



Air Patrol

Patrick Gamblin

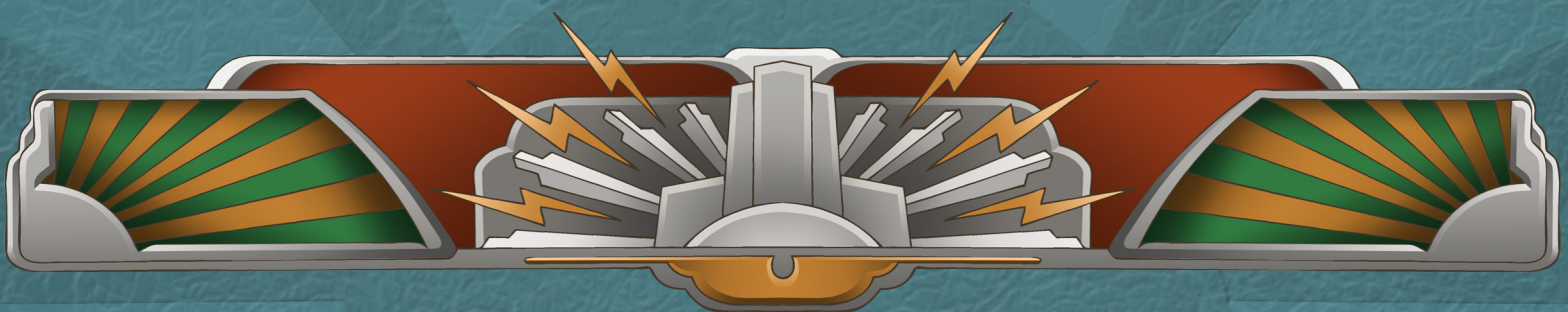


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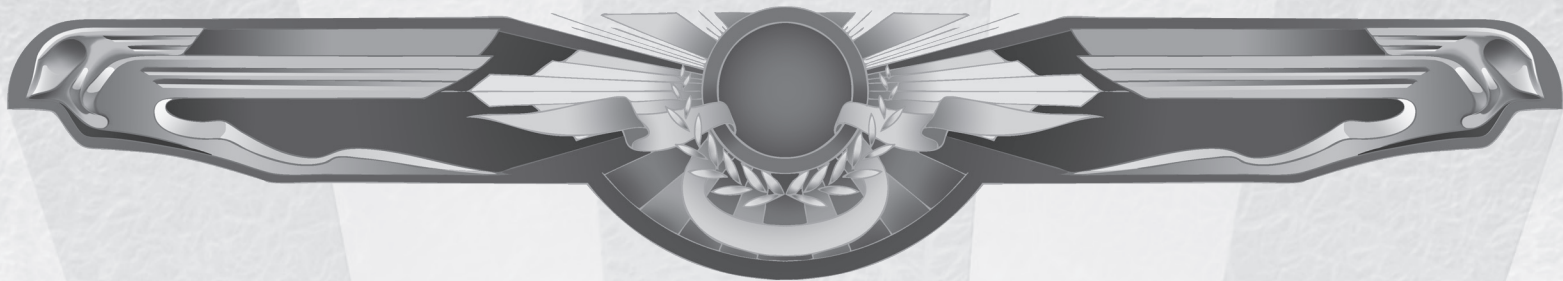
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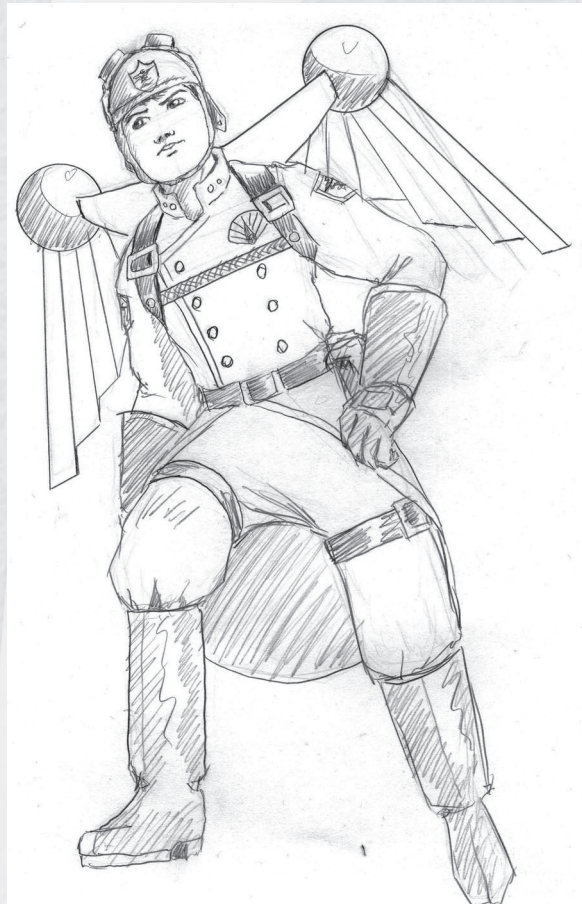
Some artwork taken from Science Fiction Weapons Clip-Art , copyright © James Thomson Used with permission.

Created for submission to the Ronnies.



“It’s a strange world out there. The old timers tell stories from the previous century, of great submersible ships exploring lost sunken cities and huge aerial vessels journeying across the face of the world. Those were just stories to most people, though, until the Great War. Only just over twenty years ago, it was when everything changed. Sure, the Wrights had led us into the sky, and Ford’s cars were already crowding the cities, but the real breakthroughs came when the aliens, in their monstrous towering contraptions landed on that day in the summer of 1917. The war ended right there, as both sides immediately had bigger problems to deal with. Shoulder to shoulder, the countries around the world fought the alien invaders.

“Things looked bad at first, as the invaders’ death rays slew men and armoured tank alike, but humanity held and held, until the Germans broke the stalemate. Yellow clouds appeared on the horizon as they released deadly mustard gas into the war zone. It was an indiscriminate killer, and many a soldier still has nightmares of that day, but it broke the alien lines. Within hours their machines had stopped moving. We had won. The war never started back up, what with the nations of the world temporarily being more interested in what they could learn from the technology

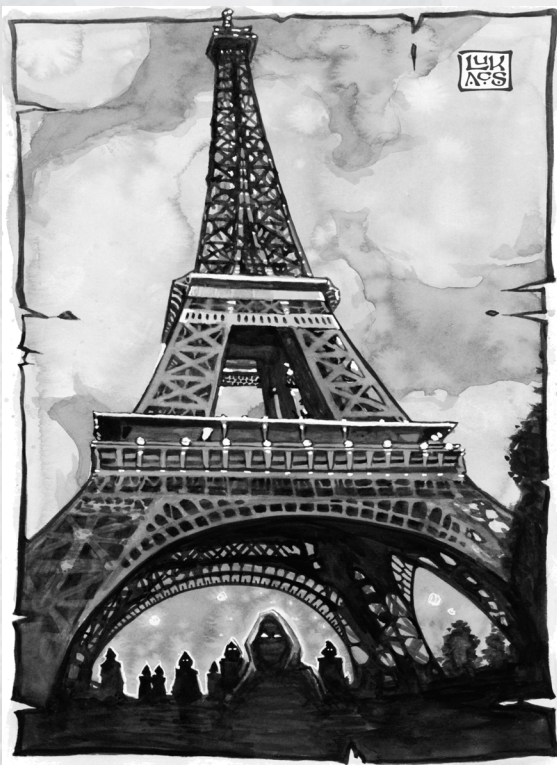


Officer Hamilton Locke, NYC Air Patrol, ready to take flight with his Tesla Zephyr flight pack. Can fear maintain it’s hold on our fair city for long with the Air Patrol fighting crime in the skies and on the ground?

scattered around the field of corpses. Tesla made the first breakthrough. He had been claiming he could build a ray capable of making an end of war. With what the aliens left, he was soon able to show he was partly right, he could make a death ray. It wasn’t an end to war, however, as the Spanish can attest.

“ Since that time technology has been racing forward. Death rays, flying packs, computation devices, robots, where will it end? I barely recognize the world any more.”

