably during the running battles of the operation's early days, but had the bad luck to be in the line at the Battle of TRES HQ in September. The initial attacks on the headquarters were repulsed, but casualties were so high that Lacroix found himself holding the brevet rank of captain early in the battle. He was himself incapacitated when his position took a direct hit during a X'hirjq fighter's attack run, with Lacroix being seriously wounded. Of the twelve men under his immediate command, and the ninety others under

his brevet command, only eight survived.

The Jihad survived the hammer-blow of Operation PHOENIX, but its myth of invincibility was decisively shattered, with wide-ranging effects throughout the hierarchy. Junior commanders took the brunt of this, wounded both in body and mind, and Lacroix was no exception. After being treated for his wounds, Lacroix - commissioned to ensign for some of his actions at PHOENIX, not the least of which was being able to boast eight survivors from a front-line company at the HQ line - spent two months on light duty and reorg work, during which he gradually put himself back together. Recovery from his wounds made him miss Operation

PACIFICA. Despite Lacroix's recovery from his injuries, of both types, he remains plagued by occasional flashbacks to the HQ battle, more often in quiet times than otherwise. As a result, he developed a fondness for background noise.

The post-Phoenix atmosphere created an air of mobility not seen before. "Loaned" to VRDET for a time in mid-1997, Lacroix worked as a brevet field operative, troubleshooting and consulting for a temporary term which soon became permanent, earning him a billet in VR Explorations. Lacroix spent most of the rest of 1997 and most of 1998 providing technical support for various functions and training new recruits, which kept

him on base during the day's major operations. Lacroix's combat experience in this time was mostly the innumerable small skirmishes the Jihad fought every day, in which he performed admirably.

**Primary Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; IQ 13 [60]; DX 13 [60]; HT 11 [10].

**Secondary Attributes:** HT 11 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 14 [5]; FP 11 [0]; Speed 6; Move 6; Jihad Rank 1 (Ensign, TRES Corps) [5].





**Appearance:** Caucasian male, 25 years of age, 5'11" and 175lbs; gray eyes, short brown hair and a goatee. In civilian life, Lacroix tends to wear business-casual type clothing, always wears his wooden, hand-carved crucifix, and stays far away from the color white when he has a choice in the matter. In the summer, he is often seen wearing a sunburn.

**Languages:** English (Native) [0]; French (Native) [0].

**Advantages:** Acute Vision +2 [4]; Patron (the Jihad, special abilities, +100%) [40]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Hard to Sponge +1 [5]; Military Rank 2 (Field Operative, VRDET) [10].

**Disadvantages:** Duty (to the Jihad) [-15]; Enemy (B'harne & Fiends, 12 or less; Hunter) [-60]; Flashbacks (mild, of Operation Phoenix) [-5]; Post-Combat Shakes [-5].

**Quirks:** Devout Catholic; keeps a radio/TV on as background noise; not quite used to the parahumans; strong dislike of winter; political cynic ("well, if we *own* Colorado..").

**Skills:** Area Knowledge (Quebec)-14 [2]; Beam Weapons/TL9 (X-Rifle)-16 [2]; Brawling-13 [1]; Camouflage-13 [1]; Computer Operation/TL8 (Mundane)-13 [1]; Computer Operation/TL9 (Jihad)-13 [1]; Driving/TL8 (automobiles)-12 [1]; Driving/TL9 (Van in Black)-13 [2]; Electronics Operation/TL9 (Jihadlinker)-13 [2]; Electronics Operation/TL9 (Sponge Detector)-13 [2]; First Aid/TL9-13 [1]; Guns/TL8 (Pistol)-13 [1]; Guns/TL8 (Rifle)-14 [2]; Meelee Weapons (Shortsword)-12 [1]; Recognize Sponge-Minion-14 [2]; Savoir-Faire (Jihad)-14 [2]; Soldier/TL9-13 [2]; Tactics-12 [2]; Theology (Roman Catholic)-12 [2].

**Total Points:** 166



## DIEDRE “DEE” GREIST

TECHNICIAN, VRDET

Dee is perhaps unique in the Jihad, being a second generation Jihaddi, albeit adopted. She was always incredibly bright and fascinated by technology, and she remembered, literally, everything. Through homeschooling her education was well up to college level in some more technical areas of study by the age of 10. Things changed though. Caught up in a small battle involving the newly formed Blood Jihad, Dee's parents and her right arm became collateral damage. She was picked up in a sweep for survivors.

Dee recovered from her coma remembering what had happened to her parents. The Blood Jihad watched over her as she recovered and she started tentatively forming bonds with a couple from the Skunk Works division. They genuinely wanted to help her, and they were able to talk shop, one of the things that she knew best. Eventually she asked if she could stay here, with them, and it was allowed. As she opened up more and more Dee started learning new, wonderful things about the Jihad technology. People who at first dismissed her as a kid started paying attention when she had intelligent things to say about their designs. As things got better, she became genuinely happy for the first time since the attack.

That, unfortunately, didn't last. The reality shifts of Operation WORLDWALK had a lot of consequences, and one of those was Dee's adopted mother ceasing to exist during the tumult. Her adopted father closed himself off after that, and more and more Dee was being raised by the whole Skunk Works, still outwardly as cheerful as ever but hurting. Then the debacle of Operation PHOENIX happened, through which Dee escaped only through luck; many of her friends in the Skunk Works didn't, which only added to her psychological injuries. The final straw came when her adopted father joined

the Lone Warrior's ill-fated mission on the *Andromeda*. Dee's mind, already under a great deal of stress, broke.

