The Blight Years

The world had already ended before anyone knew it. The science of the old days, great as it was, had no way to detect it. What started as low crop yields became a famine and then a disease. Without knowing it, the blighted purposefully spread the infection. Then the cities vanished as millions died when the hive minds reached critical mass and unleashed a lethal psychic blast. Many that did not die of blight or famine died in the fighting that followed.

The survivors, in towns small enough to survive and in places too cold and wet for the blight to thrive built walls and huddled against a long fearful dark age. Some of the survivors manifested powers. In some places this made them outcasts, as people feared the connection between their gift and the blight. In other places it made them holy or let them rule.

Out of the deserts came hordes of blighted, people and animals operating as a hive mind and possessing psionic powers. Those who could see into the astral plain reported the appearance of strange floating creatures they called *prawns*, *locusts*, *ushers* or *demons*. In the desolate ruins of the once mighty cities they saw pillars of light reaching into the sky, where prawns appear to enter and exit, and sometimes they see ghosts.

In what was once Northern California, a town became a city-state, and in a city-state there rose up a king. In 115 A.B. (After the Blight) Fillmore II, of Sur, The Lord of Surf and Rock forged an alliance of mutual trade and defense with his neighbors. In order to protect the roads and trade, he brought forth an order of Knights. Charged with patrolling the highways they were given an ancient symbol of legendary highway patrolmen as their badge. The order chose to recruit from the gifted, both because they could use their abilities and because they were feared in Sur.

The League of Sur went to war and in the peace of 154 the Gold Coast Confederacy was forged. The order was expanded and charged to recruit from all the cities and towns of the Confederacy and to protect the highways from Sur to Cottage Grove.

It is now generally accepted to be the 207th year A.B.

The Blight Years is a post-apocalyptic horror western. In addition to the ***GURPS Basic Set*** it will use material from ***GURPS High-Tech***, ***GURPS Horror***, ***GURPS Martial Arts***, ***GURPS Martial Arts: Technical Grappling***, ***GURPS Mysteries***, ***GURPS Power Ups 1: Imbuements***, ***GURPS Power Ups 2: Perks***, ***GURPS Power Ups 3: Talents***, ***GURPS Power Ups 4: Enhancements***, ***GURPS Psionic Campaigns***, ***GURPS Psionic Powers*** , ***GURPS Psis***, ***GURPS Social Engineering***, ***GURPS Tactical Shooting,*** and ***GURPS Zombies*** as well as ***Pyramid #3/12: Tech and Toys***, ***Pyramid #3/29: Psionics,*** and ***Pyramid #3/44: Alternate GURPS II***. Players should especially familiarize themselves with the rules in ***GURPS Psionic Powers***, ***GURPS Tactical Shooting, GURPS Martial Arts: Technical Grappling***, and *The Last Gasp*, ***Pyramid #3/44: Alternate GURPS II.***

The Gold Coast

The Knights of the Seven Pointed Star

The order is organized into seven member (an ideal that manpower often can't meet) *posses* that always include at least one telepath, one healer and one projector. A posse is lead by a

The Blight Years

Lieutenant (Rank 2) and a Sergeant (Rank 1) and manned by Officers (Rank 0). Seven posses make a *patrol* commanded by a Captain (Rank 3). Seven patrols make a *chapter* commanded by a Chief and an Assistant Chief (both Rank 4) which is assigned to a specific region where it has its headquarters or *chapter house.* The seven chapter houses are the *operations division* commanded by the Deputy Commander (Rank 5). There is also a *support division* commanded by the Assistant Commander (Rank 5) that handles administration, training, and so on. The order as a whole is commanded by the Commander (Rank 6). There are approximately 2500 knights in the order.

Noviates are typically recruited in their teens although the order will accept older applicants. They must have at least latent psionic ability, and be mentally and physically suitable for service. Noviates with latent abilities will be given yajé and guided through an awakening when they are deemed ready. If a noviate cannot awaken abilities or is otherwise found unsuitable they will be dismissed. Once a noviate has active trainable psionic abilities and is at least 16, they will be permitted to take the oath of service and become Cadets (Rank 0). Cadet training is a two year program and graduates are automatically promoted to Officer. Officers are sworn to seven years of active service. After which those who do not swear to further active service are still considered Knights of the Star and form a reserve component (with Duty on 6 or less) that is required to submit to annual ceremonies, training and inspections. Knights may be retired due to injury or infirmity.

Knights are permitted to marry, but as Sergeants, Officers and Cadets on active service are required to live in barracks, they are strongly encouraged not to do so until they complete their seven years or reach the rank of lieutenant.

The order often abbreviates their full name to Knights of the Star.

The Gold Coast Confederacy

Take a rainfall map of Northern California and Southern Oregon and cross reference it with a population density map. Anywhere that the annual rainfall was less than 35 inches is blighted and overrun with infected people and animals. Anywhere where the population density was about 2,500 per sq. mile or greater went critical and is now an eerie silent ruin. Everything left is the Gold Coast Confederacy.

