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INTRODUCTION

The *Cosmic Handbook* is a sourcebook for the MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS roleplaying game. It covers the some of the most popular and most powerful types of superhero stories... those dealing with space-faring adventure, aliens, primal entities, science fiction, and anything else falling into the vast cosmic realm. In the following pages the past, present, and future of the cosmos are laid bare so you can explore the galaxy, save entire alien races, face down planet eaters, and discover how important a lone human from Earth is in the battle for the soul of the universe!

Cosmic heroes uncover and put a stop to alien menaces, keeping not just a neighborhood, city, or country safe, but the entire planet. Often these battles play out across the sky for everyone to see and marvel at, while other times they're handled in secret, so as not to cause a panic. But no matter what, the forces unleashed during such conflicts typically go far beyond what terrestrial heroes are capable of handling. They keep the streets safe, you keep the planet safe. Scratch that. You keep the planets safe.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The *Cosmic Handbook* covers a lot of ground and can be used in a number of different ways. It provides information on the different types of cosmic series. From Earthlings caught up in something much larger than themselves (and really, larger than their planet) and thrust into intergalactic conflict to aliens who have taken a vow to protect life in the universe from threats from beyond the stars.

The ideas covered in this book can be used to run a cosmic series, or they can be used as inspiration for injecting some "cosmic energy" into the game you're already running. Gamemasters are free to change and adapt the material in this book as they see fit. After all, not every idea fits perfectly well into every series.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Beginning with the history of the cosmic superhero genre and working its way through information for GMs and players alike, the *Cosmic Handbook* includes archetypes and enemies, equipment and adventures, advice and examples, as well as ideas to fuel new characters and plot lines for your series.

Chapter 1: Infinity (& Beyond) is an overview of cosmic stories in superhero comics along with common storylines and genre tropes, perfect for GMs looking for inspiration. This chapter provides context for the rest of the book

while also diving into information on the challenges of surviving in space and dealing with cosmic entities wielding cosmic powers... even if that entity is your hero!

Chapter 2: Cosmic Heroes is all about creating characters, but the information is for players and Gamemasters alike. It includes tips and tricks for designing a cool and effective character no matter what sort of setting your series features. Also included is a discussion on the abilities, skills, advantages, equipment, and powers common to cosmic heroes, including rules options to adapt a few powers for use in a cosmic series. Finally, this chapter also features a number of character archetypes you can use as player characters or adapt as you see fit to create a custom hero.

Chapter 3: The Cosmic Series provides the Gamemaster with all the information needed to create compelling stories for space-faring heroes to interact with. This chapter includes sections covering themes central to cosmic series, including aliens, invasions, space travel, ancient mysteries, and more. It also gives the GM tips on starting their series and keeping it fresh over time. Lastly, there are villainous archetypes, including multiple options for using them, along with some typical alien races.

Chapter 4: The Freedom Cosmos looks at the Freedom City universe. The history of the universe is covered, including the impact of the Preservers, Earth's history with extraterrestrials, the other great alien empires, and how things have been changed by the re-emergence of Tellax the Redeemer and Collapsar, the destruction of Magna-Lor, the rise of the Stellar Imperium, and the appearance of new galactic organizations intent on their own goals. It also sets the stage for your new cosmic series by shaking up the *status quo* and giving GMs and players an exciting new universe to explore.

Chapter 5: Freedom City 2525 revisits the future of Freedom City first presented in the *M&M Annual*. The setting is the far future, when Freedom City is at the center of the peaceful Galactic Confederation. But even in the 26th century, there are threats to peace, justice, and freedom across the known galaxy. Fortunately, the Freedom Legion is there to face these threats and give your heroes a place to call home... among the stars!

Whether you and your group are looking to play in a modern-day series mainly set on Earth with frequent travel out amongst the stars, focus on a galaxy-spanning group of aliens finding a way to avoid imperial entanglements out in the universe, or assemble a team of young, enthusiastic heroes-of-the-future from across the cosmos to defend the people of the Confederation of Planets, the *Cosmic Handbook* has everything you need!