When the Evil Geniuses and the Blood Jihad formed the Verthandic Rangers, Dee was a mess; barely feeding herself and under psychiatric supervision. With the help of some of her surviving friends, and a few new ones, she improved again. She'd later say that Minerva, the base AI, was one of her best friends... and that she'd developed a crush on Malaclypse. She slowly got back into things and attacked her work with an increasing level of devotion.

At the age of 15, Dee stopped growing and it was finally okayed to fit her with an artificial arm. Due to the extent of damage, it actually had to anchor into a variety

of other bones but boasts very precise movement, better strength than her natural arm, and a powerful computer tied into her nervous system.

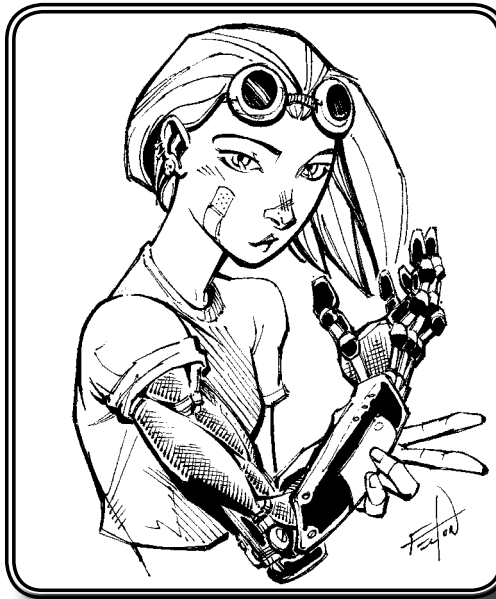
The black composite arm is Dee's most obvious feature. The 5'2 girl is slender, some would say scrawny, though her face would bring the word "cute" to mind. Her coppery brown hair is cut to a serviceable shoulder length, with her bangs occasionally drifting over her piercing green eyes. Her normal mode of attire is baggy camouflage cargo pants or jeans over black combat boots, and a black synthetic motorcycle jacket a size

too big over a T-shirt a size too small. Red skull and crossbones dot her earlobes.

**Attributes:** ST 9 [-10]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 17 [140]; HT 10 [0]

**Secondary Attributes:** HP 9 [0]; Will 14 [-15]; Per 17 [0]; Fatigue 10 [0]; Speed 5.25 [0]; Move 5 [0]; Damage Thr 1d-2, Sw 1d-1; Dodge 5; Parry 8 (Karate); Block 6

**Advantages:** Ally Group (the Jihad) [90]; Appearance (Attractive) [4]; Artificer Talent 2 [20]; Eidetic





Memory 2 [10]; Gadgeteer (Cinematic) [50]; Limb (Arm, DX 16, ST 14) [75]; Manual Dexterity (+4, right arm only (-20%)) [16]; Weapon Mount [2].

*Skill Note: Dee's Artificer Talent boosts many subspecialties of her Science! skill, especially all manner of Engineering, to skill levels of 20. Personally, she tends to focus on bionics, electronics, and mechanical engineering.*

**Disadvantages:** Alcohol Intolerance [-1]; Compulsive Behavior (Speeding, 12 or less) [-5]; Curious (6 or less) [-10]; Easy to Read [-10]; Enemy (Barney & Friends) [-60]; Fearfulness 1 [-2]; Herpetophobia (fear of reptiles, 10 or less) [-10]; Impulsiveness (12 or less) [-10]; Light Sleeper [-5]; Weirdness Magnet [-15]; Workaholic [-5]; Social Stigma (Minor) [-5]

**Equipment:** In addition to its physical capability, Dee's arm sports a weapon mount and a neural interface jack for communicating with high-tech computers.

**Total Points:** 400

**Quirks:** Feels naked when unarmed; Imaginative; Overly excitable when it comes to new technology; Relies too much on her artificial arm; Unnatural feature (arm) [-5]

**Languages:** English (native) [0]; German (Native) [6]; Japanese (Broken) [2]; Spanish (Accented) [4]

**Skills:** Armoury/TL9 (Battlesuits)-19 [2]; Armoury/TL9 (Small Arms: familiarities slugthrowers, beam weapons)-21 [8]; Beam Weapons/TL9 (X-Weapons)-11 [1]; Blacksmith/TL9-18 [1]; Computer Hacking/TL8-16 [4]; Computer Operation/TL8-17 [1]; Computer Programming/TL8-18 [8]; Cooking-17 [1]; Cryptography/TL8-17 [4]; Driving/TL8 (automobile)-11 [2]; Driving/TL8 (Motorcycle)-12 [4]; Electronics Operation/TL8 (Electronic Warfare)-17 [2]; Environment Suit/TL9 (Battlesuit)-12 [4]; Environment Suit/TL9 (NBC Suit)-11 [2]; Explosives/TL8 (Demolition)-19 [8]; Explosives/TL8 (Explosive Ordinance Disposal)-23 [4]; First Aid/TL9-19 [1]; Forgery/TL9-15 [1]; Games(First-person shooters)-17 [1]; Gunner/TL9 (Beams)-11 [1]; Guns/TL8 (Light automatics)-12 [2]; Guns/TL8 (Pistols)-12 [2]; Guns/TL8 (Rifles)-12 [2]; History-15 [1]; Intelligence Analysis/TL9-16 [2]; Karate-11 [4]; Lockpicking-18 [4]; Mechanic/TL9-20 [4]; Photography/TL8-16 [1]; Research/TL9-17 [2]; Science!-18 [36]; Speed Reading-16 [1]; Tactics-16 [2]; Weird Science-16 [4]; Writing-17 [2]