- Allen Stacy, The Bugle



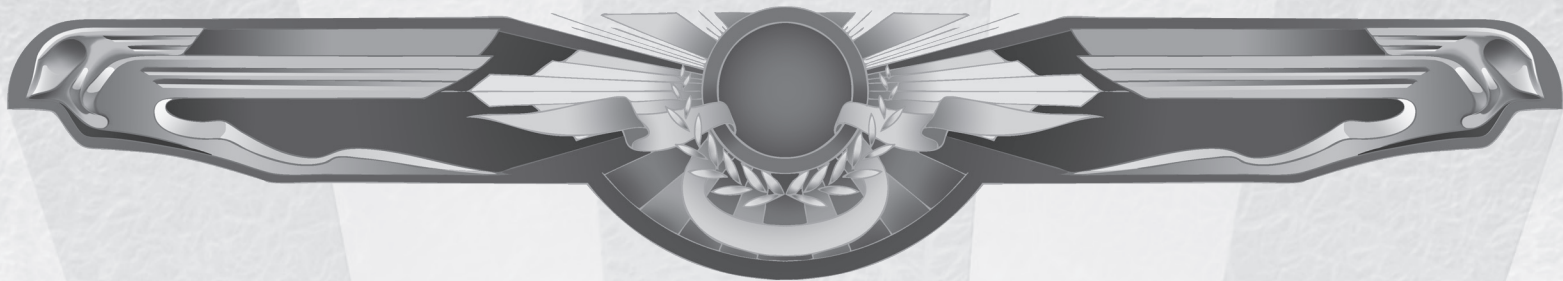
Paris, France, 1937, during the Nuit du Sang (‘Night of Blood’). French special gendarmes interrupted some sort of ritual to an ancient goddess.

History

1908: A huge explosion flattens a forest at Tunguska. Years later it is revealed the Russians destroyed some sort of alien ship.

Everyone who saw it happen dies within a year.

1917: The end of the Great War as alien forces land in Europe.



They do not respond to attempts to communicate with them and none survive the gas attacks. It is not known where they came from, but it is likely somewhere within the Solar system.

The Great Technological Revolution begins. It is still going on today.

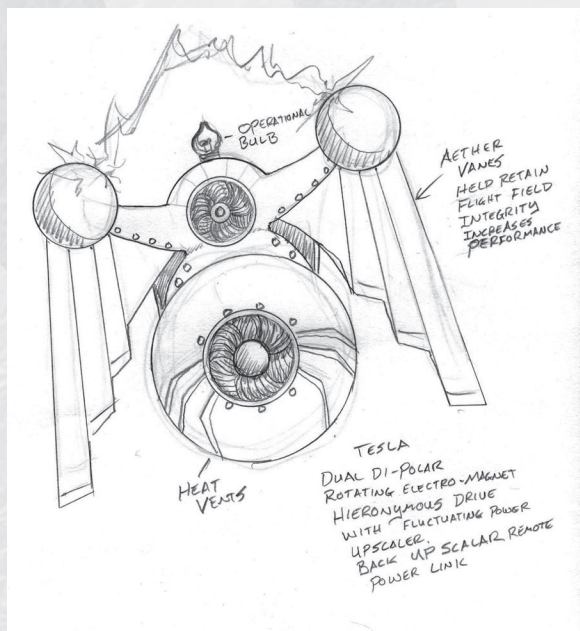
1928: The Air Patrol is founded in New York City after normal police units prove unable to stop Dr Royhawk's flooding of half the city with a tidal wave triggered by an undersea device. The Air Patrol is a dedicated fast response unit tasked with investigating strange occurrences and stopping any further dangerous events.

1937: The Night of Blood in Paris. Hundreds are killed as cultists attempt to bring their goddess to this world. It is publicly assumed to be the work of the insane, but there are persistent rumours that they may have been partially successful.

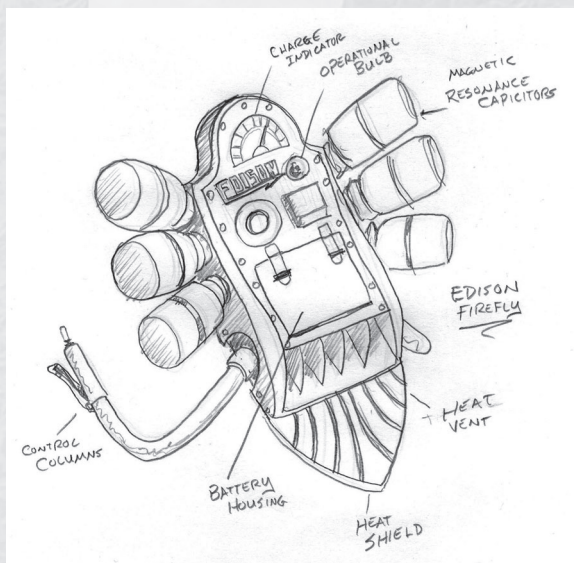
1939: The New York World's Fair.

The Air Patrol

Air Patrol is a game intended to help recreate those old serials and pulp action settings, focussing on a group of special police



The Zephyr, the flight pack used exclusively by the Air Patrol. Created by the minds at the Tesla corporation. As fast as most aircraft, the pack is shown with its wing-like control vanes folded back for maximum thrust. The electrical discharge is due to the energy levels produced when the engine runs at maximum output. Due to the pack's built-in aether engine, its power supply is almost inexhaustible.



The Edison company's Firefly, the working man's jet pack. Available in wood finish or burnished aluminum.

who ride ion projection wings and protect the world from cultists, aliens, mad scientists, mobsters, and whatever else the Game Moderator (GM) comes up with. The characters are heroic and highly capable, in the pulp tradition, but leaning more toward the Rocketeer and Doc Savage than the Shadow or the Spider.

It's probably best to approach this game from that idea of the old cliffhangers and serials. Investigations and chases and fights, eventually leading up to a confrontation with the villain and his or her likely downfall. It's less about pragmatism and more about coolness and dramatic scenes.

Settings

The setting could be any large city. New York or Chicago could be a decent setting. If you wanted a more European feel, London would be appropriate. If you wanted more glitz and flash, Hollywood might be what you want. Crime and weirdness is found in all places.

Technology

Technology is a mix of actual 1930s technology (cars, steamships, dirigibles, and propeller-driven aircraft) with the futuristic (flight packs, death rays, robots).

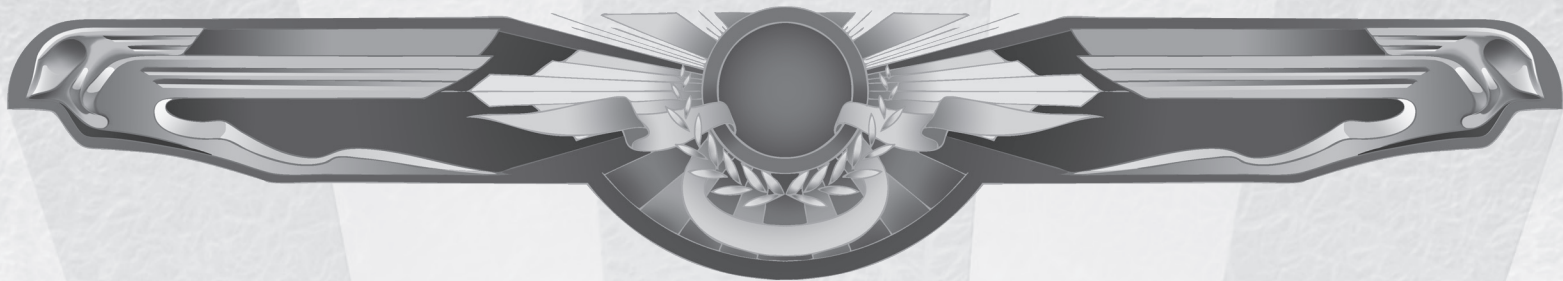
Crime

The Air Patrol is not called in to handle all crimes, only those of a certain nature.

[Needs reorganization and deeper explanation]

Terrorism/Anarchy

Any crime where the criminals are using technology that the



regular police cannot handle.

Criminals using high-technology means to upset the social order.