The Confederacy is ruled by the *Assembly,* a legislative body made up of representatives (by proportion) (Status 4-5) appointed by every town and city. Each city choses it's representatives by the means of their choice. Some are appointed, some are elected, some are purchased, and some are chosen by prophetic visions. The Assembly meets in The Republic of Redding at least three times a year.

The Assembly appoints a *Chairman* (Status 6) by parliamentary process. He leads a modest executive office and is the nominal commander in chief of the Knights of the Star.

The Assembly also appoints the *Circuit Judges* who travel the Confederacy and act as a legally mandated court of appeals for local justice.

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Individual cities and towns are free to organize themselves as they see fit, to raise their own militia and police forces, and to make their own laws. The Confederacy only requires that they provide units for the Confederate Army, respect the Law of the Road, permit citizens to seek justice from the Circuit Judges (though they have the right to an appeal to the Assembly, and judges are instructed to respect local laws), and send the required representatives to Assembly.

The Confederacy is CR2; individual towns and cities range from CR2 to CR5. The population is roughly 1 million; about 1-in-100 has psionics (about 1-in-50 has latent abilities).

Religions

Catholicism: The Roman Catholic Church was the largest single Christian denomination in California before in the old days and remains a significant belief today. Cut off from Rome the Bishops of the Confederacy have formed a *Curia* to lead the church. This body has been historically careful to couch all rulings in disclaimers in the event they are overruled by the Vatican.

Most Catholics believe:

- The blight is a natural phenomenon, just alien, and unrelated to true supernatural powers.
- Psis have dangerous but useful abilities, and are no more (or less) inherently wicked than anybody else. Many do distrust psis but out of fear for their privacy or of the blight -non-religious reasons
- The eschaton has not come and is not immanent. Christ will still come “like a thief in the night” in some (far) future time.

One interesting feature of the Church is that priests wear altar boy vestments, as well as cassocks, because many of the first priests after the blight were altar boys who found themselves leading congregations after so many had died. They also have only Venerated canonization candidates since the blight and encourage the congregation to treat Venerated as though they may be Saints (and they keep record of attributed miracles) but the Pope just hasn’t got the word to them yet.

Tribulationist Protestants: Evangelical Protestant congregations have largely adopted the idea that the world already ended and is currently undergoing the tribulations.

Most Tribulationists believe:

- The blight was the apocalypse. The blighted are possessed by demons. The so-called “prawns” are the locusts of Revelations.
- Some of the people who vanished in the blight were raptured. They reject the historical account that this happened only in the cities.
- The big cities were destroyed not by the blight, but by the wrath of God, as punishment. They associate this with the “fire” that God promised Noah, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Psionics are the mark of the beast.

The Blight Years

- It is still possible to be saved on Judgement day, but no longer possible to be raptured. Most people alive today are damned, however.

The Haven: A syncretic faith that grew out of the New Age, Haven was established in Weed on the slopes of Mt. Shasta. They are ruled by a telepathic gestalt called the *Covergence* which consists of all psis in Weed who choose to join it. According to the sigmas, as followers of Haven call themselves, Convergence manifests as a higher consciousness independent of the individuals that compose it. Convergence is kept running at all times as sigmas tune in, turn on, and drop out.

Most sigmas believe:

- The blight was the beginning of the Age of Aquarius and was required to bring about Convegence.
- The prawns aren't evil, we just haven't figured out how to communicate with them yet, but in the future Convergence does. They call them *ushers*.
- Covergence can see into the future, the past, throughout the universe, and into other dimensions.
- Psi powers are a gift, brought by the prawns in order to empower mankind and usher in the Age of Aquarius –to bring about Convergence.
- In the future everyone has the gift and is part of Convergence.
- It's the duty of the gifted to have children and spread the gift. Non-gifted sigmas must only have children with the gifted who are strongly encouraged to reproduce as much as possible with non-gifted in order to spread the gift quickly.
- Convergence is in contact with a hyper-evolved future state that has merged with similarly evolved alien Convergences called *Tripsee)*.
- Fixers are especially important as their abilities are required to manipulate the worldlines in order to join Tripsee.
- The people who died when the cities went critical transcended to a higher state of being where they act as guides to projectors in the inner astral plane and are preparing to welcome humanity to Tripsee.

Haven provides systematic training in psionic abilities to sigmas, and offers it to non-sigmas as a recruitment tool.

Other Protestants: Formally mainstream sects like Methodists and Lutherans are the fourth largest sect. Their beliefs generally fall between the Catholics and the Tribulationsists. Most fear the blight, and psis. Some agree that the tribulations may have started but with less firm conviction than the Tribulationists. Others believe psionics are a gift from god, sent to help us through these trying times.