## RENS HOUBEN/SHADUR T'KHARN

### CAPTAIN, TRES CORPS

Rens and Shadur are separate entities, sharing the same body. This fact used to have a negative effect on Rens's study results, especially in classes that bored him. (It's hard to concentrate on a dull droning voice nattering on about something dumb, but it's even worse when someone else is explicitly stating his opinions on the teacher, the subject and several hundred other facts that Shadur considers more interesting). Because they constantly share each other's thoughts, memories and experiences, both of them are gradually changing, becoming more like the other, starting to literally think as one.

Shadur joined with Rens during the latter's 15th year, when he'd injured himself critically falling from a tree. They were still exploring the effects of the joining when, in the spring of 1996, a group of wyrm-minions entered the Schwarzwald in order to build a clandestine TV station there to spread the Hellwurm's influence to Europe. In doing so, they trespassed on what Shadur claimed as his territory and pissed him off by attacking him when he asked them what the hell they were doing there. (Good advice: Never tick off a dragon in his own territory. They died quickly but messily.)

Shadur wanted to kill all of them outright, but Rens convinced him to leave one survivor to take a message back. The Hellwurm subsequently kidnapped Rens's parents and brother and sister, trying to blackmail him into allowing the TV station to be built and protecting it from the Jihad.

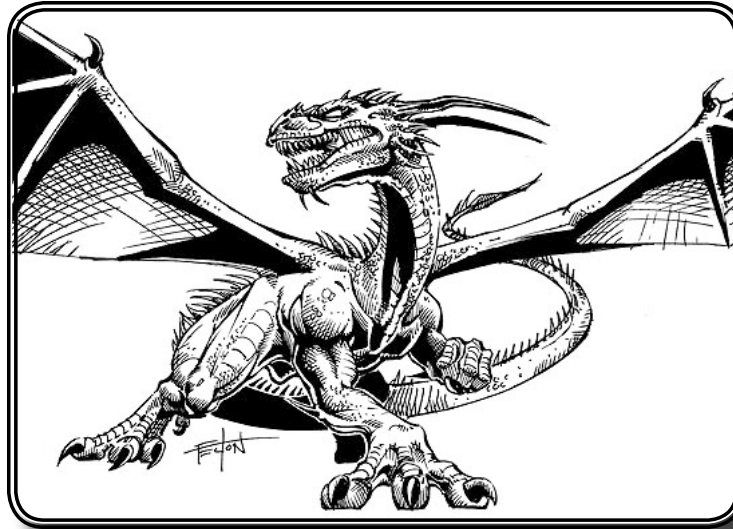
Realizing that submitting would only cause this "Barney" to continue the blackmail as long as whatever it was had a use for him, Rens/Shadur flew across the Atlantic to locate this "Jihad" which this "Barney"

seemed to worry about, to find out if they could help him.

After making contact, he learned just what kind of danger the Hellwurm presented to all sentient life and decided to join the Jihad. With the help of TRES Corps, he was able to rescue his parents and his brother and sister, as well as wiping the construction site in the Schwarzwald off the face of the Earth. Since then Shadur continues to work with TRES, currently as executive officer of Zeta Squad R&D.

### RENS

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 13 [60]; IQ 13 [60]; HT 10 [0]



**Secondary Attributes:** HP 11 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 14/13 (Hearing and Vision/all others) [4]; Fatigue 10 [0]; Speed 4.75 [0]; Move 4 [0]; Damage Thr 1d-1, Sw 1d+1; Dodge 5; Parry 10 (unarmed); Block 8

**Advantages:** 3D Spatial Sense [10]; Ally Group (The Jihad) [90]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Danger Sense [15]; Dark

Vision [25]; Gunslinger [25]; Improved G-Tolerance [5]; Military Rank 3 (Captain, TRES) [15]; Resistance (Acceleration) [1]; Shadow Form [50]; Shapeshifting (to Shadur) [283]

**Disadvantages:** Bad Temper (12 or less) [-10]; Code of Honor [-5], Duty (to the Schwartzwald) [-27], Enemy (Admiral Bond, TRES Intel -- Watcher, x1/4) [-2], Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-80], Frightens Animals [-10], Increased Consumption (eats twice as much as a normal human) [-10], Karmic Ties (Schwartzwald) [0], Odious Personal Habit (reptilian body language) [-5], Sense of Duty (the Jihad) [-5], Split Personality (Shadur) [-10], Trickster (12



or less) [-15], Weakness (1d/30min, temps above 100F/41C) [-15].