Militias/gangs/the Mob.

Attempting to create false life.

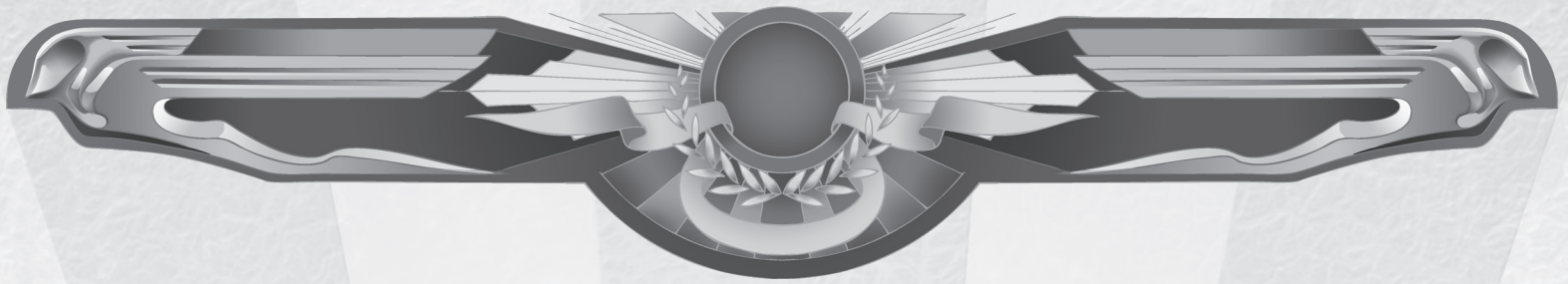
Theft/selling of military secrets.

Spying/industrial espionage.

The owning of certain high technology devices.



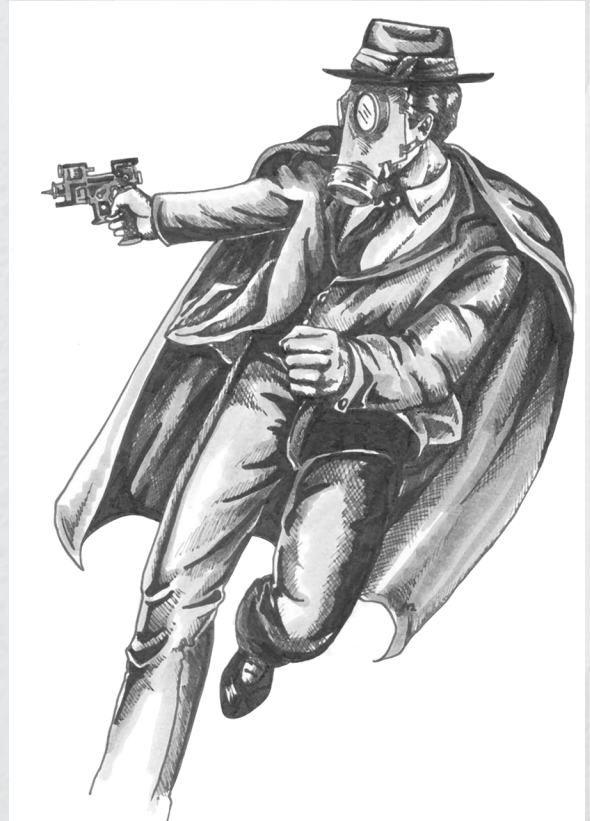
Tesla-Westinghouse's Zeus projection pistol. Capable of being connected to the Zephyr pack to draw it's energy from the pack's systems.



Sample Characters



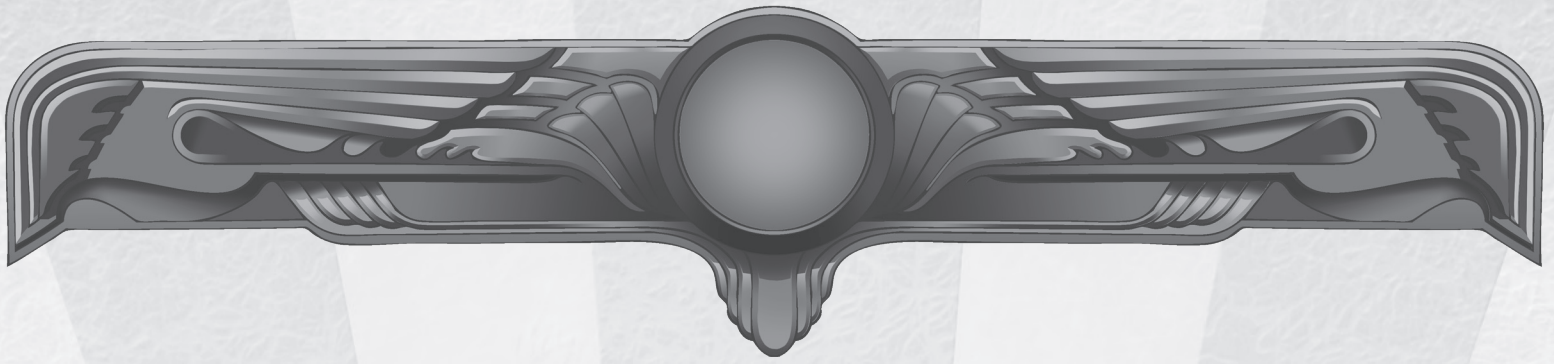
Guns Moran, after the Red Alley Slaughter. He posed for the picture, then let the photographer go.



One of the breed of men and women now calling themselves science heroes or mystery men. His name is currently unknown.



The only remaining picture of Captain Nicolas Black, a founding member of the Air Patrol. It is unknown what caused his departure, but it is believed he may be behind recent aerial attacks on government personnel.



The Basics

Before we get to character creation, here are a few basic concepts that are described in more detail in the rules section.

Skill Levels

Skill levels range from 0 to 7 and describe how good your character is with that skill.

The skill levels are:

- 0 - Untrained
- 1 - Minimal competency
- 2 - Competently trained
- 3 - Well trained
- 4 - Expert
- 5 - Among the best in the world
- 6 - A true master

Skill Checks

Skill checks compare your character's skill level to a difficulty. If their skill level is high enough, they succeed. If the difficulty is high, they may need to roll some Risk Dice to have a chance to succeed.

Risk Dice

If your character needs to do better than they normally can, you call upon risk dice. Risk dice are standard six-sided dice. Each one has a 50% chance to add 1 or 2 to your character's skill for the action in question, but also has a small chance to create a complication for your character. The more dice you roll the greater the chance of a complication. The greater the number of complication results, the worse the complication is.

Hero Points

Hero points are special points used to affect the story to the benefit of your character and their allies. They are gained by doing cool and dramatic things, and by engaging your character's Weakness. Hero points are of particular use during a Denouement.

Denouement

If your character and their allies are beating the villain, their henchmen, or a group of mooks, at a certain point the enemy's plans will be in tatters and it's time to close out that fight in a dramatic fashion. That ending is called the encounter's denouement.

Character Creation

The first step in creating an Air Patrol character is to sit down with the person running the game (hereafter referred to as the GM) and the other players and talk about the kinds of character you would be interested in playing, as well as the type of game the GM will be running. This is important, not only to make sure the character idea you pick fits the game that is going to be run, but also to make sure the character has a role in the group.