Other religions: Smaller congregations of Jews, Muslims, Mormons, and others exist in many towns.

The Blight Years

Popular Belief

The people of the Confederacy have survived a dark age and the depredations of an alien parasitic plague, which has influenced their beliefs.

The Old Days: The time before the blight has passed into legend, very little real history survives in the decades immediately following in which all was a struggle to survive. The relics of this time still dominate the physical landscape and the legacy dominates the cultural one.

Gift, Taint, Mark and Psionics: As a general rule only scholars use the terms “psionics” and “psis”.

In the umbral period following the blight people began to realize that those that survived the infection both suffered from madness and could manifest supernatural abilities. They also found that people descended from survivors often inherited the power. Terrified of the blight, people are distrustful of anyone who is associated with it. When it became clear that the blight is actually an invisible alien parasite, this only deepened the distrust –are people with powers still somehow possessed?

In many towns psis were persecuted and considered tainted. While this has lessened over time, in most places, it is still popular belief that they suffer more mental instability than normals and it is still suspected that there’s a reason people have powers and it’s not good. Powers are often still called “*The Taint*,” and psis -*Tainted*.

Tribulationists believe that psi is the mark of the beast, and call them “*Marked*”.

In the Haven of Weed the religious veneration of psionics resulted in a different outcome. There the blight is believed to have happened for a reason, and psi is known as “*The Gift”,* -psis are “*The Gifted”*. As Haven has spread beyond Weed this belief has spread too.

Psi Powers are both useful and terrifying, and while people have begun to accept them they still fear them, especially telepaths. The result of the mixing of these attitudes is that psis have Social Regard 2 (Psi; Feared) [10] (except from sigmas which treat it as Venerated instead); Intolerance (Psis) [-5] and (Telepaths) [-1] is common in most places.

Food Taboos: Since the blight is carried on food, there are all manner of complex food taboos and practices involving agriculture. Foods are ritually washed before eating. Crops are destroyed if there’s even a suspicion that they’ve become infected.

Reproductive Taboos: As it is assumed that high population densities are extremely dangerous there are many reproductive controls. Most people have small families and contraception is an acceptable and widespread practice, even by Catholics. This has resulted in a very slow rate of population growth since the blight.

Technology

The huge discontinuity with the past, the low population of the Confederacy, the effects of the lowered food productivity, and limited trade has kept the Confederacy at a level of technology

equivalent to the late 19th century. Relics from the old days still exist, as do books on general science, engineering and technology. The Confederacy is therefore TL5/8. Some TL6 equipment is available as artisan products or by import at double cost. TL8 relic equipment, if available, is 8x cost. Some advanced technology that doesn't require a large industrial base to sustain is available at normal cost; in general if it's something that was invented after 1880 but could easily have been done prior to 1880 the Confederacy is considered advanced in that specific technology, examples include: bicycles, web gear and the First Aid techniques on ***GURPS Bio-Tech*** p 123-124 (including CPR).

Psi-tech: Various forms of psionic technology are known to the Confederation primarily by The Knights of Star and by the Haven. In general the confederacy is advanced (TL6) in Psi-Tech.

Kirilian Photography (***GURPS Psi-Tech*** p. 8) exists, works, and can photograph astral beings.

Psionic Testing Equipment (***GURPS Psi-Tech*** p.9) is used routinely by the Knights of the Star to test potential recruits.

Sensory Deprivation (***GURPS Psi-Tech*** p. 10) is available and is often used by sigmas in Convergence.

Psychotronic Batteries (***GURPS Psi-Tech*** p. 14) exist but are called "Energy Crystals" and are manufactured primarily by the Haven from natural crystals. Cost is $2500 for a 10 point crystal.

Symbiotic Crystals (***GURPS Psi-Tech*** p. 15) have been found on recovered blighted corpses, however they aren't well understood. It's unclear where they come from or why the blighted have them. Those examples that have been recovered are currently undergoing study by various organizations in the Confederacy.

Null Field Generators and *Null Neutralizer Nodes* (GURPS Psi-Tech p. 16) are experimental technologies with 1/10 the affected radius. Only prototypes of the tower-sized versions are possible and these can only operate for a few minutes to a half hour with available power sources and batteries.

PK Batteries (***GURPS Psi-Tech*** p. 25) exist but only for Large and Very Large TL5 Batteries.

Telepathic Barriers ***(GURPS Psi-Tech*** p. 29) exist but due the rarity and unreliability of electric power typically require a dedicated generator to operate and are mostly used by governments and other large organizations to secure meeting rooms. Additionally, they require an operator with Electronics Operation (Psychotronics). The alarm function requires a success on a Per-based roll.

