

Adventure Book

Hook, Line & SinkerTM
Game Master Reference & Adventures

**An epic adventure and sourcebook for the Rifts® series.
Compatible with the entire Palladium Books® Megaverse®!**

Warning!

Violence and the Supernatural

The fictional World of Rifts® is violent, deadly and filled with supernatural monsters. Other dimensional beings, often referred to as "demons," torment, stalk and prey on humans. Other alien life forms, monsters, gods and demigod, as well as magic, insanity, and war are all elements in this book.

Some parents may find the violence and supernatural elements of the game inappropriate for young readers/players. We suggest parental discretion.

Please note that none of us at Palladium Books® condone or encourage the occult, the practice of magic, the use of drugs, or violence.

Dedicated to Game Masters everywhere. Keep the adventure alive and the imagination burning.

— Kevin Siembieda

First Printing — August 1996

Copyright Palladium Books Inc. & Kevin Siembieda 1996

All rights reserved, world wide, under the Universal Copyright Convention. No part of this book may be reproduced in part or whole, in any form or by any means, without permission from the publisher, except for brief quotes for use in reviews. All incidents, situations, institutions, governments and people are fictional and any similarity, without satiric intent, of characters or persons living or dead, is strictly coincidental.

Palladium Books®, Rifts®, and Megaverse® are registered trademarks owned and licensed by Kevin Siembieda and Palladium Books Inc. Hook, Line and Sinker™; Coalition War Campaign, Coalition States, Erin Tarn, SAMAS, Skelebots, Terror Trooper, Spider Skull Walker, Dog Boys, Xiticix, Psi-Stalker, Juicers, and other names and titles are trademarks owned by Kevin Siembieda and Palladium Books Inc.

Rifts® Game Shields & Adventures™ is published by Palladium Books Inc., 12455 Universal Drive, Taylor, MI 48180. Printed in the USA.

Palladium Books® Presents:

Rifts® Adventure Book

Base on the world of Rifts®, the CS & other settings, characters, & concepts created and written By **Kevin Siembieda**.

Hook, Line & Sinkers™ created by: **Jolly Blackburn**

Adventures: **Patrick Nowak**
Julius Rosenstein
Kevin Siembieda

Interior Artists: **Wayne Breaux Jr.**
Vince Martin

HLS Adventures written by: **James Osten**
Alex Marciniszyn
Kevin Siembieda

Art Direction, Maps & Keylining: **Kevin Siembieda**

Typography: **Maryann Siembieda**

Senior Editor: **Alex Marciniszyn**

Character Sheets Designs: **Michael Leonard**

Game Shields Designs: **Michael Leonard**

Game Shield Paintings: **Keith Parkinson**
Kevin Long

Editors: **Alex Marciniszyn**
James A. Osten
Julius Rosenstein

Special Thanks to Mike Leonard for his diligent work on the game shield designs and excellent character sheets. Edwin and Donna Millheim for giving it a try. And to Wayne, Keith, Pat, Maryann, Steve, Thom, Jim, and all the usual Palladium wizards for all their hard work and dedication.

— *Kevin Siembieda*

Other Palladium Products

Palladium Books® products are available throughout the world at hobby, game and comic shops everywhere. If a particular book is not in stock, most stores should be able to special order the item. You may find it helpful to let your favorite store know in advance that you are interested in a particular book(s). This should help the manager order enough books to satisfy everybody's needs.

Palladium Books® Inc. offers over 100 different role-playing products including limited editions, art **portfolios**, miniatures and T-shirts. For a description of *all* our **products**, send for Palladium's latest 32 page catalog along with 75 cents to: *Palladium Books Inc., Dept. P, 12455 Universal Drive, Taylor MI 48180*

Game Master Aids

The idea behind the **Rifts® Game Shields & Adventures** product is to create a Game Master package with all kinds of helpful references, charts, screens, character sheets, blank maps, source material, a couple of full-sized adventures, several *Hook, Line and Sinker™* adventures, and everything a G.M. for **Rifts®** might need or want. I hope we've come close with providing just that.

First there are the *two* Game Master Reference screens. The screen with *Kevin Long's* popular Red 'Borg painting contains basic reference data for creating, running and keeping track of **Rifts®** characters, including salvage tables and some adventure guidelines. The screen with *Keith Parkinson's* female druid is devoted to magic and the metaphysical. Of course, we couldn't cram all the magic spells and psionics from all of the books onto one screen, but all the basic items are included for quick, easy reference.

The six character sheets can be photocopied for your personal use in any **Rifts®** campaign (but cannot be sold or distributed). Like the game shields, these sheets are designed by *Mike Leonard* and include some new and clever ideas, like a separate sheet for the Game Master to use as a character log and quick reference, as well as a sheet for Mercenary Companies (see **Rifts® Mercenaries**) and Travelling shows (see **Rifts® World Book One: Vampire Kingdoms™**). Some of the screen panels have also been reprinted in the reference booklet for additional ease of reference.

The maps can also be photocopied for your personal use in mapping parts of the world of your own campaigns and places of note.

The elaborate and multi-faceted *Pat Nowak* adventure should give Game Masters several nights, if not weeks of adventuring. Meanwhile, the popular **Hook, Line, & Sinker™** style of adventure outlines should provide ideas for dozens of additional adventures that the G.M. can expand and modify as much as he pleases.

I thought every contributor to this book did a wonderful job. I hope it translates into hours of adventure and fun. Check out the Coming Attractions at the end of the book for **Palladium's** plans for **Rifts** over the next year or so.

— *Kevin Siembieda*



Adventures

Slavers, Xiticix & the Green Death!

An Adventure by Patrick Nowak

Additional text and suggestions by Siembieda

Scenario Outline

The only sound in the darkened throne room came from the impatient drumming of Baron Varn Cromwell's fingers on the arm of his elaborately carved throne. Flickering candles cast a dim glow to illuminate the room; it was long past midnight and the keep's electricity generator was turned off. Everyone had already retired for the evening except for the night watch and the somber quartet in the throne room. Quiet and dark, it was a fitting atmosphere for a council of war. The baron shifted his focus from the young Line Walker, Taylor, to Kort Glenmore, the grizzled dwarf Captain of the Guard — he knew they were as tense and impatient as he, although they tried to hide it. Young Taylor nervously played at the hem of his robe, while the barrel-chested Kort predictably displayed no emotion. All three waited for the court mystic, James Farseer, to wake from his trance.

A sudden cry of terror from the mystic interrupted Varn's musings and brought the Baron to a standing position. The mystic slumped over, blinked violently for several moments and finally came to his senses. With the assistance of Kort, he climbed to his unsteady feet. For fear that Farseer would fall again the dwarf held him upright. All eyes in the throne room were on the stricken, pale-faced mystic.

"James, what did you see?" the Baron prodded in an insistent whisper.

"It was a nightmarish vision the likes of which I have not seen since the Four Demons! I have no doubt that our land is in great peril Milord," he muttered, obviously on the verge of exhaustion. All three men in the room gasped, for they each remembered the horrific stories concerning the Four Horsemen of Africa, reported by friends in Tolkeen.

"I must know, James, what exactly did you see?" Baron Cromwell urged, fearing what the answer would be.

"There was a ... a cloud of dark green from the east that killed everyone in the outer villages, even the animals. Then it exploded in a flash of angry red and there was nothing left of Markeen but empty ruins!" Farseer cried out with his last strength. Spent by the effort he collapsed into the dwarf's solid arms.

"Ifear that there is more behind these troubles than just slavers. If the mystic is right, we will need help," said Kort.

"I agree. Farseer has never been wrong before," groaned the Baron, as he slumped back into his throne. He paused to think for several moments but, what else was there to do? "Taylor, use your magic to send word to Tolkeen. Tell them we need help!"

Strange things have been brewing in the quiet Barony of Markeen over the past fortnight. Dozens of people have mysteriously gone missing with no evidence of who or what might be responsible. This has led many residents to fear attacks by slavers from the north, Xiticix, Splugorth, or worse. A disturbing premonition from the Court Mystic prompted Baron Cromwell to send word via ley line transmission to the Council of Tolkeen requesting aid. Markeen is an important district in the (currently) free territory of Minnesota. It provides the south with vital raw materials, including iron ore, timber and assorted foodstuffs. Unfortunately, with the invasion by the Coalition looming on the horizon, the Tolkeen Council is reluctant to commit military units to any operation which might just amount to a wild goose chase or a weakening of their forces unless the threat is clearly identified and immediate. That being the case, Councilor Cedric Stonebark offered the idea of sending a small band of adventurers or mercenaries to locate and identify the root of the trouble that threatened Markeen. This would provide them with some ideas of what to expect and how to defend against the danger, and should get the Tolkeen military forces to send help. If they got lucky, the adventurer team might catch the faceless danger off-guard and neutralize it. Meanwhile, they will keep Tolkeen apprised of their situation requesting any help they might be able to spare. It was as good a plan as any.

Getting Started

This adventure is suited either for a group of veteran adventurers or mercenary player characters. Although a group of any composition can successfully complete this adventure, it is definitely helpful to have a *psychic* or *magic practitioner* along; it also couldn't hurt to have an intelligence specialist of some kind (CS military specialist, NGR Intelligence Commando, Freelance Spy, etc.). The G.M. should read through this adventure carefully and then decide whether or not it is appropriate for his players and/or campaign. **Slavers, Xiticix and the Green Death!** is a "thinking man's" adventure that is focused on solving the mysterious events in Markeen, not constant combat, even though there is a significant amount of conflict and fighting.

Councilor Cedric Stonebark recruits the characters for this adventure based on their reputation as dependable, experienced mercenaries, adventurers or friends from Tolkeen. Stonebark offers 10,000 credits to each character but will pay as much as 15,000 credits to each if necessary plus an expense budget of 150,000 credits for the entire group — if they really need it and/or perform admirably. In order to get paid, the characters must uncover who or what is causing the disappearances in Markeen and to stop it from happening again using whatever means are necessary. Unfortunately for the player characters, the identity of those responsible for the abductions is not readily apparent. And, even when the guilty parties are unmasked, our heroes will learn that the insidious purpose for the abductions is far more terrible than slavery, with dire ramifications for all of Minnesota!

The Barony of Markeen

Population Breakdown: 140,000 total population. Roughly 60,000 between the three northern cities plus 80,000 in small, surrounding communities. Although humans dominate, there are 50 different races of D-bees living in the Barony. Roughly 10% of the inhabitants practice magic and 6% possess some degree of psionics. All races are welcome.

55% Human

10% Psi-Stalkers

8% Renegade mutant animals (67% are Dog Boys)

4% Simvan Monster Riders

4% Quick Flex Aliens

3% Vanguard Brawlers

3% Tirrvol Sword Fist

3% Goblins

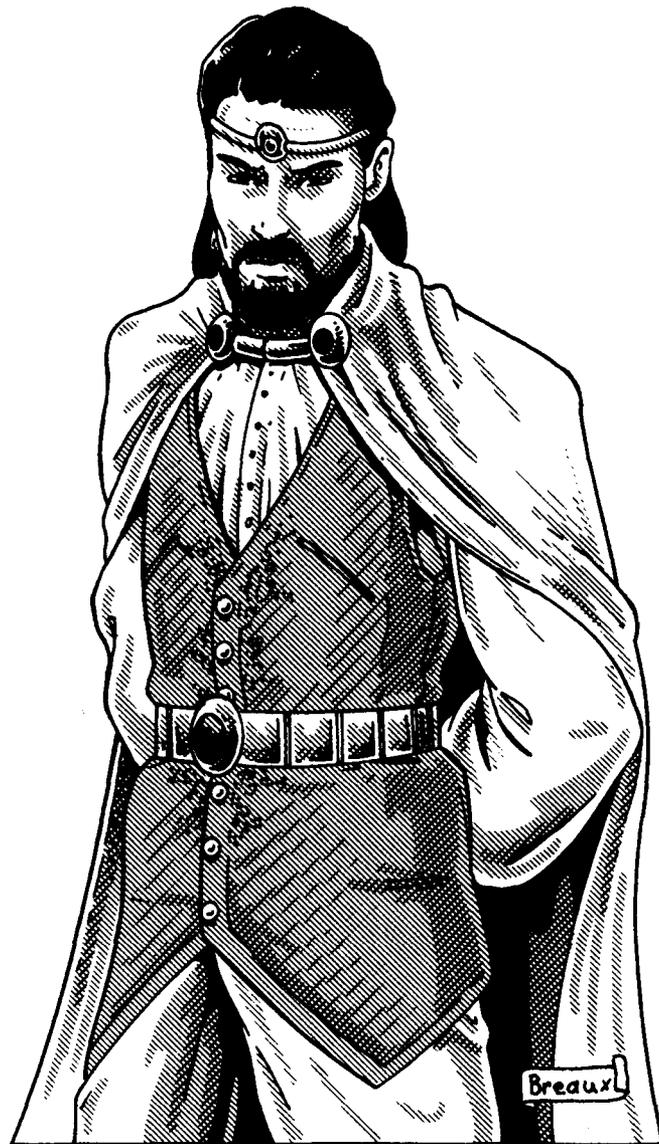
2% Orcs

8% Assorted other D-bees

In the far north of Minnesota, hugging the border of Xiticix country, is the Barony of Markeen. Even though it is officially considered a Barony of Tolkeen, the kingdom is essentially an autonomous kingdom that maintains strong economic and military ties with the southern city-state. **Baron Varn Cromwell**, the ruler of Markeen (a 9th level Cyber-Knight), is the sole authority in the kingdom and answers to no one in Tolkeen, making him the equal to the numerous feudal kings in the territory. Under the careful, compassionate leadership of Baron Cromwell, Markeen has grown into a substantial and prosperous community. Thanks to its abundant natural resources and hard-working populace, the Barony has a powerful economy rivalling that of every Minnesota city-state with the exception of Tolkeen.

Originally, the geographic region that now makes up Markeen was a backwards frontier area with no government and no organized economy, just a scattered group of hamlets. The brutal Xiticix Wars of 86 P.A. were the catalyst that changed everything and saw development explode in the region. The Xiticix had successfully occupied and colonized the ruins of Duluth for years. From here, war bands of the bug-men pushed south to grab more territory. They became especially aggressive in the fall of 85 P.A. The marauding D-bees razed frontier towns and pushed as far south as the Tolkeen border. In February of 86 P.A., Cromwell was selected to lead the counterattack against the aliens as an official representative of Tolkeen's military. With his army of patriots, mercenaries and adventurers from Tolkeen, along with dozens of local wilderness scouts and people anxious to defend their homelands, the Xiticix were pushed back. The spring and summer of 86 P.A. saw the worst battles of the campaign and would decide the outcome of the war. In the end, the original border was reestablished. At the request of the northern hamlets, they were brought under Tolkeen's authority as the Barony of Markeen. Varn Cromwell was appointed by the Tolkeen Council as the first Baron to govern the region and to serve as their protector from further Xiticix aggression.

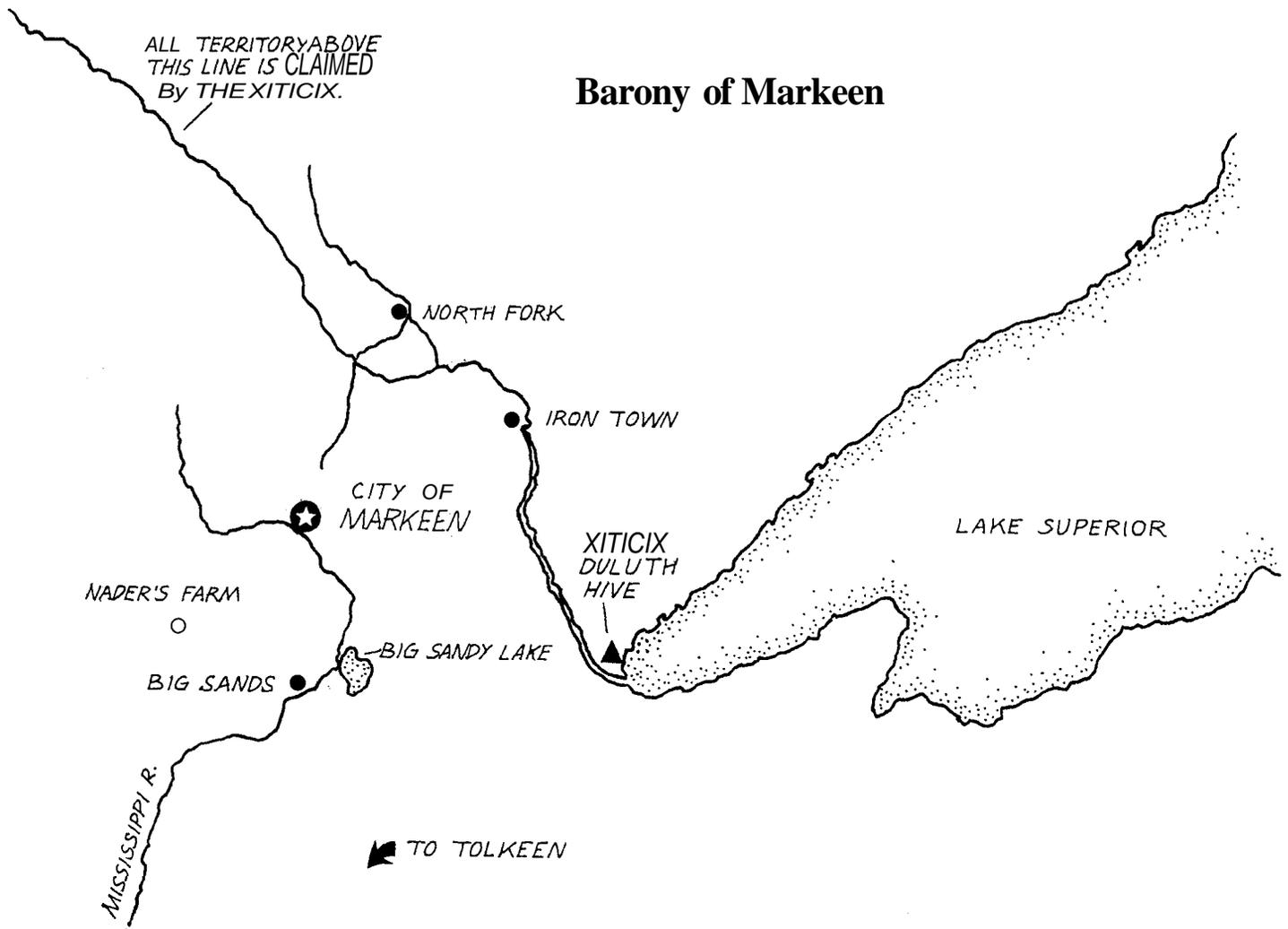
In the decades since the post-war rebuilding of 86 P.A., the Markeen region has seen remarkable population growth and urbanization. Before the Xiticix Wars, the population of the area was a meager 15,000 people, most of whom lived in isolated farming villages or seasonal hunting/trapping camps. Since that time, three major towns, **Markeen City, Iron Town** and **Big**



Sands, each with a population of over 10,000, were constructed. An additional population of 80,000 has come to live in towns, villages and farms near or in the thriving cities. One reason for the massive swell in population is that any "civilized being" is welcome in Markeen. Literally fifty different D-bee races are represented in the populace.

Under the strong leadership of Baron Cromwell, the now famous mastermind behind the 86 P.A. Xiticix War, the region became a (comparatively speaking) boom town. People had great confidence in this war hero and felt safe with him in charge, even near the Xiticix border. His open racial policy and truly fair treatment of all races, unified the hundreds of scattered tribes, clans, villages and towns. Rather than simply relying on the traditional work of trapping and subsistence farming, the economy expanded to include the exploitation of Markeen's rich natural resources of timber and iron ore, as well as other light industry. Markeen seemed to transform almost overnight from backwater frontier to a leading iron ore and timber exporter. Baron Cromwell also utilized the diverse talents and abilities of the many different D-bee races. Psi-Stalkers and Simvan not only worked to control hostile animals and monsters, but put them to work in the fields (or sent them north into Xiticix territory). The level of technology improved to include the use of techno-wizardry

Barony of Markeen



items, electric generators, indoor plumbing and interior lighting in the towns, the occasional combustible engine, and high-quality metal tools — tech level is roughly early 20th Century America (1920's). The efforts of Baron Cromwell and other leading citizens have, in a short time frame, produced a vibrant land with a thriving economy. Even so, the Barony is still relatively small and has a long way to go before it approaches the prosperity of states like Tolkeen, Lazlo, Whykin, or Northern Gun. Between the Xiticix in the north and the Coalition to the south, their future is a tenuous one.

Markeen City

The capital of the barony is also the biggest settlement and called Markeen City. Thirty-two thousand people of diverse races live together in the city built alongside the Mississippi river near the pre-Rifts location of *Grand Rapids*, where several ruined buildings can be seen in the distance. Markeen City is a typical post Cataclysm, North American town composed of several hundred buildings constructed of wood and brick surrounded by a tall concrete wall. The wall stands five feet deep (1.5 m), 15 feet (4.6 m) high and has ten guards connected by battlements on top, with a single metal gate. Inside are rows of cottage-style wooden houses separated by hard-packed dirt streets where adults watch as the children play. Along the busy streets are larger buildings that include schools, churches, stores, tradesmen's shops, taverns, assorted businesses and the Markeen

Arms Hotel. A mammoth grey stone fortress, reminiscent of a medieval keep, stands menacingly at the heart of the town.

Lumber and furs are the primary industries of Markeen City. Trees are harvested at lumberjack camps in the surrounding countryside and are brought into town by one of five combustion engine trucks owned by the city, or by horse-drawn wagon, or magic. The harvested logs are sawed into boards at the mill on the bank of the Mississippi. The mill is powered by a water turbine and a Techno-Wizard secondary generator. The Psi-Stalkers, mutant hounds and Simvan dominate the fur business, providing raw materials in the way of hides as well as fine coats, gloves, hats, and other items made from fur and animal hides.

Secondary industries in Markeen City revolve around wood or iron ore. Dozens of skilled carpenters live in the town who work in furniture, wheel or wagon manufacturing or as coopers, building wooden barrels and crates which are used to ship various materials. There are also blacksmiths and metal workers who produce tools for use by tradesmen, trappers, hunters and farmers. The town is also a service center with a fair number of stores and shops that cater to the needs of Markeen's residents and surrounding communities. These include a veterinary hospital, medical hospital as well as healers, fur clearing house (purchases and sells furs and leather goods), livery stables, cattle yards, smithies, general stores, taverns, and most notably, the Borden Brothers Machine Shop. The BBM Shop is owned and operated by *John and Dane* (level 6 techno-wizard and level 7 operator respectively) who can build, operate and repair any ma-

chine or item of technology there is (or so they claim). They also employ several low and mid-level operators and psychics, and buy, sell and trade for mechanical parts and materials.

Markeen City, and the rest of the Barony for that matter, has a strange mix of old and modern technology combined with magic. In the capital, about half of the buildings have interior lighting and most have indoor plumbing. Power is supplied by a hydroelectric plant and a Techno-Wizard electrical generator built by John Borden. Markeen City sits on a small nexus where two ley lines cross (one passing through Tolkeen and the other just north of Northern Gun/Ishpeming). The TW generator uses the earth's magic power to produce the electricity and is effectively a perpetual motion machine. The mill has its own power source to run its saws and the Bordens have state of the art equipment and tools. The Guardsmen have mega-damage weaponry as standard issue and Cromwell Keep is a mega-damage structure outfitted with modern weapon systems. At the same time, the majority of craftsmen in town (carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, butchers, etc.) use old-fashioned hand tools and manual labor for most of their work. On the streets, there are the odd car or truck, hover vehicle and robot, but most folk walk, ride horses or use horse-drawn wagons. For trade outside of Markeen, there are a pair of airships built by John Borden that "fly" above ley lines like TK Gliders. They serve as transportation that runs back and forth between Tolkeen and Ishpeming.

Cromwell Keep

Cromwell Keep is the most noticeable feature of Markeen City and is a fascinating piece of post apocalyptic architecture. Inspired by the medieval fortresses of Europe, the five story keep was constructed using stone blocks, concrete and magic! Unlike the keeps of old, Cromwell's fortress is a mega-damage structure (3,000 total M.D.C.) with modern amenities and weapon systems. It is powered by the local hydroelectric plant and has a back-up diesel generator in the basement. The keep is armed with four dual laser cannons (4,000 ft/1200 m range, inflicts 1D4×10M.D. per blast) and six NG-101 rail guns mounted on the battlements linked to a giant energy battery in the cellars, charged by the generators, and good for three full days of heavy use. On top of the main hall, fortifications and living quarters for the members of the keep's court are large enough to house the entire 1,000 man Markeen Guard.

The Markeen Guard serves as both the police and military forces for the Barony and operate from the keep's garrison. Usually less than 600 Guardsmen are quartered at Cromwell Keep, the rest are found on missions or at barracks in Big Sands or Iron Town. It is led by **Kort** Glenmore (12th level Palladium RPG, **dwarven** soldier), a legendary figure in northern Minnesota. He keeps the Guard is an effective unit of loyal, well-trained and disciplined troops. The average Guardsman is the equivalent of a second level CS Grunt O.C.C., equipped with a vibro-sword (2D6 M.D.), NG-L5 laser rifle or NG-L6 laser rifle and grenade launcher, other NG weapons, the occasional CS weapon, and Urban Warrior armor (50 M.D.C.). Approximately half of the Guardsmen are provided with regular horses for transportation; mega-damage plastic barding (55 M.D.C.) is provided for each horse. Eight NG-X9 Sampson power armor suits, 80 NG-EX10 Gladius exoskeleton battle armor and a squad of Iron Hammer Main Battle Tanks (12 tanks) round out the Guardsmen's arsenal

(see **Rifts® Mercenaries** for descriptions of the Gladius armor, Iron Hammer tanks and other cool stuff).

An Audience with the Baron

As soon as the Player Characters arrive at Markeen City they are brought to the audience hall of Cromwell Keep to meet with the court. Baron **Varn** Cromwell heads the court which includes Captain of the Guard **Kort** Glenmore, James Farseer (8th level mystic), Taylor the Sorcerer (6th level ley line walker), Guild Master **Dane** Borden (7th level operator), and Mayor **Jill** Greenfield (3rd level wilderness scout). At this meeting the Baron recounts the strange events of the last few weeks and answers any questions he can. Nearly two hundred people have disappeared in the past two weeks. Some of the missing are humans, but most have been D-bees. Groups, sometimes entire neighborhoods of city dwellers, and several entire hamlets have been abducted from every region of the Barony. Most troubling is that there are no signs of battle, no evidence of who the abductors might be and the people vanish without a trace. Nothing like this has ever happened in Markeen and fear is beginning to sweep through the territory. The Baron fears the worst and needs the group's help.

If the player characters probe with appropriate questions, the Markeen Court will mention the following details:

1. The court heard rumors last year from Northern Gun concerning a pro-Coalition organization of slavers operating somewhere near Thunder Bay. They are reputed to attack and capture entire D-bee villages. However, they are not known to be operating in Minnesota.
 2. With the increased presence of the Coalition and their proclamation of war against Tolkeen and all nonhuman kingdoms in the area, they are the natural suspects, however, there is no evidence that points to their involvement. Furthermore, there is currently no troop build up in this part of the country. The odds of this being a CS plot are slim and none.
 3. Supernatural predators are rare in Markeen and none have been sighted in months. Still, things can change suddenly, so supernatural forces could be at work.
 4. Contact with the Xiticix is limited despite the nearness of the Duluth hive. Things are usually quiet along the border, but, recently a war band was seen by a surveying group near Iron Town. However, the Xiticix rarely kidnap people to use slaves, and tend to be very straightforward, obvious and destructive — not secretive and mysterious.
 5. Two prominent humans live in nearby Xiticix territory, a reclusive scientist named **Zach Krug** and **Doug Weiss**, a scholar and correspondent for the **Lazlo** Geographic Journal, and expert on the Xiticix. In fact, the last known abduction was from the group of intelligent monkey creatures being studied by Weiss. He hasn't been heard from in days, but that's not uncommon.
- As for Krug, nobody has heard from him in several weeks, but that's not unusual for him either.
6. As far as anyone knows, there are no secret religious or magic cults in the area that could be responsible for the kidnappings.
 7. There are abductees from nearly every species living in Markeen. According to some reports, no more than a few dozen people of any particular species have gone missing.

8. The day before yesterday the Markeen Guard lost radio contact with Randolph Nader's Farm. It is a very large but remote place operated by the Nader family (Dog Boys) and about a hundred other diverse creatures from other dimensions.

Other than the above information, the only things that Baron Cromwell can offer the characters is a hearty meal, a good night's rest and basic equipment and services — E-clip recharging, minor vehicle repairs, horses for transportation, a local guide (this NPC is likely to be a **Psi-Stalker**, Simvan or mutant animal), and so on. **Note:** If the characters run into heavy combat the Baron will *try* to send them Guardsmen for support, but no more than 20 can be spared at any given moment. He will not part with any of the Iron Hammer Main Battle Tanks or Sampson power armor suits but may, if the need is great, provide a suit or two of Gladius exoskeleton armor.

G.M. Note: The author has made every attempt to keep the adventure from being linear, so let the characters direct their own course and explore any reasonable leads. As a result, the following sections are not arranged in any particular order, but this means it is important to read the adventure prior to running it!

The Guardsmen and authorities at the other cities and key places around the surrounding community will be told of the player group's involvement in putting a stop to the disappearances, so the group can expect their full cooperation.

Iron Town

Iron Town is built on the ruins of Virginia City, about 50 miles (80 km) northeast of Markeen City. As its name suggests, the town is home to the Barony's lucrative iron ore industry. There are 15,500 people living in the town, of whom more than half are **nonhuman**, 3,200 are dwarves, 850 are goblins and 500 are orcs. Under the direction of ingenious **dwarven** engineers, the people of Iron Town work in the nearby mines or at the refinery where iron ore is smelted and fashioned into ingots. The mines have electric lights powered by underground cables running throughout the city. Similar to Markeen City, a pair of Techno-Wizard generator plants provide the power.

Brute force, finely **crafted** hand tools and magic are used by the miners to extract ore; explosives are used only to a limited extent. On top of mining operations, Iron Town has two smelting plants (one uses **fire** and air elementals), fifty or so smiths and metal shops where orcish, dwarven, human and **D-bee** smiths pound out metal products needed there and for export to the Cities of Markeen, Big Sands and outlying communities; Northern Gun buys 10% of its iron ore from Iron Town. The town itself is much like Markeen City, with scores of wooden buildings, only the occasional mega-damage building, dirt roads and a ten feet wide, thirty feet high, M.D. concrete and stone wall (150 M.D. per 20 square feet). **Note:** Stationed at the Iron Town barracks are 250 Guardsmen, plus the fledgling city has a volunteer militia of another 250 in case of enemy attack.

Iron Town Encounter: The Xiticix Raid

Just as the characters near Iron Town, a group of about 300 very pissed-off Xiticix are attacking the town. The insect warriors fly over the fortified wall in a vast swarm, firing TK rifles at the people and buildings. Guardsmen and the militia are quick to react, racing to the battlements to return fire and trying to defend people on the street.

After the initial assault, the Xiticix break into smaller groups of 10 to 20 and buzz through the streets, firing randomly at buildings, civilians and Guardsmen. At this point a Xiticix group of 2-12 members (increase or decrease the number based on the characters' strength) spots the player group and rushes toward them like angry hornets. They will fight to the death, or until the rest of the swarm retreats (they follow). See page 254 of the **Rifts® RPG** for statistics.

