

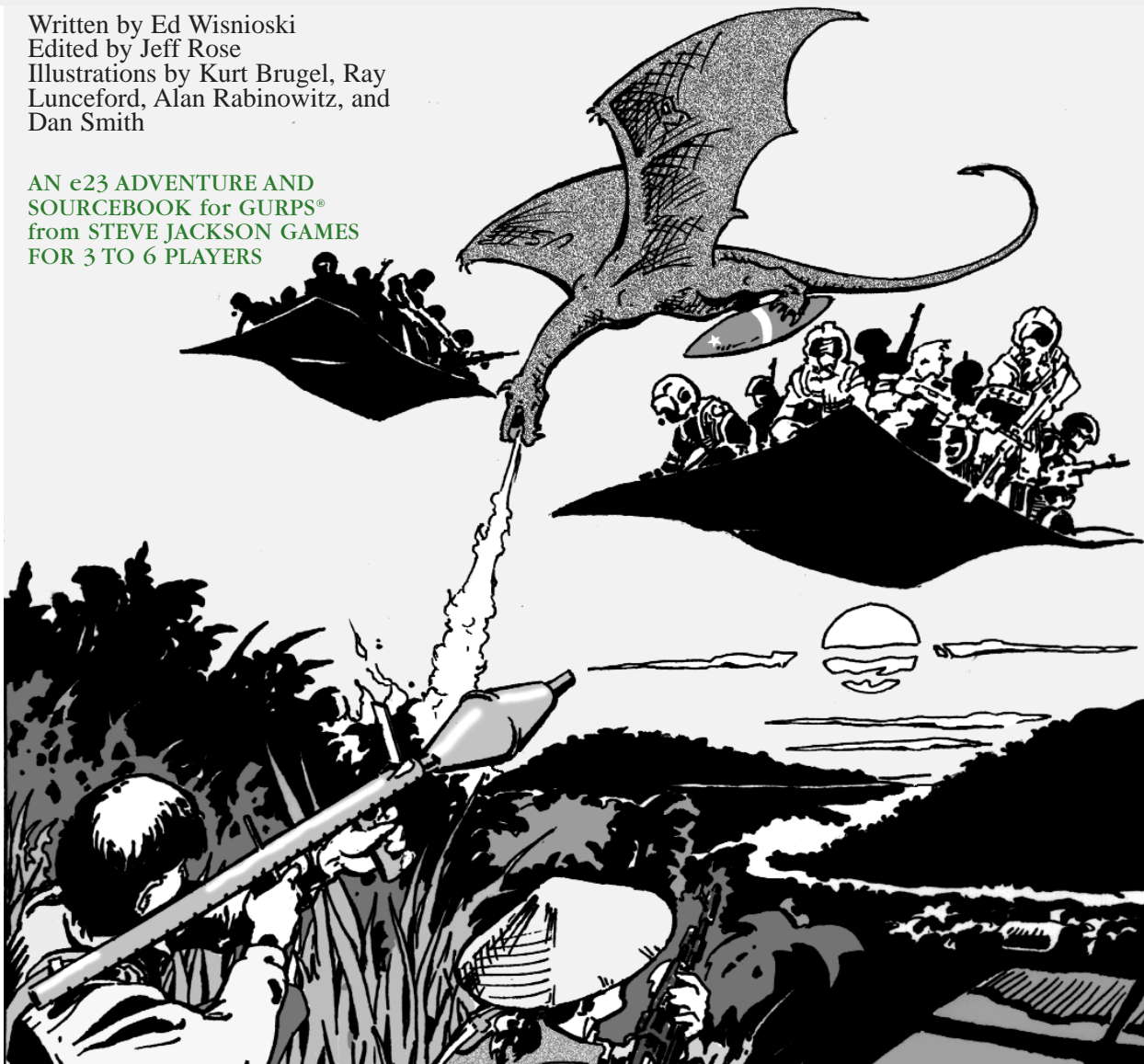
G U R P S[®]