**Quirks:** Can't drive a car to save his life; Proud [-2]

**Languages:** Dutch (Native) [0]; English (Native) [6]; German (Accented) [4]; Gesture (TRES Battle Sign Code -- Accented) [2]

**Skills:** Acting-13 [2]; Area Knowledge(Schwartzwald)-20 [24]; Beam Weapons/TL9 (rifle; familiarity, X-Rifle)-13 [1]; Chess-13 [1]; Computer Hacking/TL8-14 [12]; Computer Operation/TL8-15 [4]; Computer Programming/TL8-14 [8]; Cryptology/TL8-12 [2]; Dancing-13 [2]; Disguise/TL9-12 [1]; Driving/TL9 (Motorcycle)-13 [2]; Engineer/TL8 (Electronics)-13 [4]; Fast-Draw (Pistol)-14 [2]; First Aid/TL9-13 [1]; Guns/TL9 (Pistol)-14 [2] (Techniques: Dual-Weapon Attack+4 [5], Off-Hand Weapon Training+4 [5]); Intelligence Analysis-11 [1]; Interrogation-12 [1]; Mathematics/TL8 (Applied)-11 [1]; Mechanic/TL9 (Motorcycle)-12 [1]; Musical Instrument (Keyboard)-14 [8]; Physics/TL8-12 [4]; Pickpocket-11 [1]; Piloting!/TL9-15 [48]; Piloting!/TL9 technique (No-Landing Extraction!)-13 [3]; Research/TL9-13 [2]; Skating-11 [8]; Sleight of Hand-11 [1]; Stealth-14 [4]; Weird Science-12 [4].

**Total Points:** 649

## SHADUR

**Attributes:** ST 21 [110]; DX 13 [60]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 14 [40]

**Secondary Attributes:** SM+2; HP 21 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 15 [20]; Fatigue 14 [0]; Speed 6.75 [0]; Move 6/12/13 (basic/running/flying) [10]; Damage Thr 2d, Sw 4d-1; Dodge 10; Parry 11 (unarmed); Block 8

**Advantages:** Ally Group (The Jihad) [90]; Claws (Talons) [8]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Damage Resistance+5 (Heavy Scales) [20]; Damage Resistance+1

(versus Fire/Heat)\* [3]; Dark Vision [25]; Discriminatory Smell [15]; Extra Attack+2 [50]; Extra Legs (Four total) [5]; Fearlessness+2 [4]; Flexibility (Double-Jointed) [15]; Flight (Winged) [30]; Hard to Kill+2 [4]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Immunity to Sickness [10]; Innate Attack (fiery breath: burning, 4d, no other modifiers) [20]; Lifting ST+2 [6]; Long Arms [20]; Military Rank+3 (Captain, TRES) [15]; Penetrating Voice [1]; Peripheral Vision [15]; Reduced Consumption 2 (Cast Iron Stomach, -50%) [2]; Shapeshifting (to Rens) [15]; Striker (Tail: Long+1, 2d+2 cr or pi) [10]; Teeth (Sharp) [1]; Telescopic Vision+2 [10]; Temperature Tolerance+5 (-35 to 90 F) [5]; Unaging [15].

**Disadvantages:** Appearance (Monstrous) [-20]; Bad Grip 1 [-5]; Bloodlust (12 or less) [-10]; Duty (to Schwartzwald)\* [-27]; Enemy (Admiral Bond, TRES Intel, Watcher (x1/4)) [-1]; Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-80]; Frightens Animals [-10]; Increased Consumption (eats twice as much as normal human) [-10]; Greed (12 or less) [-15]; Horizontal [-10]; Intolerance [-10]; Jealousy [-10]; Odious Racial Habit (Eats Sentients) [-15]; Pyromania (12 or less) [-5]; Split Personality (Rens) [-10]; Stubbornness [-5]; Truthfulness (12 or less) [-5]; Weakness (1d/30min, temps above 100F/41C) [-20]

**Quirks:** Doesn't trust humans; casual with casualties (Quirk-level Callous). [-2]

**Languages:** German (Native) [0]

**Skills:** Area Knowledge (Schwartzwald)-20 [24]; Draconic Ground/Air Combat Art-14 [8]; Intimidation-16 [20]; Mount-13 [2]

**Total Points:** 481



## KIRK FELTON

GRAND ADMIRAL, TRES CORPS

Grand Admiral Kirk Felton, Commander-in-Chief of TRES Corps has borne many names throughout his lifetime; Ralph Lamb, Victor Lyon, Greg Lucas, Gregor Bourdon, and many others. But he was born Gregor Lamont, in the year of our Lord 1632 on the Cowal peninsula of what is modern day Argyll in Scotland. For over three centuries he has walked the Earth, following a path laid before him, never certain where it will lead or when-- if at all-- it will end.

His powers first manifested themselves on the eve of his twenty-second year, coinciding with a number of strange dreams and the appearance of the black claymore he carries with him to this day. The sword is sentient, and has forged some sort of soul-bond with him; he suspects that it is this bond that is responsible for his longevity, and possibly even for causing his psychokinesis to manifest in the first place.

The next several decades found him wandering western Europe aimlessly, trying to fulfill a destiny that was only vaguely defined. Vampire covens tended to be a favorite target, and he grew a loathing for the various other creatures with whom he shared the night.

In France, he found himself caught up in the Revolution, beginning his career as an eternal soldier. It was, after all, much easier to fade out of society as a nameless and faceless casualty of war, allowing him to move on to his next destination. And so the centuries passed. He was witness to Nelson's victory, and eventual death at Trafalgar, taken prisoner himself by the Royal Navy. He was cut down on Gallipoli, with countless other British soldiers. He flew sorties over the south Pacific, Korea and Vietnam, an ace twice over. Vietnam ended

his military career. He wandered the states, making himself a nuisance for whatever paranormal forces were themselves being a nuisance. And then the Hellwurm arrived.