The Xiticix and Guardsmen trade gunfire for five minutes/20 melee rounds before the aliens speed away, presumably back to the Duluth hive. In the short engagement, the bug-men lose nearly one-third their number but get more than they give, killing 83 Guardsmen, 33 militia and 328 civilians. Several hundred others are injured. Damage to the town itself is light considering how few of the structures are mega-damage; only about a hundred buildings are destroyed. The defensive wall is another story. The bulk of the Guardsmen fought from its towers and battlements, so they took the brunt of enemy fire. Three of the eight towers are destroyed, with another two heavily damaged. Furthermore, large, gaping holes are cut into the wall in no less than 11 places. The attack comes as a complete surprise to the people of Iron Town, they have no idea what provoked the assault.

Once the fires are put out, the wounded attended to and things are under control, the player characters have the opportunity to speak with **Mayor Krandus Ingot**, a gruff middle-aged dwarf. He can offer little information about the **Xiticix's** surprise attack or the people vanishing. The only disappearance at Iron Town actually occurred beyond the **city's** borders to the north, when a surveying team vanished. Among them were three humans, five dwarves, two goblins, an ogre, two Dog Boys and seven orcs. None of the group returned but their gear was found in a large clearing. No one in Iron Town saw what happened. Mayor Krandus apologizes for his ignorance concerning these matters, offers the group healing if they need it, recharges spent E-clips and provides ammunition, food, a night's lodging and excuses himself to go back to repairing his town.

Big Sands

Big Sands is an agricultural community of 12,100, approximately 40 miles (64 km) south of **Markeen** City, near the remains of pre-Rifts Palisades. There is no wall around Big Sands but the town does have a barracks for the 100 Guardsmen peacekeepers assigned to it. It is a picturesque community of wooden houses with white picket fences, flower gardens and old shade trees. At the heart of town is a business district to serve farmers in the surrounding area. Besides a sprawling market-

place (a partial mega-damage structure), there are several carpenter shops, a livery, a **dwarven** smithy, three general stores that sell everything from clothes to hayseed, a **wagonwright**, a mechanics shop, three hardware stores, 12 churches, the Big Sands Tavern & Dance Hall (an M.D.C. structure and popular meeting place) and a handful of small pubs/taverns. Crops and cattle are the main commodities at Big Sands, so two large meat packing plants and a big dairy farm (whose products include milk, cheese, yogurt and cream) are the main employers and political powers of the community. A small hydroelectric plant provides power for the two meat packing plants and most of the town, the dairy has its own plant and generators (which also serves as the city's auxiliary power station). Only about a third of the homes have electricity and indoor plumbing.

Nobody has been abducted from Big Sands itself but 43 people have gone missing from the surrounding farms in the last ten days. The authorities and citizens are alarmed, but there are no clues. One of the Guardsmen will be glad to take investigators to the scenes of the disappearances, although they will caution them that they won't find any clues.

Big Sands Encounter

Somewhere near the town, the player group runs into a ragged column of human and D-bee farmers heading north to Markeen City on wagons and lumber trucks. Forty Guardsmen astride horses and one Iron Hammer tank accompany the group of women and children. Everyone in the column wears a dejected expression, some are in tears, the Guardsmen have looks of grim determination. If asked, the officer in charge of the group, *Lieutenant Donald Milner*, explains that the women and children are being moved to **Markeen** City for their own safety. As long as the disappearances continue and the Xiticix threaten, they are not safe here in the wilderness. The Lieutenant has not seen anything out of the ordinary, although he's heard plenty of rumors about abductions which most people attribute to the CS, or demons and other supernatural forces.

He and his men can also report that the Xiticix have only become aggressive in the last 48 hours and have launched at least a half dozen unprovoked attacks against the Markeen Territory within that frame of time.

North Fork

North Fork is a rough and tumble frontier settlement that lies about 50 miles (80 km) due north of Markeen City. There is no wall, no indoor plumbing or electricity and no nice houses, only shacks and log cabins. Very few people reside permanently at North Fork but at any one time there is a transient population of 500. All that it has to offer, other than a place to sleep, are three ale halls (powered at night by vehicle engines), a chapel, a general store and a trading post. It is more of a pit-stop for trappers, prospectors and hunters to gather for a time to buy supplies, trade goods and get rip-roaring drunk than it is a town. Most folks in North Fork are **nonhumans**, including mutant animals, **orcs**, goblins, Simvan, Gorilla Men, Flex Aliens, and **Psi-Stalkers**, among others. There are very few normal humans around; the few that are present are frequently mutants, psychics, practitioners of magic, mercenaries, and criminals on the run.

As far as anybody knows, nobody has gone missing from North Fork, but since most everyone is a transient, there's no way to know for sure. The cold, hard reality of frontier life in North Fork is that nobody really cares either.

North Fork Encounters

Depending on how the player characters conduct themselves, who's present in town and how playful or nasty the Game Master is feeling, the group could run into any number of problems or side adventures here. They might run into a group of bandits, bounty hunters, a traveling show, wanted criminals, CS spies, CS deserters, bushwhackers, an old enemy, Juicers, Crazies, and people of all kinds.

As mentioned earlier, North Fork is the kind of place that a person can lose himself at. Those who come to deliberately get lost don't like being discovered, or have good reasons to get lost. If such a character or group of characters should decide that the group's questions about disappearances are really about them, they might take action against the group. Likewise, if any member(s) of the group is a wanted man, particularly by the CS, they may be targeted by a bounty hunter and/or mercenary band who are always looking for an opportunity to exploit.

Nader's Farm

Nader's Farm is located about 40 miles (64 km) southwest of Markeen City and is the biggest independent cattle ranch in the Barony. Nearly three hundred people of all species live and work at the huge farmstead owned by a Wolfen Headhunter from *Phase World*, called Nader. Most people mistake him and his family for being Dog Boys so often that they have stopped trying to explain otherwise. Nader is well liked in the community and built the massive ranch with its dozens of buildings not just to raise cattle, but also as a refuge for D-bee victims of persecution who have no place else to go.

Even before the player characters come within sight of Nader's Farm they are able to see dark plumes of smoke rising above the horizon. Smoldering buildings, **burnt-out** farm vehicles and dozens of corpses are the sights that meet the characters as they near the farm. A group of armed figures partially obscured by smoke and haze are sorting through the bodies and buildings in the distance.

The group sifting through what's left of Nader's farm is a company of bandits from south Minnesota called the **Green Team**, named after their leader, *Nate Green*. A couple weeks ago, the bandits ran afoul of the *King of St. Cloud* and have been hiding out in the forest east of Markeen. When they saw the smoke from **Nader's** farm they went to investigate and are picking through the debris looking for items of value. They may be thieves, but they are not responsible for the massacre of the farmers! If threatened, accused of the atrocity or attacked, the bandits defend themselves, but they won't start a fight if they don't have to. Nate does all the talking for the group and tells the player characters anything they want to know (excluding the fact that the Green Team is wanted in St. Cloud). The only detail Nate knows about the attack aside from the obvious, is that the attackers *were* predominantly dressed in CS armor. This was gleaned by Rosco the Dog Boy from one of the casualties before he died.



There is nothing of value left on Nader's Farm. By the time the player group arrives, the Green Team has collected everything of value, including a collection of 13 books worth 21,000 black market credits, a working but damaged bionic arm (worth 15,000 credits), and three working NG-E12 plasma ejector rifles, all stashed in a Mountaineer A.T.V. Evidence suggests that there was a serious fire-fight at the farm with enormous laser holes cut through buildings, trees, etc. All of the buildings were put to the torch, leaving only **burnt-out** shells of the once beautiful log cabin-style structures. There are about fifty corpses (or portions thereof) scattered around the area, most of which have been horribly mutilated by vibro-blades and energy weapons. Nader and his family are not among the dead, at least as far as anybody can tell.

The Green Team's Composition:

1. Nate Green, a 5th level Headhunter wearing a Chipwell Assault Suit (pg 145 of *Rifts® Mercenaries*).
2. Two 3rd level Headhunters with Chipwell CAI-100 War-monger power armor suits.
3. Big Boss A.T.V. (65 M.D.C.); armed with an NG-P7 particle beam rifle (1D4 x 10 M.D.) on the roof fed by a huge E-cell in the back with a 100 shot payload. A 2nd level bounty hunter wearing plastic man armor (35 M.D.C.) mans the gun. The driver is a 4th level vagabond wearing pre-Rifts body armor (800 S.D.C./8 M.D.C.) and armed with a Wilk's 320 laser pistol (1D6 M.D., 20 shots).

4. A Mountaineer A.T.V. (230 M.D.C.) is used as an APC and is driven by Roxie, a 2nd level vagabond armed with a Wilk's 320 pistol and dressed in pre-Rifts armor (800 S.D.C./8 M.D.C.).

5. Karl, a 4th level city rat in Huntsman armor (40 M.D.C.), armed with an MP-23A SMG (1 M.D. per burst, 5 burst payload).

6. Rosco, a 3rd level German Shepherd Dog Boy is in RPA Dog Pack armor (30 M.D.C.) and carrying an NG-E12 heavy plasma ejector (1D6x10 M.D., 6 shot payload).

7. Iron Head Calabrese, a 2nd level, full conversion cyborg carrying an NE-10 plasma cartridge rifle (1D4x10 M.D., 20 shot magazine) and whose bionics are of the S.D.C. **Heroes Unlimited** variety (A.R. 14 for S.D.C. weapons, 1,000 S.D.C./10 M.D.C.).

8. Rano, a 4th level headhunter in urban warrior armor (50 M.D.C.), armed with an L-20 pulse rifle (6D6 M.D. per pulse, 13 pulse payload) and driving a Highway-Man motorcycle (75 M.D.C., 180 mph/288 kmph). Note that each bandit also carries three extra ammunition magazines for his weapon.

A Conversation with Doug Weiss

Doug Weiss is an affable, middle-aged gentleman who has greying hair and a paunch which makes him a natural to play Santa at Cromwell Keep on Christmas. He is a scholar from Lazlo (7th level rogue scholar) who specializes in the study of intelligent lifeforms, including Xiticix. He is also a correspon-

dent for the *Lazlo Geographic Journal* and colleague of Erin Tarn's. At present, Doug lives in an abandoned trapper's cabin two miles (3.2 km) behind the Xiticix border where he is studying a tribe of strange, little, monkey-like D-bees. The scholar breaks from his work to chat with the player group in his cramped but comfortable cabin. Weiss tells them what little he knows concerning the recent troubles and everything he can about the Xiticix (which includes all the information on pages 253-255 in the **Rifts® RPG**).

Concerning the abductions, all Doug Weiss knows is that four members of the D-bee tribe he's studying went missing three days ago. He wasn't around when they were abducted but some of the other tribesmen were. For the sake of accuracy, Weiss is glad to escort the group to the D-bees and translate the gibberish language used by the creatures to give the group an accurate report. Otherwise, they will have to rely on his recollections of what was told to him a few days ago. When the scholar takes the group to the little, friendly D-bees, they jabber away excitedly and are generally annoying. After several minutes, Weiss relates what the monkey-creatures have to say. They claim the tribe was attacked by dark-colored insect men whose strange weapons shot devastating invisible arrows. Before they could run away, four of their people were grabbed and carried away — the mischievous little D-bees have no natural defenses or technology. After his precise translation of the account, word for word, Weiss adds in a confused tone, that the creatures must be confused since Xiticix rarely take prisoners, and certainly wouldn't have any use for these tiny, frail D-bees.

Weiss goes on to explain that he's unaware of any Xiticix incursion into the area. Since the War of 86 P.A., the Xiticix typically remain at their hive in Duluth except for the occasional scouting party. The creatures shun contact with other lifeforms, especially intelligent species, and are content to live and let live, so long as nobody comes near the hive. Still, he admits that it is possible that the Xiticix are responsible; he has spotted a few large bands of warriors over the last few days himself. Weiss suspects that the Xiticix could be taking prisoners of different species under the direction of their queen for some kind of study. He suggests that the characters talk to *Zach Krug* who lives deeper in Xiticix territory and who might have a better idea of what the aliens may be up to.

Weiss provides the characters with directions to get to Krug's cabin. He is absorbed with his studies here and won't leave unless there is a very good reason. Warnings of danger and forecasts of doom from Markeen City aren't enough. If, however, the characters mention anything about going to Duluth, he will plead to go along to get another first-hand look at the hive. He will don Huntsman armor (40 M.D.C.), grab his binoculars, day-pack and trusty Wilk's 447 laser rifle and join the team.

Zach Krug's Cabin

A dirt path runs from Doug Weiss's place to Zachary Krug's home three miles (4.8 km) to the east. The path ends at a large clearing where a log cabin sits on the bank of a silver colored stream. Vegetable gardens are planted in front of the cabin in neatly ordered rows, there is also a small greenhouse just behind

the cabin. Some of the vegetables are in obvious need of harvesting before they get overripe and it doesn't look like anyone has tended to them for some time. Everything is quiet and the clearing seems to be abandoned. There is a note on a white sheet of paper pinned to the door which reads:

"Doug, I've gone north for a couple weeks. I'm doing research for my latest project. See you when I get back. Zach."

Weiss has a key and gains easy entry. If he hasn't tagged along, the group can either peer through dirty windows or force the door with little difficulty and no damage. The interior of the cabin is spartan and well-ordered. Inside there is a big kitchen and sitting area, a cramped bathroom, a bedroom with bunk beds and a study. A thin layer of dust has settled on the furniture, indicating that Doc Krug has been gone for a week or two already. If the player characters search the cabin or are exceptionally observant, they notice that there isn't much food in the pantry and few of the doctor's clothes remain in the dresser. In the study there are about a dozen books missing from the bookshelf, there are a couple dozen computer disks but no computer and it looks like most of the equipment was taken from the lab bench. Anyone looking in the attached greenhouse will find that several of the windows are broken and that some plants have died while others are overgrown — more evidence that no one's been around for a while.

Doctor Zachary Krug does not return to the cabin at any time in the remainder of the adventure. In fact, he isn't even in the Minnesota territory! No matter how long the characters wait or how often they check back, the scientist does not appear.

Xiticix Territory & the Duluth Hive

In the 20 years since their arrival, the Xiticix have come to dominate a huge chunk of territory stretching from the giant Duluth hive all the way to Winnipeg, and beyond. To hear the stories, one would be led to believe that the Xiticix domain is an alien landscape. All sorts of incredible tales are told in whispers around campfires about the bug-men, their hives and the unspeakable horrors that go on across the border. To anyone who has been to Xiticix territory, these stories are laughable. The forest continues unchanged on the Xiticix side of the border for nature cares not to discern between Xiticix and man. There are the same animals and the same types of plants in the aliens' territory. All that is different is the lack of human settlements and, for Xiticix or creatures with a keen sense of smell like Dog Boys, the slight scent of the chemical used by Xiticix to mark the domain of their specific hives.

Another misconception is the belief that Xiticix are heartless monsters who live only to inflict pain and suffering on other races. People with this attitude are stunned to discover that there are native Earth animals, other D-bee creatures and even intelligent humanoids who live in Xiticix country unmolested by the insectoid aliens. The truth is that the Xiticix aliens do not enjoy violence per se and actually prefer to be left alone. Just like Earth bees and hive insects, they are territorial and very defensive of their domain. Still, they fight only when they are directly

threatened or attacked first — or when they choose to expand. There are only a few people like Doug Weiss, Doctor Zach Krug and trappers, who understand the Xiticix and can behave in such a way that they can live in the same region without conflict. These individuals know that so long as they keep their noses clean, don't make their presence obvious by building campfires, or do anything that could be construed to endanger or damage the land (like cutting down trees), and don't interfere with their activities, the Xiticix will leave them alone.

Problems often arise from the fact that other intelligent species do not understand the motives or perspective of the Xiticix. A perfect example of this was the Xiticix War of 86 P.A. Loggers along the border extended their lumber operation into Xiticix territory. The bug-men went crazy by this and retaliated as they would against any invader — total obliteration. When the loggers fled across the border, back into Markeen Territory, the Xiticix pursued. Unable to easily discern one human or D-bee from another, the insectoid warriors began to slaughter entire villages and moved south in a swarm of destruction. As per the Xiticix culture, any land taken from the enemy becomes theirs. Thus, what started as a minor skirmish turned into a Xiticix invasion! When the bug-men were pushed back to the old border, and the enemy did not pursue them, they were satisfied that their territory had been defended and the enemy rebuffed. The old lines were reestablished and all went back to normal. Likewise, non-Xiticix caught trespassing near the hive is worse than killing a member of that hive — trespassers are slain on the spot or pursued for miles. The Xiticix are not inherently evil, they are just very alien life forms whose ways are incomprehensible to most humans.

If the player characters are careful and avoid confrontation with Xiticix aliens, they should be able to pass through their territory unmolested. Non-Player Characters (NPCs) like Doug Weiss and frontiersmen from North Fork have a wealth of knowledge concerning Xiticix and offer useful advice. However, all of these folks agree that wandering too close to the Duluth hive will mean trouble. The aliens may be willing to tolerate other species in the boonies of their territory, but anything or anyone approaching within 10 miles/16 km of the hive city will be attacked and destroyed. The only measure to reduce the possibility of attack is to cover oneself with the fluid from a Xiticix scent gland. Consult pages 253-255 of the **Rifts® RPG**.

Xiticix Country: Random Encounter Table

Either roll for random encounters on the following table (roll as often as once for every 1D4 hour interval spent in Xiticix territory), or G.M.'s can select the most interesting sounding ones and play 'em out. See the last few for some answers to the mystery and a hint of things to come.

01-05 A combat patrol of 2D4 Xiticix flies by at low speed, searching for enemies. The insects are extremely agitated and are quick to engage non-Xiticix, especially robots and humanoids in M.D. power armor.

06-15 In a darkened grove of trees, a Dybbuk (see **Conversion Book One**, page 173) lurks waiting to hunt humanoid creatures at night. The creature doesn't distinguish between species and attacks any humanoids that cross its path (65 M.D.C.). If the player characters wander pass the dybbuk's lair, it will stalk them come nightfall and attack at the best opportunity (other monsters can be substituted).

16-20 Mechanoids® are found even as far north as Minnesota! A renegade Mechanoid Runner (see **Rifts® Sourcebook Two**, page 52) who survived the invasion is on an extended reconnaissance mission studying the life forms of the north. It is particularly intrigued by the Xiticix. The Mechanoid will avoid a direct confrontation and try to hide or flee. It is protected by a Mechanoid Brute, 1D4 thinmen, a runt or 2D4 non-Mechanoid minions it has duped into serving it.

21-25 A pack of howling canines on the hunt stop to investigate the adventurer group. There is a 50% chance that they attack. This is no normal wolf pack, but one from the pits of hell! It is led by a Fenry (170 M.D.C.; **Rifts Conversion Book One**, page 222) and the pack includes 1D4+2 Hell Hounds (40 M.D.C.; see **Conversion Book One**, page 186) and 4D4 normal Earth wolves.

26-32 Coiled around the limbs of a big evergreen, a Tri-Fang (70 M.D.C.; **Conversion Book One**, page 166) waits to ambush humanoid prey. It spits acid at the nearest character then drops to the ground attacking with its three heads!

33-41 Under the watchful eye of 2D4 warriors armed to the teeth, a large force of 1D4×10 Xiticix warriors are gathering mud to repair damage to the Duluth hive. If the player characters are quiet and wait or give them a wide berth, they can avoid trouble. To do otherwise means a ferocious battle.

42-51 Oblivious to mounting tension, a group of white-tailed deer, including an eight-point buck, three does and a fawn, wander out of the underbrush nearby. Their sudden appearance may startle nervous characters.

52-54 Music and laughter carries through the air from a picturesque glade where a giant oak stands. Bright ribbons and bells hang from the limbs of the tree and, if one looks closer, there are also dozens of tiny, winged Faerie Folk. Living in hollowed-out portions of the living tree there lives a total of 32 tree sprites, 17 Night-Elves faeries, 24 Green Wood faeries, and a pair of frost pixies. The faeries evade Xiticix, evil Faerie Folk, and other bad sorts, but swarm elves, humans, Dog Boys and similar creatures for fun and games. Although they are well-meaning, the Faerie Folk are likely to aggravate the hell out of the player characters after just a few minutes, and will cause all sorts of mischief.

55-60 A party of 3D6 Xiticix workers buzz by on some unknown errand. They ignore the player group and fight only if they are attacked first.

61-65 1-3 Xiticix warriors stumble out of the underbrush. They are injured from some recent, previous battle. Their wings are shredded and one is missing an arm. They are not happy to encounter intruders so close to home, and attack. They will fight to the death.

66-72 In a swampy clearing, a battle rages between an 18 foot tall Gigantes giant and four Xiticix warriors. The giant got the jump on the insects and has turned the fight into a melee where he is holding his own. The giant has a large horn (2D6 M.D.), big fangs (3D6 M.D.) an extra eye (+2 on initiative) and scaly skin (110 M.D.C.); he is armed with a makeshift club (5D6 M.D.) made from the remains of a UAR-1 bot and a plasma axe (1D4×10 M.D.). Regardless of who wins the engagement, the victor(s) will turn on the player group, and attack them immediately.

73-77 Three humanoids are huddled around a deer carcass, in the process of butchering it. There is a canine ranger, a wild fe-



male **Psi-Stalker** and a humanoid, mutant fox, wilderness scout. All three are dressed in mega-damage armor and each carries an arsenal of both S.D.C. and M.D.C. weapons. The trio is gruff but reasonable, and are willing to talk shop with the group, but know nothing about the recent troubles in Markeen. They can confirm the fact that the *Xiticix* are unusually agitated and hostile.

78-80 Corpses in various stages of decay litter an area of forest thick with trees. Some hang from tree limbs, others are scattered on the ground or impaled on jagged stumps. A quick search reveals no less than 26 *Xiticix* corpses. A particularly aggressive **Thornhead** (see **Rifts Sourcebook One**, page 118) with full P.P.E. and 750 M.D.C. has laid claim to the area and attacks all interlopers. If this monster has already been slain do not repeat this encounter. If not, it charges from its hiding place and attacks the group!

81-86 A large black bear stands on its haunches defensively, protecting a berry bush it found first. The bear will rear up angrily, making plenty of noise if anyone approaches but it runs away when anyone gets within 50 feet (15.2 m).

87-89 Just 50 miles (80 km) away from the Duluth Hive, a swarm of 4D4x10 *Xiticix* warriors are assembling. Unless they are somehow distracted, the swarm conducts a cross-border raid into Markeen. If the Baron is warned by radio or some other means, the Guardsmen will be prepared for them and be able to repel the raid with little difficulty and limited destruction of life and property. Otherwise, the raid will be much bloodier with considerable destruction to farmsteads and hamlets.

90-95 At some time or another, an earthquake left an enormous crack in the bedrock. It is now used as a lair for the wolf pack in encounter 21-25 above. The lair is never empty, a pair of Hell Hounds and 1D6 ordinary wild dogs are left behind as guardians.

96-00 Two (2) *Xiticix* warriors leisurely fire their TK rifles at a wild-looking figure hiding behind a pile of rocks. Occasionally, the figure returns fire with a battered Wilk's 447 laser rifle. If rescued, the figure is actually an old human woman named Martha, dressed in ragged clothes and mismatched body armor (25 M.D.C.), and expresses her gratitude. After a few moments of conversation, it is obvious that the woman is well meaning but quite senile. She keeps rambling about "that's what you get when you stir up a hornets nest." And, "if you're gonna stomp a bug, you'd better kill it, eh?" If asked why the *Xiticix* are so agitated or why she was being shot at, she repeats the above lines. If pressed, or if the CS is mentioned, she spits, curses the Coalition as "ijits," and tells how "a bunch of them black skull ships raided the hive city only a couple days ago, and "stirred them bug-brains up real good."

The Duluth Hive!

Duluth is a unique location where human and alien architecture have mixed in bizarre fashion. The *Xiticix* D-bees have completely rebuilt the ruins, although according to their alien hive design. Since the insectoid creatures usually build their hive cities from scratch, the Duluth hive is unique amongst *Xiticix* settlements for having been reconstructed from human ruins. There are the standard mushroom towers, but also old human

buildings of concrete and glass reinforced with mega-damage resin secreted by the aliens. The insides of these buildings have been gutted and reshaped by the aliens using the same resin to better suit the new occupants. Outside, dozens of bridges connect the several hundred mushroom towers and buildings that make up the expansive hive.

Like busy bees, *Xiticix* workers buzz around the towers, busily intent on obscure tasks (at least from a human perspective). The creatures are constantly entering the hive or leaving through the ten foot diameter holes set approximately three stories from ground level. Higher up the towers, around the seventh story, are similar holes for the use of the vigilant *Xiticix* warriors who patrol the hive city and oversee the workers — they are perpetually on guard duty. A ring of eleven structures that could be called bastion towers are stationed around the perimeter of the hive city. Each of these structures follow the general mushroom-tower design but are twice as wide and stand about 10 stories in height. These buildings are troop garrisons with much thicker walls (1D4x100+100 M.D.C. each), no connecting bridges, and have openings only at the seven story mark. Each holds 3D4x100 *Xiticix* warriors! These towers are positioned to support each other during combat, and to provide the best defense for the hive city. Only three towers face towards the lake.

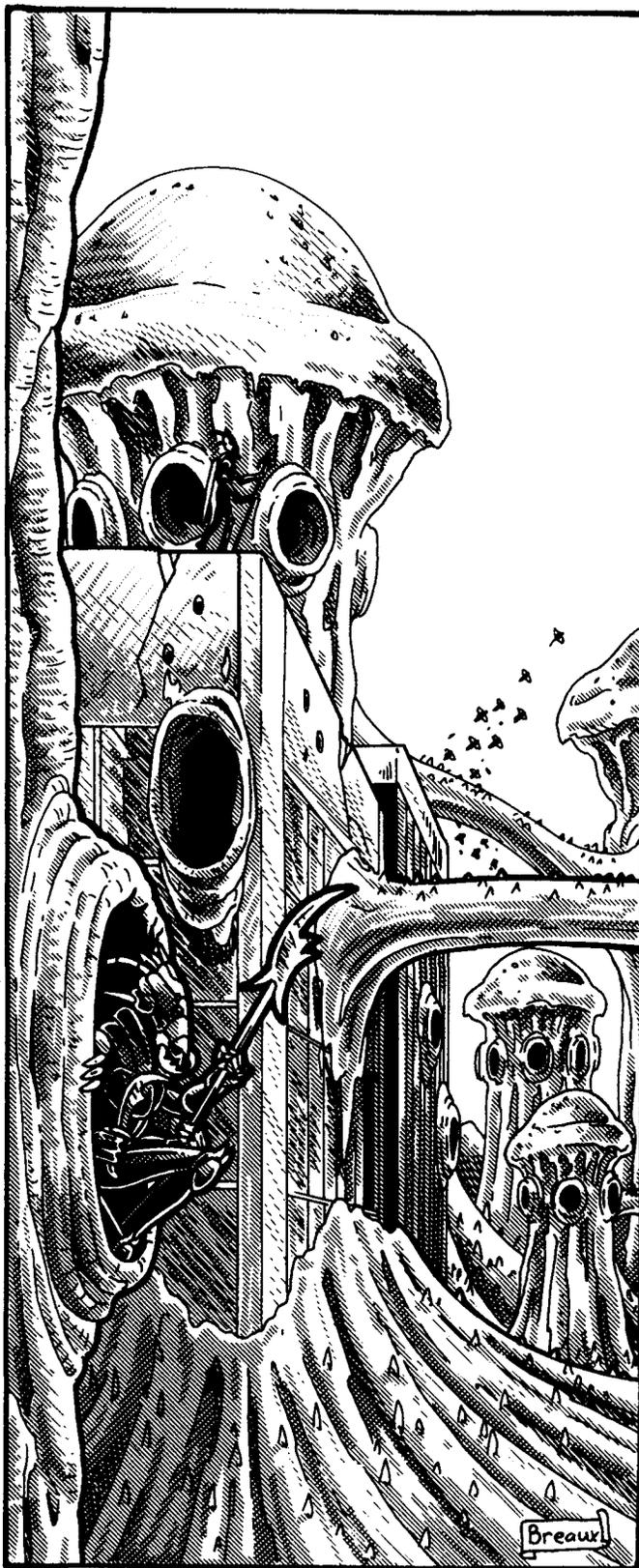
As the player characters get closer to the Duluth Hive, the number of *Xiticix* increases proportionately. In the 10 mile (16 km) belt around the hive, the warriors are out in force. Units of no less than a dozen are on patrol both on the ground and in the air. They are alert, aggressive and quick to engage any non-*Xiticix* life forms, even animals! The only way to bypass the aliens is to use camouflage, magic, psionics or similar means to avoid detection. When the characters are within sight of the hive city, the reason for the increased security and the recent problems with the *Xiticix* becomes apparent. Sometime in recent days, probably no more than a week ago, the hive was attacked.

Dead aliens by the score are scattered across the lake shore approach to the hive. Dozens of towers have been reduced to rubble, countless more bear the scars of missile impacts or burns from heavy laser cannons. There are even large craters here and there left by bombing runs — one particularly huge and deep crater has exposed a network of man-made tunnels under the hives on the surface.

Of the lake shore bastion towers, two are destroyed and the third is heavily damaged. It looks like the lake front portion was mauled while elsewhere, the damage to the hive is light. In the wake of the attack, the warriors remaining at the hive keep a careful watch on all approaches while swarms of workers repair the damage to the hive at a furious pace. On the shore are the shattered remains of three Coalition Spider-Skull Walkers and scores of troops in Dead Boy armor. Protruding from the lake like a black tower is the tail end of a crashed Death's Head transport that plunged into the water, head first. From the destruction, it is apparent that the *Xiticix* gave as good as they got in this battle.

The Tunnels Under Duluth

The player group can learn about the tunnels either from Doug Weiss or by seeing the hole blasted through the ground. Beneath the hive city there is a warren of connecting sewer tunnels, basements and other passages which, until recently, the Xi-



ticix were unaware of. The only part of the underground network used by the aliens was an underground parking garage that was altered to serve as birthing rooms and the Queen's Chamber. Doug Weiss can attest to the fact that the Xiticix never went into the other tunnels. He was told about the tunnels by **Krug**, and even used them himself on several occasions to secretly observe the aliens. If the player group hinted to Weiss that they may be going to the Duluth Hive, he automatically tells them about the

tunnels, saying that they are the only safe approach (and insists on joining them).

Upon reaching (or discovering) the hidden forest entrance to the tunnels, it is obvious that a large group recently passed through. There is the odd boot track, spent flare and even portals cut through the walls throughout the tunnels. Whoever attacked Duluth used the tunnels to sneak into the birthing chamber without alerting the Xiticix to their approach. Any attacks from the lake were nothing more than a distraction. Since the bug-men never knew about the tunnel network, they had no idea of just how vulnerable their eggs really were. If the player characters make their way to the hive through the tunnels, they run into the occasional patrol of 1D4 to 2D4 warriors that have been dispatched to explore and secure the warren. There are miles of tunnels creating a labyrinth for the Xiticix to explore and map. Despite a couple of skirmishes with patrols, the player characters can find their way to the Queen's Chamber with little difficulty (it's super easy if Weiss is with them).

Spying on the Queen's chamber from one of many small openings and ventilation shafts connecting to the spacious room reveals a great deal. No less than 50 Xiticix warriors are found in the room, clustered around the distraught queen who bears several laser burns and injuries, but appears likely to recover. Of the seven connecting egg chambers, three were put to the torch and one was robbed of its contents. All of the remaining live Xiticix avoid the eastern part of the chamber, towards the main tunnel, like the plague. There, clustered around a hole cut through the tunnel wall, are a score of dead Xiticix who have no visible wounds. The floor around them is littered with a dozen empty canister-style gas grenades lying on the ground nearby. Presumably, the canisters released some sort of nerve gas that affects the bug-men. It is also safe to assume that if the gas killed the adults, it almost certainly penetrated and killed the porous eggs. From the looks of things, the entire hatchery was obliterated.