NULLIFIER BANDS (TECH LEVEL 2)

In a universe filled with super-powerful criminals, it is no wonder someone developed nullifier bands. They are often designed as collars which are placed around the necks of prisoners, or built into strong cuffs or manacles. The nullifiers progressively weaken any super-abilities possessed by the wearer until the prisoner loses their powers (transformed into a powerless version of themselves). These devices have also found their way into the hands of space pirates and slavers, who use them to control powerful captives they plan on selling as slaves or holding for ransom. As soon as the bands are turned off or removed, the wearer regains their abilities. The ranks of Affliction vary, but are generally within two ranks of the power level of your game in order to be effective.

Nullifier Bands: Continuous Progressive Affliction (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Transformed), Instant Recovery • 3 points per rank

SPACE SUIT (TECH LEVEL 1)

Practically a necessity in almost any cosmic game, the space suit is a piece of gear no space explorer should be without. Those heroes gifted with the power to survive the void of space will still want to know where they can find one for their less-durable friends. Space suits almost always come equipped with a simple commlink circuit for communicating via radio. Depending on which race the suit was designed for, it may prove challenging for other

races to wear, but most “comic-book” cosmic settings feature space suits which truly are “one size fits all.”

Space Suit: Feature 1 (Commlink), Immunity 7 (Cold, Disease, Heat, Radiation, Vacuum, Suffocation) • 8 points

SUPER-TECH FLIGHT BELT (TECH LEVEL 2)

These compact devices create a gravitational field that responds to the will of the user. These inventions are often used by superheroes who don’t have their own ability to fly, to help them keep up with their fellow heroes. They are reliable, easy to use, and fairly compact. Additionally, the effects of the belt are subtle, so the casual viewer may not know the belt is being used.

Super-Tech Flight Belt: Flight, Subtle • 1 point + 2 points per rank

TELEPATHIC TRANSCIVER (TECH LEVEL 3)

The most efficient form of communication in a vacuum is telepathy, which requires no medium for sound to travel in and communicates ideas clearly without chance of miscommunication or interference. Often designed as a small ear plug or similar device, this unit scans the surface thoughts of the user and transmits them to others. While most living beings using a space suit find the built-in commlink sufficient for their needs, a telepathic transceiver is a must for those beings able to survive in a space without a containment suit. This device allows communication with any sentient species,

SPACE DEMIGOD

PL12

STRENGTH	AGILITY	FIGHTING	AWARENESS
11*/8**	4	9	2
STAMINA	DEXTERITY	INTELLECT	PRESENCE
11*/8**	2	0	3

POWERS

Astro-Sled: Easily Removable (-17 points), Indestructible • 28 points

Stellar Motivator: Flight 9 (1,000 MPH), **AE: Stellar Accelerator** (Movement 1 (Space Travel 1) • 21 points

Remote Control: Feature 1 (Flight and Movement only) • 1 point

Twin Blasters: Ranged Damage 12, Split • 25 points

Dual Nature: Array (13 points)

- **Berserker:** Enhanced Stamina 3, Enhanced Strength 3, Enhanced Advantage 1 (Fearless) • 13 points
- **Focused:** Enhanced Advantages 7 (Close Attack 3, Ranged Attack 3, Teamwork), Enhanced Defenses 6 (Dodge 3, Parry 3) • 1 point

I Am Forever!: Immunity 10 (Life Support), Immortality 1 (Return after 2 weeks), Protection 4, Regeneration 2 • 18 points

Star Circuit: Easily Removable (-5 points), Indestructible • 9 points

"Ping-Ping-Ping": Senses 1 (Danger Sense) • 1 point

Omnifunctions: Variable 1 • 7 points

Translation Circuit: Comprehend Languages 3 (Read All, Speak All, Understand All) • 6 points

ADVANTAGES

All-out Attack, Close Attack 4, Close Attack 3**, Fearless*, Ranged Attack 3**, Takedown 2, Teamwork**

SKILLS

Athletics 4 (+12), Insight 4 (+6), Intimidation 7 (+10), Perception 3 (+5), Ranged Combat: Heavy Weapons 6 (+8), Technology 6 (+6), Vehicles 4 (+6)

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +4

Twin Blasters +8*/+11** Damage 12

Unarmed +13*/+16** Damage 11*/8**

* Damage bonus depends on the option chosen under Powers.