Funny New Guys

Technomancer in Vietnam

Written by Ed Wisnioski
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Dan Smith

AN e23 ADVENTURE AND
SOURCEBOOK for GURPS[®]
from STEVE JACKSON GAMES
FOR 3 TO 6 PLAYERS

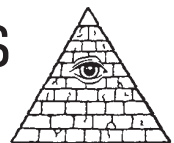


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American involvement in Indochina is a complex and difficult story to tell. The mere mention of Vietnam inspires strong emotions and bitter debate. Not since the Civil War have Americans been so divided politically. Just like the Civil War, its effects still ripple through the nation's subconscious. My interest in the war comes from the numerous veterans I have known through the years. Their stories create a living history that makes the rice paddies and jungles quite vivid.

What if high magic and the heavy firepower of the 20th century existed side by side? In David L. Pulver's *GURPS Technomancer*, they do, and the nature of war changes forever. In this book, players enter the forbidden territory of "Indian Country" and roleplay the experience of Vietnam . . . with a twist. Dragons, fighter jets, magic carpets, and zombie legions support the fight over the fate of Vietnam.

"Funny New Guys" is an adventure supplement where you fight the war on the intimate terms of an infantry soldier. You are the grunts that slog through rice paddies, contend with ambushes, and win the hearts and minds of locals. It isn't easy, but if you live to tell about your experiences, you just might get promoted and go home to the states.

About the Author

Ed Wisniewski graduated from Illinois State University and works as a web developer for a major candy company. He has been writing since he was a teenager and lives in Joliet, IL. His work is featured in the Steve Jackson products *Liber Reliquarium*, *GURPS Monsters*, and *GURPS Villains*, and he is the author of the *Goblins* adventure "Gentleman Johnson's Fishmart" featured in *The Best of Pyramid Volume One*.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to two Vietnam veterans who had a profound influence on my life. Sergeant Major David Ogle and Lieutenant Colonel Richard Weidner, thank you.



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GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, point your web browser to www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-1/.

The *GURPS Technomancer* web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/Technomancer/.

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1. Strange Days In the Jungle

Attack on Fire Base 23

The VC always attacked at night, and at Fire Base 23 the situation was looking grim for the young lieutenant. Enemy sappers, covered with axle grease to sneak through the wires, were tossing grenades into bunkers and using satchel charges against the howitzers that supported I-corps. Soldiers were running about frantically trying to shoot the enemy in the dark and ended up shooting each other. The smell of explosives and burning fuel was overpowering. The lieutenant, clad in his trousers and a flak jacket, fiddled for his pistol and then ran to the other hooches looking for others who hadn't lost their head during the ambush.

"Howdy sir," said a raggedy Coyote man covered in dirt. It was Hank the wiry Texan and radio operator. "Got any company?"

"No, we need to find a radio and get a dust off. Charley is all over this camp," Said the lieutenant.

"What about the HQ?"

"No good, too hot."

"Damn, then we will have to try over by the .50 cal."

"Let's do it."

Fires were burning now, and the other troops at the base could begin to distinguish friend from foe. The lieutenant was scared, but knew that a call to battalion could mean the difference between life and death. While running, he kept chanting his good luck spell and prayed it would work. Both the lieutenant and the coyote man made a dash for the relative safety of the bunker and its .50-caliber. Gunfire followed their footsteps as they made their way to the pile of sandbags.

The lieutenant dove into the emplacement. The VC had killed both of the crew in the early moments of the attack and some of the wounds still oozed blood. Hank was checking the action of the machine gun and getting ready to fire. The lieutenant pulled at the receiver of the radio and saw that the cord had been cut.

"Damn it!" he cursed.

VC started to approach the sandbags and gunfire sailed over their heads. Hank was blazing away with the machine gun to keep them pinned down, but they kept advancing. The lieutenant pulled his pistol and began firing in a desperate attempt to help out. This was it . . . they were going to die, but not without a fight. Neither the spell nor the prayer would be answered tonight.