The following Psi drugs (***GURPS Psi-Tech*** p. 33-35) are well known and available (at 1/4th the cost); in *Blight Years* they are either patent medicine, drugs produced primarily by Haven, or naturally occurring plants (many non-native to California but recovered from pre-blight seed stock):

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Drug	Name	Form
Blocker	Chavez Sister's Thought-Shield	Pill (10 seconds)
Brainstorm	Dr. Howard's Psychic Aide	Injected (2 seconds)
Catalyst Drug	Yajé	Drinkable (must be prepared) (5 minutes)
Mind Hype	White Lotus	Injected (10 minutes)
Muffler	Lion (contains leonurine)	Injected
Psi-Boosters	Varies [Salvia (S. divinorum) for Astral Travel]	Varies
Shiver	Fitz's Nerve Stimulating Tonic	Injected or Drinkable (30 seconds)
Trance	Carol Lowell's Tincture of Amanita	Drinkable or Injected (10 seconds)
Window	Ephedrine	Drinkable or Pill

There are persistent rumors that Somatic Traumatic Latency (***GURPS Psi-Tech*** p. 40) has been attempted.

The *Electric Pentacle* (***GURPS Horror*** p. 48-49) works on astral beings (including ghosts, prawns, and projectors) and the blighted. It also resists attempts to teleport. The TL5 version requires larger batteries and is 16 lbs heavier.

Other technology:

Weapons: Sustainable weapons technology is roughly equivalent to late TL5 (1870s). For simplicity assume that equivalents of most TL5 firearms available by 1880 exist with but with different makes (many of these are clones of the originals anyway).

The Order of the Star issues the *Redwood C193 "Judicator" Calvary .44-40* (as the Colt M1873 SAA cavalry pistol ***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 95 chambered in .44-40 Azteca but break open rather than loading gate), the *Azecta C202 10G* shotgun (the 20" Winchester Model 1887 (***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 105, but available at TL5), the *Azteca C199* .44-40 carbine (as the Winchester Model 1873 carbine in .44-40, ***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 110) and the *Star Armory C23 "Osprey" .45-70* (A Fine (Accurate) copy of the Sharps Model 1874 in .45-70 Springfield with 6x telescopic scope; Acc 5+2, 4d+1 pi, 11.9 lbs, $1950).

Beyond the Confederacy

The Blight Zones: South and East of the Confederacy are extensive blight zones. Blighted often wander into the confederacy, which is why the towns and cities are walled, the Army patrols the borders, and the Knights of the Star patrol the roads. Mostly these incursions seem to be random but occasionally there's one that purposeful and organized.

The Blight Years

The Washington Free Cities: Northern Oregon and Washington are much like California before the Confederacy, independent city states and leagues of neighbors. The Confederacy trades with them.

New Alberta: Through trade the Confederacy is aware of a large state in Canada, which is apparently very technologically advanced, expansive, aggressive, and wealthy. They are apparently led by a *Governor* who claims to be ruling on behalf of the British Crown. They have established a trade outpost in British Columbia and TL6 goods produced in New Alberta are available in the Confederacy.

The Pacific: When sailors go more than 200 nautical miles west into the pacific, they feel a strong telepathic compulsion to turn back. No attempt to overcome this has succeeded. In 186 the Confederate Navy launched an expedition staffed with Anti-Psis and armed with Chavez Sister's Thought-Shield. They never returned.

The Blight

The blight is an astral parasite with an (at least) three stage lifecycle. The first stage infects plants, appearing in the astral plane as a crystalline growth (much like plants after an ice-storm).When it matures this stage produces spore-like emanations which resemble tiny bright motes of light astrally. Vertebrate animals exposed to these "spores" or who eat infected plants can become infected with the second stage parasite. Infection results first results in a compulsion to spread the blight, followed by the development of telepathic abilities that connect the victim into a vast hive mind (eradicating their personality in the process), and finally death. At the victim's death the prawn emerges. These invisible astral parasites resemble (to projectors and in Kirilian photographs) a floating crustacean roughly a third the size of the victim. Little is known about what the prawns do, or even if they are the final adult stage.

Roll HT-3 once per day when exposed to the spores (e.g. in close proximity to infected plants) or when eating cooked food made from infected plants or animals (this roll is at an additional -3 when eating raw plants or meat). It behaves like an ordinary disease with a 72 hour delay, and 40 weekly cycles except that instead of toxic damage it reduces Will by one point per cycle.

The bite of an infected creature causes an immediate HT-4 roll; or HT-6 if the attacker is in the final stage.

The plant borne stage of the blight thrives in warm, dry climates and dies from frost and humidity.

Symptoms:

Initial Symptoms: The victim suffers from a blinding headache (Severe Pain p B438) giving -4 to DX, IQ, skills and self-control rolls (High/Low Pain Threshold has the normal effect). He also is at -2 FP.

After losing 1/3 Will: The victim feels much better. The pain stops and his FP returns to normal. He develops Compulsion (Spread The Blight) (15), Sense of Duty (Other Infected) , Delusion (I'm completely cured. I'm certainly not spreading the Blight!) and Detect (Other Infected) (Reflexive, Telepathy).