You must also decide who will be playing the leader. The leader has a role slightly different than that of the other characters. The other characters have areas of expertise that make them good at what they do. Very good at what they do, as the Air Patrol picks its members from the best available personnel. If your character is a skilled shooter, it is their job to make sure their shots count in a fight. If their focus is interrogation, they use that skill to get useful information for the group. The leader's responsibility is making these people, with their different specialties, work together efficiently and effectively, particularly during a confrontation's denouement. They get to make the plans and direct the assign-

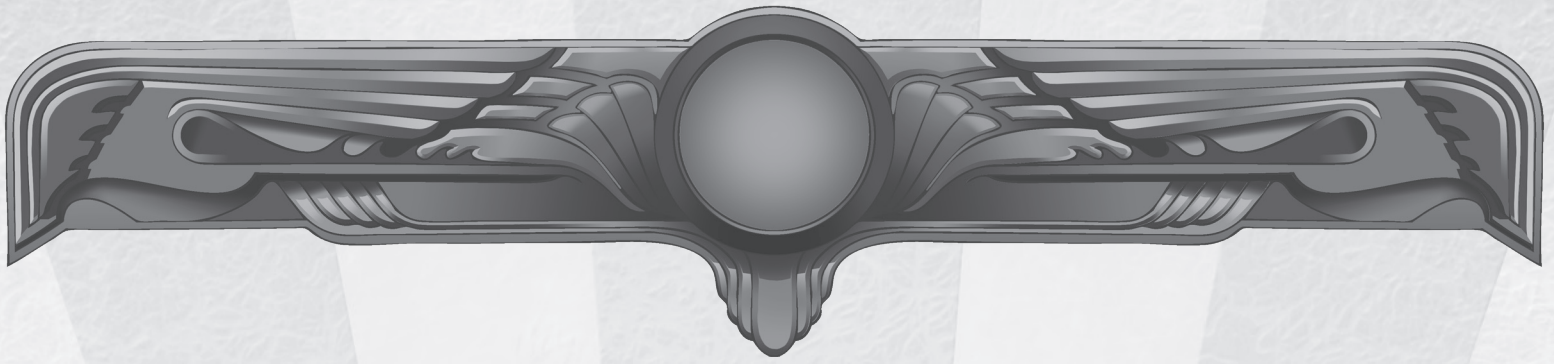
ments. It's nice to be in command, but it has its responsibilities. The leader is more likely to be focussed on making things work and less likely to be hot-dogging around. More on that later.

Skills

Once everyone has figured out what kind of character they want to play and where they fit into the group, and the GM has made sure they fit into the type of game they want to run, it is time to start working with the numbers. Pick up a character sheet and look at the skills section. There are eleven skills listed on the sheet. Those are the **basic skills**. Every Air Patrol officer has those skills to one degree or another. Below the base skills are several empty spots. Those are for **pick-up skills**. Pick-up skills are skills your character has that not everyone in the group will have. Things not taught in basic training.

The basic skills are:

Alertness: Noticing what is going on around you.



Athletics: Climbing, running, jumping, and so on.

Brawling: Fighting with fists, feet, and hand to hand weapons. Includes throwing things at a target.

Charm: Getting people to do what you want by getting them to like and trust you.

Driving: Driving cars, trucks, and motorcycles.

Education: General knowledge of history, geography, math, and such. A high Education may also indicate knowledge of other languages.

Flying: Piloting jetpacks and aircraft, both small and large.

Interrogation: Getting information out of someone through manipulation, coercion, and force of personality.

Resistance: The character's ability to resist being coerced or controlled.

Shooting: Skill in hitting targets with ranged weapons.

Sneaking: Hiding and moving quietly.

There is no strict list of pick-up skills. A short list of ideas follows, but if you think of one that isn't on the list, and the GM is okay with it, write it down in one of the blanks. I would suggest only taking pick-up skills that may assist in the character's job. If you want a character who knows how to cook, that's cool, but you don't need to spend levels on it in character creation unless a cooking skill is somehow vital to the campaign.

Some possible pick-up skills are:

Cryptology

Disguise

Drawing

Engineering

First Aid

Forensic Techniques

Psychology

Swimming

Each character starts with one of their basic skills, called their primary skill, at level 5. The skill should be different for each character. This skill is usually the reason your character is on the team. The character gets another of the basic skills at level 3, and the rest of them at level 2.

Next, each player gets 10 skill levels to spend on levels in pick-up skills or increasing levels in skills they already have. The only restriction on how they are spent is that the primary skill can be raised to 6 with one of these levels, but all other skills are limited to no higher than level 4.

Notable Abilities

In addition to skills, each character has certain abilities or advantages based on their personal history, position in society, genetic disposition, or just interests they have had. You have 6 points to buy abilities with. Abilities can have one or two points spent on them. Buying the 2 point level of an ability also gives you

it's 1 point level ability, if it has one. Some abilities are listed as Unique. Unique abilities can only be taken by one character in the group. The players and GM should discuss the abilities to make sure the ones that they want to take will fit what the GM wants to run and to settle any potential disputes over who gets a certain unique ability.

The possible abilities are:

Brutal Fighter: 1 point: The character does 1 extra damage with hand to hand or melee weapon attacks. 2 points: The character can choose to have their hand to hand attacks do normal damage instead of fisticuffs damage, if they want. The decision must be made before any skill checks are made.

Chosen Item: 1 point: The character has an item they use so often that they are particularly good with it. When using it, they get +1 skill level with appropriate skill rolls.

Cold Read: 1 point: The character has +1 skill level when trying to discover something about another character by interacting with them socially. 2 points: The character needs only a minute or even less to do this.

Famous: 1 point: The character is well known and liked (or feared, if you prefer) by many people. The character gets +1 skill on appropriate social rolls.

Fast Reactions: Unique. 1 point: After initiative has been determined, you may spend one of the character's Hero points to make your total 1 point higher than the current highest initiative.

I Know Someone Who Can Help Us: 1 point: Once each session, the character can call on an informant or ally for information about something applicable to the case. The person may want payment or a favour, however. 2 points: When the character calls on someone for information, they may spend a Hero point. If they do, the person they call owes them for something earlier and will help them as much as possible and without payment.

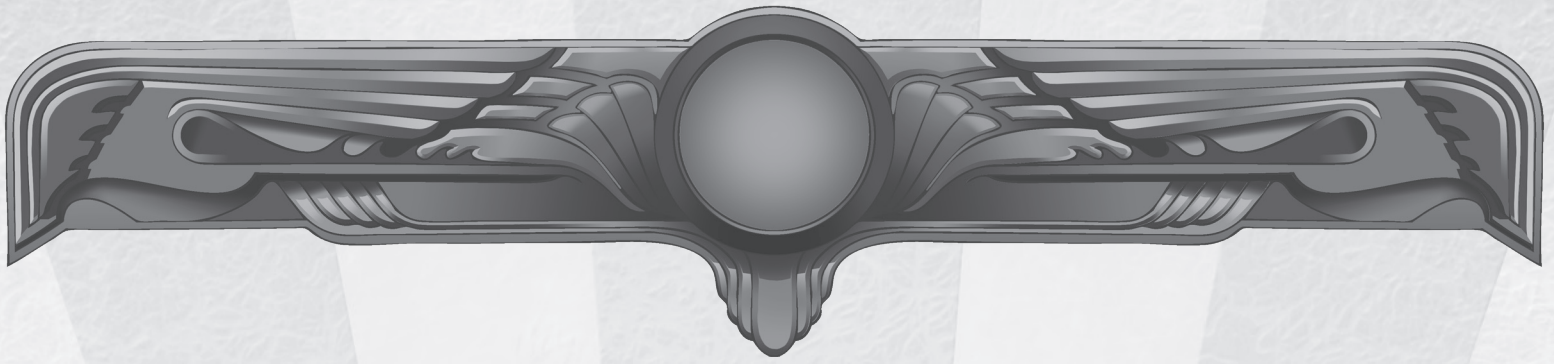
I Need a Rush on This: 1 point: The character knows the ins and outs of legal and crime scene procedures and is able to get their requests taken care of first. Analyses and tests are finished within a day instead of a week or more.

I've Heard About This: Unique. 1 point: Once per session, the character gains level 3 in a knowledge-type skill (not 3 additional levels). This lasts for the rest of the session, but only applies to the situation that brought it up originally. That is, if this is used to answer a question about a cult, it will give the character the cult knowledge skill at 3 for the rest of the session, but only for knowledge about the specific cult in question.

Intuition: Unique. Your character has good intuitive hunches. 2 points: At any time you can ask the GM a yes/no question and spend a Hero point. They must answer truthfully.

Iron Will: 1 point: If someone is trying to control your character through intimidation, magic, or psychic powers, you may spend a Hero point to completely resist for the scene.

Jury Rig: Unique. 1 point: The character must have Engineer-



ing or another appropriate skill at level 2 or higher. You may spend a Hero point to have them quickly get a device working again. It lasts at least until the end of this scene (unless destroyed), and may last even longer (exactly how much longer is up to the GM).