"Somethin's wrong!" shouted Hank. "Can you feel it?"

The muggy night had turned bitterly cold and the lieutenant could see his breath. The gunfire stopped, and in the distance, low moaning could be heard over the sound of exploding ammunition. The moaning grew louder as it got closer and the shambling figures of Vietnamese started trudging through the barbed wire of the fire base. Both Hank and the lieutenant stared in shock – they were zombies. The VC ripped into them with gunfire and they kept advancing. Arms, legs, and heads blew off and they kept advancing. When they closed with the VC sappers, they clawed at them with their hands and slashed at them with bayonets. Moaning as they went, the zombies were slaughtering the VC. The effect was horrifying and those who survived the first assault ran in terror. The lieutenant and Hank looked around, wondering if they would be next.

"Stand down all clear!" came a voice from the distance.

"Negative! There are still enemy in the wire," shouted the lieutenant.

"Stand down, they are allies."

"Says who?"

"Says me, First Sergeant Otto Nasumbaum, 13th Necromantic Operations Group."

"Zombies, they sent zombies to save us!"

"Naw, we were in the neighborhood when we saw the attack and decided to give you folks a hand."

Two things ruled the night in Vietnam. The Viet Cong and the "Z companies" of the 13th NOG.

A Brief History of the 13th Necromantic Operations Group

Vietnam changed the rules of warfare in the 20th century. Conventional doctrines like movement and firepower were replaced by propaganda and harassing the enemy on the battlefield to overwhelm him. For officers who fought in World War II, it was a frustrating experience. As the war dragged, it became obvious that the war was not going to be won conventionally, and pressure began to build to either win or get out. This was when the doctrine of spell supremacy came into being.

Major Arthur “Black Death” Guftison first proposed the idea after returning to Washington from a tour of duty in Vietnam. Guftison was an early member of the 1st Necromantic Operations Detachment and his experiences had inspired a dark vision. The communists used every tactic they could to terrorize the local population. Something needed to be done to terrorize the VC. The major had worked with the 1st NOG as a liaison with conventional units and as an intelligence officer. Since many of the VC were indoctrinated at an early age and genuinely believed that they were fighting the good fight against the Americans, something was needed to shake up their worldview.

Shortly before Nixon took over the war effort, the 1st NOD was used as shock troops and as a commando force. Spellcasting was mostly used for communications spells and finding the enemy. The army, noting the effectiveness of the 1st NOD, authorized its increase to regiment-size and renamed it the 13th Necromantic Operations Group. Guftison felt that the 13th NOG needed to perform a more sinister duty. The “hells rangers” would conduct more “black” operations using magic to create illusions, engineer gruesome and painful ways to kill the enemy, interrogate prisoners, and most controversially, reanimate the dead to fight instead of American GIs. This brief was submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on June 1966, and by October, the first “Z companies” were being raised from enemy dead in

Vietnam. Guftison received a promotion and command of one of the first units.

The “Z companies” terrified the VC and the North Vietnamese army. The shambling troops at first only carried bayonets and machetes. Later, the undead troops were given primitive rifles. Zombies could take numerous hits from rifle fire and still advance because they were already dead and possessed no fear. During the fighting of Lam Som 769, a “Z company” was overrun by a North Vietnamese tank battalion. The zombies and their controller were destroyed to the last man but the action tied up the tanks long enough for South Vietnamese dragons to come and exact revenge. Enemy troops became frightened of death because they didn’t want to be found by the Americans and transformed into Zombies. It had a crushing effect on morale and slowly began to break the communist will to fight.

Spells defeated the enemy in other ways. Strange patches of fog would conceal troop movements. VC and NVA officers would have terrible dreams with illusions concocted by the CIA. Illusions and telepathy routinely tortured prisoners. Finally, special six-man teams, known as spooks, infiltrated the military staff of the North Vietnamese army using invisibility and shape-changing spells. By the end of the war, magic could do what guns, tanks, and bombs could not – destroy the will of the communists and win the war in Vietnam.

