

# The Fires Of War

<b>Book Line:</b>	Algernon Files	<b>SKU:</b>	301
<b>Book Type:</b>	Setting	<b>Formats:</b>	Softcover, PDF
<b>Author:</b>	Aaron Sullivan, Dave Mattingly	<b>Released:</b>	2006
<b>Cost:</b>	29.95\$	<b>ISBN:</b>	0977209547
<b>Page Count:</b>	228	<b>Publisher:</b>	Blackwyrn Games
<b>Common Abbreviations:</b>	FoW	<b>Print Status:</b>	In Print

## The Review:

*Reviewed By Gordon Feiner*

The Upside:

The Fires Of War: The Algernon Files, Volume II is a character book of Golden Age superheroes and villains. The book is actually a predecessor to The Algernon Files, which covers the modern era.

*Chapter 1 - Introduction.* Along with a standard introduction to the book there is also a page that explains the set up of the character sheets in the book, the majority of which are two pages each. The first page with a character picture and history, the second with the write-up in game terms. There is also a brief time line of events in the setting the books takes its characters from. The chapter finishes with some write-ups of weapons and vehicles of the World War 2 era, while not extensive it covers the basics pretty well.

*Chapter 2 - Allies.* Chapter one is Heroes, divided into three sections. The Sentinels, a sanctioned United States team; The Defenders Of The Crown, a sanctioned United Kingdom team; And Independents, unsanctioned teams and individual heroes of the world. All told there are forty-six characters in this chapter, plus two bases (complete with maps) and a vehicle.

The write-ups are very well done, all of them invoke a very Golden Age feeling to them, not caught up in modern tropes of trying to explain the science and abilities very much. The characters are interesting and the stats themselves are well done.

*Chapter 3 - Enemies.* The Chapter is divided into three sections again. The first is the Germans, the second the Japanese and the third Independents. Being a Golden Age sourcebook taking place during World War II this is appropriate. The German Ubersoldaten group is a good counter for both the British and American teams, with some interesting and creative characters presented. We also get a few vehicles with them. The Japanese superteam is much smaller by comparison, but more cohesive a team. The third part offers up thirty one more villains for a Golden Age game, along with their vehicles or minions if any. With a total of fifty-five villains you should have more than enough creative adversaries for your game.

One of the nice touches of all the characters is that some are written up as Superhuman and some are merely very talented or well connected mortals, normal people. This gives a nice mix depending on the tone and level you want to run a campaign at set in the Blackwyrn Universe Time line. It also provides a more diverse crowd to choose from.

The last part of the book provides us with a Pages From History section that gives us what happened

to each of the people in the book moving forward through the time line of the Blackwyrms Games Universe. If you're using that time line in the modern era and want some history to go along with things this section of the book is for you.

A very nice touch in the book I have to point out is a small box that accompanies each character called Public Knowledge. If someone has an appropriate Knowledge Skill there is a provided obscure knowledge bit and appropriate penalty to the roll to determine how obscure it is. This little bit alone provides an interesting nuance and hook for the GMs to use in their games.

#### The Downside:

If the book suffers from one thing, it's organization. It could do with splitting the Independents sections into Groups and Individuals as is they manage to run into each other without much division. The Groups could also each have an entry on the group as a whole to give their motives and how they work together.

#### The Otherside:

Being a character book it automatically has appeal outside the system it was written for. The book also has a Mutants & Masterminds 2 counterpart, so if you play with that system there's no need to convert the stats (just buy the right book for the right system). For others, you have fairly detailed histories and over a hundred interesting characters to work with.

Final conclusion, the book lives up to providing some good Golden Age examples of characters, though parts of it seem disorganized, it could have been broken down differently to separate individuals from groups. But that is hardly a problem when you just need the right character for the right situation and chances are this book could have it.

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Last update: **2007/11/24 13:20**