Lying Eyes: Unique. 1 point: The character can spend a Hero point to know for certain if someone is lying or not. If they are not lying, the character gets the Hero point back.

Pushing the Envelope: 1 point: The character is able to get just a little better performance out of a vehicle. Their maximum speed is 20% higher and if it is important to the scene, they accelerate much faster. 2 points: When the character is trying to pull off a crazy stunt in a vehicle, you may spend a Hero point to have them automatically succeed. You may even spend this after rolling and failing, which turns it into a success by 1 point.

Rank: Police rank is Unique, social rank is not. Your character must be the group's leader to have this affect their police rank. 1 point: Your character has a higher than normal social or police rank. If it is social, they are upper class. If it is police rank, your character is the head of the department rather than just head of their unit. 2 points: Your character has both types of rank.

Rich: 1 point: Your character is fairly well off. They can buy expensive meals daily and may live in a nice house or large apartment. They can have a few expensive minor items to start with for free. Buying a new car would tax their income for a few weeks, but less expensive items can be bought fairly often. 2 points: Your character is extremely rich. They likely live in a large house or a huge apartment suite. It would take buying a luxury car or small boat to tap out their income for a few weeks.

Runner: 1 point: The character is almost impossible to outrun or catch up to. They can maintain this pace for quite a while.

Silver Tongued: 1 point: If the character is in a social situation, reduce any complications they generate by 1 point.

Special Item: 1 point: The character has a very useful, but uncommon item, like a ray rifle or Tommygun. 2 points: The item can be something large, expensive, and rare, like a personal dirigible. For either level of this, if the item is lost or stolen, it can be replaced by the character before the start of the next adventure. If they spend a Hero point, it is replaced before the end of the session, if possible.

Tactical Genius: Unique. 2 points: At the start of a fight, if your character is present and able to communicate a battle plan to the other characters, they each gain a special temporary Hero Point. If this Hero point is not spent before the end of the fight, it is lost.

Two-Gun Fighter: Unique. 1 point: The character has practiced using a weapon in each hand such that they can use both at the same time. If both weapons are used on the same target the character's Shooting skill is increased by 1 to reflect the target's difficulty in avoiding multiple bullets. 2 points: They may spend a hero point before taking a shot. They may shoot each gun at a

separate target as one action.

What Does This Do?: The character must have an Engineering skill of at least 2 to take this. 1 point: The character only needs 30 seconds or so to figure out what a device does. Once they've figured out what the device does, they know everything about how it works and how to control it.

Won't Go Down: 1 point: Your character takes 1 less damage from attacks.

Weakness

Every hero has their weakness, and yours is no exception. Pick one that you think would be interesting. Something that will make problems for the character, but not make them too difficult to play or cause too much tension in the group. It should be something the character is known for, even if it's only behind their back.

If the character is in a situation where their weakness could cause them a significant problem, you may decide to use the character's weakness. If you do, the character fails in some way. You decide (and roleplay) how the character fails, and the GM will decide the consequences of failure. This can only be done once during each session, and can only be done in a situation where it will have a definite negative consequence for your character and their allies.

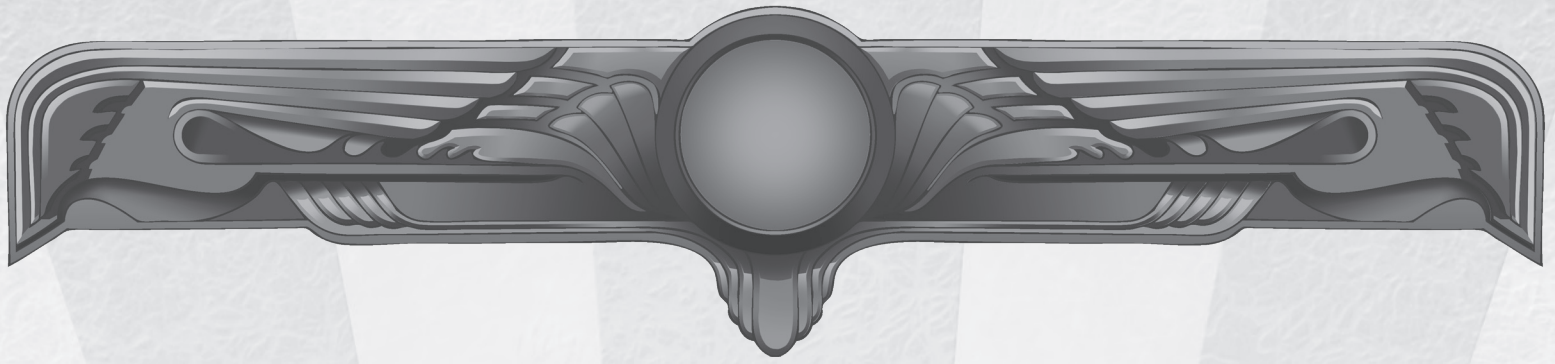
You're probably wondering why you would choose to fail at something significant. Here's why: When you use a weakness in this way, you immediately gain a Hero point. This is a way in which a player can make their own Hero points, albeit only one each session. That's why it should be something that they character is known for, since it may well happen to them every session.

Oh, and the GM can trigger it too, if it hasn't already happened during the session. If they do so, it causes some sort of failure for the character in the current scene, and they get a Hero point. Make sure the character's weakness is something you won't mind roleplaying.

Sample Ideas: Angry, Easy Mark, Greedy, Addicted to Gambling, Loves a Pretty Face.

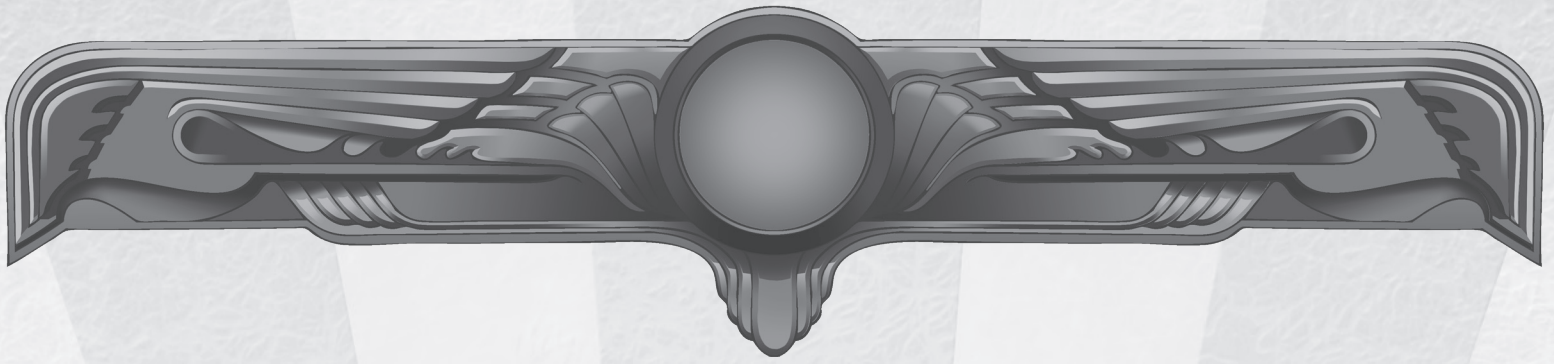
Finishing Up

This is the last step. You know what the character's areas of expertise are, what their special abilities are, and what their biggest weakness is. Now, who are they, really. What do they look like? How do they act in public or while on a case? Do they have any enemies? Any friends outside of work? How about family? What are their relationships like with the other characters? If they are the group's leader, how do they lead?



Standard Air Patrol Gear

Zehpyr flight pack
Zeus projection pistol
Whisperer
Flight helmet
Extended breather mask
Badge
Notepad
Altimeter
Uniform (pants, shirt, jacket, boots, gloves, goggles)
Baton (Range: Melee; 2 damage)
Whistle
Flashlight
Backup parachute
Army knife
Assorted personal items



General Rules

Making Skill Checks

Making skill checks is easy. You find out the difficulty of the task, subtract it from your character's appropriate skill, add in any modifiers, and if your character has at least one skill level left, they have succeeded. If you need to know how well they succeeded, the remaining number of skill levels is the number of successes they obtained.