At the war’s end, Guftison was promoted to General by a grateful Nixon and became the commander of the 13th NOG until revelations of the “Z companies” became public in 1974 and the unit was disbanded. The officer retired to his family home in Kansas where he contracted ambulatory necrotic plague in 1979. The FBI spent two years searching for him before destroying his zombie form in 1981. The Major had poetically suffered the same fate of many of the undead he commanded.

TYPICAL VC FORCES

There is no such thing as a typical Viet Cong trooper. However, a GM looking to save time can use the following template to generate VC troops for battle. These three “generic” types of Viet Cong encompass most necessary player encounters.

Troopers

The basic soldiers of the Viet Cong. They can be hardened guerilla fighters or conscripts thrown into the fray.

Attributes: ST 10-12, DX 10-13, IQ 10-12, HT 11-14.

Advantages: Fit.

Disadvantages: Duty: Military Service (Employer, 14 or less).

Skills: Guns: Light Assault Rifle (P/E), First-Aid (M/E), Survival: Jungle (M/A), Spear: Bayonet on Rifle (P/A).

Officers

Though the leadership of the Viet Cong ranges from poor to excellent, all officers are committed to the expulsion of American forces from Vietnam.

Attributes: ST 11-13, DX 10-13, IQ 10-12, HT 11-14.

Advantages: Fit, Charisma +2.

Disadvantages: Duty: Military Service (Employer 14 or less).

Skills: Guns: Light Assault Rifle (P/E), Guns: Pistol (P/E), First-Aid (M/E), Survival: Jungle (M/A), Spear: Bayonet on Rifle (P/A), Tactics (Specialty: Guerrilla) (M/H).

Commissars

Any unit company-size or larger will have a Commissar. They are the secret police and political education officers of the Viet Cong. They are the ones that make sure each soldier and officer in the field knows and obeys the “party line.” They are highly loyal and fanatical about their mission.

Attributes: ST 11-13, DX 10-13, IQ 10-12, HT 11-14.

Advantages: Fit, Voice.

Disadvantages: Duty: Military Service (Employer 14 or less), Fanatic: Communist.

Skills: Bard (M/A), Guns: Light Assault Rifle (P/E), Guns: Pistol (P/E), First-Aid (M/E), Leadership (M/A), Survival: Jungle (M/A), Spear: Bayonet on Rifle (P/A), Trivia: Communist Dogma (M/A).

Special Forces base would be a disaster, so Fire Base 23 is the next target of opportunity.

To accomplish this task, the VC have been smuggling rockets, RPGs, and mortars within firing distance of the base. Each night, they shell the base hoping to draw out the Americans. The tactic has not worked, so they are setting more booby traps and placing heavier artillery within striking range. They want to slowly lay siege to the base until the Americans blunder into a trap or abandon the location.

So far only a company of Viet Cong are engaging in this activity, but as more equipment and firepower arrive, so do more troops.

A Meeting Engagement

The players blunder into a battle with Viet Cong engineers and artillerymen setting up a Soviet cannon

outside the base. The characters’ patrol will have been complicated by rain, which inhibits “Fluffy’s” heightened senses.

The battle will quickly draw the other Viet Cong in the area and force the captain to send in another platoon. When everything is over, the Viet Cong sneak back across the Cambodian border and the potential siege of the fire base is stopped.

The Firefight

Lieutenant Henderson and the first squad go out on patrol. As new members of the first squad, the players are along for the adventure. They slowly make their way out into the jungle, passing route 6. When they are farther along, anyone with a critical success on their perception roll will notice footprints in the mud and tracks that resemble a wagon. Henderson stops the patrol, tells the troops to spread out, and move forward slowly in a skirmish line.

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