After losing ½ Will: The Self Control roll for the Compulsion is reduced to (12)

After losing 2/3 Will: The Self Control roll is reduced to 6 and the character becomes Supersensitive.

After losing all Will: The victim's individuality is completely subsumed by the hive mind and gains the blighted template. After 2d months, the disease begins to inflict 1 point of toxic damage weekly until the host dies; freeing the prawn.

Surviving: If at any point in the cycle the character succeeds at the HT roll and throws off the disease he will regain Will at one point per day of rest. For each point of Will lost, however, the character gains 5 points of psionic abilities (but not skills) and -5 points of mental disadvantages (typically neurological and psychological disorders, or psionic disorders like Supersensitive). Additionally that character gains Immunity to the Blight [5].

Descendants of survivors frequently inherent the psionic gifts without the disadvantages. They also inherit Resistant to the Blight +3 [1], Resistant to the Blight +8 [3], or Immunity to the Blight [5].

Offspring of currently infected individuals are born infected. The disease doesn't do damage in this case until the victim is well into adulthood. Infected organisms continue to breed in the blight zones.

Criticality:

In the initial infections, when the population of infected individuals reached a certain density they somehow released a psychic pulse that instantly killed every vertebrate within 10 miles. This doesn't appear to be currently happening in the blight zones.

Characters

Characters in ***The Blight Years*** will be made on 250 points with -75 points in disadvantages (including up to five quirks) and based on the following template:

Knight of the Seven Pointed Star **245 points**

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX: 12 [40]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 12 [20].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0];
Advantages: Comfortable Wealth [10]; Legal Enforcement Powers (Knight of the Star) [5]; Police Rank 0 (Officer) [0]; Status 2 [10]; Social Regard: Feared 2 (Psi) [10] • 75 points in psionic powers (*either* one 50-point package and one 25 point package *or* three 25 point packages from Chapter 3 of ***GURPS Psis***, or from ***Pyramid #3/2: Psionics;*** or 75 points in

abilities and skills chosen by the player, including Imbue 1-3 (Power Limited -5%, Psionic -10%) [9/17/34]). • 30 points chosen from among ST +1 or +2 [10/level], DX+1 [20], IQ +1 [20], HT +1 [10], Basic Speed (up to +2.00) [+5/level], Per +1 or +2 [5/level], Acute Senses (any) [2/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Danger Sense [15], Extra Action Points 1-6 [2/level]; Fit[5]; Intuition [15], Luck [15], Night Vision 1-5 [1/level], Police Rank 1 (Sergeant) [5], Sensitive [5] *or* Empathy [15], Second Wind 1-5 [5/level]; Signature Gear [1/level]; Single Minded [5], improve Resistant to the Blight +3 to +8 [2] or Immunity [4], additional Talent in your psionic powers (up to four) [5/level]; Psionic or Style Perks [1/level]; or one of the lenses below.
Perks: Resistant to the Blight +3 [1], Style Familiarity: Order Pistol Shooting [1], Style Familiarity: Order Hand-to-Hand [1]
Disadvantages: Duty (Gold Coast Confederacy) (12 or less) [-10] • -15 points chosen from among Charitable [-15*], Code of Honor (Knight of the Star*) [-10], Curious [-5*], Stubbornness [-5], and Sense of Duty (Posse) [-5] • a further -30 points chosen from among the previous traits, *Power-Based Disadvantages* (***GURPS Psis*** p. 13) (NOT including Intolerance (Psis), Mundane Background, or Epilepsy), Hard of Hearing [-10], Honesty [-10*], Intolerance (Non-Psis), (Civilians) or (Criminals) [-5], Light Sleeper [-5], No Sense of Humor [-10], Overconfidence [-5*], Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents) [-10] or Cannot Kill [-15], Sense of Duty (Order of the Star), (Law-Abiding Citizens) or (Gold Coast Confederacy) [-10].
Primary Skills: Area Knowledge (GCC) (E) IQ+1 [2]-13, Professional Skill (Law Enforcement) (A) IQ [2] 12, Fast-Draw (Ammo) (E) DX [1]-12, Fast-Draw (Pistol) (E) DX+1 [1]-12, Guns (Pistol) (E) DX+1 [2]-13, Riding (Equines) (A) DX [2]-12, Search (A) Per+1 [4]-13, and 20 additional points on the skills and techniques of Order Pistol Shooting or on Psionic Skills and Techniques.
Secondary Skills: Judo (H) DX-1 [2]-11, Observation (A) Per [2]-12, Savior-Faire (Order of the Star) (E) IQ [1]-12, Tonfa (A) DX-1 [1] -11, Tracking (A) Per-1 [1]-11, Wrestling (A) [2] DX -12 • Also pick *four* of Forced Entry or Knot-Tying both (E) DX+1 [2]-13, Stealth (A) DX [2]-12, Current Affairs (Any) (E) IQ+1 [2]-13, Animal Handling (Equines) or Criminology both (A) IQ [2]-12, Intimidation or Mind Block, both (A) Will [2]-12, Detect Lies (H) Per-1 [2]-12, Expert Skill (Psionics) or Law (GCC Criminal) both (H) IQ-1 [2]-11
Background Skills: *Six* of Brawling (E) DX [1]-12; Knife (E) DX [1]-12; First Aid (E) IQ [1]-12; Animal Handling (any), Meteorology, Survival (Mountains), (Woodlands), or (Beach), or Farming all (A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Forensics, Tactics or Theology (any) all (H) IQ-2 [1]-10