Gregor will be the first to admit that his initial reasons for joining the Jihad were less than benevolent; he was discovered by then-admiral J. Foxglov while tracking and carrying out a vendetta against a cell of wurm minions responsible for an assault that left his closest friend in a coma and himself severely injured. A chance encounter with a handful of TRES Corps Alpha Squad operatives introduced him to the Admiral, who saw potential in a man with whom they shared a common enemy.

He was inducted into TRES Corps Zeta Squad and almost instantly made the rank of Lieutenant, and while he was perfectly happy in the R&D labs developing infantry weapons, he gained notoriety in the intelligence work he did on the side, often using his skill with a pencil to render early impressions of new agents of the Enemy based on first-hand accounts of operatives.

The real trial by fire for him came during the raid on the Pacifica POW camp, where he made Captain and, much to his surprise, found himself in the favor of the Holy Albino, where he was brought into the ranks of his Maenads, given the name of Nemesis

by Windigo the Feral.

The fast track didn't stop there, however. Not long following Pacifica he was transferred to Theta Squadron, where he took up drill instructor duty, eventually being promoted to XO and Rear Admiral of the "newbie squad." Soon it was Admiral, and he was placed in command of TRES Corps Omega Squad.

In the wake of Grand Admiral Marburger's disappearance, he was appointed the seat of Second-in-Command by de facto Grand Admiral Melanie Davies.





And when the position began to wear on her, the two officers met and agreed to change positions.

And so he sits in the Big Chair, double-diamonds clipped to his lapel. To those that don't know him, they might find him somewhat distant, curt to a point, and always formal. But to those of the "inner circle," he's warm, friendly, and a great bloke to share a stout with. And if you have a stout handy, you're already halfway there.

Interestingly enough, the emergence of the Nemesis entity has all but eliminated the appearance of the demon-beast. The gift of the Warp seems to have brought a welcome stability into Felton's being, provided that no Lyrans happen across his path.

**Attributes:** ST 16 [60]; DX 15 [100]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 15 [50]

**Secondary Attributes:** HP 16 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 16/11 (Taste, Smell, Hearing / all others) [20]; Fatigue 15 [0]; Speed 7.5 [0]; Move 7 [0]; Damage Thr 1d+1, Sw 2d+2; Dodge 8; Parry 13; Block 9

**Advantages:** Ally Group (The Jihad) [90]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Patron (Feral Jackson, base 20; Accessible by supplication, +50%; rarely appears, 6 or less; x1/2)) [15]; Immunity to Sickness [15]; Military Rank 5 (Grand Admiral, C-in-C TRES Corps) [25]; Night Vision 9 [9]; Regeneration (Hourly) [25]; Alternate Form (Maenad: ST+16; DX+2; HT+2; Enhanced Dodge; DR 2; Claws (Talons, Armor Divisor (2) on damage inflicted, +50%); Uncontrollable, -10%) [222]; Unaging [15]

**Psionics:** Special Rapport (wife Keili) [5]; Innate Attack 6d (Burning, 5/lvl; Area Effect 8 yds, +150%; Selective Area, +20%, Psychokinetic, -10%) [78]; Telekinesis 6 (Psionic, -10%) [27]; Warp (Ranged, +40%; Extra Carrying Capacity (Heavy), +30%; Teleportation, -10%) [160]

**Disadvantages:** Bloodlust (12 or less, Lyrans only, -50%) [-5]; Duty (The Jihad) [-15]; Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-80]; Guilt Complex [-5]; Magic Susceptibility 5 [-15]; Pacifism: Cannot Harm Inno-

cents [-10]; Phobia: Enclosed spaces (12 or less) [-15]; Post-Combat Shakes [-5]; Sense of Duty (All humanity) [-15]; Split personality (Nemesis) [-10]; Susceptibility to Poison 5 [-5]; Unnatural Feature 2 (Red, glowing eyes) [-2]

**Quirks:** Scottish brogue comes and goes when agitated. Interacts with peers strictly according to protocol when formally "on-duty". Soul-bound to a sentient Lyrans-made sword. Nemesis smokes; Felton doesn't. [-4]

**Languages:** English (native) [0], French (Native) [6], German (Accented) [4], Lyrans (Spoken (Broken) / Written (None)) [1]

**Skills:** Armoury/TL7 (Small Arms)-16 [20]; Artist (Drawing)-16 [24]; Battlesuit/TL8-15 [2]; Beam Weapons/TL9 (X-Rifle)-17 [4]; Blacksmith/TL4-14 [12]; Brawling-18 [8]; Driving/TL8 (Automobile)-17 [8]; Driving/TL8 (Tracked)-15 [8]; Electronics Operation(Comm)/TL8-15 [16]; First Aid/TL8-15 [12]; Guns/TL7 (Pistol)-17 [4]; Guns/TL7 Technique (Pistol: Fanning (Average, Pistol-4))-16 [3]; Guns/TL7 (Rifle)-18 [8]; Innate Attack (Fire, based on IQ)-19 [28]; Masonry-14 [8]; Piloting/TL7 (Light Airplane)-17 [8]; Piloting/TL8 (High-Performance Airplane)-16 [4]; Professional Skill (Distiller)-13 [8]; Professional Skill (Cooper)-12 [4]; Strategy-12 [8]; Tactics-12 [8]; Two-Handed Sword-19 [16]