Note: If the Xiticix discover the presence of our heroes, swarms of them will chase the group relentlessly, all the way across the border. If undiscovered, the group can quietly slip away once they are satisfied that they have seen enough. This cunning siege on the Xiticix by the Coalition States definitely explains the Xiticix aggression but does it explain the disappearances? Not if this has all transpired within the last 2-5 days.

It may also dawn on one of the player characters or NPCs that if the CS had gotten this far, they could probably have obliterated the entire hive. Why not finish the job, unless they didn't want to? And why not finish the job? Because the surviving insectoids, overcome by grief and anger, would be most likely to lash out at the nearest humanoids in the area — which would be Tolkeen, Markeen and their neighbors! The plan was brilliant. Since the Xiticix can't or don't distinguish between the various human and D-bee bipedal races, the Coalition's old Minnesota enemies would be blamed and attacked by the bug-men. Let the two (both enemies of the CS) fight amongst themselves, and then sweep in to pick up the pieces without jeopardizing human life. Another great example of the Coalition's scheming and manipulation.

The Old Krug Homestead

The Krug family homestead is deep in Xiticix country about 20 miles (32 km) beyond the acknowledged border. Its location is no secret but it has been abandoned for years and nobody would think to look there for anything. The player characters can learn of its existence either from intercepted radio transmissions to the Coalition, or from Doug Weiss or the senile old woman (see random encounter table). Both Weiss and the old woman are reluctant to talk about the old homestead because they also know it as the resting place of the Krug family, slaughtered several years ago by a Xiticix raiding party. Poor, old Zachary Krug was never the same after that. Weiss knows that Zach often spends time near the ruined homestead to be close to his family or to brood. He will tell the player characters about the location of the place to locate his missing friend to make sure he's okay, to get more information about recent Xiticix activity, or as a safe place to hole-up for a few nights. Even without Weiss, the group may find it important to track down Krug for his advice.

Caution is necessary during the trip to the Krugs's place since it is deep in Xiticix country and the alien insect-men are very agitated and alert (for reasons described above). There is no road or path to the old Krug place, forcing the player characters to slug through the tangled underbrush of the forest. Around the old farm itself, the going is particularly tough due to a veritable wall of young trees and thorn bushes. Beyond this barrier is an enormous clearing where three derelict, weather-stained buildings stand near a dried up river bed. The glass panes of the windows are smashed, boards are missing (leaving dark gaps in the walls), doors have fallen off their hinges and the sagging barn is just about ready to collapse completely. From a distance it looks like no one has been to the desolate setting in centuries.

Up close there is an entirely different story. In recent weeks the farm has been in use. Tracks from human-sized combat boots are everywhere. Someone repaired the smallest building, which is a combination laboratory and greenhouse. The greenhouse has been repaired in full, with airtight, transparent *mega-damage* plastic plates! The open area between the barn and lab was torn up badly, a successful tracking roll reveals that the area was used as a helicopter pad in recent weeks. Only the tiny graveyard where Zach's wife and children are buried seems to have been left alone, although there are fresh flower bushes planted there.

The interior of the main building also saw heavy use. There are muddy bootprints on the first floor and basement, and garbage that suggests at least a dozen. A couple of olive drab tarps hang in doorways, there are half-burned candles set on tables and in the kitchen there is a pile of empty freeze-dried ration packets (CS issue) and open food cans in a cupboard. A thorough search turns up a ripped nylon backpack, a discarded rifle E-clip, a deck of playing cards, a cardboard box holding 2D6 rolls of toilet paper and a pocket knife bearing a CS logo. Whoever used the laboratory, did a better job cleaning than did the people in the main building. There is no dust in the main room which holds a folded, grey wool blanket on an old cot, a stack of birch logs beside a wood stove and a lab table covered by a black tarp. Under the tarp, the table is stained badly. Inside the middle drawer is a stack of paper documents that can be identified as experiment reports by any character with a science skill

(or by Weiss; he'll also recognize it as Krug's handwriting). There is also a large sealed envelope that contains numerous photographs of Xiticix corpses in various stages of autopsy and accompanying reports of the alien's anatomy on a computer disk.

In spite of the careful work done to restore the greenhouse, someone went to a great deal of effort to destroy the plants inside. From the empty gasoline cans on the floor, the soot stains on the glass panes and the burnt remains of the plants, it is obvious that someone burned all (?) the plants. At the same time, the person was careful to keep the fire contained; there is no evidence that the fire spread beyond the metal bin where the plants were deposited. In all actuality, the individual was not too careful and a number of the plants survived, including a young death flower (described in the coming pages). Anyone taking more than a passing interest in the burned plants notices that they were all of the same variety, a species not indigenous to earth. Hidden amidst the ashes is one half-burned yellowish-green plant that releases its spores as soon as anyone touches it. It takes a while for the spores to take effect but thankfully, due to the youth of the plant, they are not as deadly as normal. Anyone not wearing environmental armor will become infected, suffering the loss of one melee attack and penalties of -4 to strike/parry/dodge for the next 2D4 hours unless they make a save vs nonlethal poison, in which case the penalties apply for only 4-24 minutes.

Inside the sagging barn is a horrific scene, shocking enough to turn even a hardened mere's stomach. The stink of rot escapes the moment the barricaded doors are forced open. Past a cluster of empty chopper fuel barrels stacked near the door is a huge canvas tarp spread over a big pile. Stains cover the top of the tarp which can be identified by the smell as gasoline. Beneath the tarp is a partially covered mass grave filled with about two hundred humanoids of diverse species; these are the missing Markeen citizens!

None of the corpses have visible wounds nor is there any obvious evidence of poisoning. **G.M. Note:** All of these people and creatures were killed in tests of the bio-weapon, ZK-12, at the hands of Remington's Raiders. An autopsy conducted on any corpse reveals that the victim's internal organs were literally turned into mush, causing death.

It appears that whoever was responsible for killing the people attempted to destroy the evidence. Several full barrels of fuel are arranged around the tarp, one of which has a CS demolition charge strapped to its side. The charge was set with a time delay fuse that apparently failed to work. Anyone with the Demolitions Disposal skill will be able to determine that had the charge detonated, the barn, and probably the other buildings, would have disappeared in a giant fire ball, leaving no evidence whatsoever.

What About The Coalition?

Before the player characters got involved in this adventure, the abductions had already come to an end, not that they could know it. By this point, the player group has done a good job of investigating and have probably come to that same conclusion. Unfortunately for them, the powers that be in both Markeen and Tolkeen are not satisfied that the abductions have stopped and that the CS *may* have been involved (the evidence is circumstantial at best, and the CS-Xiticix siege may be unrelated). They

want to know with absolute certainty who is responsible for the abductions and why they were staged. This poses quite a problem considering that all the leads in **Markeen** do tap out and the culprits (namely Remington's Raiders) have left the area for their base in Old Ontario. The only concrete clues the player characters have to track down the **Raiders** are pieces of evidence (sightings by the Green Team, the pocket knife at the **Krug Homestead**, remains of the assault force in Duluth) that implicate Coalition involvement in the problem (not to mention there is also evidence that someone is using biological warfare agents).

It should be obvious to our heroes that the CS is mixed up in this somehow, even if they can't prove it, and that some sort of chemical or biological agent is being tested.

The baron recognizes the importance of possible CS involvement and the use of the biological warfare agent, particularly in light of Farseer's prophecy. He knows that with the meager resources of Markeen, it is impossible to hunt down the individuals responsible, especially if they are from the Coalition, and thus sends the characters to Tolkeen to talk with members of the Tolkeen Intelligence Bureau (TIB). In the alternative, the player group may find other leads or events that take them to Tolkeen.

Chasing Leads in Tolkeen

One way or another, the group goes to Tolkeen. If they are without vehicles, Baron Cromwell arranges for transportation to Tolkeen on one of **Markeen's** airships or provides them with a vehicle. Warned by coded radio transmission of their impending arrival, *Councilor Cedric Stonebark* takes care of all the messy details necessary for the group to get access to the Tolkeen Intelligence Bureau (TIB). A liaison officer named Captain Leo Prince is assigned to the visiting group to make their search as easy as possible. The captain is the chief agent for the entire northern Minnesota theater, including Lake Superior and sections of Old Ontario and Michigan. When it comes to those regions, he is a walking encyclopedia who knows what time each bear takes his proverbial dump in the woods. Captain Prince shares information with the player group in the form of detailed briefings that respond to their questions.

Really the only useful information that Captain Prince has access to is concerning the movements of Coalition forces. Tolkeen is expecting an attack at any moment so they are keeping careful tabs on the disposition of CS units likely to participate in any invasion. If Captain Prince is asked about the possibility of CS forces being involved in the Markeen abductions, he tells them that this is unlikely. As for the Xiticix, TIB sent a reconnaissance airplane to photograph the Duluth Hive after learning about the CS raid. From the damage done to the hive and the bodies left on the beach, the Bureau estimates that there was at least a company-sized infantry element supported by air and naval forces — in fact, the troops probably came from under the lake to surprise the enemy (most CS vehicles are water tight and can function as submersibles). From the intelligence gathered by Tolkeen and **Lazlo**, the movements of CS forces near the Minnesota border weren't nearly enough to assemble a raiding force of that size.

There has been little recent action from the Coalition States. None of the units deployed on the border have moved and no new units have been brought into the Minnesota theater. Reports

from **Lazlo** concerning Iron Heart and Free Quebec reveal nothing out of the ordinary on that front either. The only unit known to have come anywhere near Minnesota within the time frame described by the player characters was a Triton ship, the *CSS Cartier*, sent to patrol Lake Superior and the other Great Lakes west of **Lazlo**. Captain Prince admits that although the timing is right, it would have been possible for the Trident to reach Duluth, but, the ship could not have carried out the raid alone. This gives additional credence to the idea of a submersible force, as well as speculates that if the abductions were **CS-sponsored** missions, it is most likely that the Coalition would use privateers or hire friendly mercenaries led by CS special forces advisors. These forces could move around within the Minnesota Territory without raising suspicion and could infiltrate the region undetected. One thing is obvious, the forces responsible are well-equipped with modern ships and aircraft.

At this point, the door to the briefing room opens and a junior TIB agent rushes in, handing Captain Prince a video cassette. The Captain explains that a radio listening post near the border recorded a coded video transmission sent from somewhere in the north to a CS forward base in Wisconsin. TIB hackers just finished decoding the transmission.

The video is brief. It shows someone in Dead Boy armor dropping a gas grenade into a pit filled with a group of **D-bees**. It releases a greenish cloud that seems to affect the group immediately. Within minutes, the people begin convulsing and dying. The scene repeats about a dozen times, each time with a different humanoid species, including the little monkey people and a pair of Xiticix. At the end of the ten minute tape a voice says:

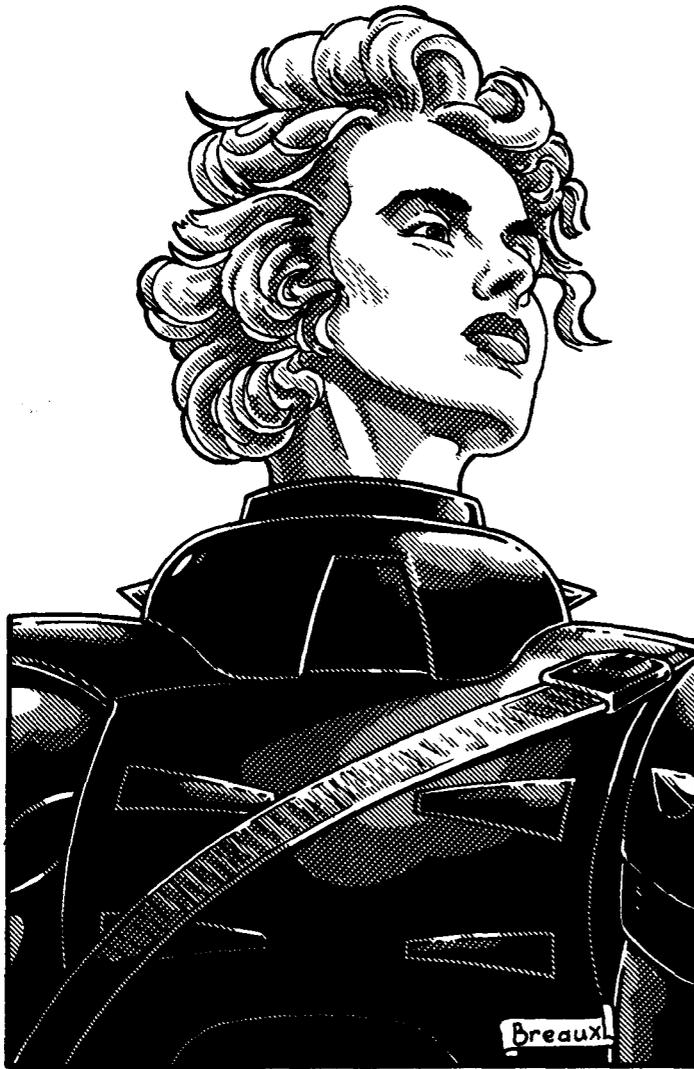
"Colonel Joyner, these tests are 100% authentic. If your government is at all interested in purchasing this weapon you know the price, and how to get in touch. Remington, out."

The player characters who searched the Old Krug Homestead will recognize the scene on the video as the same from the barn. This also confirms Captain Prince's suspicions that mercenaries were involved in the abductions and not the Coalition directly. After the video he is convinced. He offers to get the player characters a meeting with a CS double-agent named **Dana Langton**. She knows a great deal concerning CS friendly mercenary groups and might be able to give them a hand. Captain Prince knows he's heard of "Remington," but can't put his finger on exactly what it was or where he heard it.

If the player group stresses the importance of locating the *CSS Cartier*, the Captain promises to look into getting the air force to dispatch a reconnaissance aircraft and track the vessel down. He stresses that there are no guarantees that such a plane will be available or, if one is dispatched, that it will find the vessel. The Bureau sends out a couple planes to locate the *CSS Cartier* and also scan for radio and microwave transmissions that could be used to locate the ship. This approach will eventually find both the ship and **Remington's** Raiders, but only after a few of days of searching. Speaking with Dana Langton turns up the mercenaries and the ship a lot faster.

Double Agent Dana Langton

A few hours after Captain Prince's briefing, Dana Langton agrees to meet with the player group at the *Raging Golem Diner*. She is an attractive woman in her late thirties, but her cold green eyes could stare down even a CS Drill Sergeant. For two years



now she's been living in Tolkeen under the cover of a Fort El Dorado consulate staff worker. However, she is really a member of the CS Intelligence Division. Dana has been divulging CS secrets to the Tolkeen Intelligence Bureau for 18 months and has gained their trust. In truth, she is 100% loyal to the Coalition and this is all an elaborate trap designed to hurt Tolkeen sometime in the future with disinformation that will be their ruin.

Fortunately for our heroes, Langton knows absolutely nothing about the biological weapon that Remington discovered, tested on **Markeen** inhabitants and is now trying to sell to the CS government at **Chi-Town**. Only a select few members of the CS government and military know anything about ZK-12 or its "test" on the hatchery at the Duluth Hive. As a result, Langton believes the identity of Remington and his lair in Thunder Bay to be semi-useless information that should boost her credibility. Dana knows of no official Coalition operation in Markeen and she agrees with Captain Prince's evaluation that a CS friendly, but independent mercenary group or a rogue force with some loose ties to the CS is likely to be responsible. What's more, Dana mentions that a collection of four to six CS sponsored privateer groups have established an enclave somewhere along the Ontario coast of Lake Superior. She knows of Remington by reputation and is familiar with his personal history (see below), but cannot say exactly where he can be found.

Langton does know of someone who should know where Remington's Raiders can be located. Such information isn't free.

She tells the group they owe her a big favor (and she will collect), and tells them about Ronald Mercer, the biggest and most reliable arms dealer in all of Free Quebec. Langton also gives them the location of Mercer's shop and organizes, by radio, for the dealer to meet with them in two days. With help from the Tolkeen Council, arrangements are made for the group to be transported to the city of Old Bones via dimensional Rifts! They leave as soon as possible!

The Old Bones Arms Dealer

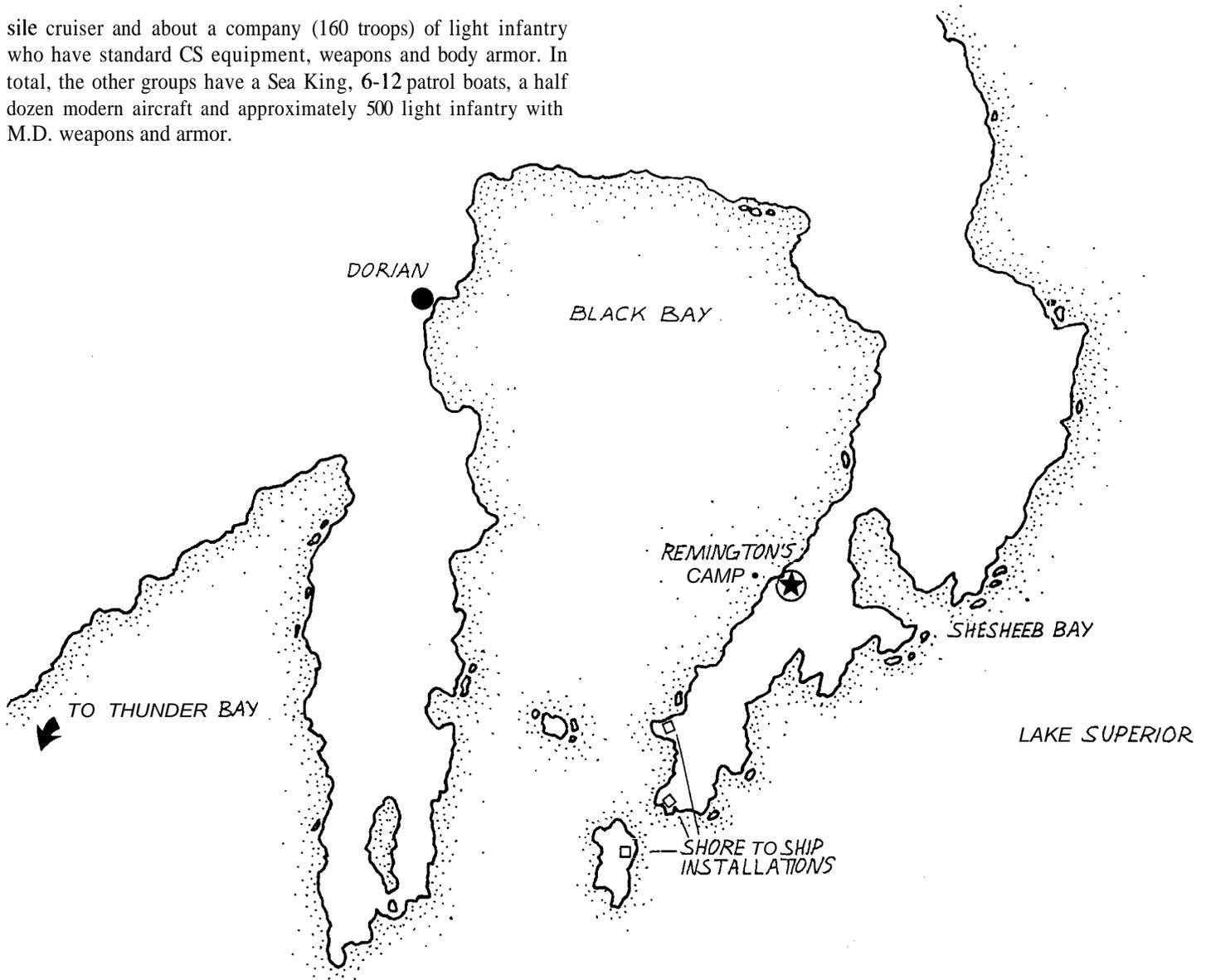
Ronald Mercer is without a doubt the best arms dealer in Free Quebec. His operation is very professional and in return for outfitting CS clandestine forces and mercenary teams, the Coalition government leaves him alone. Mercer has contacts with literally dozens of arms manufacturers and can get anything from a CS Mark V APC to an Iron Heart Sea King! The prices for merchandise are high but reasonable considering Ron's reputation for selling only brand new, quality equipment. Furthermore, he guarantees delivery of purchases to any location in North America within two weeks or less, thanks to his private fleet of cargo planes and merchant ships.

Like most black marketeers, Ronald avoids political entanglements and is entirely neutral in his world view. He sells guns to anyone regardless of political ideology or how it might affect other people. Mercer does have some morals, unlike most arms dealers; he avoids human augmentation, never buys equipment from shady groups like cyber-snatcher gangs and sells only to individuals whom he believes to be stable and responsible. He has no moral qualms about selling weapons to soldiers, whether they are members of a national militia, mercenaries, or Coalition secret agents. But he would never knowingly sell weapons to groups, like the Pecos Raiders or Federation of Magic, who specifically attack civilians. Mercer sees these individuals as butchers and mad dogs who should be destroyed without mercy.

This moral code is very important to the goals of the player characters. One of the credos that Mercer lives by is to never betray a customer, regardless of the price offered (although he'd probably talk if his own life was on the line). He is quick to tell this to relay his trustworthiness to the group when they meet at his bar, *Le Chat Noir*. There are fifty men and women armed with M.D. weapons in the bar and Mercer himself is wearing a **Naruni** personal force field (160 M.D.C.), so threatening the man to give up Remington will get them nowhere. Appeals to Ronald's moral code are more likely to work, since the man is already nervous about Captain Remington's intentions for the dozens of empty gas missile warheads he recently sold to the **merc**. If the player characters tell Mercer about the biological agent, ZK-12, they've seen in action, and the diabolical method that Remington used to test it, the dealer gives them the location of the pirate base in **Black Bay**. Note that the player characters should have a tough selling job to convince Mercer to roll on Remington and his Raiders, unless they have physical proof like a copy of the video transmission, the photographs, or one of them agrees to a psionic probe by one of his henchmen to see if they are telling the truth.

Mercer warns the characters that the pirates' enclave is extremely well defended and that the groups have an impressive arsenal of power armor, aircraft, warships and land forces. He knows for certain that Remington has a pre-Rifts U.S. Navy mis-

sile cruiser and about a company (160 troops) of light infantry who have standard CS equipment, weapons and body armor. In total, the other groups have a Sea King, 6-12 patrol boats, a half dozen modern aircraft and approximately 500 light infantry with M.D. weapons and armor.



The Raid on Black Bay

What started out as a relatively minor dilemma in an isolated northern Minnesota community has turned into a full-fledged crisis. While searching for those responsible for approximately 200 abductions in the Barony of **Markeen**, our heroes have uncovered the existence of an incredibly potent weapon of mass destruction, the **ZK-12** biological agent, and the intent of its creators (Remington's Raiders) to sell the dangerous weapon to the Coalition States. With the purchase of a missile cruiser and long-range missiles, Remington is in the position to launch ZK-12 to every major free city-state in North America. Officials in the free states of Tolkeen and Markeen are terrified of the possibility of biological weapons being used against their largely unprotected civilians. There is no question in their minds that the pirates must be stopped, and that the CS must be prevented from acquiring the ZK-12 formula. If this deadly weapon should fall into the hands of the Coalition States, there can be no doubt that they would use it against Tolkeen, the Xiticix and quite possibly, Free Quebec and other enemies of the States. It would give the CS the edge they've been looking for to become "the" power in North America. Remington knows this, which is why he's asking 10 billion credits for it.

Even as the player characters make the trek back to Lazlo from Old Bones, there is a secret meeting of the Lazlo government and select members of the Tolkeen Council, including **Cedric Stonebark** and **Baron Varn Cromwell**. At the secret meeting, the powers that be decide to mount a commando-style raid to destroy the biological weapon. The officials realize that a large-scale military operation would only draw the Coalition into the conflict to secure the biological agent. Thus, they agree to send a small strike force against the brigands. The player characters are part of that force (one of several teams sent to destroy this terrible weapon). The combined governments are resolved that the characters are the right choice since it was they who uncovered the plot, proving both their toughness and loyalty. The officials do whatever it takes (within reason) to get the characters to go along, even agreeing to pay each of them as much as one million credits! Characters of a good alignment can't refuse even if the money wasn't part of the deal. And even selfish and evil characters are likely to realize the gravity of the situation and agree to take the mission; the money is just a nice bonus.

When the player group arrives in **Lazlo's** harbors the preparations for the raid are almost finished. Baron Cromwell and his

canine general, Arl Xzzyn, have worked together to draft an attack plan and assemble an assault team. In addition to the player characters, there are 8-12 volunteers, including a great homed dragon hatchling (6th level), a pair of techno-wizards (4th level each), a Glitter Boy with his armored suit (5th level), and whatever other NPCs the Game Master may want to include to help out the characters. Secrecy is vital to the success of the mission. Therefore, transportation is by a pre-Rifts submarine purchased from Golden Age Weaponsmiths Inc. and then modified by the famous techno-wizards of Lazlo. In absolute silence and incredible speed, the vessel will ferry the assault team to the coast near Black Bay. From there the team is on its own, having to cross overland and attack the mainland while the sub causes a diversion, attacking the shore fortifications with its water to air missiles. The player characters are provided with whatever healing, armor and special equipment they deem necessary, including minor magic items, spell scrolls, electronics equipment, TW gear, any Wilk's, NG or Wellington small arms, and even power armor if they know how to use it (no Glitter Boys or Triax items unless a character has one to begin with. Giant robot vehicles won't fit in the sub and are too slow to follow along).

The Black Bay Pirate Lair

Black Bay lies about 40 miles (64 km) east of Thunder Bay on the north coast of Lake Superior. The bay, which is known locally as Pirate Bay, is approximately 37 miles (60 km) long and 13 miles (21 km) across at its widest point, but only about 4.5 miles (7.2 km) at the mouth. Five pirate/privateer groups, including Remington's Raiders, share the bay as a base of operations for their activities on the Great Lakes. Inside Black Bay no violence is tolerated, the whole reason for gathering in the bay is for mutual defense. The groups share responsibility for manning the six forts guarding the mouth (each with 20 armored troops, 500 M.D.C., and a pair of heavy laser cannons: 1D6x10 M.D.C. per blast, 6000 foot/1800 m range, 120 shot payload) and also for maintaining the harbor/shipyards at Dorion.

Black Bay is ruled by a council that consists of the leader of each separate group and convenes at least once a month in Dorion. Currently, Remington is in a position to dictate terms to the other members, thanks to his brand new missile cruiser. In total their fleets amount to only one Missile Cruiser, a Sea King that has been refitted to function as a diesel-electric submarine, a freighter converted to a mini-carrier (carries 3 Grey Eagles), 8 Black Eels, 3 Tritons and 2 U.S. Navy patrol boats (plus the CSS *Cartier* currently anchored in the bay). **Note:** Many of these vessels are described in **Rifts® Mercenaries** (and **Rifts® Undersea** for more sea and underwater weaponry).

A direct approach into Black Bay is suicide. The ring of fortifications backed up by the fleet makes it impossible to enter the bay uninvited. Luck is with the Lazlo assault team for Remington's camp is separate from the other four, all based at Dorion, on the rocky east shore of the bay. The submarine lands the group on the shore of Shesheeb Bay, just a couple of miles from Remington's camp. Once the assault team is on the beach, the submarine leaves to make its diversionary attack on the forts at the mouth of Black Bay.

Remington's Raiders

The Raiders are a medium-sized mercenary and privateering company of about 200. They are independent but in recent years have worked mainly for the Coalition State of Chi-Town. Maritime operations are the specialty of the company, especially amphibious landings and ship boarding, but for the right price, the Raiders can perform any kind of mission. All of the members are battle-hardened veterans or professional soldiers who are 100% loyal to Gus Remington. These men have great equipment, eat well and receive good pay. **Note:** These troops have the same statistics and equipment as the typical CS Grunt on page 256 of the **Rifts® RPG**.

The assets of the force include their personal equipment, the Black Bay encampment, a Missile Cruiser, a Trident patrol boat, an old USN patrol boat, 2 Black Eels, a half-dozen landing ships, a Grey Falcon jet, an Iron Eagle gunship and a CH-47 Chinook chopper.

For the last few months the men of the Raiders have been extremely busy preparing for and executing their current mission. When Remington hired on to help Zach Krug produce and test ZK-12, there was a great deal of work to do. Using the choppers, they moved all of the equipment that the scientist required, first to Krug's old farmstead and, just days ago, to Black Bay. Once enough of the lethal biological agent was prepared, it was the Raiders who snatched a diverse mix of people from Markeen for ZK-12 tests at the old Krug place.

When the Lazlo team arrives in the area, the Raiders are busy preparing to attack Duluth using missiles loaded with ZK-12. The attack is being staged as a demonstration for Coalition officers who continue to question the lethal power of the gas; which is why the Coalition vessel, CSS *Cartier*, is present. Every soldier in Remington's company knows all about Zach Krug, the ZK-12, the impending attack on Duluth and the plans to sell the formula to the Coalition State of Chi-Town.

If the player characters are able to capture one of Remington's Raiders, it is possible to make him talk through psychic or normal interrogation, although it won't be easy.

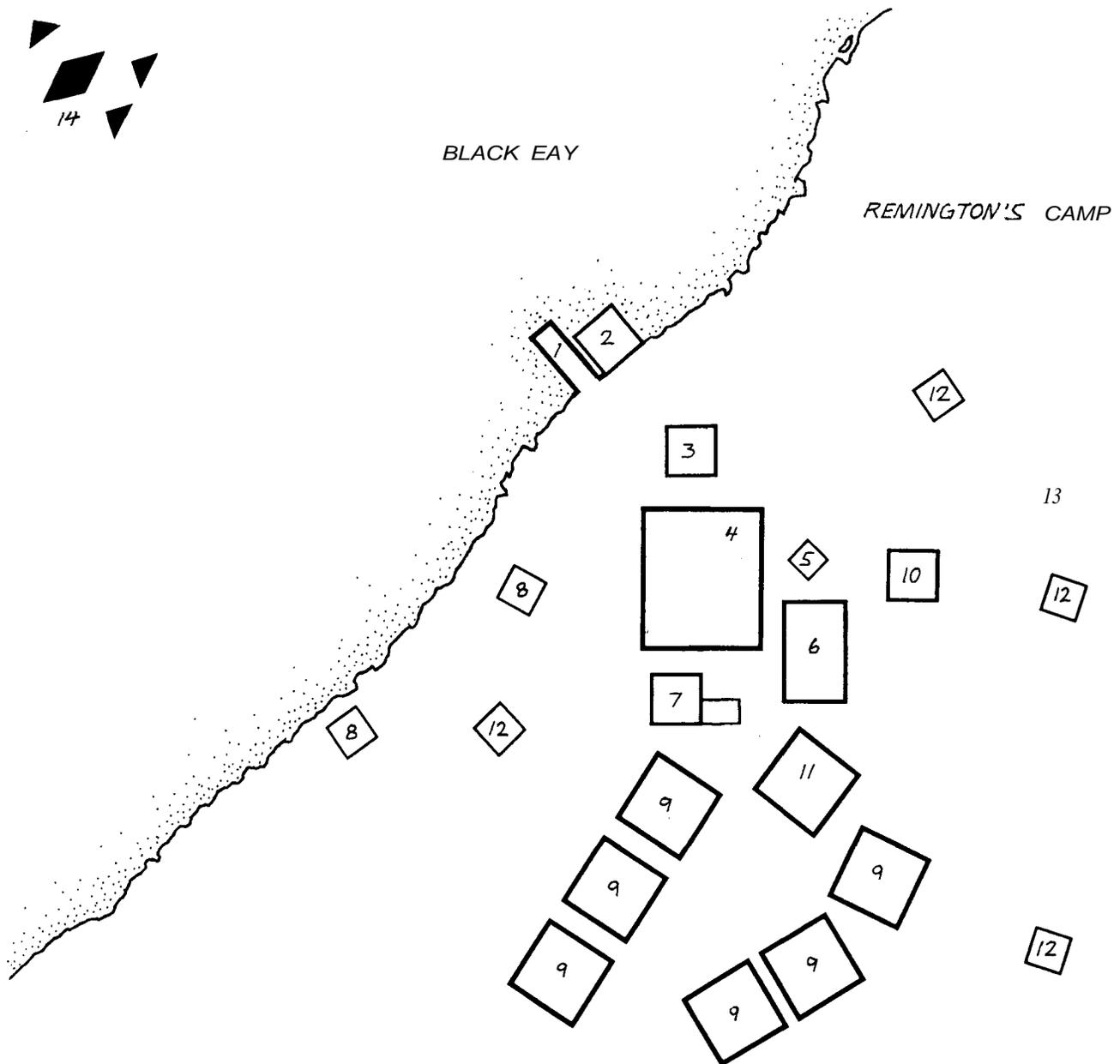
Encampment Map Key

The camp is located on the east shore of the bay. It consists of nearly twenty buildings, with Remington's entire pirate fleet anchored 4000 feet (1200 m) off shore. The buildings are predominantly S.D.C. structures constructed of corrugated steel, wood, sandbags and concrete. All of them are painted in a grayish-green camouflage pattern to make them hard to detect from the air.