DEFENSE

DODGE 9*/12** **FORTITUDE** 11*/18**

PARRY 9*/12** **TOUGHNESS** 15*/12**

WILL 12

*Berserker Assault/**Focused Warrior

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Enemy: You have a powerful enemy from the same terrible world that spawned you, someone who either seeks to bring you home for their own gain or to destroy you for leaving.

Temper: Your dual nature's dark side is that of a berserker. Sometimes the rage and pain gets to be too much and you lash out. In those moments enemies, bystanders, and friends alike may be the targets of your fury.



"You are no match for me. I am my own worst enemy, so I should know!"

POWER POINT TOTALS: ABILITIES 72 • POWERS 69 • ADVANTAGES 7 • SKILLS 17 • DEFENSES 15 = 180



mortality power, or simply by having GM permission to bring in a new “node” of their species.

Many races find telepathic species to be intimidating, and groupminds even moreso. Because of this, most groupmind species are rather withdrawn from the rest of galactic civilization.

ENERGY BEING • 32 POINTS

Powers: **Energy Form** (Flight 3 (16 MPH), Immunity 10 (Life Support), Insubstantial 3 (energy; Permanent, Innate))

Totals: Abilities 0 + Powers 32 + Advantages 0 + Skills 0 + Defense 0 = 32

Suggested Complications: Energy Disruption: The energy being's form is vulnerable to forces and conditions that disrupt that type of energy, which causes an Affliction to the being so long as the condition lasts. Typical Afflictions include dazed, stunned, and incapacitated, and the being tends to avoid or flee from conditions that can disrupt it.

INSECTOID RACE • 26 POINTS

DEX 4

Powers: Extra Limbs 2, Flight 4 (Wings; 30 MPH), Leaping 3 (60 feet), Movement (Wall-Crawling), Impervious Protection 3, Senses 1 (Radius Vision)

Totals: Abilities 8 + Powers 18 + Advantages 0 + Skills 0 + Defense 0 = 26

Suggested Complications: Prejudice: Other races have a difficult time interacting with insect-like races and react poorly to them.

ENERGY BEING

Many alien races evolve forms other than solid material, either arising out of energy fields like light, sound, magnetism, or plasma (to name a few), or evolving past the need for a material form, becoming creatures of pure energy. Energy beings range from peaceful evolved super-minds who want nothing to do with violent or primitive species, to destructive conquerors bent on claiming entire galaxies as part of their domain. In addition to the traits listed for the template, an energy being may have powers related to the specific form of energy composing its body, while “beings of pure thought” tend to also have some psionic powers, particularly telepathy and telekinesis. See the *Power Profiles* sourcebook for examples of different energy control, kinetic, and mental powers.

INSECTOID RACE

Similar to the groupmind, insectoid races usually aren't welcomed into society by other races. They are frequently seen as villains in comic books, though occasionally a hero arises to redeem the rest of the race, or who stands out as unique among them. Insectoid races are notable for having exoskeletons and other traits similar to Earthly insects. Depending on the level of realism in his series, a GM may wish to enforce specific scientific differences between these aliens and actual Earth insects, such as the need for lungs and other biological traits that

ALIEN SUPERMIND

PL15

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
-2	4	-2	0	-2	14	8	4

POWERS

Floating: Flight 3 (16 MPH), Continuous • 9 points

Mind Field: Immunity 10 (Mental Powers), Limited: Half-Effect, Reflect • 10 points

Psychokinetic Field: Immunity 10 (Life Support); Protection 14 • 24 points

Superior Mental Capacity: Comprehend 2 (languages, understand and understood); Quickness 10, Limited: Mental Tasks only • 9 points.