**Total Points:** 988



## ARIS MERQUONI

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EXPLORATIONS, VRDET

Aris joined the Jihad after doing something extremely stupid: attempting to take on a group of Lyran mages all by her lonesome. A member of a race known commonly as the 'Galactic Dragons', she has the ability to cross dimensional barriers. Unfortunately, when she came to this universe, her teleport was rudely interrupted by a Lyran channeling spell. Irked, and intent on taking revenge, Aris plowed straight into the mages' circle and got fried for her efforts.

Licking her wounds, Aris joined up with the Jihad in order to get a chance to fight back, and there learned about the Hellwurm and other Jihad lore. After a brief stint in TRES Corps, she decided that the formal military structure wasn't for her and joined the newly formed Verthandic Rangers. Through diligence and application, or maybe just sheer stubbornness, she rose to the rank of XO of the Explorations division.

Less rash than her early days, and incredibly out of the loop of global politics, Aris is much happier in a straight fight than in a cloak-and-dagger situation, but understands the term 'overwhelming odds' much better than she used to.

Aris has a rather fuzzy history pre-Jihad; it is known that at one point she served as a Third-Gunner on a Kzin battleship, and that she was mentored by an anthropomorphic feline deity named Firefoot, but she doesn't have many non-Jihad ties and doesn't seem to mind.

Aris is not a professional shapeshifter. Changing into forms she hasn't practiced gives her muscle spasms and migraines. She rarely needs to.

**Attributes:** ST: 25 [150]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 12 [40]; HT

14 [40]

**Secondary Attributes:** SM+1; HP 25 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; Fatigue 14 [0]; Speed 6.5; Move 6; Damage Thr 1d-1, Sw 1d+2; Dodge 6; Parry 9; Block 7

**Advantages:** Ally Group (the Jihad) [90]; Claws (Talons) [8]; Damage Resistance 2 (Scales) [10]; Galactic Dragon (new meta-trait; see below) [97]; G-experience [10]; Magery 1 [15]; Military Rank 4 (Commander, VRDET) [20]; Patron (Deity, never around when you need him) [10]; Penetrating Voice [1]; Striker (Tail: Long+1, 2d+2 cr or pi) [5]; Teeth [2].



**Disadvantages:** Appearance: Monstrous [-20]; Horizontal [-10]; Bad Grip 1 [-5]; Duty(to the Jihad, constant) [-15]; Enemy (Barney & Fiends) [-60]; Fanaticism (for the Jihad) [-15]; Oblivious [-5]

**Quirks:** Disorganized; Talks to self; Mood swings; Personality Change (becomes Easy to Read when in human form) [-4]

**Languages:** Th-varian (native) [0]; English (Native) [6]; Kzinti (Accented) [4]

**Cultural Familiarities:** Native, Kzinti, American [2]

**Skills:** Administration-11 [1]; Beam Weapons/TL9 (Plasma Rifle)-12 [1]; Brawling-12 [1]; Broadsword (human musculature)-12 [2]; Broadsword (Kzinti musculature)-11 [1]; Computer Operation/TL9-12 [1]; Driving/TL8 (Automobiles)-11 [1]; First Aid/TL9-14 [4]; Free-Fall-14 [8]; Gunner/TL9 (Kzinti starship cannon)-14 [4]; Leadership-12 [4]; Swim-14 [1]; Tactics-10 [2]; Typing-12 [1]



*META-TRAIT: GALACTIC DRAGON*

**Advantages:** Morph (Nuisance effect: changing into unpracticed forms causes physical discomfort, -5%) [95]

**Disadvantages:** Hoarding (as Miserliness, 12 or less) [-10]

**Spells:** Detect Magic IQ-1 [2]; Fog IQ-2 [1]; Ignite Fire IQ-2 [1]; Lightning IQ-1 [1]; Seek Earth IQ-1 [1]; Teleport IQ-1 [2]; Plane Shift (Jihad Universe) IQ-1 [2]; Plane Shift (Home universe) IQ-1 [2]

Total: 97

*Aris' Galactic Dragon meta-trait is not part of the racial templates; its traits are available in all forms.*

*PRACTICED TEMPLATES:*

*Natural dragon form (Aris' base racial template):*

**Attributes:** ST+13 [130]

**Secondary Attributes:** SM+1

**Advantages:** Claws (Talons) [8]; Penetrating Voice [1]; Damage Resistance 2 (Scales) [10]; Striker (Tail: Long+1, 2d+2 cr or pi) [5]; Teeth [2]

**Disadvantages:** Appearance: Monstrous [-20]; Horizontal [-10]; Bad Grip 1 [-5].

Total: 121

*Winged dragon form:*

**Attributes:** ST+8 [80]

**Secondary Attributes:** SM+1

**Advantages:** Claws (Talons) [8]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; Penetrating Voice [1]; Damage Resistance 2 (Scales) [10]; Striker (Tail: Long+1, 2d+2 cr or pi) [5]; Teeth [2]

