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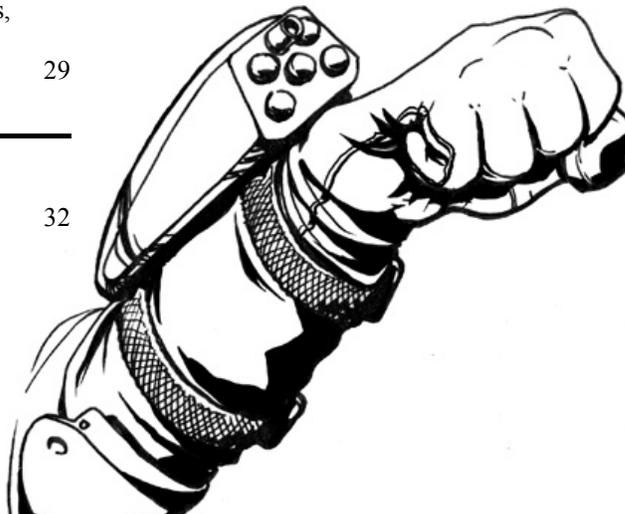
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## CONVENTIONS

Hero Games will be at these conventions. Stop by and visit the booth, and play in some games!

### KublaCon

May 23-26

San Francisco, CA

[kublacon.com](http://kublacon.com)

### PortCon

June 13-15

Portland, ME

[portconmaine.com](http://portconmaine.com)

### Origins

June 26-29

Columbus, OH

[originsgames.com](http://originsgames.com)

### GenCon Indy

July 24-27

Indianapolis, IN

[gencon.com](http://gencon.com)

### ConQuest

August 29-Sept 1

Palo Alto, CA

[con-quest.com](http://con-quest.com)

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# Thinking Outside the Lead Box

by Jacob Russell

## How to Deal With Players Who Spend too Much on Senses

I must confess to something. I like Enhanced Senses. Actually, I love them. The idea that my character can sense things that no one else in the group can is one of the most enjoyable parts about playing a super-hero for me. I get to stop, look off into the distance and cryptically state, “Something’s coming...” Love it. To that end, a lot of my characters have had some combination of the following senses:

- N-Ray Sense (usually vision)
- IR, UV, Nightvision, or anything that allows me to see in the dark
- Telescopic Senses (usually sight and hearing)
- Levels with all senses (usually about +4, or enough to net me a PER roll of 17 or less)

I’ve had more than one GM complain about this proclivity of mine. I even had people on the Hero discussion boards tell me that they would flat out refuse to allow my character in their campaign. The reason stated is that such a character would be able to instantly sense any crime or criminal. He needs no detective work, no Stealth, no Shadowing, no Forensics. He just needs to spend a full phase at half DCV and voila! Clue found, perp caught, case solved. In many of Superman’s adventures, particularly on the old George Reeves TV show, the criminals always hid that week’s plot device or McGuffin in a lead box. This would never stop a *Champions* player. They’d simply scan the city for lead boxes all the time. Well, let’s try to think outside of the lead box.

But before we get too far into this, let me make a couple of points about comparative cost and character concept. First, note that the standard detective skills Stealth, Shadowing, Concealment, Deduction, Forensics, and Criminology cost three points each. The lot of them together cost 18 points. The above list of senses costs about 30 to 40 points, so no one’s getting off cheap. The second point of order here is that those skills are not appropriate to purchase unless your character has the appropriate training as part of their background. So if you like to do detective work, but want to play someone who isn’t a highly trained investigator, Enhanced Senses is a good way to satisfy both needs.

Still, it’s easy to see how a GM might want to make a character actually *work* to solve a case. There’s no reason why someone with 30, 40, or even 50 points of Enhanced Senses would not have to work hard for their solutions. They would just have to work in a different way.

Characters with different abilities just require different challenges. The following strategies are offered to help GMs keep characters with lots of Enhanced Senses from unbalancing a game.

### SHADOWING

One abuse of Enhanced Senses that I must confess to is how I once used my senses to follow someone without any fear of detection. I told my GM, “I use my N-Ray and Telescopic Vision to keep track of him from four blocks away, and behind a building.” The poor GM could not think of any way to stop me without resorting to blatant GM chicanery. What should he have done?