Telepathy: Mental Communication 5 (anywhere), Area, Selective • 30 points

Vast Psychic Powers: Array (62-point reserve) • 72 points

- **Implant Image:** Illusion 15 (all senses), Insidious, Limited: One Subject, Dynamic • 62 points
- **Dominate Mind:** Perception Range Cumulative Affliction 15 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled), Dynamic • 2 points
- **Invade Thoughts:** Cumulative Effortless Mind Reading 15, Dynamic • 2 points
- **Mass Domination:** Burst Area 5 (500 foot radius) Affliction 10 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled), Dynamic • 2 points
- **Psychic Blast:** Perception Range Damage 15, Alternate Resistance: Will, Dynamic • 2 points
- **Psychokinesis:** Perception Range Damaging Move Object 15, Dynamic • 2 points

SKILLS

Deception 5 (+9), Expertise: Galactic Lore 4 (+18), Expertise: Science 6 (+20), Expertise: Strategy 6 (+20), Insight 4 (+12), Intimidation 4 (+8), Investigation 4 (+18), Perception 7 (+15), Technology 10 (+24), Treatment 4 (+18)

Hiveminds provide the real threat of a PC being dominated and turned against his allies. This can be tricky to implement in games and any dominated hero should be given ample hero points for her troubles, and so they can be used to throw off her new master's yolk at a dramatic moment and help defeat the villain.

THE RULING OVERMIND

The ruling overmind runs his own organization. It might be an interstellar crime syndicate, an empire, or an army of killer robots. This villain has whole armies of minions at his disposal to further his goals. They are often advanced artificial intelligences built as constructs, though sometimes they are a collective consciousness tied to those they rule, similar to the hivemind, previously. In either case, they focus on mental domination and iron-fisted rule. Any who oppose them will be attacked with ruthless efficiency.

Sometimes the ruling overmind chooses a hero as an agent, granting him or her powers and assistance. However, the villain's overall goals and attitude usually

ADVANTAGES

Assessment, Eidetic Memory, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Jack-of-all-trades, Seize Initiative, Speed of Thought, Ultimate Effort (Will resistance checks), Well-informed

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +14

Psychic Blast — Perception Ranged, Damage 15, Resisted by Will

Psychokinesis — Perception Ranged, Damaging Move Object 15

Unarmed -2 Close, Damage -2

DEFENSE

DODGE 12 **FORTITUDE** 10

PARRY 10 **TOUGHNESS** 18

WILL 20

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES 48 **SKILLS** 27

POWERS 154 **DEFENSES** 44

ADVANTAGES 9 **TOTAL** 282

COMPLICATIONS

Disabled: Can barely move without mechanical assistance or through use of powers.

Motivation—Domination: The Alien Supermind seeks to control all around him and treats people like puppets.

make this a volatile and short-lived relationship. Any hero who rebels against him will be targeted for capture, extermination, or worse.

THE VAMPIRIC INTELLIGENCE

The vampiric intelligence gets stronger and deadlier the more beings he holds under his sway. Give him a city and he's a threat, a planet he's a menace, and with an empire he's a danger to the universe! This means finding a way to liberate this villain's pawns is the best way to beat him, but it's also a surefire way to earn his enmity.

A vampiric intelligence tends to increase in power level the more minions it has, making it a bit odd compared to most characters. Usually it starts out fairly weak, in the PL6-9 range, and gain power levels and ranks in powers, defenses, and attacks the more minds it dominates. A good rule of thumb is to give the villain a power level about every multiple of ten beings it controls. Thus a vampiric intelligence who begins at PL7 but manages to take over 10 people is now PL8, but one who controls a planet of 10 billion is PL17! These villains usually have powerful Afflictions and Will-based attacks as well.

forming illegal experiments involving alien genetics and technology for decades, either on their own or under the influence of alien (or alien-hybrid) shapeshifters.

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS Gamemasters looking to run a “Watch the Skies” style series of 1950s science-horror can easily use the decade following the Roswell Incident—and the accompanying Red Scare—as a backdrop.