**Disadvantages:** Appearance: Monstrous [-20]; Horizontal [-10]; Bad Grip 1 [-5]

**Skills:** Flight-13 [1]

Total: 102

*Small dragon form:*

**Attributes:** ST+3 [30]

**Advantages:** Claws (Sharp) [5]; Damage Resistance 2 (Scales) [10]; Striker (Tail: Long+1, 2d+2 cr or pi) [5]; Teeth [2]

**Disadvantages:** Appearance: Monstrous [-20]; Horizontal [-10]; Bad Grip 1 [-5]

Total: 17

*Feline humanoid form:*

**Attributes:** ST+2 [20]

**Advantages:** Claws (Sharp) [5]; Fur [7]; Teeth [1].

**Disadvantages:** Appearance: Monstrous [-20]

**Skills:** Brawling DX+2 [4]

Total: 17

*Human form:* 0-point human template

**Total Points:** 448



## JIHAD & BARNEY STORIES

A mostly-complete archive of the Jihad to Destroy Barney's writing is at <http://www.jihad.net/>.

Bull, Brian *Day of the Barney* (1993). Not a Jihad story, but considered the high water mark of early Barney parody writing. The author's website was pulled after threats by the Lyons Group, but it can still be found on various humor websites. The Jihad archive also contains two other stories by Bull, *Son of Barney* and *Death Zone Purple*.

Arsenal the Lone Warrior, *Fall of the Power Rangers* (1995). Truly one of the great offbeat classics of early Jihad literature, this story chronicles one man's fight against the scourge of mid-90's mass-marketing, the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers.

*Operation Phoenix* (1996). The earliest complete story in the archive, this one covers the X'hirjq Invasion.

*Operation Pacifica* (1996-1997). The story of a Jihad rescue mission in the Pacific. Sequel to *Operation Phoenix*.

*The Marraketh Connection* (1997-1998). The premiere of VRDET, another rescue story.

*Operation Homefront* (1998). A multi-JAO mission to stop a global spongification array

*Operation Samsonite* (1999). The premiere of the JPV. Unfinished as of 2006.

Felton, Kirk *Alone In The Night* (2001). A short story dealing with Charn'El in the aftermath of Operation PACIFICA.

Merquoni, Aris & Templeton, Katrina *I Left My Sense In San Francisco* (2002). A story that was intended to give the Line Editor a stroke, but had the opposite effect, much to the authors' chagrin. Recommended.

*Jihad Universe 3.0* (2004-). The

most recent Jihad story. Still being written as of July 2005. Expected to be finished sometime in early 2007.

## ROLEPLAYING RESOURCES

We used a whole lot of different RPG sources to help us piece together the most recent Jihad Universe setting.

Pulver, David et. al. *GURPS* (Steve Jackson Games 2005). Obviously the major influence, the first version of this book had *3rd Edition* material added as a lark, which we later expanded and updated to *4th Edition* for this release. The books we've used or referenced include (but are not limited to) *GURPS Atlantis*, *GURPS IOU*, *GURPS Illuminati*, *GURPS Infinite Worlds*, *GURPS Magic*, *GURPS Powers/Supers/IST* and the ever-popular *GURPS Ultra-Tech 1 & 2*.

Stolze, Greg *Unknown Armies* (Atlas Games, 2002). Gritty urban horror/fantasy gaming. Some of the feel filtered into the Jihad Universe in spots, and we figure UA would make a good alternative system for running Jihad Universe games.

Vasilakos, George et. al. *Conspiracy X* (Eden Studios 1996). A setting based off the classic conspiracy tropes of the 1990s, *Conspiracy X* in all its variations informed a lot of the mundane actor material in Chapter 5. We like to think that the Jihad Universe might make good crossover material.

## COMICS

Despite all the work we put into making the Jihad Universe more realistic, it remains a comic-book universe at heart. Here's a few of our inspirations.

Ellis, Warren *Stormwatch* (Wildstorm, 1998). International superhero group battles evil on a global scale. Works as a rough "Jihad goes public"

analogue.

Ellis, Warren *Planetary* (Wildstorm, 1999-2006). Investigators plumbing the depths of weirdness of the 20th century. The direct inspiration for the group in Chapter 4.

Foglio, Phil & Kaja *Girl Genius* (Airship Entertainment, 2000-). Adventure, romance and Mad Science in an alternate steampunk world. Jihaddi mad inventors would feel right at home here.

Morrison, Grant *The Invisibles* (Vertigo, 1996-2001). A band of anarchists trying to save the world from Lovecraftian monsters. A good way to approach a mundane entering the Jihad's world for the first time.

Perry, Fred *Gold Digger* (Antarctic Press, 1993-). Adventures of a super-intelligent archaeologist and her were-cheetah sister. Recommended for gratuitous silliness if nothing else.

Winick, Judd et. al. *Exiles* (Marvel, 2001-). Various alternate versions of Marvel superheroes bouncing between alternate universes righting wrongs.

Wolfman, Marv *Crisis on Infinite Earths* (DC, 1985). The dimension-destroying crossover event that started the modern age of comics. Recommended read if you want to try and understand Operation WORLDWALK.

## OTHER MEDIA

*The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across The 8th Dimension* (W.D. Richter, 1985). The classic cult movie about a hero and his idiosyncratic sidekicks fighting aliens.