1. The docks: The meres have four motorboats used to ferry personnel and equipment to the fleet in Black Bay. When the boats aren't in use, they are tethered to the dock. At present, 3-18 troops in plain black Dead Boy armor (old style) are loading ZK-12 missiles onto the boats.

2. A boat house attached to the docks contains fuel for the boats and tools to keep them in running order. When repairs are needed, the boat is brought right into the building. Presently it is empty.

3. An ammo bunker guarded by four mercenaries sits between the docks and the aircraft pad. It is reinforced and armored with mega-damage plating (100 M.D.C.). Inside are



boxes of grenades, a box of ZK-12 gas canisters, rail gun ammo belts, dozens of missiles, spare E-clips and a recharger, extra body armor and even a half dozen (old style) SAMAS power armor suits! Any explosion inside the bunker causing 20 M.D.C. detonates the explosives contained inside and destroys the bunker, inflicting 2D4x100 M.D.C. to everything in a 60 foot (18.3 m) radius!

4. A landing pad of asphalt, large enough to accommodate all three of the Raiders' aircraft at once, is located adjacent to the ammo bunker. Presently an Iron Eagle aircraft (see **Rifts@ Mercenaries** or substitute a different aircraft) is grounded on the missile cruiser, the CH-47 is running supplies out to the fleet, but a Grey Falcon fighter jet rests on the ground ready to go. A pair of armed and alert meres guard the jet.

5. Control Tower: A simple wooden tower holds communication gear to direct air traffic to the base. Two unarmored meres with C-18 laser pistols are in the tower.

6. A big hangar made of corrugated steel sits alongside the landing pad. Aircraft are brought inside when the weather is bad or repairs are needed. There are tools and spare parts inside the hangar. A tank of jet fuel sits outside.

7. Command Bunker: A large reinforced bunker (300 M.D.C.) that is separated into officers' quarters and an operations center. Inside are large military maps, radio equipment, a couple of computers, and several file cabinets full of documents, all in code.

8. Shore fortifications are placed south of the docks to protect the encampment from ship attacks on Black Bay. Each is a small reinforced bunker (90 M.D.C.) that holds a tripod-mounted C-40R rail gun with plenty of ammo, as well as a WI-23 missile launcher and four meres.

9. Barracks buildings constructed of wood are clustered to the south of camp. There are fifteen bunk beds, thirty footlockers and a table and chairs in each barracks.

10. The lab (200 M.D.C.) was specially rebuilt by the mercenaries to be completely airtight in case something went awry during the production of the ZK-12. Inside there is a small room with separate ventilation where Zach Krug lives. The larger room holds cabinets, lab benches, rows of death flowers growing under UV lights and all the equipment needed to refine the spores into ZK-12. Packaging equipment to put the finished chemical agent in metal canisters is located at one end of the room.

When our heroes arrive, Zach Krug is busily filling ZK-12 canister grenades and putting them in a wooden crate. There is a half-full box of spore grenades on the floor beside the scientist (holds 24 grenades). If approached, he pulls an ion pistol from under his lab coat and threatens to shoot if they don't leave. Zach doesn't want to kill anybody and he won't shoot unless shot at first. If the player characters try to reason with him, he reluctantly agrees to help them destroy the lab, his notes, the ZK-12 gas and the terrible, alien flowers. He'll then follow the group in hope of making his escape — Remington will go on a murderous rampage.

11. Mess Hall: A large building made of concrete and wood. Inside is a kitchen, food storage rooms and a big room filled

with tables where soldiers congregate to eat. The hall is empty when the player characters attack, except for six support personnel armed with NG-56 pistols working in the kitchen.

12. Four Iron Bolt Missile Vehicles (see **Rifts® Mercenaries**) are entrenched at various locations along the camp's perimeter. The vehicles are positioned to provide the camp with an ironclad air defense. Each vehicle has a full complement of long-range missiles but only 20 mini-missiles.

13. 10 patrols of 2D4 mercenaries wander the rear area between Black Bay and Lake Superior. There is a 01-30% chance of wandering into or being spotted by a patrol for every 15 minutes spent in this area. As soon as they make contact, the patrol leader radios the camp to warn them of intruders. An additional unit of 20 mercenaries arrives to reinforce the patrol within 5 minutes/20 melees.

14. The fleet is anchored in Black Bay, 4000 feet (1200 m) from the encampment and is within range to use most of their weapons systems. The ships fire on any concentrated groups of attackers and large targets like giant robots, aircraft and dragons, but shies away from firing at buildings for fear of killing **friendlies**.

ZK-12 Biological Agent

ZK-12 is a unique biological weapon that is unlike any other ever produced in human history. It is not a virus or a germ, but an incredibly toxic spore from an alien plant from some unknown dimension. These deadly, and nearly invisible, spores are extremely potent and can cause virtually every known species on Earth to become seriously ill. Only powerful supernatural creatures like adult dragons, vampires, **Nightlords**, **Spugorth**, and demons are immune to the effects of the spores. When contracted, the spores attack every major organ of the victim's body, using the respiratory or circulatory systems (or anything similar) to spread throughout the host.

Luckily for the inhabitants of Earth, there is only one small patch of the plants known to exist. That was in northern Minnesota, until Krug found it. Biologist Zachary Krug stumbled upon the alien vegetation in the spring of 98 P.A. Zach was fascinated by the stunted, cactus-like yellowish-green plants covered with bulbous protrusions and tiny brown flowers. He immediately noticed that the forest animals and even the Xiticix steered clear of the vegetation and thus cautiously studied the plant. During that study he discovered the deadly spores held in the bulbous shoots and the grievous effects they had on most life forms — with a 78% rate of fatality. He dubbed the grotesque looking plant the "Death Flower" and began harvesting spores for further study.

Doctor Krug spent the next several years secretly studying the Death Flower. During that time he learned how to safely grow it in his greenhouse, how to harvest the spores, and also how to decontaminate areas polluted by the them. More importantly, the scientist also learned through painstaking experimentation how to chemically refine the spores to increase their lethality. Refined by his secret chemical process, the spores became so fatal as to cause death 99.5% of the time! Zach named the resulting **bio-weapon** ZK-12 short for Zachary Krug formula 12 (the chemical solution that finally worked). Convinced that he'd cre-

ated the most deadly weapon since the atomic bomb (he may be correct), Zachary destroyed all the death flowers growing in the wild and prepared to extract his revenge on the Xiticix by using it on the Duluth Hive. That's why he approached Remington and his Raiders. He needed help in getting the toxin to the hive, unfortunately, Remington saw a wider range of possibilities for ZK-12.

Primary Purpose: **Anti-Personnel**

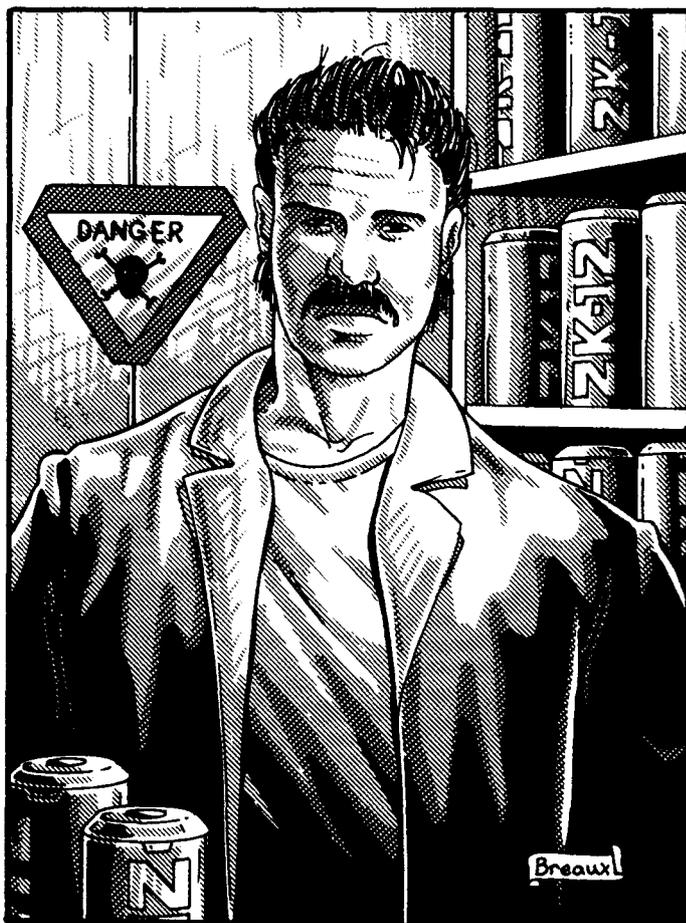
Effect/Mega-Damage: Any living creature exposed to ZK-12 refined spores must make a saving throw of 18 or higher (including bonuses from P.E. only) or die! Even lesser supernatural life forms are affected by ZK-12 and must save vs lethal poison (14) or fall ill for 1D4 days with penalties of -20% on all skill, -6 on initiative, -8 to strike, parry and dodge, and reduce actions/attacks per melee by five (minimum of one attack per round)!

Range: Airborne; requires physical contact by touch or breathing it in.

Area of Effect: Varies; depends on the amount of spores released. Any airtight container can be filled with ZK-12, from metal cans to canister-style grenades and missile warheads. Spore-filled grenades and mini-missiles erupt and have a 10 foot (3 m) radius of effect; short-range missiles have a 50 foot (15.2 m) radius of effect; medium-range missiles have an 80 foot (24.4 m) casualty radius; and long-range missiles have a 150 ft (45.7 m) casualty radius.

Duration: Spores that are not immediately ingested, quickly dissipate and are rendered totally impotent in a matter of 1D6×10 minutes.

Notes: Both ZK-12 and Death Flower spores have absolutely no effect on adult dragons, vampires/undead, elementals, supernatural intelligences, gods, godlings and most greater supernatural beings and creatures of magic.



Zachary Krug

Zachary Krug is not the average resident of the northern Minnesota frontier. He is no farmer or miner, nor is he an outdoorsman of any kind. Rather, Zach is an intellectual who was born and raised in the city of Tolkeen where he attended school at the Tolkeen University. After completing his education as a biologist, he moved north to study alien wildlife and also to use his expertise to aid local farmers. Life in the Barony of Markeen was tough, but for over a decade Zach lived there happily with his family. He was well-liked by the people and earned a reputation as a reclusive but generous man who wouldn't hurt a fly, and would give you the shirt off his back.

Six years ago, a Xiticix war band raided the Krug homestead, killing Zach's wife and three children. The mild-mannered scientist was deeply wounded by the loss of his family and retreated to a remote location in the woods to live out his life as a hermit. Alone and preoccupied with grief, Zachary underwent a startling transformation. Grief gave way to rage, and rage to an obsession for revenge. The biologist became consumed with hurting the Xiticix like they hurt him. Krug spent months plotting the destruction of the Duluth Hive before stumbling on an alien plant, the "death flower" (see above), and discovering its deadly, toxic spores. For three years Zach studied the plants and spores until, through experimentation, he learned to refine the spores into an incredibly lethal biological agent he named ZK-12. Once he had produced enough ZK-12 to begin testing, he contacted a mercenary group to provide him with security and subjects on whom to test the weapon.

Since hooking up with Captain Remington's army, the good Doctor Krug has taken a back seat role. He is content to leave

the details to Remington and simply continues producing ZK-12 in a secluded laboratory, eagerly waiting to avenge his family on the Xiticix. Deep below the surface, Zach knows that what he's doing is wrong, and that ZK-12 is too dangerous to be put in the hands of Captain Remington and the Coalition States. However, so far his overriding desire for revenge has been sufficient to keep his conscience submerged. If Zach was forced to abandon his veil of feigned ignorance and confront the truth, he would come around and atone for his actions by destroying the formula for ZK-12 and all remaining stocks of the weapon.

Doctor Zachary Krug

O.C.C. & Level of Experience: 8th level rouge scientist.

Alignment: He was unprincipled, but driven to commit evil acts by his all-consuming desire for revenge against the Xiticix.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 19, M.A. 8, P.S. 11, P.P. 9, P.E. 11, P.B. 12, Spd. 14

S.D.C.: 35

Hit Points: 34

Height: 5 feet, 6 inches (1.67 m); **Weight:** 175 lbs (79.5 kg)

Age: 42

P.P.E.: 6

Combat: Basic hand to hand, with 3 attacks per melee.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry/dodge, +2 to damage, +2 to pull/roll with punch, critical strike on roll of 19-20, kick attack for 1D6 damage, and judo throw/flip inflicting 1D6 damage plus the victim loses initiative and one melee attack/action.

Skills of Note: Advanced math, computer operation and literacy at 98%, land navigation 71%, radio: basic 93%, read sensory equipment 88%, basic electronics 88%, pilot automobile 87%, computer repair 73%, wilderness survival 73%, holistic medicine 63%, pathology 83%, medical doctor 98/93%, demolitions 94%, biology 88%, botany 83%, chemistry 88%, analytical chemistry 83%, lore: demons and monsters 78%, W.P. energy rifle and W.P. energy pistol.

Equipment: Huntsman padded armor (40 M.D.C.), NG-56 light ion pistol (2D6 M.D., 400 foot/122 m range, 6 shot payload, see Rifts Mercenaries) with a spare E-clip, a plasma grenade (5D6 M.D.), walkie-talkie, PDD recorder, hand-held computer, spiral note pad and mechanical pencil.

Captain Gus Remington

Gus Remington lived the typical Coalition success story. In his youth, he was a poster boy for military recruitment. He was born into a large farming family in the Iowa portion of the State of Chi-Town and grew up accustomed to the **backbreaking** labor of farming. At age eighteen, Gus enlisted in the Chi-Town military to escape the drudgery of small-town existence and to live a life of adventure. He was a natural at soldiering and graduated at the top of his class. He was recruited into the Special Forces and by age twenty-one, Gus was a full-fledged field operative sent to the remote frontier regions of the Coalition to fight for human freedom and supremacy. Following a distinguished six year military career, Gus spent another three years as a field agent for the CS Intelligence Division. At twenty-nine he left the military to pursue a freelance career, lured to mercenary work by the promise of big money.

It took about a year but Gus organized a private mercenary army of the size of a military company (160 troops). He called



them "Remington's Raiders." While the "Raiders" are a mercenary unit, it is composed largely of retired CS veterans and Coalition sympathizers who often worked for either the intelligence division, the Internal Security Specialists or the Coalition military directly. Most are young, though seasoned, veterans like Remington, who became disillusioned with military life under the CS government. As privateers they have more freedom and can bend and avoid "the rules." Ironically, despite their complaints about service under the CS, Remington and his Raiders never severed their ties with the Coalition Military and 50% of their work comes from the States. They even have *official* "privateer" status from the CS government with letters of marque from the Naval Advisory Commission (NAC), authorizing their small fleet to raid enemy commerce on the Great Lakes. See **Rifts® Coalition War Campaign** for more details about the ISS, NAC and other Coalition military divisions and leaders.

It was pure, dumb luck that **Zachary Krug** found Gus Remington when he went looking for mercenaries. Gus immediately recognized the potential of this situation and signed up to aid the scientist in his quest for vengeance against the Xiticix. It didn't take long for the smart, **experienced** and charismatic ex-Military Specialist to gain **Krug's** trust and take control of the operation. As soon as he was sure that the ZK-12 would work, Remington immediately contacted the Chi-Town military and offered to provide them with a weapon that would solve all their D-bee problems — for a price, of course, albeit a reduced one due to his loyalty to the human supremacist ideals of the Coalition States; 10billion credits!

Remington is a worthy opponent who has an intimate knowledge of both infantry and naval tactics. He is a creative, resourceful commander who has surrounded himself with capable veteran soldiers. Although he can go toe to toe with the best in a fight, Remington prefers to use subterfuge, hit-and-run tactics, surprise and ambush to defeat his enemies. Its safer and more fun, that way.

Captain Gus Remington

O.C.C. & Level of Experience: 9th level CS Military Specialist.

Alignment: Miscreant

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 12, M.A. 17, P.S. 17, P.P. 17, P.E. 20, P.B. 13, Spd. 24

S.D.C.: 56; Hit points: 43,

Height: 5 feet, 11 inches (1.76 m)

Weight: 188 lbs (84.6 kg)

Age: 29

P.P.E.: 2

Combat: Hand to hand assassin, with 6 attacks per melee!

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +3 to strike, +6 to **parry/dodge**, +5 to damage, +4 to roll with punch, entangle, knock-out on 17-20, kick attack for 1D6 damage, and 45% chance to trust/intimidate.

Skills of Note: Radio: basic 95%, literacy 80%, computer operation 85%, intelligence 80%, pilot hovercraft 98%, robot combat elite: SAMAS, read sensory equipment 95%, weapon systems 90%, running, lore demons & monsters 70%, streetwise 52%, pilot warships/patrol boats 72%, pilot helicopter 75%, prowl 65%, swimming 90%, S.C.U.B.A. 90%, boxing, climbing 70%, demolitions 98%, demolitions disposal 98%, NBC warfare 90%, detect ambush 80%, wilderness survival 80%, sniper, tracking 75%, radio: scramblers 85%, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy and W.P. Knife.

Equipment: Camouflage Bushman armor (60 M.D.C.), C-18 pistol with 2 spare E-clips, Wilk's 447 laser rifle and 6 E-clips, three plasma grenades, vibro-knife, M-16 carbine, binoculars and hand-held computer.

Resolution & Continuing Sub-Plots

To achieve victory the characters do not have to defeat Remington's Raiders, just destroy the ZK-12, any plant specimens and rescue Doctor Krug from himself. In destroying the biological weapon, the characters will not only have saved millions of lives but also helped a tortured man redeem his soul. GM Note: No matter what happens, the ZK-12 is destroyed in the adventure. Even if the player characters should fail to destroy the spore weapons, either Doctor Krug uses his plasma grenade to incinerate the ZK-12 canisters and remaining Death Flower plants, research notes and himself, if need be, or the Coalition nukes the base! The CS won't take the chance that this horrible biological weapon falls into the wrong hands (including **Remington's**) and be used against the Allied States.

If the group survives this ordeal, they receive a hero's welcome when they return to the **Lazlo** harbor, and again at **Markeen** and/or **Tolkeen**.

There is plenty more to be done, however, for this is just the beginning of the story, not the end. In the course of the adventure, our heroes managed to embroil themselves in the growing conflict between Tolkeen and the Coalition States. On one hand they've earned the gratitude of Tolkeen and **D-bees** throughout the Mid-West, but on the other, they have forever alienated the Coalition. Plus they have met many of the individuals who will be players in the Tolkeen invasion from both sides (Baron Cromwell, TIB Captain Prince, Dana Langton, Ronald Mercer and even the Black Bay pirates — assuming many have survived). It should prove difficult for the player characters to extricate themselves from the situation.

If Remington survived the raid on his encampment, the Captain will blame the characters for his losing a fortune and plot to get vengeance (he will live for the day that they are destroyed; slowly and horribly). He and the surviving Raiders will dog their steps at every opportunity, hire spies and bounty hunters to torment them and cause them nothing but grief. Sadly, only Remington's death will bring them any relief from his vengeance.

ance (most of his Raiders are only following his lead, and don't care whether the group lives or dies).

Then there is the serious problem with the Xiticix Duluth Hive. The crazy old woman is right, the CS has stirred up a hornets' nest, and it's the people of Minnesota who are going to suffer. Unless they can find some way to communicate with the bug-men and get them to realize that they weren't responsible for the destruction of the nest, the Queen will launch a new campaign that will make the Xiticix War of 86 look like a picnic! Another alternative is to take advantage of the Xiticix's weakened state (tens of thousands of eggs and hatchlings slain, so it will be a while before a new generation will be born to replace the old) and destroy them once and for all. Of course, the Coalition will take a back seat to see how things unfold and strike at either or both sides when they are most vulnerable.

Note: If the Queen is slain, a new one will take her place, but the hive will fall to even greater turmoil. Relentless bombardment might actually drive them out of Duluth and back into the north county.

Arsenal of Terror

An adventure by Julius Rosenstein

Plot Synopsis: A new kind of weapons technology has appeared on Rifts Earth. The player characters get drawn into the struggle to prevent the widespread usage of these weapons.

The first hint of something out of the ordinary will be when the player characters come upon the scene of a massacre and/or encounter fleeing refugees of such a massacre, and/or hear stories and reports of certain massacres taking place. In any case, one important piece of information will stand out as a constant — the attackers are armed with weapons that *bypass* mega-damage armor and do damage directly to the person **inside!**

There are a number of ways that the G.M. may get the players involved in tracking down these raiders. At any rate, characters of a good alignment would not simply walk away from this menace.

Tracking down the marauders

At first glance, it would seem that the raiders are from the Pecos Empire. Most of the evidence (and eyewitness accounts) will point in that direction. However, going to Lone Star will also be another course of action at this point. **GM's option:** Feel free to throw in some false leads if you want to make it more challenging for the players.

Plan A: The Pecos Empire

The most obvious way that the players may attempt to track down these mysterious weapons **will be** to go to the Pecos Empire. If the player characters follow this course of action, they will eventually encounter a patrol that will demand to know what they are doing on "their land." The typical patrol of Pecos bandits will be mounted on a mixture of horses, motorcycles, and hover vehicles. All are armed with weapons ranging from archaic bows and swords to energy weapons. Average level of experience is **3-4th**.

If the group decides to flee from a confrontation and succeeds in outrunning their pursuers, the patrol will follow just long enough to ensure that the intruders are driven off their territory before breaking off the pursuit. The patrol will not initiate an attack but will fight if they are attacked. If they are losing, they will retreat and go for reinforcements. Any Pecos riders who are captured and questioned will deny that the Pecos Empire has anything to do with the new weapons and will tell the group to talk to *Warlord Grange*.

Similarly, if approached peacefully, the bandit patrol will be wary, but not hostile. If the group lets slip that they are investigating the stories about these strange weapons, the patrol will deny any responsibility on the part of the Pecos Empire and insist that the group talk to Warlord Grange. They will be granted safe conduct through Pecos territory and provided a guide/escort as well. Either way, the group should ultimately meet the warlord but the circumstances leading up to the meeting will affect their status in future negotiations.

Warlord Grange (described elsewhere) is the overall commander of the Pecos rider bands in this particular region. He is currently in command of a force of several hundred riders (2-5th level; humans and D-bees) and has been searching for the marauders himself, but to no avail.

When he talks to the players, Grange will vehemently deny that the Empire is to blame for these attacks and attempt to recruit the group's services to track down the raiders. Even though the Pecos Empire could care less about many of the atrocities that have taken place, they do resent being made the scapegoats for the actions of some other villain — after all, this is their **turf**.

If the group refuses to help him, he will contemptuously order them to leave Empire territory. If they comply, they will be jeered at and spat upon by the Pecos Riders as cowards and cre-

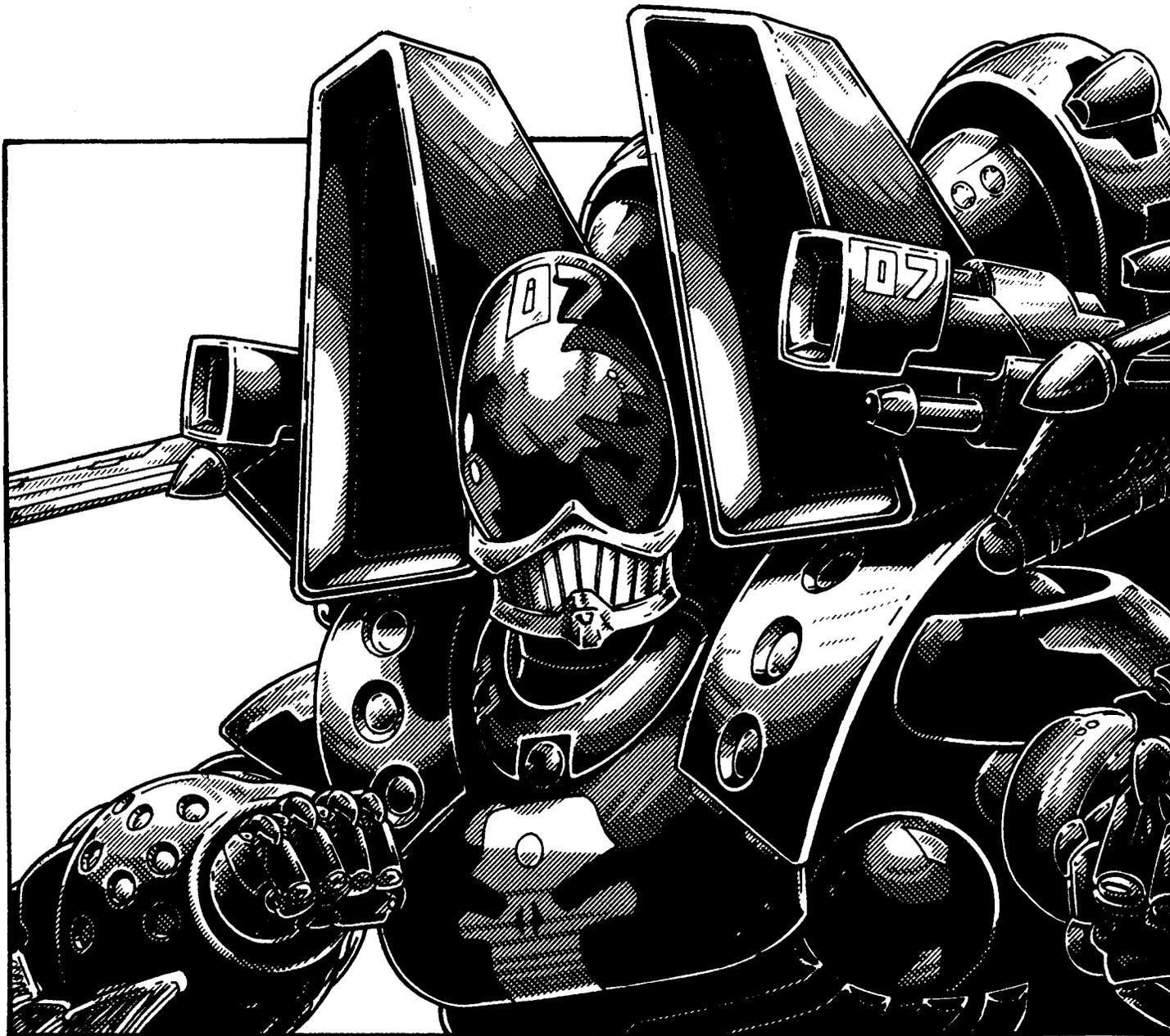
tins, but otherwise allowed to leave unmolested. Refusal to obey his order to leave his territory, threats, or smart aleck behavior by the player group will make the warlord demand a "toll" from the travelers. Depending upon the group's earlier actions, this may be a token amount or a large portion of their money, weapons, or equipment. If the group refuses to pay this toll, Grange has over 200 Riders (at least) to enforce his demands. Although Grange does not want to hurt anyone without good reason, he will take whatever action he deems necessary to save face and/or to enforce his rule. This could even result in an order to kill the characters if he feels that he has to. The warlord cannot afford to back down and lose face in front of his men.

If the player characters do accept the assignment, they will be treated as guests and even as fellow Riders (well, almost). Although the Empire will not commit much in the way of resources (such as men, weapons, or machines), they will provide what little information they have to anyone attempting to track down the impostors and promising to share whatever they learn

with them. The Pecos Riders can provide the group with the approximate times and places of the invaders' appearances as well as information that **Armageddon Unlimited** is in the area and has offered the Empire their services against both the mysterious interlopers and the Coalition State of Lone Star (who they suspect may be bankrolling the raids). Unfortunately, any information they can provide is second-hand and sketchy at best.

Grange will also offer the services of a strike force that may be called to assist in taking down the raiders once their location becomes known. He may even bring in the infamous *Shadow Warriors* if the situation warrants it (see the description in **Rifts® Mercenaries**).

The leaders of the Pecos Empire are willing to oppose these interlopers for two reasons: 1) They are genuinely indignant about being incriminated in these raids, even though the Pecos Riders use terror and intimidation tactics to cow their victims, themselves; and 2) Defeating these impostors may provide them with the opportunity to pick up for themselves some of these in-



teresting new weapons they have been hearing so much about. **Note:** A psionic using empathy will only pick up that the warlord is genuine in his denial of any responsibility for these attacks and in his willingness to help apprehend these marauders. Psionic telepathy or mind bond will tip off the psionic to the hidden agenda of ridding themselves of these rogues and getting their hands on the new weapons.

Plan B: Lone Star

Another course of action available to the player group is to go to the *CS Lone Star territory* for information; Lone Star has been the site of many of the attacks. This is something that both *Gallienus* and *Baywulfe* (described elsewhere) will advise against. Unless the life of a comrade is at stake, Gallienus will outright refuse to go to Coalition territory and will depart on his own search if necessary (although he may be willing to meet up with the group later). If Gallienus leaves, Baywulfe will accompany him.

If the group does go to Lone Star to investigate the activities of these mysterious raiders, they are likely to be detained and questioned by the CS, unless they can provide adequate proof that they are not involved. If they do convince the Coalition authorities of their good intentions, they will be released but

brusquely told to mind their own business. **Note:** This is the best treatment that the "normal" (the more Coalition-acceptable types) characters can hope for; D-Bees, mages, and other outlandish inhuman characters will be lucky to escape with their lives.

Although the Coalition High Command does not want any outside interference in what they feel is a matter of internal security, individual Coalition soldiers *may* volunteer some assistance. Such tips and assistance most likely to come from mutant animals —human troops are less likely to work with outsiders, especially **D-bees**. What little information they can provide is essentially second-hand rumors and gossip, but may offer a few leads.