ARCADIA

Before the Grue crashed on Earth, their damaged vessel passed over the Pacific Northwest, particularly the dense temperate rainforest near Emerald City. Desperate attempts to save the ship, along with possible conflict with whatever was on-board, left debris scattered along their route. This contaminated the Arcadian Forest with Grue germ-plasm as well as their technology and containers of alien substances, possibly even escaped alien beings. An accident involving one of these containers merged a human and an alien prisoner of the Grue to create the hero Xen0 (see the *Emerald City* setting for details).

In the years since, the alien contamination has added to the Arcadian reputation for strange sightings and phenomena. This led to the incorporation of alien visitors and those changed by their influence into the Cryptid Clans, a secret society of “outsiders,” non-humans, and mutants dwelling in the Arcadian wilderness (also detailed in *Emerald City*). It has also made the Arcadian Forest a popular site for “cryptid hunters” and others seeking evidence of elusive creatures like Bigfoot and extraterrestrials.

STAR ISLAND

Of course, those looking for evidence of extraterrestrials on Earth these days don’t have to go further than the Internet or cable news. In addition to several known alien heroes, the E.T. population of Earth has recently increased significantly due to a new “migration”.

Located off the coast near Freedom City, Star Island was so named because of its rough shape as well as its time as a launching facility and ground-based space telemetry center. Shifts in government funding, along with several incidents involving super-villain attacks, led to the closure of the Space Center. Discussions were underway within the Federal Government to use Star Island for the expansion of the Blackstone Prison facility when the Silver Storm occurred in Emerald City, shifting priority to the creation of a new federal super-prison closer to the West Coast (and leading to the creation of the Deep Six prison described in *Emerald City*).

After the destruction of Magna-Lor and the collapse of the Lor Republic, Daedalus (a member of Earth’s Freedom League) made contact with some of his old friends in Lor space. When it became clear the Republic could not be saved, Daedalus did what he could to rescue endangered refugees hunted by the forces of the new Imperium under Star-Khan. He brought them to Earth, where the League set up Star Island as a combination triage center and refugee camp. Once the United States government and the United Nations became aware of the situation, Daedalus and the Freedom League were ordered to halt the importation of any further “illegal aliens.”



against it. They severed Tellax's link with those enhanced by the Silver Storm and made Earth's environment "toxic" to it. Tellax was forced to flee, having achieved none of its goals. Forced back out into space, the Redeemer began a new program to evolve and protect, with the Argents.

Although capable of communicating with humans, Tellax is a vast and alien mind with little resembling human nature. It is dedicated to its programming to preserve the cosmos at virtually any cost, and individual lives mean nothing to it. Other life forms are, by necessity, simply biological resources to manipulate as needed to achieve its goals. It may well be that Max Mars' close connection with Tellax's technology on Earth over many years "infiltrated" the AI's consciousness with some all too human flaws, although Tellax vigorously denies this hypothesis. Still, it would explain some of its arrogance and growing messiah complex, to say nothing of its tendency to adopt a masculine human voice and persona.