Example: Officer Locke is trying to shoot at a target on the firing range. He has a Shooting skill of 4. The difficulty to hit that particular target is 2. There are no other skill modifiers for the shot in this situation. Locke gets 2 successes on his shot (4 skill - 2 difficulty). The combat section details how these successes may be spent, but for now we see that Locke has gotten at least one success, so he hits the target.

Difficulty Ratings

There are four standard difficulty ratings, though the GM may choose a number in between two of the listed ones if they feel it is appropriate.

The standard difficulties are:

Easy: 0. This is the sort of thing that is so easy even a beginner won't usually have any trouble with it.

Moderately Difficult Action: 3. This is something an everyday person would find a bit difficult, but not too hard to do if they exerted themselves.

Very Difficult: 6. This is something even a well trained person will have a hard time with.

Extremely Difficult: 9. This is the sort of thing only the most skilled person could have much of a chance at, and even then it would be hard for them to pull off.

The difficulty should be representative of the particular situation the character finds themselves in. For instance, a long range shot at a target in broad daylight might be very difficult (6). If it was dusk, the difficulty might be extremely difficult (8 or 9).

Opposed Rolls and Difficulties

Sometimes it isn't as simple as just coming up with a difficulty rating if there is a character (player or otherwise) opposing the roll. In this case the opposing character may set the acting character's difficulty to the opposing character's skill rating. The opposing skill must be something appropriate to the situation and can be increased using risk dice if the character wishes.

Assisting Others

If your character is trying to help another character do something, they must spend their whole action doing so. This gives the other character a bonus equal to half your character's applicable skill level, rounded up. If you want to, you may even add in risk dice to try to boost the bonus you give them, though this may lead to complications that end up making things all the harder.

Risk Dice

Risk dice are regular six-sided dice. If you want to improve your character's action attempt, you may choose to roll one or more risk dice. In fact, if combat, you must roll at least one risk die on any attack or defence attempt.

The possible results on a risk die are:

6: +2 levels, 1 complication point.

4 and 5: +1 level.

2 and 3: No skill modifier.

1: No skill modifier, 1 complication point.

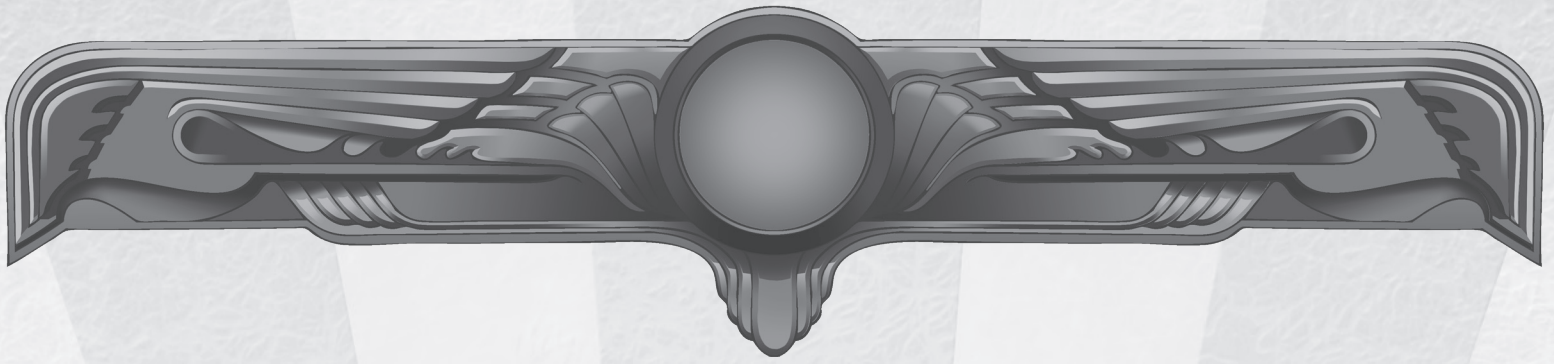
You cannot roll more than 5 risk dice on any action. You can roll risk dice on a defense, even though you are not initiating the action.

Success and Successes

If your roll is successful and you need to know exactly how successful it was, you use the number of skill levels that remained after any modifiers were applied and compare it to the difficulty. The more your roll beat the difficulty by, the better the character did. Each point above the difficulty becomes a success that can be spent to improve the results of the action. Some success costs are listed specifically in various sections of this book. Other costs must be decided upon by the GM. Remember that the character will need to keep one success left over to succeed at the action in the first place.

Example: Officer Locke beat the difficulty to hit his target by 2. In order to hit the human-shaped target in general, he just needs to have succeeded by 1. To hit the small area in the middle of the chest representing the target's vital organs, he needs to spend one of his successes. He decides to do so and his shot hits the target's "vitals," a good shot. He could not hit the target's head, though, since he would need to spend 2 successes for that, which would not leave him enough successes to have hit the target. The combat section lists the success costs for hit locations.

Example 2: Officer Locke is trying to pick a lock and succeeds,



by 3 points. He wants to get the lock picked faster than normal, so he asks the GM if he can spend 2 of the successes to do it in half the normal time. The GM feels that is acceptable, so Locke is left with 1 point above the difficulty, enough to successfully pick the lock.

Complications

Complications are the result of over-extending the character's abilities or the character just getting unlucky. If one or more complication points comes up on a roll and the GM has an idea for what to do with them, they tell the current active player what the effects of the complication are (or will be once the action is done if the effect happens in response to that) and give them a hero point. This point cannot be used to negate the complication (see the next sub-section). The following paragraphs list a few general ideas for complications of different levels:

1 point: While crawling through a hedge, the character puts their knee down in something smelly; The complication is something that irritates the character, but doesn't make things too hard for them.

2 points: The character, while trying to tail a suspect, sees someone they know across the street; This is something that is a major distraction to the character, but not terribly dangerous.

3 points: The character successfully sneaks in through the skylight, only to turn around and see a puzzled janitor looking at them; This represents a major problem for the character.

4 points: The character's attack hits, but they make a noise that alerts nearby guard dogs; At this level, the complication could be quite dangerous for the character and maybe even their allies.

5 points: The character trips after taking their action and ends up hanging by one arm over a vat of molten metal; This complication is extremely dangerous for the character and possibly their allies.

Hero Points

Hero points, as mentioned before, are a way for the character to affect what's going on in certain ways other than making a skill check. Your character gains a hero point at the start of any session if they do not already have at least one. Your character also gains a hero point if you use their Weakness. Lastly, the GM can give a character a hero point if the character does something the GM and play group find cool or dramatic.

Hero points can be spent in a number of ways:

- 1) Some character abilities require the character to spend a hero point to use the ability.
- 2) A player can spend a Hero point after a roll results in a complication to negate all the complication points from the roll.
- 3) A player can spend a Hero point to add 1 to their skill level

for a particular task. This may be done after a roll was made, but before any effects of the roll are applied.