The two major pieces of information that the players may learn from their time in Lone Star are: 1) The Coalition believes the Pecos Empire to be the guilty party and is gearing up for an assault against them. This attack will not be called off unless someone can provide proof of the bandits' innocence in this matter. 2) Armageddon Unlimited has been goading the Lone Star authorities to launch a punitive strike.

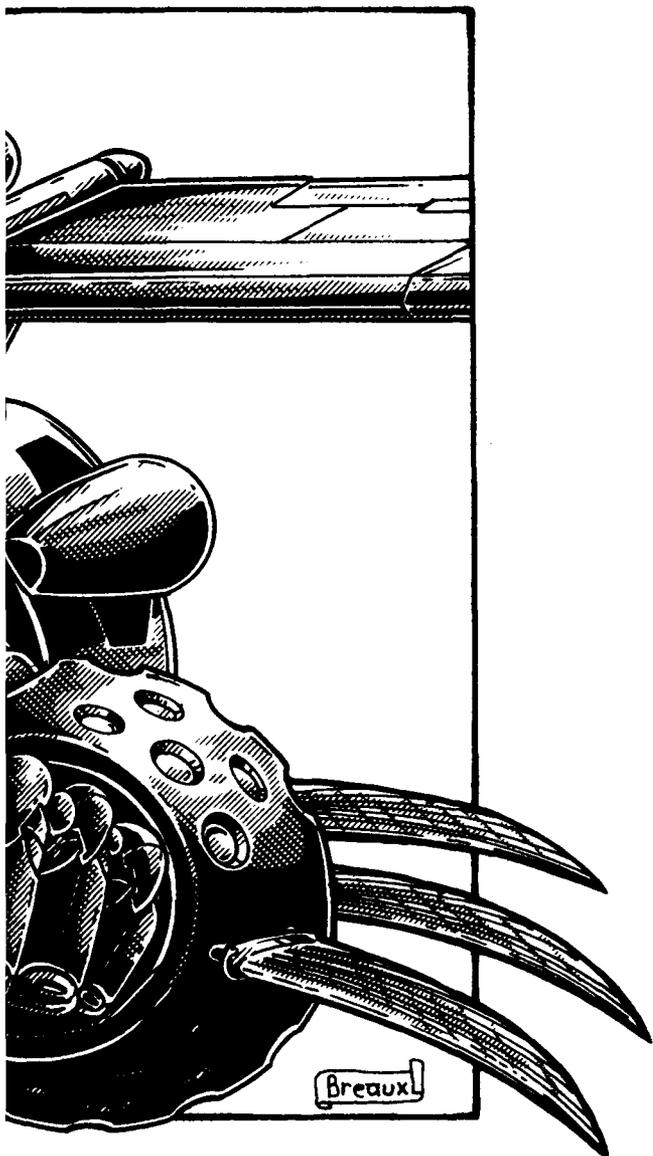
No matter how well they are treated in Lone Star, the characters will NOT get to meet with the High Command through normal channels. If the player group tries anything to circumvent these channels, they are likely to get themselves arrested.

Note: The situation between Lone Star and the Pecos Empire is pretty tense and escalating by the day. Unless some evidence is brought forward to prove who the marauders really are, a bloody war is imminent. If such evidence is brought forward, the two powers will temporarily put aside their differences to deal with this common threat together.

Plan C: Armageddon Unlimited

Since some of the clues, along with their less than savory reputation, will point to Armageddon Unlimited as having something to do with the mysterious marauders (see **Rifts® Mercenaries**, page 77, for more data on this merc organization and other mercenary groups), the players may try to infiltrate this mercenary company for more information. This is a very dangerous course of action. Although many Free Companies will hire freelance mercenaries, the intense internal security of this particular company is likely to expose any but the most skilled spies. Anyone shown to be a spy or traitor will be summarily killed!

Anyone attempting to question these mercenaries will be stonewalled and ultimately asked to leave, at gunpoint, if necessary. Certain characters with a general reputation for being good (**Cyber-Knights**, **True Atlanteans**, etc.) will be killed (either openly or through stealth). Anyone attempting to shadow Armageddon Unlimited from a distance will discover that (based on reports about their numerical strength) a number of the mercenaries are absent, including two of the notable leaders — *Colonel N'iall* and *Urtik Blackhand*. However, discovering this is contingent upon someone with the espionage skill of intelligence making a successful roll on that skill.



Other possibilities

For the characters who are not primarily combat oriented, there are a number of methods that may assist in tracking down the marauders: magic, psionics, and even mundane non-combat skills like wilderness tracking and communications might turn up a clue or intercept a message that could put our heroes on their trail. Likewise, several espionage skills could prove particularly useful. Never underestimate being alert and resourceful.

Gallienus & Baywulfe

Regardless of their course of action, if the player characters go after the unidentified raiders, sooner or later, they will meet up with two other adventurer types — Gallienus and Baywulfe (described elsewhere). At first glance, Baywulfe will seem to be a 40ish, red-haired man of medium height and build. He is dressed in a mage's robe, wears no armor, and is armed only with a **vibro-knife**. Gallienus looks like a tall, lanky man wearing combat fatigues and a helmet. Although an obviously well-armed fighter, he wears no more armor than Baywulfe does. A psionic that does a see aura on the duo will detect that both are high level and possess magic, psychic abilities, and high P.P.E. Gallienus' aura shows a human variant; Baywulfe's aura, which shows him to be non-human, is more powerful.

This pair will approach the characters, introduce themselves, and ask if the group has any information about the marauders with strange weapons. If it is established that the player characters are on the same mission, the pair will suggest that they join forces. Baywulfe is willing to offer financial compensation to any reluctant characters, but any who accept his offer will be treated as hirelings from that time forward. Gallienus, on the other hand, will try to appeal to the characters' nobler instincts and accept any new comrades as equals.

Gallienus will remove his helmet at their first shared meal (if not sooner) and reveal a tattooed face. Any character who expresses surprise or interest will learn that Gallienus is an **Atlantean Undead Slayer**. Gallienus will be honest and up front about himself and willing to share general information about True Atlanteans with anyone who expresses an interest.

In contrast to Gallienus (who is generally open and friendly), Baywulfe will be generally arrogant, condescending, and somewhat secretive (except to Gallienus). From time to time, he will go off to be by himself. If questioned about this, he will curtly refuse to answer. If Gallienus is questioned about this, he will politely but firmly say that he does not have the right to reveal anything about Baywulfe that the man does not choose to share himself. Gallienus will also extend this courtesy of discretion to any other character who reveals something to him in confidence.

G.M.'s SECTION

For the G.M.'s eyes only!

The real story behind these two is that Baywulfe is an adult Fire Dragon. Recently, he was ambushed by the marauders and severely wounded. Since the phase technology inhibited his normal ability to bio-regenerate, the dragon was forced to flee for his life. Unfortunately, some of his pursuers caught up with him. Just as they were preparing to finish him off, help came from a totally unexpected source — Gallienus, the Undead Slayer.

Gallienus had encountered some survivors of an earlier raid and was on the trail of the marauders himself. When he saw the dragon fighting the villains, he joined in on his side. Aided by the advantage of surprise, the pair soon drove off the attackers. Afterward, Gallienus stayed around to help nurse Baywulfe back to health.

When his injuries healed sufficiently, Baywulfe agreed to accompany Gallienus in pursuing the marauders. However, where Gallienus is concerned with protecting the innocent, Baywulfe is out for revenge. At times, Gallienus has had to use whatever influence he has with Baywulfe to keep the dragon from hurting people in this quest. Luckily, Baywulfe does feel a debt of gratitude to Gallienus and has followed the Undead Slayer's lead much of the time.

Even though the dragon's original plan was to exact his revenge and then return home, the long talks he and Gallienus have enjoyed during his healing period have started to change his attitude. Since no one has ever before risked their life to help him, Baywulfe is intrigued and a bit confused by Gallienus. Although the dragon is still primarily looking out for himself, Gallienus has become the closest thing to a friend that he's ever

known. Similar nobility, loyalty and kindness given to him by the player characters will further move the great beast to reconsider his motives and the value of humanoid life. If anyone harms Gallienus, they will have to face a very vengeful dragon.

For his part, Gallienus sees in Baywulfe someone who has the potential to change for the better but is still rough around the edges. He is doing what he can to encourage the dragon toward the side of light. However, this does not mean that the Undead Slayer will just stand by if Baywulfe threatens anyone or gives in to his baser instincts. First and foremost, Gallienus is an Undead Slayer who is willing to stand up to even a dragon, rather than see any cruelty or injustice perpetrated against the innocent.

The reason that Baywulfe will go off by himself from time to time is that he is not yet ready to trust others with his true (dragon) identity, so he wants to be alone whenever his periods of human **metamorphing** wear off.

G.M.'s Note: Both of these characters (especially Baywulfe) are powerful **characters** who could easily dominate many situations. Care should be taken to make sure that they are used sparingly and not make all the decisions or hog all the action. Furthermore, the G.M. should feel free to modify them or any character to best fit his campaign.

The Full Story

These new weapons are *Phase Beamers* and *Phase Swords* that were brought over from the Three Galaxies into Rifts Earth by agents of **Ahriman** the Evil One (see **Rifts® Conversion Book Two: Pantheons of the Megaverse** for the full description of this foul god and scores of other gods, godlings and god-

pretenders). Although formidable weaponry, the inherent weaknesses of *phase technology* (i.e., useless against inanimate objects, unable to penetrate force fields or magical barriers) are well known throughout the Three Galaxies. However, on Rifts Earth, they are a new and terrifying form of weaponry. The terror that they generate is far out of proportion to the actual damage the weapons inflict — nobody has ever seen a weapon or magic that can bypass mega-damage armor, so the implications are frightening.

G.M.'s option: Allow any characters familiar with the technology of the Three Galaxies a chance to identify these weapons as being Phase Technology. Characters who have never been to the Three Galaxies will be unable to determine what these weapons are. See **Rifts® Dimension Book Two: Phase World** for more details about Phase Technology and the Three Galaxies.

Even though some "renegade marauders" from the Pecos Empire are currently being blamed for these atrocities, the reality is that the weapons are being used by the ruthless mercenaries of *Armageddon Unlimited* (itself a front for **Ahriman the Evil One**). These mercenaries have disguised themselves as raiders for three reasons: One, they are trying to stir up trouble between the Pecos Empire and Lone Star (many of the attacks have occurred in Coalition territory against CS forces). Two, they are hoping to get themselves hired by one side or the other to incite more trouble and to see that the upcoming conflict is a bloody one. Three, they are trying to maintain a low profile during this initial "testing stage" of the Phase weapons. If the tests are a success, they will drop their charade and openly use the weapons to intimidate others (after stockpiling a much larger weapons supply).

Ahriman's Master Plan is essentially to bring Phase weaponry into Rifts Earth and equip *Armageddon Unlimited* with them. Then mercenaries from *Armageddon Unlimited* will disguise themselves as bandits from the Pecos Empire and spread a reign of terror, with the hope of causing a border war between the Pecos Empire and Lone Star. When this occurs, *Armageddon Unlimited* will join the war. This should enable them to escalate the conflict and give them the cover story of supposedly obtaining some of these new Phase weapons from the Pecos Empire (either as gifts from an ally or as confiscations from an enemy, depending upon which side hires them). If all goes according to plan, the end result will be that *Armageddon Unlimited* will have instigated a bloody war, and armed themselves with this frightening new weaponry without being blamed for any atrocities that may have occurred earlier.

Although these weapons are just right for the psychological terror that *Armageddon Unlimited* likes to spread, there are currently only a handful of these weapons available (this is all that **Ahriman's** agents have been able to acquire thus far). If the weapons prove to be effective, **Ahriman** will attempt to procure larger quantities. The total current **stock** of Phase weapons are: Three Phase swords (currently used as personal weapons by Colonel **N'iall**, **Urlik Blackhand**, and **Leon Pasquali**), two **PH-21 Beamer** pistols (currently used as personal weapons by General **Ursus** and **Sargon the Hunter**), six **PH-100 Beamer** rifles, and four **PH-400 Heavy Beamers** — both of the latter weapons have been deployed among *Armageddon Unlimited's* elite troops.

Currently, Colonel **N'iall** and **Urlik Blackhand** are with the marauders. Although Colonel **N'iall** is in charge of the overall

group, **Blackhand** commands the actual raiding party. If the player characters are fortunate (?) enough to catch the raiders during an attack, the marauders will be at their least numerous and weakest (5D6 with a minimum of 10, including **Blackhand**). This could be the best time to defeat the immediate threat (the actual raiding party itself).

If forced to flee from a superior foe, **Blackhand's** forces will try to link up with Colonel **N'iall's** command. If Colonel **N'iall's** forces are up against superior numbers (Colonel **N'iall** will have 50 soldiers, less any casualties that have been inflicted by the player characters thus far), they will retreat in a different direction from where their main company is (in order to preserve the secret of their involvement in this terrorist campaign). However, if *Armageddon Unlimited's* part in this campaign has already been found out, or if it looks as if his command will be otherwise wiped out, Colonel **N'iall** will disobey orders and join the main company under General **Ursus**.

Note: **Blackhand's** raiders and Colonel **N'iall's** forces are never more than a couple of days away from one another. The main army of General **Ursus** is several **day's** distance away from both groups.

The Final Battle

G.M.'s Note: If at all possible, General **Ursus** will try to avoid a pitched battle. Thus far, the raids have been quick hit-and-run attacks against small, unprepared targets. Most of the survivors have been dealt with severely in order to maintain the secret about the Phase weapons' weaknesses and who is using them. On the other hand, any battle is a chancy affair at best. Even if *Armageddon Unlimited* is victorious in such a conflict (General **Ursus** knows how powerful his mercenary army really is), there is still the chance that someone will be armed with defenses that can stop his Phase weaponry. Also, being connected to these raids will adversely affect the image that *Armageddon Unlimited* is trying to cultivate, and make it harder to obtain future employment.

However, if the main *Armageddon Unlimited* army is involved in a battle, they will pull out all the stops and do whatever they feel they must. As a last resort, **Leon Pasquali** can call on **Aeshma the Fury** (full description in **Pantheons of the Megaverse**) for assistance. This will require a ritual lasting 3D6 melee rounds (minimum of 10) of uninterrupted concentration. Anyone in the area with the ability to sense magic, ley lines, Rifts, etc., will realize that **Pasquali** is the focus for some very heavy magic about to go down. Any distraction (such as an attack inflicting damage) will cause the summoning to fail. However, **Pasquali** will be very well guarded by 1D4+2 demons, if it comes to this situation. If not interrupted, **Pasquali** has a 01-85% chance of calling upon **Aeshma's** intervention.

If **Aeshma** is successfully summoned, roll percentile, the following will result:

01-30 **Aeshma** appears alone.

31-55 A **Baal-rog** is with him, M.D.C.: 700, P.P.E.: 325

56-65 A **Baal-rog** and a **Gargoyle** are with him, M.D.C.: 200, P.P.E.: 7

66-75 A **Baal-rog**, **Gargoyle** and an **Alu demon** appear with **Aeshma**, M.D.C.: 110, P.P.E.: 21

76-00 **Aeshma** appears with a **Baal-rog**, two **Gargoyles** and an **Alu demon**



G.M.'s Note: The higher the die roll, the more creatures appear. This list is cumulative.

Aeshma is just here for a quick fight. He will not Rift in any reinforcements, believing any companions that arrived with him should be enough for this situation. Although owing nominal loyalty to Ahriman, Aeshma feels absolutely none toward Ursus and the rest of Armageddon Unlimited. If the battle goes against him, Aeshma will depart and leave ALL of his allies to their fates; this includes any demons that may have arrived with him.

Aeshma will lead the charge against whomever he was summoned to fight, all the while exhorting all other demons and forces of darkness to follow him into "glorious battle." Unless he goes into a battle fury, he will retreat if he sustains considerable damage (60% of his M.D.C.).

As long as Aeshma is still in the battle, any other demons that accompany him will continue to fight until sustaining 80% of their M.D.C. However, if Aeshma quits the field of battle, they are likely to leave also (01-75%). Most of these demons are malicious, but not suicidal. Those who stay of their own volition (25%) will fight to the death and wreak what havoc they can. G.M.s, feel free to modify the number of demonic foes as is most fitting for your game and the player characters.

For the final battle (if it comes to that), the forces that might be arrayed against the marauders (and Armageddon Unlimited, if necessary) *may* include the strike force from the Pecos Empire, the Shadow Warriors, and a CS power armor force from Lone Star (depending upon the characters' past actions and if they have managed to send word to the right people quickly enough).

If they are present, Baywulfe and Gallienus will fight alongside their newfound comrades throughout the battle. Gallienus will be in the forefront of the fight, and, if the tide of battle turns against the good guys, will be one of the last to quit the field (and then only after ensuring that any wounded comrades have been evacuated).

Baywulfe will turn into his dragon form and wreak havoc among the enemy. He is not in a berserker rage, so he will fight in an intelligent manner, using his magic, psionics, and flame breath as well as engaging in physical combat. If necessary, he will go one-on-one against Aeshma himself. Unlike the previous encounter where he was caught off guard, Baywulfe has had time to prepare for this fight and is going for broke to get his revenge. At the same time, he is savvy enough to keep an eye out for Phase weapons and try to avoid them. Even if his associates are being overwhelmed, Baywulfe is not about to quit the battle until he is down to his last few hundred M.D.C.

Possible Outcomes

1. If the marauders are not defeated, the raids will continue until after the Pecos Empire and Lone Star clash in war. This will only escalate the level of violence and may open up numerous sub-plots and other avenues of adventure. Once war has erupted, General Ursus will call off the raids, as they will have served his and Ahriman's purpose. **Note:** Although the CS plans to leave any campaigns against the Pecos Empire till after their wars with Tolkeen and Free Quebec are over, escalating violence by the Pecos Empire may lead to the creation of a third front and a bloody war.

2. If the marauders are defeated but no connection is made between them and Armageddon Unlimited, General Ursus will arrange for some innocent scapegoats to be killed and implicated as the culprits. He will claim that his army tracked down and killed some of these brigands in a fair fight, confiscating their Phase weapons as booty.

3. If the connection is made between the marauders and Armageddon Unlimited (regardless of the battle's outcome), General Ursus will try to minimize the damage to his army's reputation. This could involve blaming it all on some "renegades acting without his consent" to his soldiers being mind-controlled by some alien entity ("yeah, that's the ticket."). Or he may even claim that his people are being framed by ... the player group! A military defeat will further embarrass Armageddon Unlimited, but the General will accept it as a necessary evil to keep Ahriman's involvement in this affair a secret.

4. If Aeshma makes an appearance at any time, General Ursus will blame everything that happened on him! This tactic will be approved by Ahriman. The evil god does not want to compromise his network of agents in the Three Galaxies, so Aeshma will serve as the perfect scapegoat. This is a stall tactic as Ahriman is not yet ready to deal with a coordinated attack by champions of Light (especially Cosmo-Knights and True Atlanteans). Thus, blaming it all upon his "rebellious and independent ally" may allow him the opportunity of weaseling out of trouble this time.

Even if Armageddon Unlimited is not defeated in battle, Ahriman will consider the plan a failure if the weaknesses of Phase weapons are discovered. In a large battle, there will be plenty of opportunities for someone to come along with a force field or magic barrier (not to mention missed shots that hit inanimate objects and leave them unharmed). Also, an operator, Techno-Wizard or someone with telemechanics who gets his hands on a Phase weapon should be able to deduce its limitations within a matter of minutes. Once its secrets are revealed, Phase technology will lose the psychological advantage it currently enjoys.

Aftermath & Wrap-Up

When the furor has died down and things return to normal (normal for Rifts Earth, that is), many of the people that the player characters have met and fought with (or against) will move on. Their reaction to the characters will depend upon earlier, specific actions (naturally), but in general terms the following is likely:

1. Any Pecos riders (and Shadow Warriors) will return to the Empire. If the player characters were of any help, they will be welcomed within the Empire. If they impressed Warlord Grange, he will offer them positions and status as well. The Pecos Empire is always looking for more good Riders.

If the group fought against the Pecos Riders, they will be branded as enemies and attacked whenever they are encountered inside and outside the Empire.

2. If Coalition Lone Star troops were involved, they too will be returning to their homes. If the players were of any help, any thanks that they receive will be informal. Mages, psychics, D-bees, and others who would be pariahs in the Coalition will be officially ignored. Humans and other more acceptable types may

rate a brief mention in an official report somewhere. However, players who have aided the Coalition are likely to find a supply of Coalition issue provisions and equipment "carelessly" tossed aside (where the characters will obviously be able to find them).

3. Gallienus feels that it is time he moves on. If anyone earns his respect, he will invite them to accompany him on his wanderings or may join them for a time, provided he's invited (and the G.M. allows it). In any case, whoever has acted in an honorable fashion will find that they now have a friend and ally in Gallienus Jurovan.

4. Baywulfe, having reaped the vengeance he wanted, is going home. He will not invite anyone to accompany him nor offer to go along with anyone else (not even Gallienus). **G.M.'s Note:** Although it looks as if Baywulfe is as aloof and remote as ever, he may actually consider some of the players as friends (G.M.'s option). If they have won his affection and/or respect, he will not tell them this, but if he hears of them needing some help in the future, he may show up to lend them a hand. The dragon can become a **reoccurring** character, friend or villain.

Non-Player Characters

Gallienus

Gallienus (pronounced "Gah-lay-nuss") was born to the True Atlantean clan of Jurovan. Both of his parents are mages, his mother a shifter, his father a techno-wizard. They had originally hoped that their son would follow in one of their footsteps. However, when the clan elders discovered that Gallienus had the aptitude to become an Undead Slayer, his delighted parents insisted that their son fulfill this new destiny.

After completing his training under some experienced warriors, Gallienus went out on his own in search of adventure. Currently, he is something of a modern day knight-errant, travelling about in search of adventures, generally involving himself in battling evil and aiding the helpless.

The oldest of **five** siblings, Gallienus had four sisters: Paula, Diana, **Farrah**, and Alistaira (in order of age). All four became mages of various kinds (respectively): a Shifter, a Temporal Wizard, a Stone Master, and a **Techno-Wizard**.

Paula was killed by the Coalition (leaving in Gallienus a hatred for the CS), but the other three sisters continue (like Gallienus) to adventure for the cause of good (Diana, Farrah, and Alistaira are levels 6, 5, and 4 in their respective O.C.C.s).

Real Name: Gallienus Jurovan

Alignment: Principled

M.D.C.: 302

Height: 6 feet, 8 inches (2.0 m)

Weight: 223 lbs. (101 kg)

Age: 128 (looks early 20's)

Species: Atlantean

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 24, M.A. 16, P.S. 24, P.P. 12, P.E. 21, P.B. 18, Spd. 39

Disposition: Gallienus is basically a courteous and friendly person. Although he tends to be a bit **overprotective** of others, he is not arrogant or overbearing about it. If someone wants to pursue a questionable course of action, he may counsel and advise against it, but will not try to prevent them from going

ahead with it if no one is in danger of being harmed by their folly. In this respect, he is more like a big brother than a father. The only people Gallienus is intolerant of are Coalition soldiers, because of a personal vendetta. This intolerance does not extend to Coalition civilians, whom he basically holds blameless in the death of his sister. Furthermore, while he dislikes and distrusts most CS soldiers, he reserves his ire for obviously evil and unscrupulous characters.



Horror Factor: 14 (upon discovering his true nature)

Experience Level: 9th level Undead Slayer

Natural Abilities: Sense vampires, 1000 feet (305 m) range, sense ley lines 70%, nexuses 80%, and rifts, operate dimensional pyramids 80%. Also see Tattoos, below.

Skills of Note: Can speak and read/write—American, Dragonese/Elf, Greek, all at 98%; can speak—Demongogian, Euro, Chinese, all at 98%; Basic Math 98%, Radio: Basic 98%, Swimming 95%, Horsemanship 87%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 95%, Faerie 80%, D-Bee 70%, Magic 70/60/55%; Tracking 85%, Wilderness Survival 90%, Detect Ambush 85%, Escape Artist 85%, Intelligence 79%, Pilot Sailboats 80%, Land Navigation 73%, Carpentry 70%, Cook 70%, First Aid 65%, Streetwise 62%, Identify Plants & Fruits 60%, Running, Boxing, Gymnastics & Acrobatics (Sense of balance, climb rope, back flip, all at 98%, walk **tightrope/high wire** 89%, parallel bars & rings 84%, climb 57%, prowl 45%).

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts

Number of Attacks: Seven hand to hand or by tattoo.

Bonuses: +8 to pull/roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +5 to parry and dodge, +2 strike, jump kick, entangle, critical strike on 18-20, paired weapons, leap attack (critical strike), +9 S.D.C. damage, automatic kick attack 2D4, +5 vs. **psionics/insanity**,

+12% vs. **coma/death**, +3 vs. poison, 40% to charm/impress, +7 vs all **magicks**, +8 vs. Horror Factor, considered to be a supernatural being.

Magical Knowledge: None, but see **tattoos.P.P.E.:** 308

Pstonic Knowledge: None, except by tattoos.

Weapons and Equipment: TX-16 Pump Rifle, Wilk's 320 Laser Pistol, 1 silver-plated knife, a wood cross, a dozen wooden stakes & mallet, 1 TW water shotgun, First-aid kit, NG-S2 Basic Survival Pack (*NGR*, pg. 101), Multi-Optics Helmet (*RPG*, pg. 245), Palm Bio-Unit (Sourcebook I, pg. 60), Cross Flashlight (*Vampire Kingdoms*, pg. 30), Extra ammo: 32 rounds for TX-16, 6 E-Clips.

Description: At first, Gallienus looks like a tall, lanky man wearing combat fatigues and a helmet. Unlike many Tattooed Men who keep large portions of their bodies bare for easy access to their tattoos, Gallienus is experienced enough to not need to touch his tattoos (concentration is enough for him). So he prefers to conceal his status as an Undead Slayer until he gets to know the people he meets. Otherwise, Gallienus is a tall man with long black hair and blue eyes. Unless he needs it to maintain a disguise, Gallienus will not wear armor as he finds it too confining. Since he already has over 300 M.D.C. and can activate three of his tattoos for 915 more (see below), he manages to do quite well without armor.

Money: 22,000 credits in cash and precious gems readily accessible. Another 91,000 credits are back home with his clan. Gallienus will either have to contact the clan elders to forward the money to him or return home himself to get these funds.

Tattoos: Has a total of 29 tattoos. They are:

- Chain With a Broken Link: Gives a P.S. 30 (supernatural). P.P.E. Cost: 30. Duration: 45 minutes.
- Cloud in Chains (Air Powers): Gives the user several air powers (see *Rifts Atlantis*, pg. 91). P.P.E. Cost: 50. Duration: 9 minutes.
- Turn Dead (Cross): Turn dead, equal to the spell. P.P.E. Cost: 15. Duration: 9 minutes.
- Dolphin: Gives swim as a fish (superior) & breathe without air, equal to the spell (see *Rifts® RPG*, pages 170 & 175). P.P.E. Cost: 20. Duration: 4.5 hours.
- Eye of Knowledge: Caster can understand and speak all languages & read most (non-magical) written languages. P.P.E. Cost: 15. Duration: 2 hours, 15 minutes.
- Eye of Mystic Knowledge: Allows caster to recognize magical writings. P.P.E. Cost: 20. Duration: 1.5 hours.
- Eye with Tears: Gives empathy equal to the psionic power & empathic transmission up to once per melee (see *Rifts® RPG*, pages 121 & 124). P.P.E. Cost: 15. Duration: 18 minutes.
- Three Eyes (Supernatural vision): Gives the user nightvision, see the invisible, and see aura (see *Rifts RPG*, pg. 122). P.P.E. Cost: 20. Duration: 1.5 hours.
- Heart Impaled by a Wooden Stake: Renders the character invulnerable to the bite and mind control powers of vampires. P.P.E. Cost: 15. Duration: 9 hours.
- Heart in Chains (Invulnerability): Limited invulnerability: the body can withstand 675 M.D.C., and protects from most forms of physical attack, poison and drugs. P.P.E. Cost: 40. Duration: 1.5 hours.

- Heart with Large Wings (Flight): Flies at superhuman speed of 205 (140 mph/224 kph). P.P.E. Cost: 20. Duration: 4.5 hours.
- Knight in Armor: Creates a transparent suit of magical armor. M.D.C. 180 P.P.E. Cost: 25. Duration: 4.5 hours.
- Rose and Thorny Stem & Dripping Blood (Healing): Heal wounds as the spell; as many as three healing touches can be performed in one minute. P.P.E. Cost: 30. Duration: 9 minutes.
- Phoenix (Super Healing): Will restore 50 Hit Points and 50 S.D.C., or 100 M.D.C., and cure several disorders. It can also bring back the dead, but at the cost of 1D6 Hit Points, 2D6 P.P.E. points, and 1 P.E. point (permanent). P.P.E. Cost: 124. Duration: Instant.
- Skull Engulfed in Flames: Grants several fire powers, including a fire aura with 60 M.D.C. and fire bolts (9D4 M.D., 900 feet). P.P.E. Cost: 45. Duration: 4.5 hours.
- Ball of Thorns: Caster becomes impervious to all poisons and +2 vs. all drugs, chemicals, and gases. P.P.E. Cost: 15. Duration: 1.5 hours.
- Flaming Sword: Creates a magical weapon that inflicts 2D4 M.D. P.P.E. Cost: 10. Duration: 2 hours, 15 minutes.
- Flaming Sword with a Coiled Serpent: Creates a magical weapon that inflicts 2D4 M.D. but 3D8 M.D. against dragons, dinosaurs, and other reptilians. P.P.E. Cost: 20. Duration: 2 hours, 15 minutes.
- Two Crossed Swords: Caster becomes +1 to strike and +2 to parry with swords. P.P.E. Cost: 5. Duration: 2 hours, 15 minutes.
- Bow & arrows with flaming winged arrows: Fires mega-damage arrows (inflicts 1D6 M.D.). P.P.E. Cost: 20. Duration: 2 hours, 15 minutes.
- Monster: Pegasus: Creates a pegasus with 180 M.D.C. P.P.E. Cost: 100. Duration: 4.5 hours.
- Monster: Gryphon: Creates a gryphon with 86 M.D.C. P.P.E. Cost: 80. Duration: 4.5 hours.
- Simple Weapons (Sword, Knife): Each counts as a tattoo. Creates an ordinary weapon. P.P.E. Cost: 2. Duration: 4.5 hours.
- Simple Animals (Elephant, Horse, Tiger, Wolf): Creates animal-like constructs that are totally loyal to the caster. P.P.E. Cost: 20 (Horse, Wolf), 30 (Tiger, Elephant). Duration: 9 hours.