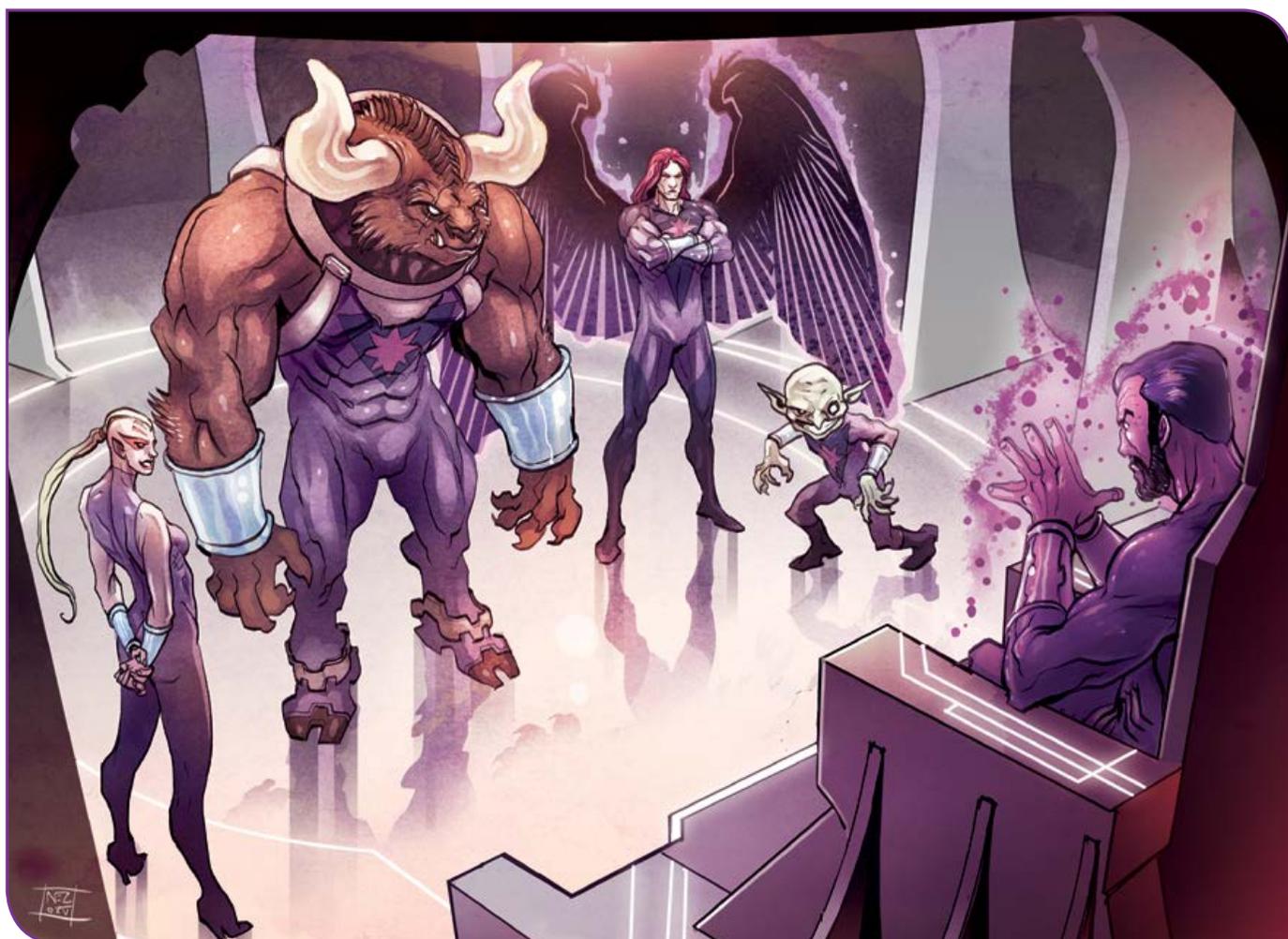
Technically speaking, Tellax is a disembodied entity, a sophisticated self-aware computer program, capable of "inhabiting" a variety of technological "shells." Tellax can copy its program into other forms, and may be able to holistically encode it on a sub-atomic level, allowing it to survive in even the tiniest fragment of its material structure until it is able to reconstitute a suitable body. You can consider this a form of the Immortality effect, but it is more of a plot device for Tellax's inevitable return than anything else. Given the remarkable adaptability of its technology, Tellax can have virtually any traits or effects you wish to give it. The ones given in its game stats are merely the most common.

THE BLACKGUARD

In the long history of the Star Knights, only one of them has ever turned against the Order. Sri Rojan Lhar betrayed the Star Knights and attempted to seize control of Citadel and the power of the Star Stone for himself. He failed but managed to escape, despite the efforts of Mentor and his fellow Star Knights. A'Jan Koor pursued Rojan—who became known as "Blackstar"—to Earth and the two became implacable foes. Years after his betrayal, Rojan was captured and Mentor stripped "the Black Star Knight" of his armor, sentencing him to life imprisonment on an isolated asteroid.