*Serve the Confederacy and the Order. Protect lawful trade on the roads. Wear the uniform with pride and take care of your gear. Protect and assist your fellow Knights. Don't dishonor or embarrass the Order or your posse. Ride well, shoot straight, and speak the truth.

You may take up to -30 additional points in disadvantages including up to five quirks (for a total disadvantage limit of -75; the mandatory Duty doesn't count against the limit). You may spend the remaining points 5 to 35 points on additional psionic abilities the skills, techniques and perks of either Order Style, on the following lenses, or on any other traits the GM agrees is appropriate; including combining it with the 75 points in powers for a 100 point power package.

Characters may take one Style perk per 10 points in Style skills and one additional combat perk per 20 points in combat skills. They make take one psionic perk per 25 points in the abilities and skills of the power. They make take up to six additional perks that are neither combat nor psionic.

Lenses
Field Medic [25]
Advantages: Healer 1 [10]

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Perks: Skill Adaptation (Pharmacy (Synthetic) includes Herbal Psi-Drugs) [1]
Primary Skills: Diagnosis (H) IQ [2]-12*; (H) Physician (H) IQ+1 [4]-13*; Surgery (Trauma) (H) IQ+1[4]-13*; Veterinary (Horses) (A) IQ+1 [2]-13*; Pharmacy (H) IQ [2]-12* (Synthetic).
*Includes Healer

Officer Training [25]
Will: +1 [5]
Advantages: Police Rank 2 (Lieutenant) [10]
Primary Skills: Administration (A) IQ [2] -12; Leadership (A) IQ+1 [4] -13; Tactics (H) IQ [4] -12.

Sharpshooter [25]
Primary Skills: Camouflage IQ [1] -12; Guns (Rifle) DX [1] -12*.
Perks: Style Familiarity (Sharpshooter) [1]
22 additional points in the components of the Sharpshooter Style (***GURPS Tactical Shooting*** p 52)

*Note that if you raise this to 14 or higher Guns (Pistol) can default from it. However you must still spend one point on both Gun skills to qualify for both Styles.

Wilderness Scout [25]
Advantages: Outdoorsman 2 [20]
Skills: Improve Tracking (A) to Per+2 [1] -14* and Survival (any) (A) to IQ+2 [1] -14*; Camouflage (A) IQ+2 -14* [2]; Navigation (Land) (A) IQ+1[1] -13*.
*Includes Outdoorsman

New Technique:
Engulf

Hard

Default: TK Grab-6; cannot exceed TX Grab.
Your TK completely surround a grappled target and inflict +2 CP per die. These cannot be spent for Contests.

Styles

Knights of the Star are rigorously trained in hand-to-hand combat and in pistol shooting. These styles were, according the order's legends, practiced by the original highway patrol and were passed down through the blight years by descendants of officers from the old days. In truth these styles were largely resurrected from police, military, and martial arts training manuals.

Order Hand-to-Hand

4 points

This style is descended from police-adapted Brazilian Jiu-jitsu (***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 167-168) and stylists should fight in a similar way. They are also trained to use the Tonfa for softening strikes, armed grapples, and chokes.

Skills: Judo; Wrestling; Tonfa.
Techniques: Arm or Hand Lock (Judo, Tonfa or Wrestling); Armed Grapple (Tonfa); Breakfall (Judo); Choke Hold (Judo, Tonfa or Wrestling); Grabbing Parry (Judo), Ground Fighting (Judo or Wrestling); Handcuffing (Judo or Wrestling); Head Lock (Judo, Wrestling or Tonfa); Leg Grapple (Judo or Wrestling); Leg or Foot Lock(Judo, Tonfa or Wrestling); Leg Throw; Low Fighting (Judo or Wrestling); Lower-Body Hand or Arm Lock (Judo or Wrestling); Lower-Body Leg or Foot Lock (Judo or Wrestling); Scissors Hold (Wrestling); Retain Weapon (Tonfa);Trip (Judo or Wrestling).

Perks: Ground Guard; Power Grappling; Technique Adaptation (Ground-Fighting); Technique Adaptation (Low-Fighting).