The following is where the Undead Slayer's tattoos are located:

Head—Eye with tears, Cross, Knife

Chest & Stomach—Eye in circle with 2 lines (Mystic knowledge), Rose, Gryphon, Ball of Thorns, Three Eyes, Wolf, Sword

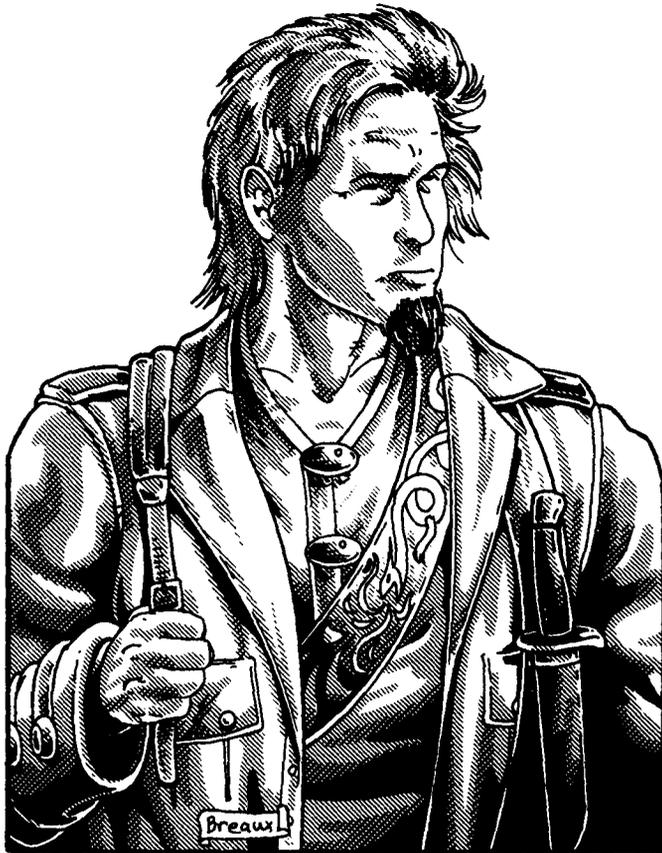
Right Arm—Heart impaled by a stake, Cloud in chains, Flaming sword with a coiled serpent, Dolphin

Left Arm—Flaming Sword, Horse, Pegasus, Chain with a Broken Link

Back—Heart in chains, Eye of Knowledge, Skull in flames, Two crossed swords, Elephant

Right Leg—Phoenix rising from flames, Bow & Arrow with winged & flaming arrows

Left Leg—Knight in full body armor, Tiger, Heart with Large Wings



Baywulfe

Several unpleasant incidents from his hatchling days have turned Baywulfe the fire dragon (true name **Mowvock**) into a gruff, somewhat hard-hearted loner. He has found it much easier to close himself off from people and expect the worst, than trusting in someone only to be betrayed. Also, Mowvock enjoys travelling and seldom stays around anywhere long enough to make friends.

Upon coming to Rifts Earth, the dragon (as a private joke) has taken the alias of **Baywulfe** (a variant spelling of a legendary pre-Rifts hero). Since the original Beowulf was mortally wounded by a fire dragon, Baywulfe finds it amusing to be addressed by this name. Now he has become so used to the fake name that he finds it hard to answer to any other.

Since arriving on Rifts Earth, Baywulfe has found the diversity of life around him to be fascinating. For the most part, the dragon is content to remain as an outside observer as long as something does not affect him directly. However, recent events have prompted him to make a quest for vengeance against the Phase marauders. Although he will not stop until he has accomplished his goal, part of him is still looking ahead to the time when he can go back to minding his own business.

Baywulfe

Real Name: Mowvock

Alignment: Miscreant (with recent leanings toward selfish)
M.D.C.: 6000

Height: 5 feet, 10 inches (1.8 m) in human form, 27 feet (8.2 m) tall and 56 feet (17 m) long in dragon form.

Weight: 165 lbs. (75 kg) in human form, 25 tons in dragon form.

Age: 1,400 years old

Species: Fire Dragon

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 21, M.A. 14, P.S. 30, P.P. 23, P.E. 24, P.B. 21 (13 in human form), Spd. 120 (running)/160 (flying).

Disposition: For the longest time, Baywulfe could best be described as mean, suspicious, and vengeful. He is still like that, but recent events with the Undead Slayer (and the player characters) have softened his heart and started a subtle change in him. For the first time in his life, he has someone close to becoming a friend and this may change him for the better. Only time will tell.

Horror Factor: 16

Experience Level: 12th level Dragon, 5th level Diabolist

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 100 ft (30.5 m; can see in total darkness), excellent color vision, see the invisible, turn invisible at will, bio-regeneration 1D4x10 M.D. per minute, impervious to fire (does no damage, including M.D. magic fire and plasma energy), teleport self 88%, dimensional teleport 46%, and metamorphosis at will for up to 48 hours.

Skills of Note: Basic and advanced math, basic electronics, computer operation, demon & monster lore, all at 98%, literate in Dragonese/Elven, English/American, Spanish, Euro, Palladium World's Dwarven, 98%, faerie lore 90%.

Combat Skills: Hand to hand: Basic.

Number of Attacks: Eight physical or four physical and four breath attacks, or two by magic. **Restrained Punch**—4D6+15 S.D.C., **Full Strength Punch**—4D6 M.D., **Power Punch**—1D6x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks), **Kick or slashing tail attack**—5D6 M.D., **Bite**—4D6 M.D., **Fire Breath:** Range 200 feet (61 m), six feet wide (1.8 m), inflicts 6D6 M.D. and can be used as often as four times a melee.

Bonuses: +8 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +3 on initiative, +15 S.D.C. punch, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with impact or fall, +5 to save vs. psionics, +8 to save vs. magic, +3 on all other saves, 55% to impress in dragon form.

Magical Knowledge: All magic spells from levels 1-6, plus animate & control dead, turn dead, exorcism, resurrection, and remove curse. Equal to a 12th level magic practitioner. Is also a 5th level diabolist. P.P.E.: 500

Psionic Knowledge: Has all sensitive and physical psi-powers. I.S.P.: 100

Weapons and Equipment: Is currently travelling very light. Other than his clothes, his diabolist kit (assorted magical components for creating wards), and some personal items, a vibro-knife (lent by Gallienus) is the only weapon he is carrying.

Description: In human form, Baywulfe will seem to be a 40-ish, red-haired man of medium height and build. As a dragon, he has a dark scarlet hide.

Money: Over the years, Baywulfe has acquired a hoard worth over 3 million credits (much of it in precious gems and artifacts). He generally takes around 50 to 60 thousand credits (for everyday expenses) whenever he departs on long trips. He currently has around 45,000 credits left on him.



Warlord Grange

Alien Grange was born and raised in the loose-knit confederation of bandits, rogues and barbarians known as the Pecos Empire. Like many a young man in the Empire, he became a Pecos Raider. Unlike most, Grange was not content to simply do as he was told. Whenever he was given an order, Grange would question if the way that they did things was the best way. Although he often drove his raid leader and comrades to distraction with his often unconventional ways of doing things, most of the time he was correct. His methods, though sometimes unorthodox, were usually innovative and more effective than the standard ways that his comrades used.

Although some of his more conservative fellow raiders had no use for these methods (or for Grange himself), several of his comrades (usually the ones who benefitted the most from his innovations) encouraged him and said that he was the kind of leader that they wished they had. This inspired Grange to take his next bold step. When Grange's term of service was over, he decided to start his own band.

With a few comrades to begin with, Grange's fledgling band soon made a name for themselves. A natural leader and tactical genius, Grange led his men over obstacles that would have deterred larger raiding bands and often defeated enemies against greater (sometimes overwhelming) odds. As word began to spread about this brilliant young commander, other Pecos Raiders began to join his band. Within a few years, Grange was a rising star of the Pecos Empire and "Grange's Riders," also known as the "Pecos Riders" (because 60% of his gang ride horses and other animals), was becoming famous. Grange turned out to be a gifted organizer as well and soon established a small but thriving kingdom in the southern part of the Empire to serve as his home base of operations.

Today the core of his gang numbers into the hundreds, with transients and hangers-on that can increase the size of his band by 30-50%. In addition to his own band of followers, there are a number of other raider bands with whom he has made alliances

with or otherwise brought into his sphere of control. In times of great need, these bands would willingly join forces with him, effectively giving the character access to a small army of 7000-11,000 warriors. All this has effectively made the young warlord one of the prime movers and shakers of the Pecos Empire. He has also made some of the elder warlords nervous.

Warlord Grange

Real Name: Alien Grange

Alignment: Aberrant

Hit Points: 54 S.D.C.: 47

Height: 6 feet, 1 inch (1.8 m)

Weight: 175 lbs. (79 kg)

Age: 36

Attributes: IQ 14, ME 16, MA 17, PS 14, PP 12, PE 13, PB 12, Spd 12

Disposition: Having been raised in the Pecos Empire, Grange does not see anything morally wrong with raiding his neighbors nor are these raids motivated by any ill will toward his prospective victims ("It's just a job!"). In most cases, he is not resentful of any of his victims who fight back, even when they foil his plans or hurt him or his men ("Hey, that's their job! It's just the breaks of the game!"). However, there are certain unspoken rules that Grange goes by and when these rules are violated, it becomes a personal matter.

In his younger days, Grange preferred to lead by example. Although this is not always possible. He is still a "hands-on" leader when the opportunity arises, but with the large number of men under his command and/or influence, it is hard to personally handle all the affairs of his growing power base. Even now, after all that he has accomplished, Grange still continues to question the traditional. He is constantly looking for new solutions to old problems. The old adage, "If it isn't broke, don't fix it!" has never applied to Alien Grange.

Experience Level: 11thlevel Wilderness Scout

Skills of Note: Horsemanship, fishing, climbing, wilderness survival, all at 98%, speaks American, Spanish, Dragonese/Elf, 98%, literate in American, Spanish, 95%, land navigation 96%, identify plants 95%, cook, prowl, track animals, all at 90%, W.P. Knife, W.P. Sword, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Hunting Rifle

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Expert

Number of Attacks: Five (5)

Bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +3 to damage, critical strike on 18-20, knockout/stun on 18-20, paired weapons, kick attack (1D6 damage)

Magic Knowledge: None

Psionic Knowledge: None

Weapons and Equipment: Grange has access to a number of weapons and armors. He prefers Huntsman armor for most situations but has a set of Crusader armor for when he knows he is going into a battle. He generally carries a TX-11 Laser Rifle and a vibro-sword.

Description: A bearded man in his mid-30's with reddish-brown hair cropped short. Grange is alert, clever, resourceful and thinks quick on his feet. He often makes people think that he is nervous and jumpy because he is frequently looking around him. Actually, he is continually scanning his surroundings — an old survival technique he learned in his scouting days.

Money: As a warlord of the Pecos Empire, Grange has access to a not-so-small fortune (looted over many years). He can read-

ily lay his hands on 350,000 credits and can get triple that amount within 24 hours (larger amounts can be obtained but may take longer).

Hook, Line & Sinker™ Adventures

HLS created by Jolly Blackburn

Rifts® Adventures written by Kevin Siembieda, Jim Osten, Alex Marciniszyn, and Thomas Bartold

What is a Hook, Line & Sinker?

Hook, Line & Sinker™ is the popular Game Master's tool created by Jolly Blackburn. The idea behind it is simple — give the Game Master just enough information to spark his own creative energies and then step out of the way. They come in handy when the G.M. has nothing else prepared, or finds the party has outpaced him and the prepared adventure suddenly ends.

The Explanation:

Hook: The current situation or location of the adventuring party.

Line: An opportunity for adventure that presents itself to the party. A line is normally presented as a short paragraph. Think of the line as the "bait" to lure the party into an adventure.

Sinker: The clincher to the line. The sinker presents the G.M. with a dilemma that makes the situation a true adventure for his players.

The Adventures: The following are just a *handful* of possible adventures suitable for use in North America. Also see the **Rifts® Index: Volume One and Rifts® World Book 11: Coalition War Campaign™** for more HLS and fully plotted adventures. **Rifts® Mercenaries and Juicer Uprising™** may also provide ideas, characters and equipment for adventures.

Quest of the Cyber-Knight

By Jim Osten

Hook: The player group has taken lodging for the night at a tavern in the middle of the wilderness, far outside Coalition territory. They have been hired by a group of small towns and villages to fight a **D-bee** invasion and still have several days of travel to get there. It is late when a ragged, fat little man staggers in asking for food, shelter and help. He has been traveling all day by motorized transport and tells of a band of thieves holed up in the tunnels of an underground cave. His masters, all battle-hardened meres, were driving a caravan that was attacked and almost destroyed by them. The meres tracked and followed them into the cave and have not returned. The fat little man had been their cook and nervously waited two days and nights before leaving their camp at the cave's entrance for help!

From a dark corner steps a big man, well muscled and clad in gold and silver armor with long golden hair. He identifies himself as *Raoul Lazarious*, a cyber-knight (see **Rifts® World**

Book One: Vampire Kingdoms for more information about Raoul and other members of Reed's Rangers). There are gasps of recognition and awe among the crowd. Some of the travelers have heard of this legendary vampire fighter's exploits. With his authoritative manner, the knight immediately takes charge, vowing to uphold the values of his order in rooting out this evil. He proposes to lead whoever will follow into the cave and bring the robbers to justice. He seems arrogant, wild-eyed and almost raving at times but he should also be too charismatic for the player group to resist teaming up with.

They leave within a few hours, Lazarious heroically astride his robot horse and wearing his helmet of long spikes. Behind him on the saddle, the cook holds on for dear life. The players follow.

Line: By late morning they reach the mouth of the cave surrounded by the previously abandoned mercenary vehicles, covered with several days of dust. No fresh tracks lead out from the entrance. As Lazarious leads the group down into the earth, the cook is told to wait up top. If he hears or sees nothing by the next morning, he is to go for more help. A hundred feet into the tunnel the only light available is from the lanterns the players carry. The tunnel splits up into several other walkways and Lazarious breaks the group up into smaller teams so each can cover a tunnel. The plan is to surround the thieves from all sides, cut off their escape routes and take them alive if possible.

Whatever contact the players have had up till now with Lazarious will leave them feeling uneasy. He may be a fabled Cyber-Knight, but he is also cold, imperious, manipulative, secretive and pushy. He and the leader of the player group will be at odds with each other, creating tension and confusion among the group and any NPCs (non-player characters will typically side with the legendary knight no matter what). The knight seems to know much more than he is willing to share. A few of the player characters may admit that they feel like willing chessmen — pawns — with no knowledge of what to expect, and unsure of exactly who the chess master is.

Chambers within the cave are all similar. An unearthly fog clings to the cave floor. The rocks and very air are ice cold. Scattered, waist high bursts of flame erupt at random from the floor. The fire geysers burn for a few seconds and then dissipate. An unnatural heaviness fills the air, making it hard to breathe or even think straight. Ground tremors shake the cave every so



often, causing rocks and loose dirt to crumble from above as a prelude to a larger earthquake or volcanic eruption.

Each of the divided player character groups will have one or more short, violent encounters with the supposed thieves. Through these encounters, each team discovers that this is no simple robbers' nest, but a haven for vampires! When they all regroup and compare notes, only **Lazarious** will not be surprised and will strongly insist that they must **find** the Vampire Intelligence that controls this colony.

Sinker: Lazarious strongly suspected this was a vampire nest from the very beginning, but didn't bother to let his "volunteers" in on his suspicions for fear they would turn and run. Prepared for this confirmation, he will surprise the player group by giving each of them a backpack filled with weapons effective against vampires. While the adventurer group and NPCs might be angry, frightened and concerned, the **cyber-knight** seems to glow with renewed energy and excitement. It is just as he suspected and had hoped. Lazarious loves killing undead and was in the area for the express purpose of hunting down vampires when the players met him! He chastises anybody who wants to turn back, explaining that now that the vampires know they are on to them, they must destroy them all or hundreds, perhaps thousands of people will fall to the monsters. Besides, he adds, he's fairly certain there isn't a vampire intelligence present.

Anyone with knowledge about vampires knows that it takes 2500 vampires born of its essence to anchor it to this world (see **Rifts® World Book One: Vampire Kingdoms** for more information and lots of cool stuff). There may or may not be that many currently in this community! The famous vampire hunter suspects less than four hundred! Regardless, this is sounding

more and more like a suicide mission. What is the hope for success? Furthermore, each subsequent tremor seems to get progressively more violent. The farther down the players go, the more tunnels they will **find** blocked by either fallen rock or thick with vampire hordes, leaving them with fewer options in each confrontation.

Lazarious is consumed with destroying the vampires and the Vampire Intelligence (if there is one) no matter the cost in lives, including his own. Remember that Lazarious can afford this attitude. With his training and abilities, he is harder to kill than most. The player characters may or may not have the same endurance or skills. The Cyber-knight also seems to know how the enemy thinks and is able to think and stay several strategic steps ahead of them. This should keep him in charge of the battle regardless of any dissension among the player group. If and when an exit is discovered, will the players decide to just abandon this mad war (along with the equally mad **knight?**), go for reinforcements and return, or just continue to follow Lazarious into battle after battle? Is the Cyber-Knight correct in his assessment of the situation or is there a vampire intelligence at the end of the road? Do the other members of Reed's Rangers arrive to help or save the day? Are our heroes pushed out and forced to fight another day (and giving the master vampire and some of his minions the opportunity to escape and continue the **horror?**)?

Rescue

By Kevin Siembieda

Hook: The player group hears the sound of energy bolts not far way. A white haired, human woman who looks to be in her 50's is hiding behind a large boulder. From time to time she peeks over its edge to fire her laser rifle or to hurl defiant comments toward her attackers. Her foes are a pair of D-bees, monsters or Coalition troopers (G.M., pick what you want).

Line: Any characters of a good alignment should come to the woman's rescue. Her assailants flee at the first sign of superior numbers or powerful beings like dragons and Juicers.

The woman eyes the player character's warily, not sure whether she's been rescued or has just gone from the frying pan into the fire. She responds positively to any gestures of kindness and friendliness. When she steps forward, a diary falls from her backpack and opens to an entry with a book mark. It's a message to Plato at **Lazlo** and is signed Erin Tarn! She smiles sheepishly as she scoops up the diary and nervously says, "I hope you're all fans of mine and not bounty hunters."

The charismatic woman confirms she is the famous historian. Erin Tarn thanks them for their help and asks for a rather large favor. She explains that the two D-bees are part of a larger force of villains who jumped her and her fellow travelers. Through the courage of Sir **Thorpe**, she was able to get away, but he and all the others have been captured. She wonders if the noble player characters would join her in rescuing them. **Note:** The adventure that transpires can be a short, simple adventure or a lengthy series of adventures similar to the **Nowak** adventure elsewhere. Erin is everything the group has ever heard about her: bold, courageous, caring, intelligent, tells **marvelous** stories, and more. Best of all, she really likes the members of the group and talks about other adventures and places she'd like to see them accompany her on.

Sinker: At the end of the adventure, our triumphant heroes discover that the woman is *not* Erin Tarn! She is a well meaning rogue scholar who has read all of Erin's books (memorizing large portions) but has never even met the woman. This bogus Tarn is not evil, nor is her deception intentional. The poor woman has survived a horrible trauma by taking refuge in a fantasy world where she believes herself to be Erin Tarn. In that fantasy world, she is resourceful, heroic and brave, and not some tragic, unrecognized (7th level) scholar who was unable to save her friends and colleagues from dimensional raiders who raped and tortured her and slew her comrades before her very eyes.

Note: If the player characters like her, she will gladly join their group, but her delusions of being Erin Tarn are likely to get her and them in constant trouble.



Two Gun Sally

By Kevin Siembieda

Hook: While relaxing for a moment at a tavern, dance hall or casino, one or more of our adventurers meet a lovely lady named Sally. She is a "regular guy," friendly, a great dancer and loads of fun. She has a thing for Juicers, Crazyes, and **Cyber-Knights**.

Line: A few days or weeks later (and probably someplace else), the group stumbles into Sally again. At first, she seems a bit nervous and tense but lightens up if the group agrees to let her tag along with them. She's her usual cheerful, fun-loving, gregarious self when the local authorities (or worse, CS troopers), approach them, weapons drawn, and ask Sally to come along peacefully. She's accused of murder.

Sinker: It seems that sweet, fun-loving Sally is more commonly known as Two Gun Sally, an assassin and bounty hunter of some renown (the player characters may have even heard of her). She is accused of having murdered two important local politicians (mayor, governor, senator, or so on; both were evil scum cutting a secret deal with the CS) and a visiting businessman (who happens to be a high ranking Coalition Officer operating undercover). The two politicians were Sally's "paid hits," the Coalition undercover agent just got in the way when he tried to shoot her.

Our heroes are in a pickle. Do they help their new pal, notorious assassin, Two Gun Sally, or turn against her? How will their association with her or involvement in this situation affect their future? **Note:** Sally ain't no wall-flower. She was a Juicer for two years but went through successful detoxification. Her long black hair hides most of her M.O.M. implants; she's a 6th level Crazy who makes her living as a bounty hunter and assassin for hire. She shares the Juicer's philosophy of live fast and die hard, but doesn't plan on dying, or doing jail time, any time soon. She may genuinely like the player characters, but right now she's using them to save her butt, regardless of how it may affect them. Sally is of anarchist alignment with strong leanings toward miscreant.

Identity Crisis

By Kevin Siembieda

Hook: The adventurer group can be just about anyplace, any time when a group of nervous looking **D-bees** point them out to a Ley Line Walker, a pair of Headhunters and gentleman in light Urban Warrior armor and cape (Mind Melter or Mystic). All are 4-6th level and of a good alignment.

Line: The player characters are accused of being Coalition spies and mercenaries under CS employ, and responsible for a series of recent atrocities against several **D-bee** communities. Prepare to die!

Of course it's not true, but their accusers won't listen "to their lies!" Apparently the **D-bees** are positive about their identities and one of the Headhunters hisses that he saw them fleeing from the scene of their most recent attack, himself. "I know what I seen. And if it ain't you, then yer all pretty damn sorry imitations, and I guess I'll be seeing you sorry asses in hell."

Sinker: Our heroes have no choice but to fight. Their opponents are misguided heroes themselves, blinded by their anger and out for blood — they have, at least momentarily, lost sight of justice. Even if the player group can fight only enough to make good an escape (the G.M. should allow this, perhaps even from CS intervention from agents who overhear the accusations and also mistake the heroes to be the villains), the quartet are driven to find them and make them pay for the slaughter of nearly a hundred people. They will pursue them relentlessly.

The player characters' only chance to avoid killing good guys, which will only get even more people after them, is to track down the real murderers and bring them to justice. This can lead to numerous adventures, false leads, skirmishes and even sub-plots where stupid CS agents approach them with some terrible scheme or assignment because they mistake the player characters as their agents too! Ultimately, when the showdown with the real villains occurs, the player group will be surprised at

how similar these brigands look like them; at least in armor, size and ability (one or two levels lower than the player characters).

More Trouble with Magic

By Kevin Siembieda



Hook: At some point after a heroic adventure, the player group is approached by a group of peasants (human or D-bee) who are in need of "heroes" such as they. The peasants are willing to pay them "everything they own," which includes two bars of gold melted from jewelry, and some two-bit artifacts; the entire lot *might* be worth as much as 600 credits.

Line: A powerful sorcerer (powerful by their estimation, really only 4th level) has claimed their village as his domain and has appointed himself as their king. He is supported by a pair of Psi-Stalkers (both 3rd level) and a monster (an evil, mutant

badger, and escapee from Lone Star). All treat them badly and hurt their women.

Sinker: The peasants have nobody else to turn too. If the group doesn't help them, nobody will. The villains will not step down and move on without a fight, unless the player group clearly overpowers them. Even then, they may retreat, only to return in a day or two with reinforcements: 2D4 vagabond bandits or mercenaries (all 3-4th level). Of course, the G.M. may elaborate or expand upon the villains and situation as he or she sees fit.



Monsters

By Kevin Siembieda

Hook: The adventurers arrive at a town of humans locked in terror. Monsters have arrived in their community and have been terrorizing the area. Hideous lizard men who steal their children. They beg the group to help them and can offer free food and shelter, medical assistance and information. They know exactly where the monsters have made their lair.

Line: If the characters go to investigate near the location of the lair, they encounter one of the reptilian humanoids. The creature stands five feet (1.5 m) tall and is carrying a pair of small children (brother and sister). When it sees anybody, it looks startled and like it wants to run. If any weapon is pointed at it or any sudden movement is made, the sinister looking lizard man drops the kids and runs for the hills! He can run as fast as a Juicer and leap up to eight feet (2.4 m) high and 15 feet (4.6 m) long. M.D. energy bolts singe his mega-damage scales.

Sinker: If the player characters act in haste, they will hurt or kill innocent beings. The **humancentric** villagers have already jumped to the conclusion that the small lizard men are evil, and would kill them if they had their way. However, these simple, tribal people are not murderers, thieves or kidnapers. In fact, the one has just rescued the children who were lost in the woods and was taking them to the outskirts of town. The children will confirm this and talk about how the lizard man rescued them, took them to his home, where his family cleaned their wounds and fed them delicious blueberry pie.

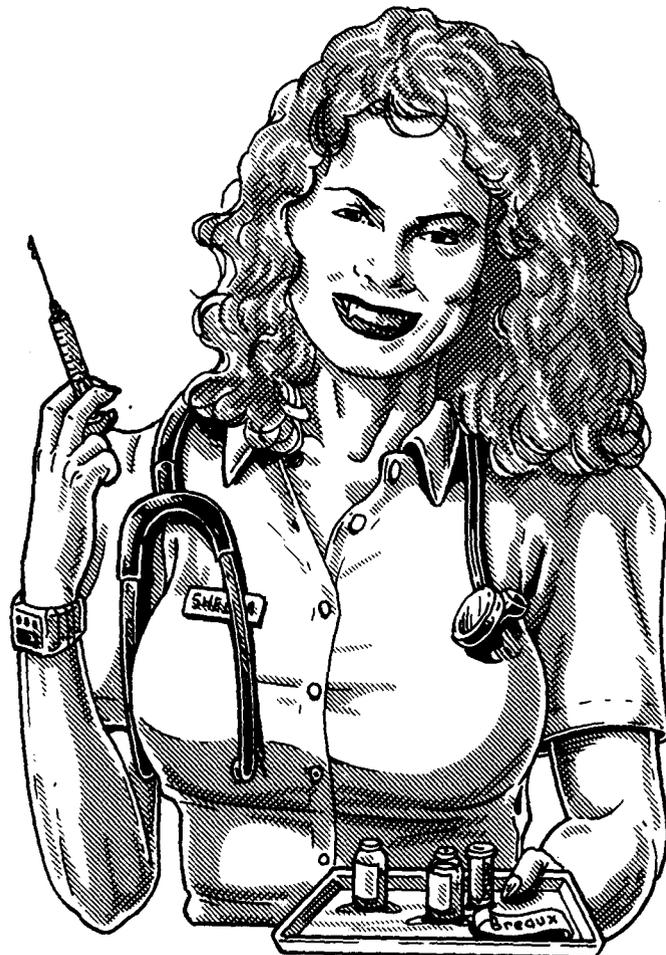
Angels of Mercy

By Kevin Siembieda

Hook: Early one night, our heroes stumble upon a scene of carnage. A village or small town, tribe or caravan (human or D-bees) was attacked by bandits and decimated. Fortunately, help has already arrived. Presumably, doctors, nurses and rescue people from a neighboring town (?) are already on the scene and tending to the frightened and injured. People are being escorted to two hover ambulances and three covered, hover-cargo trucks for evacuation. If the player characters ask if they can be of assistance, the rescue people thank them but decline the offer, saying they have the situation well in hand. A quick glance around would seem to confirm this.

Line: A nurse shouts angrily as a young boy (approx. age 12) leaps out of an ambulance and makes a mad dash from the vehicle to the player group. He hides behind one of them and, in hysterics, pleads for their protection, warning that these people "aren't human! They're monsters!!"

Sinker: A beautiful human or elf nurse (the one who was just shouting at the boy) slowly walks over to explain that the boy hurt his head and is delirious. Indeed, the boy's face is covered with bruises and he has a very large bump on his head. The boy insists she's lying and begs them not to believe her. Magic or psionic probes will reveal that the beauty is evil and not human. She's a master vampire and eight of the others are secondary vampires of her creation. Six others are their mortal servants (humans and/or D-bees). They have this great scam going where they travel the countryside posing as medical personnel that



picks up "road kill," as they call them — people who are injured or sick — on the premise that they will get them the medical aid they need; friends and relatives are welcome to come along. Once locked inside the mega-damage vehicles (100 M.D.C. each), the vampires feed on them! The female leader, who poses as a nurse, has real medical knowledge (3rd level Medical Doctor) and will keep a half dozen alive for weeks, draining blood from their human cattle as needed. She showed her true colors to the boy and his family too soon and the kid was able to escape.

Unless the group hands the boy over to her, there will be trouble. Asking to look inside one of the trucks, to see the boy's family (in the ambulance) will provoke a fight.



A Good Deal, Buy Now!

By Alex Marciniszyn & Kevin Siembieda

Hook: The group encounters a caravan of humanoid D-bees. The beings are four feet tall and have round, oversized heads and oversized hands. There are a total of ten small wagons, each being pulled by a team of two dog-like creatures that are the size of small horses. The D-bees speak American and offer their cargo of weapons for sale.

Line: If the group needs weapons and E-Clips, they've hit the jackpot. Wilk's, Northern Gun, and some Coalition laser rifles and pistols are available at *half the normal prices!* Some fragmentation grenades are also available. The transactions must be done quickly because the D-bees are late for a meeting and must get going. Their attitude is either buy or don't, but make it quick.

Sinker: All rifles and pistols are missing a part or two and cannot be fired. The grenades are duds, and although the E-Clips will read as charged, they are not. Unless the player characters thoroughly examine each of the weapons (there is no time, re-

member), there is no way they can tell that they're mostly junk. Besides, the sample weapon or two that is initially shown to a character is a perfectly good weapon (and usually not sold with the junk). Furthermore, the D-bees are natural psychics. Not only do they have mind block auto-defense, but alter aura, telepathy, hypnotic suggestion, mind wipe, mind bolt, empathic transmission and all psi-sensitive powers (not quite Mind Melters, but master psionics with formidable power; average 126 I.S.P.). They use their powers to blind characters to any defects and to encourage the sale. It's only after they are gone (sometimes much later) that the player characters realize they've been cheated.

This story may not end here, depending on the reaction of the player characters. Do they write the incident off, discard the junk and move on? Or do they hunt down and confront the D-bee con-artists? Is the confrontation civil or hostile? Do the characters get cheated again? Do the D-bees' retaliate with physical and psionic violence (these little guys are tougher and meaner than they look; anarchist and evil alignment)? If so, our heroes may find themselves incapacitated and their good weapons and equipment stolen (and quickly sold). Or they could find themselves in a pitched battle. **Note:** Most of the weapons can be repaired with several hours to days of work and roughly 2D4x1000 credits in parts. The group may also be able to find a buyer for the damaged goods but only at half of what they paid for them.

Gift of Power

By Alex Marciniszyn & Kevin Siembieda

Hook: A young man with flowing black hair and dressed in a light blue robe suddenly appears in the air, about four feet (1.2 m) above the ground. A feeling of calm is felt by the player group and all the characters sense that he is good. He says, "Come to me all who are worthy and I will give you a great gift." Any evil characters will not be able to hear him, but do see him.

Line: When approached by characters with a good alignment, he will give each one a plain white sphere the size of a baseball; the spheres just appears in his hand. When everyone who deserves to get a sphere has one, he says, "Use the spheres wisely when great evil and trouble is at hand. Their magic energy can be used at will." He explains that each sphere contains 30 P.P.E., which can be used as needed, but only good characters with magic or psionics can use them to their full effectiveness — otherwise they provide only limited protection against evil. The young man then disappears.

Unfortunately, a minion (human or demonic) of the young man's enemy, an evil sorcerer (at least 7th level; diabolic alignment), has witnessed the transaction, although he could not hear what was said (he is evil). The minion contacts his master (via magic or radio) and the group is earmarked as enemies. He is told to follow the player characters who received a sphere at a safe distance while reinforcements are sent.

Soon the group is confronted by supernatural and evil minions of the foul sorcerer (the sorcerer *may* be among them; G.M.'s call). They want the spheres, now, and threaten to kill any who resist. They also accuse the group of being the servants of *Atalnache*(who?) and the enemies of their master.