Blackstar—as he became known—managed to escape from his prison with the aid of Omega, who gifted Blackstar with the Shadow Bands, ancient artifacts which had found their way into the Terminus. Perhaps Omega intended Blackstar to one day join his Annihilators, or simply wished to soften the defenses of Earth's universe. Whatever the case, Blackstar took full advantage of his good fortune, becoming active once more in Earth's area of the galaxy and working with the notorious Crime League.

Still, his ambitions far exceeded petty criminal activity or even power over just one planet. Blackstar used his freedom and available resources to unlock the secrets of the Shadow Bands and learn about their link to the legendary Nightstone, a cosmic source of near-limitless power. If he could not overcome the Star Knights and their Mentor by stealth, then he would do so by force, creating



THE FREEDOM LEGION

BASE: Freedom City, Earth

CURRENT MEMBERS: Centurion II (reserve), Charger, Chiller, the Clockwatcher (affiliate), Colonel Colossus, Dr. Metropolis (affiliate), Metalla, the Nightstalker (reserve), Professor Danger, Solarflare, Star Knight; many other affiliate members across known space

FORMER MEMBERS: Elementress; others as yet unestablished

HEADQUARTERS: Freedom Hall

VEHICLES: *Daedalus*-class space-plane

For seven centuries, Freedom City's superheroes have shown the way to a bright, shining future for all. Today's heir to the Patriot Regiment legacy is the Freedom Legion. Tales of the Legion's heroic exploits inspire the inhabitants of countless worlds, and the team is revered throughout the galaxy for its dedication to justice and liberty for all sentient beings.

By necessity, the interplanetary Freedom Legion is structured more loosely than its predecessors. Scores of super-beings (including Dr. Metropolis) who prefer not to leave their bases of operation have affiliate-member status. They are left to pursue their own heroic agendas while still enjoying the sanction and support of the C.O.P. and

Legion, obligated only to respond to either organization's emergency calls.

By contrast, a dedicated core opts for active-member status, committing themselves full-time to resolving crises throughout the galaxy. The active members reside at Freedom Hall, allowing them immediate access to the Confederation's top decision-makers.

HEADQUARTERS: FREEDOM HALL · 36 POINTS

Size: Colossal **TOU:** 20 **Features:** Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Defense System, Fire Prevention System, Gym, Hangar, Holding Cells (Impervious, Punishment), Infirmary, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 5, Teleportal (Teleport 18, Affects Others Only, Limited to Extended, Limited to other teleportal locations), Trophy Room, Workshop

DAEDALUS-CLASS SPACE-PLANE · 50 POINTS

Size: Gargantuan; **STR** 13 **SPD** 12 (Flight (8,000 MPH)) **DEF** 6 **TOU** 13, **Features:** Autopilot 3, Communications 2, Computer, Fire Prevention System, Holding Cells (Impervious), Navigation System 3. **Powers:** Space Travel 3

CHARGER

Inhabitants of the storm-swept planet Tempest endure one of the harshest climates in known space. On other worlds, technology alleviates intemperate environmental conditions, but Tempest's electrically charged atmosphere overloads most electronic devices, leaving its culture backward and pastoral.

Such a low-tech world cannot long hold dreamers like Mykal Antczak, and at a young age, he left Tempest for planets unknown. Mykal never considered himself special, but on Earth, he learned the natural abilities his people take for granted qualified him for the Claremont Academy.

To survive lightning strikes, Tempestians naturally expel electricity from their bodies. With the Academy's guidance, Mykal learned to direct and focus these electrical discharges, and he set his sights on using his abilities as a superhero.

Mykal's selfless, humble nature and boundless enthusiasm made him a natural for the Freedom Legion, and he joined shortly after graduation. Taking the codename Charger, Mykal serves the Legion with honor and distinction. His boyhood dreams of seeing the galaxy realized, Mykal is finally happy, even if he doesn't always understand the technology he encounters along the way.

CHILLER

As a child, Geoff Miklas miraculously survived a crash landing on the arid planet Szolta. He vividly remembers blacking out from the unrelenting sun as he wished he could be cold... freezing cold...

This trauma triggered Geoff's latent cryokinetic powers. Though his ability to project intense cold saved his life, it also made him feel less human. He enrolled in the