Order Pistol Shooting

5 points

This style was taught by the CHP, resurrected from training material and adapted for mounted use. It is a Point-Shooting style (***GURPS Tactical Shooting*** p. 50) and includes the typical elements like the preference for un-sighted shooting and the "combat crouch".

Skills: Guns (Pistol); Fast-Draw (Ammo); Fast-Draw (Pistol); Riding (Horse)
Techniques: Behind-the-Back Shot (Pistol); Cavalry Training (Pistol); Close-Hip Shooting (Pistol); Close-Quarters Battle (Pistol); Combat Riding (Horse); Double-Loading (Pistol); Fast-Firing (Pistol); Immediate Action (Pistol); Quick-Shot (Pistol); Retain Weapon (Pistol); Thumbing (Pistol).
Perks: Barricade Tactics (Pistol); Cool Under Fire; Fastest Gun in the West (Pistol); Off-Hand Weapon Training (Pistol); Quick Reload (any); Standard Operating Procedure(Cleaning Bug); Sure-Footed (Sand or Uneven); Tap-Rack-Bang (Pistol); Tracer Eyes; Weapon Bond.

Optional Traits:
Advanced training and additional range time allows:
Skills: Guns (Shotgun); Guns (Rifle)
Techniques: Fast-Firing (Rifle)

Equipment

Knights of the Star are issued a set of uniforms, a locker and a footlocker. Below the rank of lieutenant knights stay in a bunkhouse with the other members of their posse. Lieutenants and captains share rooms (bedroom and office) with a knight of equal rank and are permitted to maintain housing outside of the chapter house if they wish. Knights of higher rank get their own quarters.

For duty, they are issued:

- An Azteca C199 .44-40 carbine with 12 rounds.
- A cavalry horse (p. B459) with bit and bridle, horseshoes, saddle and tack, stirrups and two saddle bags (all p. B289)
- A Redwood C193 "Judicator" Calvary .44-40 pistol carried underloaded with 5 rounds
- 45 rounds of .44-40 in belt loops.
- 45 rounds of .44-40 in belt pouch
- Calvary boots (p B384) with spurs (p. B289).
- 2 canteens (***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 53, p B) of water.
- Web Gear (***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 54).
- 2 blankets (***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 56, p. B)
- Shelter Half Tent (**GURPS High-Tech** p. 56)
- Belt Holster (**GURPS High-Tech p**. 153)
- Carbine Scabbard (***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 154)
- Gun Cleaning Kit (***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 160)
- Handcuffs (***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 53, handmade to TL6 factory standards, $100).
- 5 bandages (***GURPS High*-Tech** p. 53)
- One bottle of Fitz's Nerve Stimulating Tonic (10 doses, .5 lbs).

Optionally they may carry a Azecta C202 10G, loaded with 4 rounds of 00 buckshot, an additional 16 rounds of 00 buck and a shotgun scabbard.

The posse as a whole carries a set of group basics (p. B) divided up among the knights.

The Sharpshooter replaces the carbine with a Star Armory C23 "Osprey" .45-70, the rounds in the belt pouch with .45-70, and the carbine scabbard with a rifle scabbard.

The field medic adds:

- An additional saddle bag.
- A doctor's bag (***GURPS High*-Tech** p. 220) with 12 bandages, four small boards for splinting, an ontological reflector, a percussor, a stethoscope, a suturing kit, four doses of chloroform, 20 doses of castor oil, six doses of morphine, six doses of Lion, and a notebook with pencil.
- Surgical Kit (***GURPS High*-Tech** p 223)

Additionally characters have personal basics (***GURPS High*-Tech** p. and p. B) (including cord, notebook, pencil, matches, and mess kit).

Characters start with up to $2000 in additional personal gear. Don't bother keeping any as cash, as it won't be used in this campaign. Signature gear is worth $2500/point.

Rules

In order to emphasize the horror aspects, The Blight Years will use many of the optional rules for realism as well as those for stress and fear.

Optional Rules in Effect:

Injuries:
Bleeding and *Accumulated Wounds* p B420; *Partial Injuries* ***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 136; *Severe Bleeding* (including cumulative penalties and *Bandaging Severe Wounds*) ***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 138; *Lasting and Permanent Injuries* ***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 138; *Body Hits* ***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 162; *Limb Hits* ***GURPS High-Tech*** p. 162.

Hit Locations:
In addition to the Basic Set hit locations the following will be in use: *Ear, Jaw, Joints, Nose, Spine, Veins and Arteries* (***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 137); *Pelvis* (***GURPS Tactical Shooting*** p. 15); and *Abdomen* (including *Digestive Tract*) (***GURPS Low Tech Instant Armor*** p. 19).

Styles: The rules for styles (***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 140-143). Characters are allowed to try *any* technique, but may only improve those taught by one of their styles.