If anybody hands one of the spheres to one of the minions it will explode, inflicting 2D4x10 M.D. to the evil minion and is destroyed (will glow blinding white and inflict 2D6 damage per melee round, if, at some point, it is handled by an evil or anarchist player character, but does not explode). The explosion will be regarded as a deliberate attack and immediately incites a pitched battle!

If the player characters try to activate the spheres, they quickly discover they do not have the simple powers that were described. Instead, the sphere disappears with the following effects: Characters who are *men at arms* or *adventurers* will suddenly be engulfed in a blue-white energy field that functions like a suit of energy armor. It provides 100 M.D.C. (in addition to any other M.D.C. armor), regenerates 2D6 M.D.C. per melee round, and enables the character to magically create an energy blade reminiscent of a psi-sword; it automatically appears and inflicts 3D6 M.D. to mortal enemies and 6D6 M.D. to supernatural foes! It also enables the character to run and leap twice his usual rate (absolutely astounding if a Crazy or Juicer; speed is increased only 30% if a partial or full 'Borg because the machinery interferes with the magic)!!

Practitioners of magic will be given a similar suit of energy armor without the weapon or increased speed, but they will find an additional 50 P.P.E. at their disposal and all spells are cast at one level higher than their current level, plus range is increased by 25%! The same holds true of *Techno-Wizards*, but they will also find that the payload of their weapons or duration of their devices is doubled!

Psychics will find the range of their powers increased by 50% and function at one level higher than their current one. They too have the regenerating energy armor, the same as men of magic.

These minions and their master are the "great evil" and "trouble" the mysterious figure was referring to. Presuming the group fights off the minions, one will snarl and say something like, "The masters will hear of this and you shall pay dearly. Not even your Atalnache will be able to save you!" and disappear (teleport, turn invisible and flee, etc.). It's clear the group has unwittingly become embroiled in some sort of battle between good and evil.

Sinker: What the group will soon come to discover is that they have become the champions in a battle between Atalnache, an American Indian god of light, and a god (or alien intelligence) of evil! The sorcerer is the dark god's chief minion and link to Earth. If he is destroyed, the evil god cannot enter into the Earth's plane of existence and good will have triumphed. The problem is that a number of human and D-bee sacrifices have given the dark god enough power to send the sorcerer over a dozen supernatural and demonic minions, some of whom our heroes just battled (80% are lesser beings, 20% greater and more powerful beings). A cult of evil humans and D-bees also follow the sorcerer and seek to bring the evil god to Earth. Checking out the area will confirm that local villagers live in terror and that demons have recently come to plague the land and people have disappeared. One town near a ley line nexus has been completely invaded and serves as the fiends' base of operations — they can point the way.

Exactly how the story advances from here is up to the G.M. Our heroes can thwart the villains by liberating enslaved villages and rescuing captives/victims, engage in several small skirmishes, eventually leading to a big climactic battle, or go directly to the big battle near the ley line. The former should offer a couple to several adventure sessions of gaming, but either choice is fun.

Note: Once the "great evil" has been thwarted, the god, Atalnache, will reappear, thank them, saying that he knew that "true heroes" would stop the spread of darkness. With a simple gesture, the spheres all go flying back to him, he magically heals any wounds, thanks them again, and just before he disappears, says that they will be in his thoughts from this day forward (meaning he may reappear at some point looking for their help again, and possibly to help them should they ever do battle again with a great, supernatural evil). Likewise, if the final battle starts to go badly for our heroes, Atalnache may arrive like the proverbial cavalry to save the day (or at least the player characters).

The group can keep whatever valuables the bad guys might have lost or that the grateful villagers might offer (not much in either case), but Atalnache takes his temporary gifts of power with him, knowing that their reward is the greatness and goodness of their deeds. Plus they have earned his gratitude, and the gratitude of a god of light is more valuable than a million credits.





Help Wanted

By Alex Marciniszyn & Kevin Siembieda

Hook: The figure of a robed, thin, old man, walking with a wooden staff appears in the distance. Upon spotting the group, he begins to walk toward them. As he comes closer, his aged face looks like a mask. He says, "I need your help." When he is about ten feet (3 m) away, it is clear that his hairless head is artificial. "Please don't be afraid. I am a harmless robot."

Line: The robot explains that he has just been reactivated after a 300 year waiting period. He asks for at least two people to help him reactivate what he calls "The Command Post." An underground, pre-Rifts military facility that he cannot operate on his own.

Sinker Possibility #1: Any volunteers will be taken to a small cave nearby. About 20 feet (6 m) from the entrance, there is a steel door that has two combination locks. This opens to a short corridor that has smooth, artificial walls. At the end is another steel door with a key pad lock mechanism. Once inside, lights automatically come on. A number (at least equal to the number of volunteers) of men are standing on both sides of the room, weapons drawn. One of them speaks, "Well done, number twenty-two. More slaves. Now go back out and convince the rest of them to come in."

Exactly what's going on here is up to the G.M. This could be one of Archie 3's weird little plots (see **Rifts® Sourcebook 1 & 2** for details about Archie 3, the pre-Rifts artificial intelligence that thinks it's a god). Or it could be aliens (again!?!?) or a CS trap or recruitment, vampires, or whatever you want.

Sinker Possibility #2: Any volunteers will be taken to a small cave nearby. About 20 feet (6 m) from the entrance, there is a steel door that has two combination locks. However, before anybody can say or do another thing, our heroes are attacked by claim jumpers! A motley crew of Juicers, Crazies and cutthroats

who want whatever is behind the heavy steel door. They don't know what's there, but have jumped to the conclusion that it is probably pre-Rifts and worth a fortune. Even if the group can fight them off for the moment, they will return (possibly with reinforcements). If these brigands push the player group away from the door, they will eventually get or blow the doors open and get into the complex. Whether it's the bandits pursuing the player characters or the player group pursuing the bandits, a number of skirmishes and conflicts will occur through a maze of tunnels and empty rooms with old machines and equipment often ruined by age.

The entire time, the robot will be assuring our heroes just how important this place is and that there is something of incredible importance, value or power (G.M.'s pick) at some place deep inside the complex. This could be a miracle drug, super computer, Glitter Boy armor or other pre-Rifts super robot armor or vehicle, a legion of robot peacekeepers, weapons, nuclear missiles, an army of American soldiers in suspended animation, or who knows what!? In any case, after fighting the murderous bushwhackers, they reach their goal only to find it has decayed with age or been destroyed by a natural or Rifts caused disaster.

One possible outcome could be evidence that somebody had found the place through a different entrance. It has been ransacked so completely that entire computer banks, control consoles and furnishings have been removed. There's not a thing left. From the dust and other indications, this happened decades ago. The robot is stunned. He may pop a servo and collapse or join the group (he's a basic non-combat robot). "Who could have done this?" the bot groans. Words painted by stencil on a wall (or door) reads: SAMAS Test Facility 002 — United States of America — Maximum Security Clearance ... the rest is marred and unreadable. It would seem the Coalition States beat our heroes to the facility decades ago.

Let's Play or Bubble Trouble

By Alex Marciniszyn & Kevin Siembieda

Hook: The group smells the pleasant odor of flowers. Then they hear the sound of children laughing in a field nearby. There are no other people in the area.

Line: Upon investigating the source of the laughter, the group comes upon a small group of D-bee children playing in a field of flowers. Except for their high foreheads and butterfly like antennae, they look like human five year olds. They are the source of yellow bubbles that burst in the air and release the flowery smell. When they spot the group, they invite them to join in the fun, saying, "Come and play with us. Make some bubbles. It's fun!" The giggling children hand plastic rings with handles to any who want to make bubbles. The rings are four inches across and make large bubbles. They invite people (Non-Player Characters in the way of other adventurers or local peasants may already be playing) to use the green bubble fluid, which the rest of the children start using also.

Sinker: A minute or so later, after the green bubbles burst, characters within 20 feet (6 m) must roll to save versus nonlethal toxin (16 or higher) at -3! Those who fail will be knocked out for fifteen minutes. Only characters in sealed environmental armor are not affected — air filters aren't sufficient protection against these magical fumes. The children are immune. **Note:** In the al-

ternative, the player characters may watch hidden from a distance as a group of NPC peasants or adventurers fall victim to these children and their bubbles.

What happens next is up to the G.M. The children can be mischievous, faerie-like beings who simply steal a few items that look interesting, or they might strip the characters to their underwear and hang the armor and clothing in a tree. Then watch (giggling) when their victims wake up and must locate and retrieve their possessions. Or, as several people fall unconscious (all innocent NPCs succumb), the children begin to run a short distance away, stop and smile as one (or more) *Splugorth Slave Barges* emerge from its hiding place in a nearby wooded area. Unless those remaining conscious do something fast, the unconscious people will wake up in chains and headed for the Splugorth Slave Market on Atlantis!



The Diner

By Alex Marciniszyn

Hook: The group is travelling across a grassy plain. After travelling a short time, someone notices a sign on the ground, partially propped up by a few rocks.

Line: Anyone trying to read the wooden sign will realize it is written in a totally alien language. Object read will reveal that a dark green, humanoid D-bee is the sign's maker. He is somewhere nearby.

Sinker: Suddenly, arrowhead like tips on the ends of vines shoot out of small slits in the ground, striking any exposed skin of the characters. A toxin that causes dizziness and an 80% chance of falling is injected. The vines are actually tube-like tentacles coated in a very slippery substance and are elastic. It would be easiest to cut them off (4 S.D.C.). For each **melee** round that the arrowhead and vine are attached, blood is being sucked out of the body! Multiple vine strikes are possible, especially if someone falls to the ground.

Below the ground in a burrow, is the D-bee. The arrow vines are attached to a separate (but linked), root-like bladder under the ground and rocks. It acts as a stomach that digests the blood and sends the nutrients along two main lines that attach to the body of the D-bee in his burrow 12 feet (3.6 m) away. After a victim is sucked dry, the D-bee emerges from his burrow and buries the remains.

If the prey is too dangerous or he or his comrades put up too much of a fight, the tentacles are retracted back underground. If the bladder is found, it can be destroyed, which has a 01-60% chance of killing the D-bee. If left unmolested, the D-bee can burrow over to his bladder, connect it to his back (usually concealed under a robe or cloak) and he can wander around. The bladder can also attack from under the cloak, but it and the D-bee are vulnerable to attack.

Note: The wooden sign that was found is a warning to others of his kind that this is his feeding ground. This alien is local only to a small region, is very rare and travels in small, loose knit bands of 3D4 members.

Seeds

By Alex Marciniszyn

Hook: The group is passing through a wooded area and comes across a grove of strange trees. The bark and branches are purple, the leaves are perfectly round and yellow.

Line: A person who is of the same race as the dominant race in the group appears a short distance away. He says, "The seeds aren't edible but they retain heat for hours. I've found a few other uses for them as well." If anyone should check, they will discover that the figure talking to them is an illusion.

Sinker: A few seeds fall to the ground to mingle with the others already there. Everyone will feel a compulsion to pick one up (-2 to save vs psionics). Each seed is shaped like a half inch long capsule, with a transparent outer skin that has eight tiny, purple cones on it and a milk white interior. All will feel another compulsion (-2 to save) to remove their M.D.C. gauntlets and squeeze the seed in the palms of their bare hands.

If anyone should do so, there is a slight stinging sensation and then a cool sensation a few seconds later. Upon opening the hand, the seed is intact but its interior fluid is gone. That person will become possessed by the tree the seed fell from. His new purpose in life is to protect the tree. A battle will begin if any effort is made to remove him from the area. To break the psionic mind control, either the sentient tree must be destroyed or the victim must be forcibly taken a half mile (0.8 km) away. At that range the tree's psionic influence is gone. However, if he or she ever comes closer than within the half mile (0.8 km) radius, the character will again fall under the tree's control!

Note: Creatures of magic such as dragons and partial or full conversion 'Borgs, do not suffer the -2 penalty to save, and are, in fact, +2 to save vs the tree's psionic attacks. There are only a tiny handful of these trees known to exist anywhere on Earth (three control an entire town built around them, located 100 miles/160 km from the infamous Calgary Rift). A single tree can control up to 400 people. The tree has 2D4x100 M.D.C. and cannot move once rooted. Its other abilities include a hypnotic suggestion-like compulsion transmitted via telepathy, empathy, presence sense, sense magic, detect psionics, mind block, alter

aura, and a powerful mind control/enslavement via the liquid in the capsules that links its victims/protectors to it. The tree's goal is not global conquest or slavery but to create an army of protectors who live their simple lives but are psionically driven to protect and nurture the tree — that becomes their lifesgoal and they will fight to the death to do so.

From Other Worlds

A series of interrelated HLS adventures by Jim Osten.

I. Why I Hate Bugs

Part one of a multi-part adventure.

By Jim Osten

Hook: Your player group is far outside of recognized Coalition territory and serving as wilderness mercenaries. Almost every day over the past few months, a great number of Rifts have appeared, one at a time, and moving in an easterly direction across the countryside. Each opening lasts only a short time, but deposits another horde of Xiticix warriors that terrorizes the nearest human settlements. Your players have been hired by a collective of nearby small towns and villages to repel these invaders any way they can and prevent them from getting more organized. See the **Rifts® RPG** for information on the Xiticix.

Line: The player group is fighting a losing battle. The dimensional gateways keep popping up regularly. The bug-men come through in groups of 20 to 30 at a time, sometimes double or triple that number and are usually very well armed. So far, our heroes have been able to kill most of the invaders, but some escape into the wilderness with each skirmish. Those bug-men must have some sort of meager, hidden camp set up by now. There are also lost individual Xiticix causing mayhem all over the countryside. The nearby human towns are running low on food and weapons and are already rationing. In little more than a week, there won't be enough food or E-clip powered weapons left to sustain them. Even E-clip recharging units are hard to come by and breaking down. A supply caravan with reinforcements, fresh supplies and weapons is expected "any day now," assuming they didn't run into trouble somewhere along the trail.

Sinker: The villagers are all counting on the player group to save the day, but many of the villagers are panicking, turning on the player characters, or talk about leaving. It's a desperate situation. Originally they took a united stand and hired the player characters to protect them. They didn't want their homes overrun by "stinking, misbegotten D-bees." In the player group's best judgment, they figured it could be done. Everyone dug in their heels and held on at the group's insistence. After weeks of constant Rift activity and relentless fighting, it is now too late to leave. There is less than a 50-50 chance of making it through the miles of barren terrain without a fight. Even more so with a large group of people, many of which are farmers, women, and children who are not fighters (even if they had weapons). All of the ATVs and other shaky vehicles available from all of the towns combined would not be enough to transport everybody. Some would either have to stay behind or travel on foot. Everything really depends on the return of the supply caravan and the player group's ability to fight off the invading monsters.

II. The Robot Masters

By Jim Osten

Hook: Your player group is on a recon mission, searching for the Xiticix base and hoping for a miracle. Out of determination and desperation, the group has wandered farther out than ever before. Supplies are low and you are all on foot. Some of your own people are even talking about desertion. Even if you all agreed to abandon the fight here and now, where would you go and how far would you get without motorized transports?



One of your scouts sees flames and smoke over the horizon. You make the trek and find the smoldering remains of a small hidden village encampment. Footprints, corpses and damage indicate that the bug-men took the town by surprise, stripped it for supplies and moved on. At first this looks like any other primitive town, but your men find a couple of jeeps and transport vehicles well hidden and camouflaged amongst the buildings. Then you find several caches of E-clip powered weapons and ammo as well, all of it is *Coalition* issue.

Line: As your people comb every inch of the encampment, they discover a hidden bunker below one of the shacks. Within is a sophisticated laboratory filled with 100 inactive skelebots and the equipment necessary to program and activate them. What was this secret Coalition base doing out here in the middle of nowhere? The answer is a moot point. You've found your miracle! The bots can be programmed to destroy the Xiticix enemy (they automatically attack Xiticix as part of the CS programming). The base's other resources missed by the bug-men replenishes the group's sagging supplies and morale.

Sinker: Just how precise are your programming skills? Does the group go with the basic activation of the CS program (the safest and easiest to do)? Or does the group try to adjust the programming? Making adjustments may completely foul the activation program and prevent any of the bots from being activated (the CS are famous for safety measures and **anti-tampering** safeguards) or make them erratic and unreliable. See **Rifts® Sourcebook Number One** or the **Coalition War Campaign™** for more details on Skelebots and their programming and safeguards.

Activating them as per normal CS standards will cause the bots to immediately attack every *unauthorized* person at the secret base (they are normally programmed to respond to race, Coalition uniforms, insignias and other recognition codes). So the group could find themselves under fire by 100 Skelebots unless they can trick them or have a quick getaway plan.

Another problem, what will the Skelebots do after they fight the Xiticix? There's no way to control them and most Skelebots are programmed to exterminate all D-bees and recognized enemies of the States. Ultimately, unless the player group has a computer whiz and 3D4x10 hours to waste trying to break the CS codes and programming (they don't), the group really has no idea what the bots are programmed to do. After all, this was a secret base, who knows what the CS's plans were; the Skelebots may have a special agenda. Still, activating them as is, is probably the lesser of two evils (otherwise the group may later find themselves fighting Skelebots too).

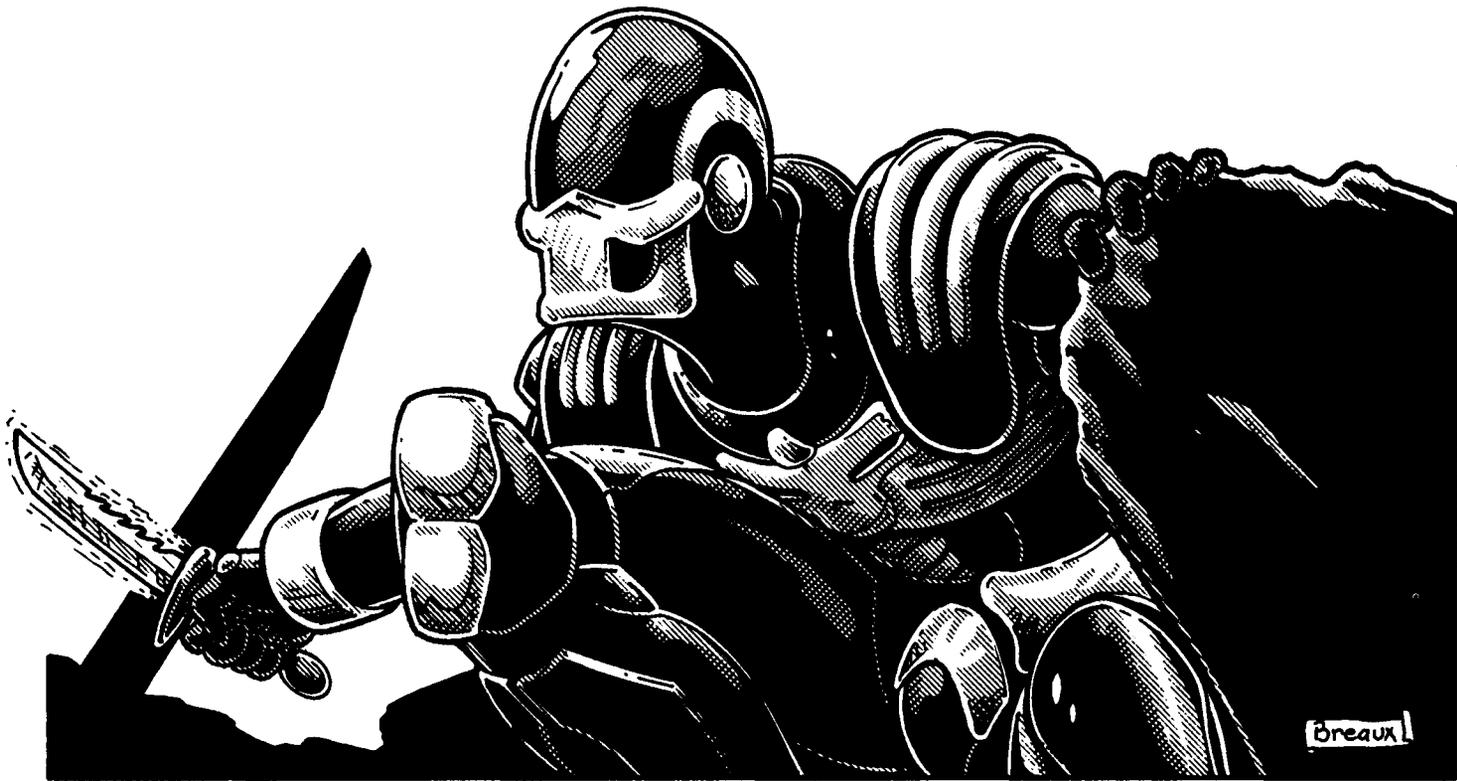
Sometime later, back at the burned out village and bunker, the rest of the Coalition soldiers have returned and discovered the ruins and loss of their property. As far as they can tell from the ground tracks, Xiticix and humanoids (D-bees?) working together, took out their camp (and activated or stole their Skelebots?). How do they explain to their superiors how this happened to a supposedly secret base? They are likely to follow the trail of the player characters to get some answers (other squads may try to find some of the Skelebots).

Note: The theft of high level Coalition technology is punishable by death. If CS troops should track down (very likely) or later encounter the player characters armed with CS equipment, they will regard them as thieving mercenaries or worse. For dramatic effect during such a confrontation, a Rift could erupt, unleashing a horde of Xiticix. Whose side will the soldiers be on? Will they join forces with the player characters to fight the monsters? Will they be more understanding of our heroes and believe their explanation of what happened at the secret CS base? If so, will the CS soldiers help them continue their fight, let them go, or try to arrest them **anyway?!?** Remember, they may still believe the players raided their camp with Xiticix help. Can the player characters prove that they are not a bunch of "miserable, stinking D-bees?" And besides, none of this changes the fact that these characters know about the base. Can they be allowed to live with this knowledge?

III. A New Ally?

By Jim Osten

Hook: The player characters are on the run from Coalition soldiers (or other powerful menace) in the middle of the wilderness. On foot, they were hunting down a particularly elusive and



troublesome Xiticix raiding party when they were spotted by a small Coalition force traveling by jeep and ATVs (this is a different group than any previous encounter with the CS). The players have no choice but to hide out in a large mountainous region of surprising greenery and jagged rock. They stumble onto a well-hidden cavern and hunker down there while they plan their next move. The players have made their hunt for the Xiticix raiders a personal vendetta. They are tired and hungry (supplies are low) and driven by a vengeance that makes them determined and foolish.

The cavern is a maze of seemingly endless corridors and chambers, clearly not a natural structure. Any psionic scans reveal nothing except a dull buzz. There are soft echoes of moaning and crying from deep within the cave that sound almost human. The players should decide to investigate (no choice if of good alignment), and hope along the way to find a tunnel leading out the other side of the mountain. In a remote chamber, the adventurers find a large group (G.M.'s choice as to total number) of ragged human-looking children, all huddled together and cowering in fear!

Line: The kids range in age from 5 to 16 years old. All are androgynous, with large, dark eyes, covered in dirt and shaking nervously. Each has a jewel-studded metal band around his or her neck, wrists and feet that are held in place with a small alien-looking padlock. The kids all seem groggy and sluggish as if drunk or retarded. Their verbal responses to questions are nothing more than grunts and groans.

A sweet looking young girl is able to gesture well enough to convince one of the player characters to pick the lock on her neckband so it can be removed. She explains that she and the others are a race of dragons from another world brought here by the Xiticix. They were to be used as warriors to further the bug-men's conquest. With the restraining bands on, they are helpless and trapped in their humanoid forms. A few days ago, most of the other bug-men left. In unison, the kids overpowered and

killed the remaining guards but are too weak and mentally confused by the restraints to escape.

She begs the player characters to remove her wrist and ankle bands and liberate her friends. In exchange, her people will help them defeat their mutual enemy. Any psionic/psychic probes by the players are blocked — the girl *claims* because of the restraints. Upon closer examination, the characters will see that the restraining bands have electrical circuitry running through them and that the jewels randomly glow and hum. This techno-magic (?) is apparently immune to dragon physical might. In a darkened corner of the chamber, some of the player characters will also notice a large pile of fresh Xiticix exoskeletons, but without a trace of meat or guts on **them!**

Sinker: An army of dragons may sound like a great way to strike back at the Xiticix, but is it really wise to unleash this many dragons on a world already crowded with D-bees and other dangers? Anybody with any dragon lore knowledge should be wary of trusting the fickleness of such powerful and erratic creatures. The girl seems trustworthy and sympathetic, but any psychic will swear she was holding something back, even through the blocked scans.

Furthermore, are they really dragons? Dragons, even in human form, do not need to eat and do so only for the sensations it provides. They are normally sustained by and absorb magic energy. So how do they explain the devoured corpses? It is possible that the techno-magic bands interfere with that aspect of their nature and made them ravenous (that's what the girl or one of the others might claim). Dragons are usually non-social loners and would not normally have that much concern for others of their kind. However, this particular race may be an exception to the rule, and they are slaves. See the **Rifts® RPG** and **Conversion Book One** for more on dragons.

The players better quickly decide whether or not to trust the girl. Someone in the player group either spots or senses a Psi-Stalker and a pack of Dog Boys at the mouth of the cave with

Coalition reinforcements close behind. From this distance the **Psi-Stalker** has already "tagged" any psionics/psychics among the players or sensed the children. It will not be easy to shake him, no matter how far or fast they run. Even if the players don't fully believe the girl's story, can they leave the kids there for the Coalition to find? As the players decide, the children stare at them with **waifish** innocence.

IV. Playing Chicken

By Jim Osten

Hook: A Rift bursts opens in the central marketplace of a small town. Remarkably, the player group and the local villagers **have** been waiting for it! Barrels, boxes and bags stuffed with padding, and other large objects have been set up for cover. The **locals** are also ready with stones, sticks, torches and primitive catapults to help the player group. Over the past few weeks, our heroes and some of the locals have been mapping out the locations where the previous Rifts have appeared and have plotted the basic travel line and locations for new ones.

As a result, they can predict where the next opening will appear along the countryside axis with a 58% degree of accuracy! Size still varies randomly from Rift to Rift. Whatever variables control that aspect, none can say. Duration is another matter. In general sequence, they have remained open on an average of 6, 13, 17, 25, 32 and 41 minute intervals, and then back to 6 and through the established projections. This current Rift is expected to stay open for **41** minutes. The town defenders are pumped and confident that all of the Xiticix can be killed or pushed back this time. They have stockpiled enough weapons, medical supplies, and cover to last the Rift's duration.

In the thick of battle, the wave of bug-men has started to thin out. 20 feet from the opening, some of the player characters see within the Rift that a large group of **humanoids**, dressed in rags and chains, are being held by Xiticix guards. Somebody shouts to the group to jump through and rescue the captives.

Line: The players are now cocky and heady with an organized victory over the bug-men in sight. Furthermore, this looks like a quick, easy, hit and run mission. If they leap through the Rift, some of the braver villagers will follow and help! They disable the nearest guards and start to usher the captives back through the dimensional portal. However, there are more captives than originally thought. More Xiticix soldiers descend on the valiant rescuers as the Rift starts to shimmer and shake. There is no way all the captives can be freed and pushed through before the Rift closes.

Sinker: While combat continues on the Earth side of the Rift, pandemonium and renewed excitement reign as well. Whoever is keeping track of the timed opening is shouting the minutes as they elapse. The shouts are repeated and carried to the human defenders closest to the opening until word reaches through to the rescuers and captives on the other side. Who will make it through and who might get trapped on the Xiticix's own turf? If trapped, this could lead to an adventure fighting the bug-men until a way out can be found. The next Rift opening?

V. Crossing the Line

By Jim Osten

Hook: After another Rift encounter, the player group, has patiently and quietly tracked, watched and followed some escaping Xiticix to a new hive location. A location that falls right on the line of random Rifts. The bug-men have no idea they have been followed and finally meet up with other refugee bug-men who take them to a small outcrop of mountains. A careful reconnaissance of the area shows that only 3 to 4 dozen of the D-bees currently occupy the nest and that it is honeycombed with tunnels and chambers. This looks like a great opportunity to kill off the invaders and boobytrap the nest in case more show up later! To the surprise of any psionics in the player group, they will be able to detect psionics inside the nest!

Line: The players also notice some curious activities by the bug-men. They **regularly** go out in groups, foraging not only for food, but scavenging for all sorts of metal. They pick clean the bodies of fallen meres and Coalition soldiers, and bring back the remaining vehicles, no matter how damaged or wrecked.

Within their mountain nest, they sort the various metals into organized piles. The strangest sight the player characters behold is the bug-men screening the water of the underground stream within their hideaway like pre-Rift prospectors used to pan for gold! The bug-men carry bits and pieces of the metal remains into a deep chamber far from the players' view. An ominous bluish-white glow and strange, unidentifiable, mechanical sounds are coming from that chamber! When the players hear human screams coming from within, they have no choice but to investigate.

Sinker: The bug-men within the huge chamber are easily disposed of. Sparks fly as background machinery is hit. The cave is filled with a wild array of engines, motors, batteries and coils strung together with thousands of wires and cables leading to crude control panels, crystals and vats of liquid. The noise echoing throughout the chamber sounds like a good sized, misdirected orchestra, accented by half a dozen car engines racing and backfiring.

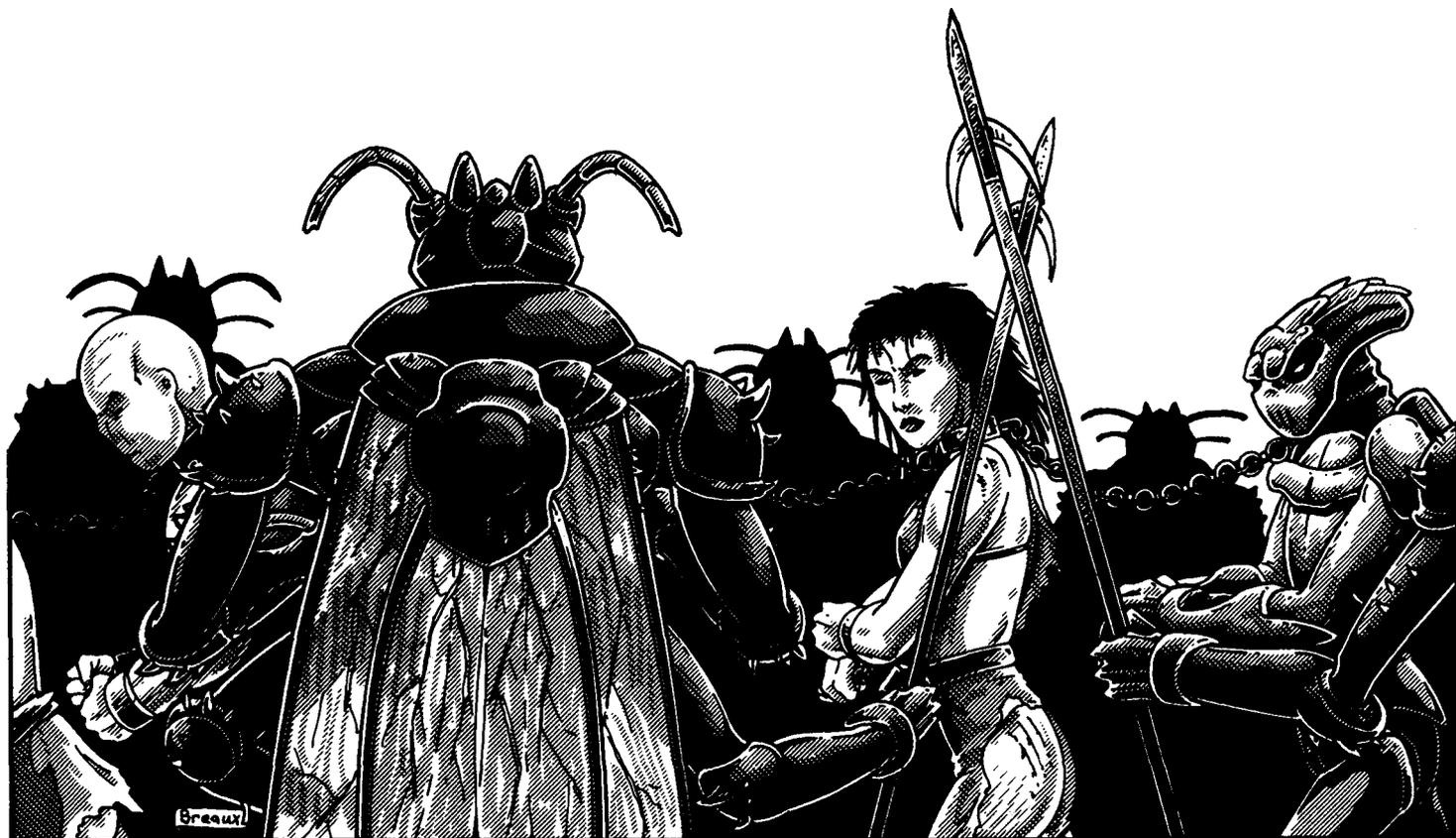
At various points amidst this jungle of wires and machinery, are a dozen humans and D-bees bound to chairs and poles with webbing and wired to this mess with direct connections into their skulls! The psionics in the group will identify them as medium to high level psychics. They are all frothing at the mouth and writhing with discomfort. They seem brain-dead and oblivious to any outside stimuli.