Villains, Henchmen, and Mooks

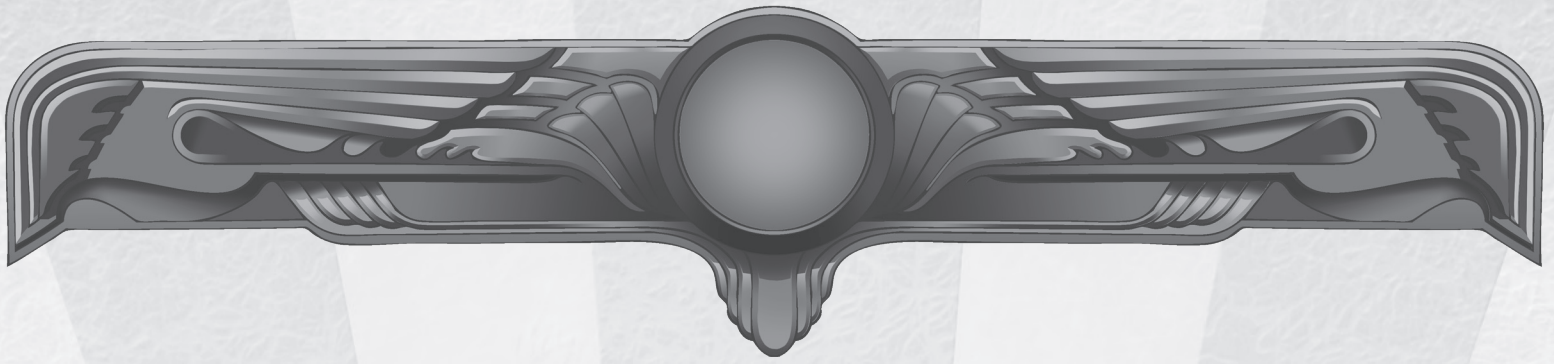
There are three levels of opposition. The most powerful enemies are the Villains. Skilled, hard to kill, and prepared with death traps and escape routes, villains are the main target of your group of characters. Henchmen (and henchwomen) are the mid-level enemies. Tough and skilled, they are not as well prepared as the villains they serve, and are much easier to take down. Usually encountered with a group of mooks. Mooks are the least powerful enemies your group will meet. Tough enough to threaten ordinary civilians, they must still use numbers to take on a player character. While it is possible for a group of mooks to take down a player character, it is uncommon.

Creating Enemy Characters

Let's start with mooks. Mooks are the easiest characters to create. They have simplified stats in comparison to player characters because the mooks are meant to be a minor challenge, unless they greatly outnumber the characters. A mook generally only has a couple of skills. Usually brawling, shooting, and resistance. Specific types of mooks may have specialist skills. Usually mooks only have level 2 or 3 in their skills. Mooks have one special disadvantage as well: if they ever get a damage result on a player character that would ordinarily kill the PC, the result is instead changed to a wound and a knockout.

Next up the chain of command are henchpeople, the special agents for the villain. Henchpersons have normal skill sets like player characters, and can have skills up to 4 or even 5. Damage from henchmen is treated normally, unlike that of mooks. Henchpeople should be made as detailed as a player character, preferably with a cool name, an iconic look, and lots of stuff that will make the players love or hate them. These are the people the players will run into most often, since the villain is usually only seen near the end. Lastly, henchmen get something that will be detailed more on the next page, a villain ability. Villain abilities come into play during the denouement of a confrontation and may allow the henchperson to run away to fight another day if the rating of the ability has gotten high enough.

The biggest bads are the villains. They should be made up like a player character, with skills, abilities, and a weakness, but their skills are more likely to be in the 4-5 ranges with maybe a skill of 6 in their specialty. They should be a major threat to the player characters, with resources and servants enough to provide the group with a challenge. They should also be memorable. In addition to the normal character abilities, villains have special villain abilities, one for each player in the game. These represent plans and prepa-



ration the villain has done in case the players get too close, and are used during the denouement. They cover escape plans, death traps, false bodies, and destruction of evidence. The setup for villain abilities is detailed later on in this section, while their handling during the denouement of a fight is explained in the combat section. The last special note for villains is this: They cannot be killed or knocked out before the denouement of a fight. To defeat them, you must defeat their plans, then take them down.

Handling an Investigation

[I'm still hoping to find a better way to handle the investigation part of the game. If I can't get anything better than the way every other game does it, I'll go with that, but I'd rather do something new. I also need to redo the way the Villain abilities are handled during the denouement, but that needs to wait until I figure out how I'm doing the investigation in general.]

Air Police characters are a kind of combination between police detectives and a SWAT team. In an Air police game, the end will likely come in a confrontation of some kind, likely a violent one, but before you can confront them you have to find out who is responsible for the and where they are. This requires investigation.

The first thing that happens is a crime of some sort that the players are called in to investigate, usually something the regular police aren't able to handle. The clues you give to the players depend on what's going on, but I would suggest giving them a few things to get them started on lines of inquiry. I would suggest not making them roll to find clues, as a failed roll can stall out a game session if you haven't planned a different way to get the players the clue they just missed.

At the beginning of the investigation, you determine the ratings of the various villain abilities possessed by the villain and his or her henchmen. Henchpeople get one point in their ability. Villains get a number of points equal to the number of players to split between their abilities. During the investigation, the players should run across the villain's henchmen and mooks (and possibly the villain himself), as they try to carry out parts of the villain's plan. Each time the villain's forces manage to successfully carry out part of the plan, increase the rating of one of the villain's abilities by one. Each time the players stop part of the plan, reduce one of the villain's abilities by one. At the end of each session where the villain or henchperson remains free, increase each of their villain abilities by one.

It may be tricky to do, but the idea is to keep the villain's ability ratings somewhere nearby the players' hero point totals. If one side is getting very far above the other, you may want to give the players more chances to stop parts of the villain's plans, or make the villain's forces tougher and harder to stop. You know your players. Work to make the game as fun for all of you as you can.

The Prognosticator and the Whisperers

[I'm also trying to find a better/cooler way to work the Whisperers into things, but every idea I've had turns out flawed.]

The Air Police have access to a couple of devices that help them to conduct investigations. The first is the Prognosticator. The only one of it's kind, it announces when a notable crime has been connected. It usually gives little more than the address and some idea of what happened, but it is better than nothing. It may also come up with vague pronouncements about the future of the city.

The other item of note for investigations is the Whisperers. Each character has one attached to their uniform. It not only acts as a radio and a beacon in case the character is lost or shot down, it also has a connection to the Prognosticator. More specifically, it can give the characters clues that aren't normally obvious to them, usually only a couple words whispered directly to the character, though in the case of a particularly powerful crime the whisperers may talk in unison, something that should creep out the characters a bit. This allows you to give the players indications of a clue they should be looking out for.

If a player is feeling particularly lost, they can spend a hero point and ask you to have the Whisperer give them a more obvious clue. If this happens I would suggest you help them out. A stalled game is no fun, particularly if the mission is interesting.

Experience and Improvement

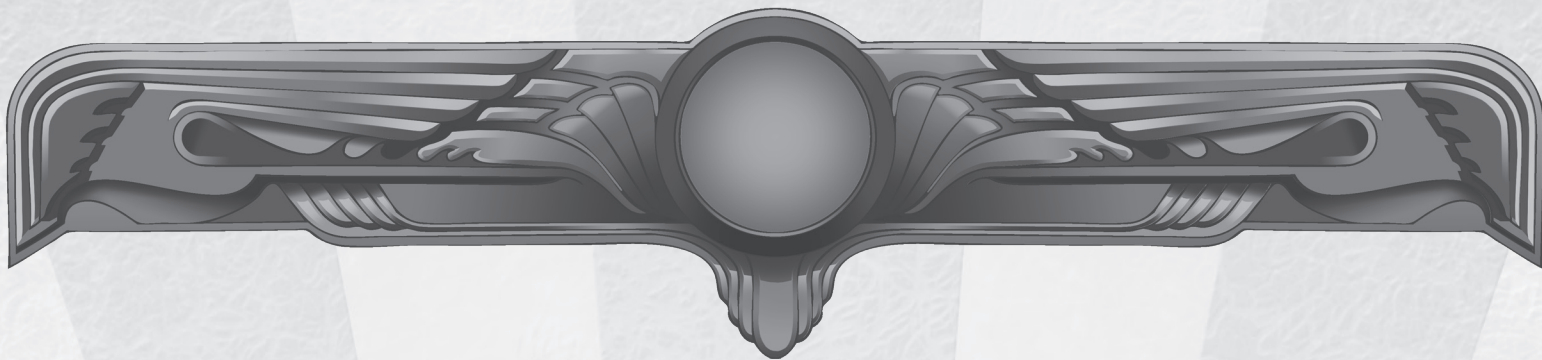
After the end of each mission, each player writes a few lines on their character sheet about the mission. Focus on the basics of what happened from the character's point of view and what they gained. After that each player suggests something their player gained from the mission, such as a new contact, a favour owed to them, or some trick they learned.

Ideas:

Contact: The character has made a connection to someone with a particular field of knowledge or who can get information for them in other ways. What kind of information they have access to depends on who they are. A contact can be used once per case.