*GI Joe* (1983-1987). Secret bases, super technology, specialized supersoldiers against an enemy dumber than most rock formations. We can't confirm it, but we'll eat our hats if this isn't the inspiration for a lot of the original Jihaddi.



# APOLOGIA

*“Everything goes by the board: honor, pride, decency to get the book written.”*

—WILLIAM FAULKNER

It all started years ago, when as an mostly-innocent high school student I downloaded a copy of “Barneystein 3D,” a fairly silly-ass mod to the equally silly-ass first-person shooter *Wolfenstein 3D*. Included with the image mod was a good big old stack of fiction from alt.barney.dinosaur.die.die.die, including what most people consider the first real classic of anti-Barney fiction, “Day of the Barney.”

I read it, and I was hooked.

Around the same time, I found a dialup shell account out of the University of Denver. The account was free, so access was limited, but I could wander around the Web and gopher — remember gopher? — using lynx. And lo and behold, I found the original Jihad website, back when it was on the Santa Cruz Armory server. Using lynx, I didn’t know how hideous & garish the design was, but the available content was even more interesting than the other stuff.

When I managed to cajole my parents into getting a proper internet service, my first destination was good old ab4d. Destiny had it in for me from the start, I guess.

My early career was unimpressive. Like many a newbie before me, I started my own group, The Evil Geniuses for a Better Tomorrow., to a lukewarm response. The more established members laughed at my newbie mistakes, just like everywhere else on the internet. My timing being impeccable, I managed to show up in the middle of the internet drama that was The Great Serp Purge, so there was a fair amount of paranoia where I couldn’t see it. There would later be a great deal of paranoia where I *could* see, but that’s another and far less pleasant story.

Anyway, once the Purge has run its course, things calmed down a bit and I got to interact in more comfortable ways with the rest of the group. Then, between the *Phoenix* and *Pacifica* storylines, destiny decided to fuck with my life once again. On the spur of the moment, I decided to build a general guide to the Jihad’s oft-confusing story/game world. The beginnings of the project were, to be frank, pretty weak. Not much more than a list and description of stuff found in the early stories. When DeadLock the Feral, the then up-and-coming de facto leader of the Jihad, took an interest in the project, it really began to get off the ground. Between the two of us, we decided that instead of a simple list of stuff, we should try and formulate a proper role-playing guide to the JU. Since this project would codify the whole shebang, we ended up calling it the *Jihad Universe 2.0*, or JU2.

We had long voice & IRC conversations about how to shape the universe. Most of it, however, was eventually lost. Partly because I lost the notes over time, but mostly because a *lot* of DeadLock’s suggestions were heavily influenced by White Wolf Games’ *World of Darkness* series. At the time (this would be near the end of *Pacifica*, if I remember correctly — call it late 1996), DeadLock

and the Maenads of the Holy Albino were the de facto storytellers in the Jihad, and they had a very strong bias towards *WoD*. DL did anyway, and he was the driving force behind most of the Maenad storylines.

I freely admit to personal bias here: I’m not a huge fan of *WoD*. Especially not the more angstful *Werewolf* and *Vampire* stuff that DL insisted on putting into the game. I distinctly remember a long conversation where he went through and detailed the Jihad’s position on *every single type* of *WoD* were-animal. In the end, all of that stuff was cut, and rightly so in my terribly unhumble opinion.

The months passed, and I kept working on JU2 in fits and starts. The Jihad as a group finally came to a sort of drama critical mass and imploded. DeadLock left the group shortly thereafter, citing boredom and trailing enemies — including me, as it turned out. I was swept into the power vacuum DL left behind, and I still kept working on JU2, even though the group it was for was more or less history by that point. Fireball came on the team to replace DL, and together we pulled off a miracle: We made sense of the muddle of stories that made up the Jihad and created the *Jihad Universe 2.0*. We released it to the Jihad with great fanfare, and nobody who hadn’t already seen it gave a damn.

I got pissed and threw a huge public drama-fit of my own, swearing that I was through with the Jihad. A month later I was back at it, building bigger and better foundations for the game.

I have been *consumed* by this mad gibberish, swallowed like Jonah into a world where danger hides behind a kidvid show, mad scientists lurk underneath mountains opening holes into other dimensions, Atlantis waits under the sea for the foolish to pry her secrets out, and anybody with the eyes to See and Understand can grab a Really Big Gun and help Save the World.

It’s been almost twelve years (ye gods, how the time flies) since I first read about this group, and much has changed. Almost all of the old guard from 1994 are gone. DeadLock’s gone, JFox, Arsenal, J-Rock, Owsen, Windigo, Shardik... all names of former Great Leaders who’ve departed for warmer climates. The Jihad itself has dwindled from a cast of hundreds to a mere dozen active members. The message boards and web pages are all collecting dust.

Those dozen people left of the Jihad still have a great deal of fire to them, though. They’re continuing to add to the structure that I built, creating newer and greater monuments to one of the Internet’s oldest running gags. As a GM, I couldn’t be prouder of any of them.

It’s to them, Katrina, Patrick, Kirk, Dan, David, Elena, William, Susie, Joe, Rens and Jim that I dedicate this final-and-I-mean-it-dammit version of the *Jihad Universe Role-Playing Game & Writer’s Guide*.

As for me, I’m outta here.

*Ave atque vale.*

“Σ-JoM”

Sean Malaclypse Breen  
April 7, 2006