### POPULATION SIZE

First of all, he should have made me define the specific geographic area in which I was searching for the character. Second, the GM should have decided roughly how many people are in that area. Once it’s figured out how many people are being scanned through, apply modifiers according to the following rough scheme:

Number of People	Modifier
1	-0
10	-2
100	-4
1000	-6
10000	-8

If these modifiers look familiar, it’s because they’ve been taken straight from the Mind Scan modifiers (*HERO System 5th Edition*, p. 134). Characters who wish to purchase Rapid Sight so they can scan through more faces quickly should be allowed to do so. They’re paying for it, after all.

### VISUAL SIMILARITY

How similar is the target to the rest of the population? Trying to find “Fat Tony” Gambini in the Chinese Quarter should be pretty easy. Trying to pick him out at a plus-sized men’s clothing store would be a lot harder.

Population and Target	Modifier
Population is highly varied (carnival, street festival)	-2
Population is very uniform, target is not	+2 to +4
Population is very uniform, as is target	-2 to -4

### MOTION

Modifiers can also be applied to uniformity of speed and direction. Someone running through a crowd of people who are only walking will stand out, even if they’re all moving in the

## FUTURE WARRIOR

The project described here is known as the Future Warrior 2025 program, and represents the sort of equipment the standard infantryman of 2025 can expect to be carrying. A precursor of the Future Soldier program is something the Army is calling the Objective Force Warrior program, which will be fielded around 2010. The Objective Force Warrior program will combine full body armor, a physical sensor system, and communications equipment to act as stepping stone between the current military model and the desired 2025 model.

## WEAPONS POD

Initially, the Future Soldier design called for a forearm-mounted weapon's pod. Game Masters wishing to use such a pod should rename the Combat Pistol the Combat Pod and make it an OIF instead of an OAF.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Popular Science. *21st Century Soldier*

# The \$50 Million Dollar Man

by Michael Surbrook

## The Solider of the Year 2025

Recently the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was awarded a five-year \$50 million dollar grant to develop new technologies for the next generation of United States armed forces infantry. This grant was used by MIT to create the Institute for Soldier Nanotechnologies, which hopes to design and develop new, lightweight materials and technologies in order to create new uniforms and equipment for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century fighting man.

Although a lot of the ideas being expressed at the ISN sound like science fiction (such as a uniform which responds to injuries received by its wearer), both the ISN and the United States Army is quite serious in its intent. Already news detailing some of the Institute's research subjects has come to light, allowing for some speculation as to the final results. This is where this article comes in.

The ideas and goals of the ISN are very reminiscent of the sort of "super gear" used by many comic book and comic book RPG agencies, both lawful (such as UNTIL) or criminal (such as VIPER). The difference is that the ISN creating devices to be used in the real world, and in real combat situations, not on the pages of a comic book. However, this shouldn't stop anyone from adapting these ideas to their own superhero campaigns (or near-future campaigns for that matter). This article will attempt to take some of those ideas and present them in *HERO System* terms, so that GM and players can adapt and use these ideas in their own campaigns.



Weapons Pod

## The Gear

Much of the equipment the ISN hopes to create will be based around various applications of nanotechnology – devices and materials far smaller (and much lighter) than anything made now. In theory, electrical nanotechnological components would be one-millionth of a meter in width, or only about ten times larger than a single atom. Similar advances made with microengineering would result in mechanical devices built on the scale of microchips. The objective is to make the soldier's gear both stronger and lighter. In this case, the weight-load of a fully kitted soldier would be roughly 30 pounds, 42 if he carries the assault rifle described below. Compare that to the 90 pounds of equipment a modern solider currently carries.

A theoretical breakdown of the future soldier's kit is as follows:



SABR Rifle

## SABR (ALLIANT TECHNOSYSTEMS SELECTABLE ASSAULT BATTLE RIFLE)

Also known as the Objective Individual Combat Weapon (or "OICW"), this weapon combines a 5.56mm carbine with a 20mm munitions launcher in a compact over-and-under configuration. Designed to replace the M-16 assault rifle/M-203 grenade launcher weapons system used by the current armed forces, the SABR allows a wide variety of options on the battlefield due to the variable ordinance available for the munitions launcher. For gaming purposes, however, the launcher's variable munitions can easily be simulated by the *Explosion Advantage*, and the *Indirect Advantage*, which simulates the ability for rounds to detonate at a set point (like after passing through a closed window).

The SABR comes with an integral laser sight and a high-resolution infrared targeting scope. The former is used when the soldier is on the move, while the latter is normally used to place rounds fired by the munitions launcher.

artwork by Chris Watkins