Favour: The character has done something for someone and that person now feels they owe the character a favour. This could be a big favour, or a small one. The person will only return the favour so many times before they no longer feel they owe the character anything, so beware of calling on them too many times.

Trick: The character has learned to do something in a certain way that gives them a minor bonus with certain skill uses. For instance, they may have learned a trick to picking padlocks that gives them a +1 to rolls to do so. They will not get a bonus for other kinds of locks, such as the locks in regular doors, or vault locks.



Combat Rules

Initiative

At the start of each round of action, each player rolls a six-sided die. The higher the result, the better. Characters with a skill at 4 or higher get +1 to their roll if they declare now that the skill is the main one they will be using for their action this round. They cannot change to a different skill later in the round.

The Combat Round

As in many games the combat round is a short period where each character gets to take an action. The first character to act is the one with the lowest initiative total. The second one to act is the next lowest, and so on. At any point, any character with a better initiative total may interrupt (though they must wait until any active skill checks finish resolving before doing so) and take their action instead. Once everyone involved in the combat has had a chance to take an action, the round ends. If a character wants to, they can pass as their action and do nothing. They cannot, however save their action until later on in the round.

Attacks and Defenses

Attacks are handled like any other opposed skill check. The attacker and defender decide how many risk dice they're going to roll. Because combat is a chaotic thing, they must always roll at least one risk die on every attack and defence check. If the attacker's roll beats the difficulty to hit the target by at least 1, the attack hits.

The two most commonly used defence skills are Brawling (against hand to hand attacks) and Athletics (against ranged attacks).

Hit Locations

Before making an attack roll, you must declare what part of the target you are aiming at. If you successfully hit the target, you must have beat the difficulty by a certain number to hit the location you wanted to hit. Smaller areas are harder to hit, but some areas have specific effects, such as knocking the target out or even killing them. The successes required to hit specific locations on a person are as follows: Non-vital areas of the torso: 0; Limb: 1; Torso, vital area: 1; Head, hand, or foot: 2.

[Still not entirely happy with this. Needs more work.]

Cover

Cover is the most effective way to avoid getting hit and gives a +1 defense skill bonus as long as you are mostly behind it. If you attack a target that is under cover, you have two choices. The first option is to try to hit the part of the target not under cover (if there are any). That is handled as a normal attack.

Alternately, you can try to hit a covered area. If the location you want is under cover, but you can still see the target, or part of them, you can still try to hit area you want. The target gets 1 more to their defense skill. Your attack must also penetrate the cover's 'armour': 0 for a bush, -1 damage for a car door, -2 for a cinder-block. If the target is completely protected by the cover and you can't tell exactly where they are in it, you can't hit them.

Surprise

If the target is surprised and did not expect the attack or did not see it coming, their defence skill is reduced to 0.

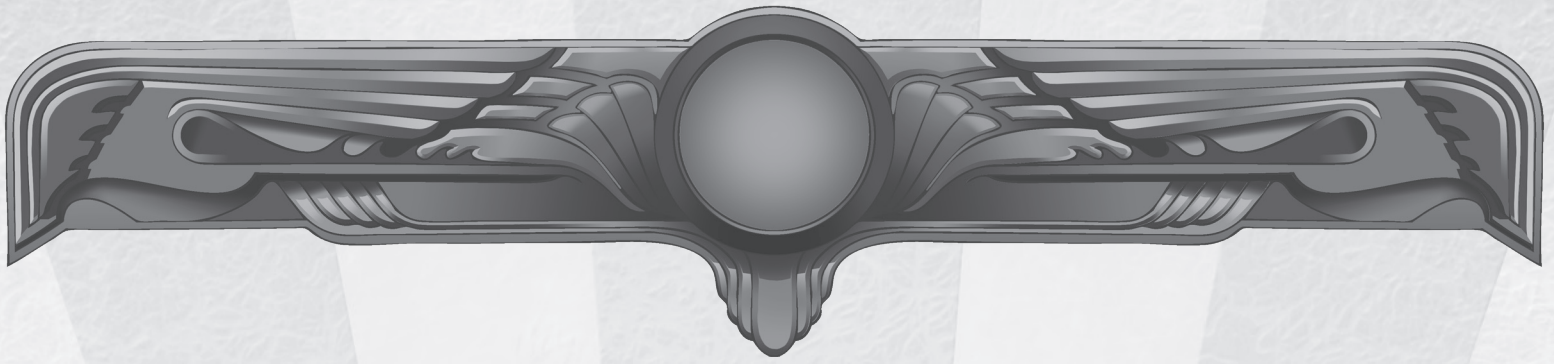
Damage

[This system needs work too. I don't think damage is working right yet.]

There are two types of damage, normal damage and fisticuffs damage. The only difference is that fisticuffs damage cannot kill the target, no matter where it hits them.

When an attack hits something, first increase the damage done by the number the attack roll beat the defense roll by. The attacker may voluntarily do less damage if they want to. Then subtract the level of any armour on the area hit from the attack's damage. If there is no damage left, the armour stopped the attack and no damage is sustained. If any damage does get through the armour (or there was no armour), consult the injury chart below.

Damage	Effects
1 or less	The character is staggered (-1 to their next skill check).
2 to 4	The character takes 1 wound. Wounds are subtracted from appropriate skill checks until healed. If the attack hit the head, the character is knocked out until the end of the fight.
5 or more	The character takes 1 wound (see above). Non-player characters are killed if the attack hits the head or vitals and was normal damage. Player characters are only knocked out by this. If it was fisticuffs damage to the head or vitals, the character is knocked out.



Special Attack Effects

Sometimes you want to do more than just hurt a target, you want to disarm them, knock them down, or knock them back. The success cost of these effects is dependent on the situation, but is usually an increase of 1 or 2. These effects must be decided on before a roll is made.

Example: Officer Locke has shot Guns Moran in the leg. Moran is on an angled roof and holding a big bag of money. The GM decides that, given the location of the hit, the weight of the package Moran is holding and the unstable footing, that no cost is needed. Moran takes a fall if Locke's player wants him to.

Example 2: Moran has just hit Locke in the arm with a club and wants to disarm him. There are no extenuating circumstances, so the judge decides it will cost 1 point.

Example 3: Moran tries to do the same to the rifle Locke's teammate O'Mally is holding. The GM decides it will cost 2 points, since O'Mally is holding on strongly with both hands.

Denouement

This section needs to be redone to fit with whatever the investigation period turns out like. It will include the following, villain abilities, however: *Escape Plan (type of escape)*, *Death Trap (single target)*, *Death Trap (area of effect)*, and maybe *Destroy the Evidence*. I'd like to keep *It Wasn't Really Me*, but I'm not sure it's possible to do it in a fun way.

Healing

A wounded character heals (removes) 2 wounds between each story arc or mission.

Equipment

Some sample equipment to give you an idea what things would be like.

Weapons:

Close range equals about 10m/30 feet.

Long range equals about 30m/100 feet.

Very long range equals about 300m/1,000 feet.

The range modifier is the penalty to hit something within that range.

The following weapons all do normal damage.

Ordinary Pistol:

Ranges: Close: +0; Long: -2

Damage: 3

Shots: Depends on the model. Most have 5 to 7.

Ordinary Rifle:

Ranges: Close/Long: +0; Very Long: -2

Damage: 4

Shots: Depends on the model. Most have 5 to 10.

Tommy Gun:

Ranges: Close: +0; Long: -1

Damage: 3

Shots: 20 for a normal clip; 50 for a drum clip.

Burst: The Tommygun can fire 10 rounds in a burst. This increases the attack's damage by 2 and allows the attacker to take a -1 attack penalty for each target beyond the first. All additional targets must be close to the original.

Tesla-Westinghouse Projector Pistol

Ranges: Close: +0; Long: -1

Damage: 4

Shots: 20. Can be attached to a Tesla generator or a Zephyr flight pack for unlimited shots.

Winchester Beam Rifle:

Ranges: Close/Long: +0; Very Long: -1

Damage: 5

Shots: 15.

Other attacks:

Hand to hand attacks do 1 damage. They normally only do fisticuffs damage.

Melee weapon attacks do 2 damage. They can do normal or fisticuffs damage, depending on how they were used in the attack.