General Combat: Expanded Combat Maneuvers (***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 97-108), the *Melee Attack Options* (although many of them won't be often relevant) ***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 190-113; Untrained Fighters ***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 113 as modified for *Untrained Shooters*, ***GURPS Tactical Shooting*** p. 47; *Tricky Shooting*, ***GURPS Martial Arts*** p 121; *Parries with Legs or Feet* ***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 123, *Retreat Options*, ***GURPS Martial Arts*** and *Situational Awareness**, GURPS Tactical Shooting*** p. 11***.*** As the game progresses and players become more comfortable with the unfamiliar rules systems, *Reaction Time*, ***GURPS Tactical***

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Shooting p. 32, will be phased in (default action: All-Out Defense to or in cover, Move to cover, the character's last Maneuver, or Do Nothing; go down the list and take the first possible).

Grappling: Close Combat Options on ***GURPS Martial Arts*** p. 114 -119 as modified by ***GURPS Martial Arts: Technical Grappling*** p. 20-25; the general system in ***GURPS Martial Arts: Technical Grappling,*** Judo throws require a grabbing parry and are resolved as quick contests (***GURPS Martial Arts: Technical Grappling*** p. 39). *Reaction Time* won't apply if grappling.

Firearms: The general rules in ***GURPS High –Tech,*** and ***GURPS Tactical Shooting*** including all the rules in the *Harsh Realism* box on p. 32; *Restricted Dodge Against Firearms,* ***GURPS Tactical Shooting*** p. 17, with the addition that groups of shooters combining RoF for suppression (p. 18) count as a single shooter for this rule; and *Malfunction*, p. B407.

Fear: Cool Under Fire, and *Shell Shock,* ***GURPS Tactical Shooting*** p. 34. Professional Skill (Law Enforcement) can replace Soldier in all Will-based rolls. *Stress and Derangement* ***GURPS Horror*** p. 141 to 142; *Flight or Frenzy* ***GURPS Horror*** p. 141 on stun resulting from critically failed Fright Checks (or if the stunned character fails a SC roll for Berserk or Cowardice); and *Stun is Fun* (ibid.) on all other instances of Mental Stun.

Psionics: Ergokinesis is not split (and Cyberpsi is generally unavailable); Telepathy works on all vertebrates; Dream Control does not exist (and there is no "dream world"); *Optional Crippling Rules* (***GURPS Psionic Powers*** p. 7); *anyone* may use the *Mental Maneuvers* (***GURPS Psionic Powers*** p. 11); the *Jam* technique (***GURPS Psionic Powers*** p. 31) exists for all abilities; *Telekinetic Control* (***GURPS Psionic Powers*** p. 54) and *Telespeak* (***GURPS Psionic Powers*** p. 59) do not exist; and *RL Exoteleport* (***GURPS Psionic Powers*** p. 70) replaces Exoteleport.

Imbuements: Psionic imbuements using the rules in ***GURPS Power Ups 1: Imbuements,*** and *Psi-Powered Imbuements*, ***Pyramid #3/12: Tech and Toys*** p. 24-26 (including the *TK Bullet* optional rule on p. 25).

*Fatigue: The Last Gasp (****Pyramid #3/44: Alternate GURPS II*** **p**. 4-13), except *High Resolution ST Loss* (p. 5) and *Mighty Warriors and Action Points* (p. 7) but including *Variant Move: Acceleration* (p. 9). Each discrete action costs AP. The HT roll for injury mitigates both Shock and AP loss. Poker chips will be used to track AP (and PC's will be required to track APs for their mounts).

Fatigue and Psi: Repeated attempts now cost 4 AP. Using psi techniques and imbuements costs 8 AP. Extra effort costs 10 AP. Cure halves the FP costs (1 FP heals 4 HP). Steal Energy and Psychotronic Batteries initially drain ½ the targets AP [x(level-5) for Steal Energy 7+]; once the target's AP is 0 it drains FP at the normal rate as long as the target has mild fatigue. At severe fatigue drain time is quadrupled and is x12 to drain deep fatigue. Steal Energy restores AP initially and then restores FP at the same rate. Psychotronic Batteries store 1 FP after draining all AP and then charge at 1:1. Each level of a Psionic Talent gives 1 bonus AP for that power only.

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*Economics and Wealth: Abstract Wealth (**Pyramid #3/44: Alternate GURPS II* **p**. 30-32); buying and selling are unlikely to be important in this game, and Job rolls are superfluous as most of the game will be about the PC's *on-duty* activities.

House Rules in Effect

Step and Wait: You may take a Step when Waiting. This replaces any movement from the triggered action (so it's pointless to trigger a Move or Move and Attack). Step and Wait isn't a recovery action if the Wait isn't triggered (it is a zero-cost action in that case instead).

Parrying Unarmed Attacks: The "free" attack from parrying an unarmed attack only does half damage. This is cutting for most blades, but is crushing for most other weapons including hafted weapons like spears and axes.

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