In a scooped out section of cave wall surrounded by rock, a small Rift crackles with a steady hum! By twisting a few dials, the Rift acts as a monitor window to other dimensions and brings into focus a Xiticix landscape. With every turn of the dial come screams of pain and anguish from the wired captives. Anything thrown at the Rift will not go through. Some techno-wizard repairs to the damaged machinery *might* get this bizarre homemade Rift machine to work as an actual two-way dimensional door! The periodic random Rifts outside are a side-effect of the machine!

The original creator of the device was a group of evil human or D-bee **techno-wizards** who accidentally fused a link to the Xiticix **homeworld**. They were slain by the first wave of creatures

to emerge from the Rift. Afterward, the creatures realized that the machine was a doorway linking their world to Rifts Earth but that it was damaged during the battle that marked their arrival. Although damaged, the machine continues to hold its tenuous link to their domain via the erratic *sequence* of random Rifts. This is how the bug-men continue to arrive on Earth. Realizing there is something special about the machine, they built a hive around it to conceal and protect it, and have since been trying to figure out how it works so they can fix it (so far they haven't got a clue). They've been gathering parts for the repair work, should that day come.

The wired captives are mutilated beyond repair and have no hope for a return to any semblance of normal life — they simply serve as part of the horrible machine's control mechanism and power source. Killing them or otherwise destroying the machine will stop the random Rifts to the Xiticix world. However, it will cause a dimensional vortex that will suck the hive and everything within a one mile (1.6 km) diameter into another dimensional (probably not the Xiticix homeworld). The characters have 12 minutes to get to safety!



Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Level.: H.P.: D.C.:
 A.R.: D.C.: A.P.M.:
 H to H: Strike:+ Parry:+
 Dodge:+ Roll:+ Damage:+ Initiative:
 Weapons:
 Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:
 D.C.-Natural:
 D.C.-Armor:
 H.P.:

Weapons: range payload damage

# 1			
# 2			
# 3			
# 4			
# 5			
# 6			
# 7			
# 8			

Skills:

Equipment:

Step One: Size & Orientation

Small Time Company or Squad	<input type="checkbox"/>	60pts +10-vehicles +10-weapons
Minor Company	<input type="checkbox"/>	95pts +10-equipment +10-vehicles
Free Company	<input type="checkbox"/>	145pts +10-vehicle +10 outfits +10-weapons
Large Company	<input type="checkbox"/>	200pts +10-vehicles +10-budget
Mercenary Army	<input type="checkbox"/>	300pts +20-budget or weapons +20-outfits
Large Mercenary Army	<input type="checkbox"/>	500pts +20-vehicles +20-budget

Step Two: Sponsorship

Independant Operative	<input type="checkbox"/>	+10pts
Secret	<input type="checkbox"/>	+10pts-equipment +10pts-outfits +10pts
Criminal: Small Time Bandits	<input type="checkbox"/>	+10pts-criminal activities +10pts
Criminal: Organized Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	+20pts-intelligence resources +20pts-criminal activities +10pts
Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	+20pts-outfits +20pts-equipment +20pts
_____ Front	<input type="checkbox"/>	+20pts-outfits +20pts-equipment +20pts-weapons +10pts-budget +10pts

Total Points: _____

Step Three: Features

A. Outfits		I. Special Budget	
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts	1. None	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts
2. Utility	<input type="checkbox"/> 5pts	2. Nickles and Dimes	<input type="checkbox"/> 5pts
3. Open Wardrobe	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts	3. Small Potatoes	<input type="checkbox"/> 15pts
4. Specialty Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> 20pts	4. Large Loans	<input type="checkbox"/> 20pts
5. Gimmick Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> 30pts	5. Big Bucks	<input type="checkbox"/> 45pts
6. Unlimited Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> 50pts	6. Mega Bucks	<input type="checkbox"/> 60pts
B. Equipment		J. General Alignment	
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts	1. Miscreant/Diabolic	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts
2. Cheap Gear	<input type="checkbox"/> 2pts	2. Miscreant/Aberrant	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts
3. Electronic Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> 5pts	3. Anarchist	<input type="checkbox"/> 2pts
4. Medical Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts	4. Anarchist/Unprincipled	<input type="checkbox"/> 4pts
5. Medical Clinic	<input type="checkbox"/> 20pts	5. Unprincipled/Scrupulous	<input type="checkbox"/> 7pts
6. Magic Technologies	<input type="checkbox"/> 40pts	6. Scrupulous/Principled	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts
7. High-Tech Augmentation	<input type="checkbox"/> 40pts	K. Criminal Activity	
8. Unlimited Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> 50pts	1. Con Man (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> x 5pts
C. Vehicles		2. Prostitutes (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> x 5pts
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts	3. Cyberdoc (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> x 10pts
2. Basic Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> 3pts	4. Robbers (2D4 +2)	<input type="checkbox"/> x 10pts
3. Fleet Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts	5. Smugglers (1D6 +2)	<input type="checkbox"/> x 15pts
4. Combat Cars	<input type="checkbox"/> 20pts	6. Expert Assassin (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> x 15pts
5. Specialty Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/> 30pts	7. Psychic Enforcer (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> x 15pts
6. Unlimited Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/> 50pts	8. Special Forces (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> x 20pts
D. Weapons, Power Armor & Bots		9. Safecracker/Locksmith (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> x 25pts
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts	10. Forger (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> x 30pts
2. Basic Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> 5pts	L. Reputation/Credentials	
3. Basic Weaponry	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts	1. Hunted	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts
4. Advanced Weaponry	<input type="checkbox"/> 20pts	2. Scoundrels	<input type="checkbox"/> 1pts
5. Extensive Weaponry	<input type="checkbox"/> 40pts	3. Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> 5pts
6. Maximum Firepower	<input type="checkbox"/> 60pts	4. Known	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts
E. Communications		5. Excellent Reputation	<input type="checkbox"/> 25pts
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts	6. Famous	<input type="checkbox"/> 50pts
2. Basic Service	<input type="checkbox"/> 2pts	M. Salary	
3. Secured Service	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts	1. None	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts
4. Full Range System	<input type="checkbox"/> 15pts	2. Freelance	<input type="checkbox"/> 2pts
5. Deluxe Com. Network	<input type="checkbox"/> 25pts	3. Pittance Salary	<input type="checkbox"/> 5pts
6. Superior Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> 40pts	4. Good Salary	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts
F. Internal Security		5. Excellent Salary	<input type="checkbox"/> 20pts
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts	6. Outrageous Salary	<input type="checkbox"/> 40pts
2. Lax	<input type="checkbox"/> 2pts	Point Modifications: _____ +	
3. Tight	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts	Total Points Used: _____	
4. Iron-Clad	<input type="checkbox"/> 20pts	Operational Territory: _____	
5. Paranoid	<input type="checkbox"/> 40pts	History: _____	
6. Impregnable	<input type="checkbox"/> 60pts	_____	
G. Permanent Bases		_____	
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts	_____	
2. Partial Headquarters	<input type="checkbox"/> 2pts	_____	
3. Headquarters	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts	_____	
4. Fortified Headquarters	<input type="checkbox"/> 20pts	_____	
5. Company Town	<input type="checkbox"/> 40pts	_____	
6. Company City	<input type="checkbox"/> 60pts	_____	
H. Intelligence Resources		_____	
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/> 0pts	_____	
2. Scout Detachment	<input type="checkbox"/> 5pts	_____	
3. Special Military Operatives	<input type="checkbox"/> 10pts	_____	
4. Psionic and Magic Operatives	<input type="checkbox"/> 20pts	_____	
5. D-Bee Specialists	<input type="checkbox"/> 20pts	_____	
6. Infiltration Network	<input type="checkbox"/> 50pts	_____	

Level: _____ H.P.: _____ D.C.: _____
A.R.: _____ D.C.: _____ A.P.M.: _____
H to H: _____ Strike: + _____ Parry: + _____
Dodge: + _____ Roll: + _____ Damage: + _____ Initiative: _____
Weapons: _____
Fled: <input type="checkbox"/> K O: <input type="checkbox"/> Dead: <input type="checkbox"/> Surrendered: <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> D.C.-Natural: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> D.C.-Armor: _____
H.P.: _____
Notes/Skills: _____

Level: _____ H.P.: _____ D.C.: _____
A.R.: _____ D.C.: _____ A.P.M.: _____
H to H: _____ Strike: + _____ Parry: + _____
Dodge: + _____ Roll: + _____ Damage: + _____ Initiative: _____
Weapons: _____
Fled: <input type="checkbox"/> K O: <input type="checkbox"/> Dead: <input type="checkbox"/> Surrendered: <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> D.C.-Natural: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> D.C.-Armor: _____
H.P.: _____
Notes/Skills: _____

Level: _____ H.P.: _____ D.C.: _____
A.R.: _____ D.C.: _____ A.P.M.: _____
H to H: _____ Strike: + _____ Parry: + _____
Dodge: + _____ Roll: + _____ Damage: + _____ Initiative: _____
Weapons: _____
Fled: <input type="checkbox"/> K O: <input type="checkbox"/> Dead: <input type="checkbox"/> Surrendered: <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> D.C.-Natural: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> D.C.-Armor: _____
H.P.: _____
Notes/Skills: _____

Level: _____ H.P.: _____ D.C.: _____
A.R.: _____ D.C.: _____ A.P.M.: _____
H to H: _____ Strike: + _____ Parry: + _____
Dodge: + _____ Roll: + _____ Damage: + _____ Initiative: _____
Weapons: _____
Fled: <input type="checkbox"/> K O: <input type="checkbox"/> Dead: <input type="checkbox"/> Surrendered: <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> D.C.-Natural: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> D.C.-Armor: _____
H.P.: _____
Notes/Skills: _____

Weapons:	range	payload	damage
# 1	_____	_____	_____
# 2	_____	_____	_____
# 3	_____	_____	_____
# 4	_____	_____	_____
# 5	_____	_____	_____
# 6	_____	_____	_____
# 7	_____	_____	_____
# 8	_____	_____	_____
# 9	_____	_____	_____
# 10	_____	_____	_____
# 11	_____	_____	_____

Step One: Type

Side Show	<input type="checkbox"/>	110pts +10-vehicles +30-acts
Freak Show	<input type="checkbox"/>	150pts +20-acts +10-equipment
Travelling Medicine Show	<input type="checkbox"/>	140pts +10-security +20 criminal activity
Travelling Troubadours	<input type="checkbox"/>	160pts +10-equipment +20-outfits
Carnival	<input type="checkbox"/>	240pts +50-acts +10-reputation
Circus	<input type="checkbox"/>	300pts +90-acts +20-reputation

Step Two: Sponsorship

Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	+20pts-acts +20pts
Secret	<input type="checkbox"/>	+10pts-acts +10-defense +30pts
Criminal: Small Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	+30pts-criminal activity +10pts
Criminal: Organized Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	+10pts-security +10-defense +50-criminal activity
Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	+10pts-security +50pts
_____ Front	<input type="checkbox"/>	+10pts-security +20-defense +10-equipment +40pts

Total Points: _____

Step Three: Features

A. Outfits			Four African lions	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/>	0pts	Two tigers	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts
2. Utility	<input type="checkbox"/>	5pts	Two leopards	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts
3. Open Wardrobe	<input type="checkbox"/>	10pts	Small dinosaur	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts
4. Specialty Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	20pts	Large herbivour dinosaur	<input type="checkbox"/> x	10pts
5. Gimmick Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	30pts	Common monster	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts
6. Unlimited Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	50pts	Exotic monster- tame	<input type="checkbox"/> x	20pts
B. Equipment			Exotic monster- wild	<input type="checkbox"/> x	30pts
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/>	0pts	15. Real Magic Act	<input type="checkbox"/> x	12pts
2. Cheap Gear	<input type="checkbox"/>	2pts	16. Healer	<input type="checkbox"/> x	12pts
3. Electronic Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>	5pts	17. Showgirls (8)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	10pts
4. Medical Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	10pts	18. Live Freaks (2R-6F)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	12pts
5. Medical Clinic	<input type="checkbox"/>	20pts	19. Side Show Attractions(12)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	10pts
6. Unlimited Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	50pts	20. Pre-Rifts Movies	<input type="checkbox"/> x	15pts*
C. Vehicles			Black & White	<input type="checkbox"/> x	3pts
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/>	0pts	Lousy Film	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts
2. Basic Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	3pts	Good drama, gangster, advert.	<input type="checkbox"/> x	10pts
3. Company Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	10pts	Great drama, gangster, advert.	<input type="checkbox"/> x	15pts
4. Deluxe Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	20pts	Fair Sci-Fi	<input type="checkbox"/> x	15pts
5. Specialty Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/>	30pts	Great Sci-Fi	<input type="checkbox"/> x	30pts
6. Unlimited Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/>	50pts	H. General Alignment		
D. Communications			21. Rides	<input type="checkbox"/> x	1pt
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/>	0pts	Pony ride (6)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	2pts
2. Basic Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	2pts	Horse ride (6)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	4pts
3. Secured Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	5pts	Elephant ride (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts
4. Full Range System	<input type="checkbox"/>	15pts	Other Animals (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	10pts
5. Deluxe Com. Network	<input type="checkbox"/>	25pts	Exotic Animals (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	3pts
6. Theater/Superior Com.*	<input type="checkbox"/>	50pts	Carnival rides	<input type="checkbox"/> x	1pt
E. Internal Security			22. Games of Chance	<input type="checkbox"/> x	15pts
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/>	0pts	23. Gladiatorial Arena	<input type="checkbox"/> x	0pts
2. Lax	<input type="checkbox"/>	2pts	I. Criminal Activity		
3. Tight	<input type="checkbox"/>	10pts	1. Medicine Man	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts
4. Iron-Clad	<input type="checkbox"/>	20pts	2. Prostitutes (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts
5. Paranoid	<input type="checkbox"/>	40pts	3. Expert Forger	<input type="checkbox"/> x	10pts
6. Impregnable	<input type="checkbox"/>	60pts	4. Expert Worms (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	10pts
F. Defenses/Military Power			5. Cyberdoc	<input type="checkbox"/> x	10pts
1. None	<input type="checkbox"/>	0pts	6. Pickpocket Team (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	8pts
2. Basic Defenses	<input type="checkbox"/>	5pts	7. Robbers (2D4 +2)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	10pts
3. Weapons & Armor	<input type="checkbox"/>	10pts	8. Smugglers (1D6 +2)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	15pts
4. Militia	<input type="checkbox"/>	20pts	9. Expert Assassin	<input type="checkbox"/> x	15pts
5. Private Army	<input type="checkbox"/>	40pts	10. Psychic Enforcer	<input type="checkbox"/> x	15pts
6. Strike Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	60pts	11. Special Forces (2)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	20pts
G. Types of Acts			J. Reputation		
1. Average Clowns (6)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	1pt	1. Hunted	<input type="checkbox"/>	0pts
2. Expert Clowns (6)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	2pts	2. Scoundrels	<input type="checkbox"/>	1pt
3. Jugglers (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	1pt	3. Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>	5pts
4. Expert Jugglers (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts	4. Known	<input type="checkbox"/>	10pts
5. Expert tumblers (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts	5. Excellent Reputation	<input type="checkbox"/>	25pts
6. Average Minstrels (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	2pts	6. Famous	<input type="checkbox"/>	50pts
7. Expert Minstrels (4)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts	K. Salary		
8. Expert Side-show Barker	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts	1. None	<input type="checkbox"/>	0pts
9. Fortuneteller (non-psyhic)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	2pts	2. Freelance	<input type="checkbox"/>	2pts
10. Psychic/Mystic Fortuneteller	<input type="checkbox"/> x	6pts	3. Pittance Salary	<input type="checkbox"/>	5pts
11. Expert Stage Magician	<input type="checkbox"/> x	6pts	4. Good Salary	<input type="checkbox"/>	10pts
12. Pickpocket & Shill	<input type="checkbox"/> x	6pts	5. Excellent Salary	<input type="checkbox"/>	20pts
13. Expert Acrobats (8)	<input type="checkbox"/> x	15pts	6. Outrageous Salary	<input type="checkbox"/>	40pts
14. Expert Animal Tamer	<input type="checkbox"/> x	15pts	Point Modifications: _____		
12 trained dogs	<input type="checkbox"/> x	1pt	Total Points Used: _____		
24 snakes	<input type="checkbox"/> x	1pt			
4 bears	<input type="checkbox"/> x	3pts			
6 horses	<input type="checkbox"/> x	4pts			
6 elephants	<input type="checkbox"/> x	5pts			

Operational Territory: _____

History: _____

Level: _____ H.P.: _____ D.C.: _____

A.R.: _____ D.C.: _____ A.P.M.: _____

H to H: _____ Strike: + _____ Parry: + _____

Dodge: + _____ Roll: + _____ Damage: + _____ Initiative: _____

Weapons: _____

Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:

D.C.-Natural: _____

D.C.-Armor: _____

H.P.: _____

Notes/Skills: _____

Level: _____ H.P.: _____ D.C.: _____

A.R.: _____ D.C.: _____ A.P.M.: _____

H to H: _____ Strike: + _____ Parry: + _____

Dodge: + _____ Roll: + _____ Damage: + _____ Initiative: _____

Weapons: _____

Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:

D.C.-Natural: _____

D.C.-Armor: _____

H.P.: _____

Notes/Skills: _____

Level: _____ H.P.: _____ D.C.: _____

A.R.: _____ D.C.: _____ A.P.M.: _____

H to H: _____ Strike: + _____ Parry: + _____

Dodge: + _____ Roll: + _____ Damage: + _____ Initiative: _____

Weapons: _____

Fled: K O: Dead: Surrendered:

D.C.-Natural: _____

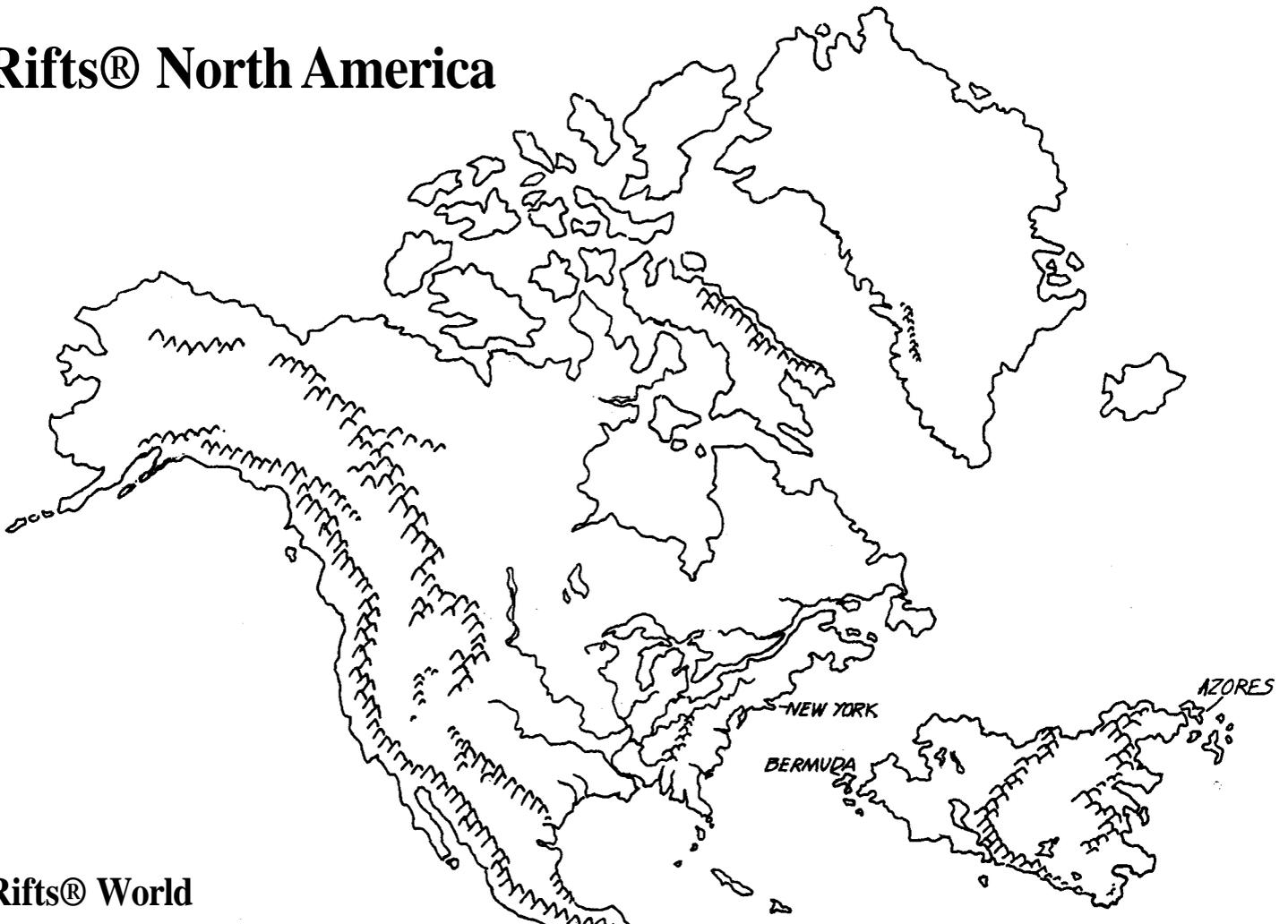
D.C.-Armor: _____

H.P.: _____

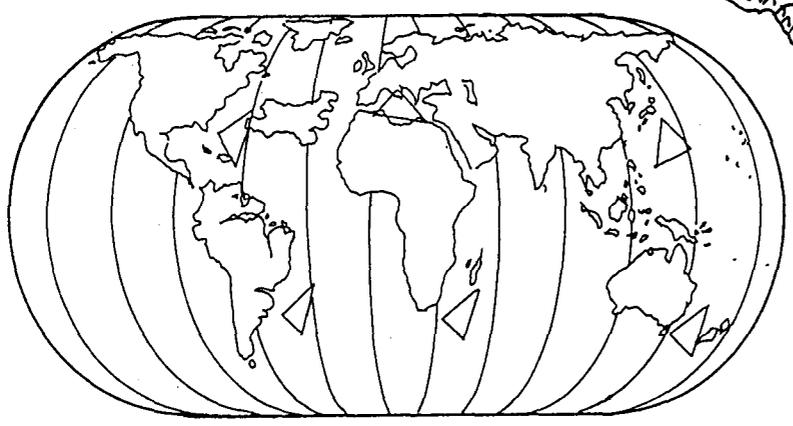
Notes/Skills: _____

Weapons:	range	payload	damage
# 1	_____	_____	_____
# 2	_____	_____	_____
# 3	_____	_____	_____
# 4	_____	_____	_____
# 5	_____	_____	_____
# 6	_____	_____	_____
# 7	_____	_____	_____
# 8	_____	_____	_____
# 9	_____	_____	_____
# 10	_____	_____	_____
# 11	_____	_____	_____

Rifts® North America



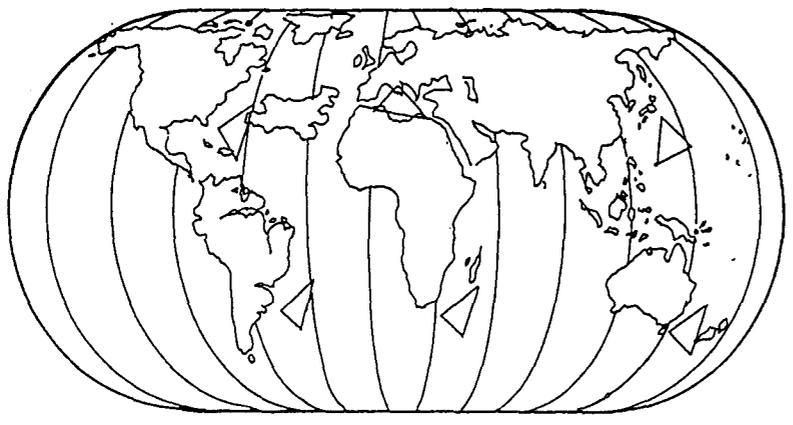
Rifts® World



Rifts® Atlantis



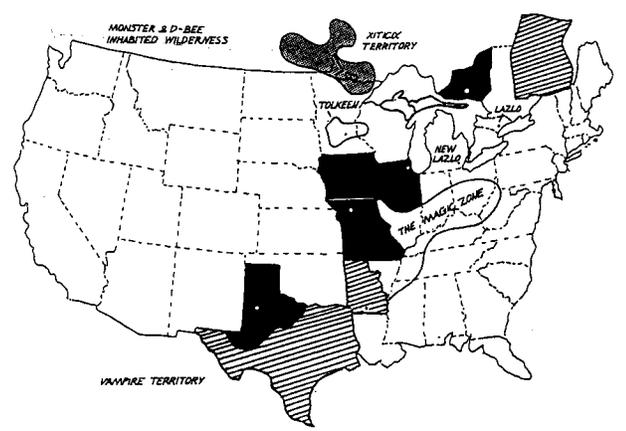
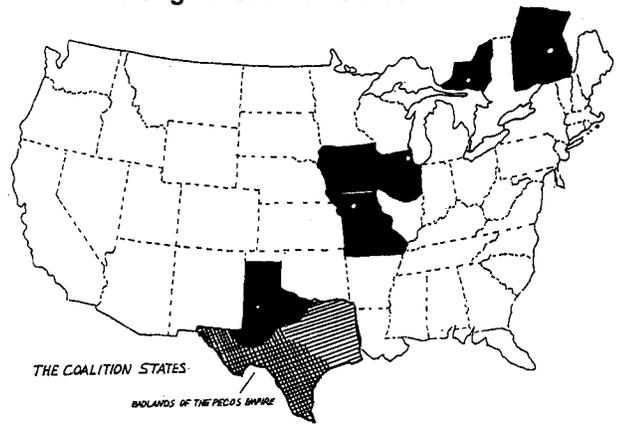
South America





Rifts® North America

The Original Coalition States



Coming Attractions

Rifts® World Book 11:

The Coalition War Campaign™

Emperor Prosek unveils his new Coalition Army and *Campaign of Unity* through war! This book has it all! More information about the Coalition States, Emperor Prosek, the CS government, alliances, enemies, plans for conquest, the Burbs, and weapons of war.

Highlights Include:

- Over a dozen new O.C.C.S for the Coalition Army, including the CS Strike Cyborg, Commando, Special Forces, Ranger, Ace, and others.
- The ISS, Psi-Net, and NTSET city protectors and police.
- Power Armor and Robot Vehicles like the Super SAMAS, Striker SAMAS, Terror Trooper, Spider Scout Walker, Scorpion-Skull Walker, Hellraiser, and more.
- New Skelebots, "Dead Boy" armor, tanks, APCs, hover cars, helicopters, Rocket Cycles, and the "Fire Storm" Mobile Fortress!
- CS enemies and allies: outlined and briefly described.
- CS Military, troop movement, build-ups and invasion plans (who will be the first to fall?).
- The Coalition's military structure, ranks, key leaders, laws and punishment, G.M. tips, D-bees, adventure ideas, maps, and more!
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- Art by Breaux, McKenna, Martin and Lawson.
- \$20.95 — 224 pages — Cat. No. 821
- Available now!

Rifts® World Book 12: Pyscape™

Pyscape™ has been a source of rumors and legends for centuries, yet few have ever found this mysterious refuge of psychics. After years of hiding, the secret community is finally going into the open. What danger motivates them to act now?

Highlights Include:

- New psionic powers and new psychic O.C.C.S like the Astral Warrior, Psi-Filer, Mirage Weaver, Gate Maker, Psyche Killer, Eruptors and more.
- The history of Pyscape, The Enclave (their rival) and a glimpse into the Astral Kingdom!
- Hints about the Federation of Magic.
- Menaces include foul sorcerers, Astral Undead, Mallon the Dark and the coming of the Soul Breakers, among others.
- World information and adventure ideas.
- Written by C.J. Carella with material by Siembieda.
- Art by McKenna, Carson, Petersen and Breaux.
- \$16.95 — 160 pages — Cat. No. 822
- Available September/October, 1996.

Rifts® World Book 13: Lone Star™

The Lone Star Genetics Complex is the birthplace of the Dog Boys, but it is run by a madman who is beyond the control of even Emperor Prosek. R.C.C.s for scores of different mutant animals (and mutant humans), plus escaped slaves, sinister plots, blind faith and a lust for power.

Highlights Include:

- A closer look at the famous Dog Boys, how they think, why they serve the CS and other inside information.
- New mutants (animal and human) and genetic experiments that are so secret that even the Emperor and CS High Command don't know about them!
- The history of the Lone Star Complex — a pre-Rifts relic that has yielded many secrets to the CS.
- The Pecos Empire and other dangers.
- World information and adventure ideas.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- Art by Petersen, Lawson, Breaux and others.
- \$16.95 — 160 pages — Cat. No. 825
- Tentatively scheduled for a November/December 1996, release.

Rifts® World Book 14: The New West

Ley line interference, Rift activity, magic, and ancient Gods have made what was once the Western United States a forbidding yet magical wilderness. For some, like the native American Indians, the New West means a return to tradition and a chance to recreate old nations. For others, the vast wilderness means freedom and adventure, for still others it is a new frontier to tame or plunder.

Highlights Include:

- O.C.C.S like the Gunslinger, Bounty Hunter, Shaman, Spirit Scout and others — all with twists that will surprise you.
- Techno-Wizardry that brings the American Old West to new life with mega-damage punch.
- Ancient spirit gods of the American Indians, magic, demons and supernatural monsters.
- At last, a closer look at *Wilk's* and its Wilk's-Remington line of weapons. Plus Colt Firearms Technology and more.
- The Iron Horse bullet train is just one of the lifelines between civilization and the new frontier, but many don't want technology, new or old, they have magic.
- World information and adventure ideas.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda and Christopher R. Kornmann.
- Art by Breaux, Petersen and McKenna.
- \$16.95 — 160 pages — Cat. No. 826
- Tentatively scheduled for a Feb./March, 1997 release.