

US Army Field Manual 6-66 (Post-Mortem Incantations) [GURPS 4E]

This volume has been indifferently bound in cheap cardboard: the original pages have holes compatible with a standard three-ring binder. This copy of the US Army Field Manual 6-66 (Post-Mortem Incantations) is dated 1968 AD and consists of 340 pages of small-type text and diagrams. The text is, pardon the pun, deathly dull -- but quite accurate; anyone with a knowledge of practical magic will immediately recognize it as being a true grimoire.

The largest section of the book consists of various spells. Unlike most grimoires, the Field Manual classifies its spells by rank: the assumption seems to be that mages are warrant officers, and are expected to show proficiency in specific spells before advancing in rank. Warrant officer ones (W-1) seem to be 'general' mages: the W-2 to W-4 ranks represent more specialized disciplines (in this case, necromancy). The spells are as follows:

- W-1: Ignite Fire, Light, Purify Air, Seek Earth, Seek Water, Sense Danger, Sense Foes, Simple Illusion, Sound, Test Food. [10]
- W-2: Death Vision, Detect Magic, Lend Energy, Lend Vitality, Recover Energy. [5]
- W-3: Control Zombie, Final Rest, Summon Spirit, Turn Zombie, Zombie. [5]
- W-4: Banish, Enchant, Find Weakness, Magic Resistance, Minor Healing, Pentagram, Remove Curse, Scryguard, Spell Shield, Summon Demon. [10]

Note that, as a practical matter, under this system those with Magery 1 cannot rise above W-2 rank and those with Magery 2 cannot rise above W-4. W-5 seems to be reserved for mages with Magery 3. This is all actually referenced in the text, albeit in military language.

The rest of the grimoire is devoted to practical matters: how to perform rituals in the field, basic safety practices, how to harvest necromantic-active substances from an animal corpse, and so on. There is an entire chapter on ethical considerations, which heavily references the 1964 Geneva Conventions on the Use of Magic in War. Short version: armies can zombify their own troops, but not those of legal combatants (army necromancers may attempt to take control of existing zombies). The use of

Death Vision or Summon Spirit are likewise forbidden for use on legal combatants. Demon summoning is *not* forbidden, but demons are considered to be weapons of mass destruction, and thus prohibited under the UCMJ unless in retaliation for a successful demon summoning by the other side. Human sacrifice is expressly forbidden in all cases, lawful combatants or no.

The general tenor of the text is all the more appalling by how matter-of-fact it is. There is none of the usual grandiose language and overbearing emotional cues; instead, the text for the Field Manual will dryly discuss which parts of the human liver to use when summoning the corpse's shade, and which best methods are best for gathering information from the spirit when it does show up. There are quite a few awful things described in the Field Manual, and there's is something profoundly disquieting about seeing the procedures for producing those awful things laid out, step by careful step.

Plus, again, the spells **work**. While the language is clunky and rich in military-speak, it can actually be deciphered quite easily. Anybody with magical ability can learn these spells -- and anybody who does learn them all will be well on the way to being a competent, if fairly specialized, necromancer. Not necessarily an *evil* one -- it depends on

your opinion on zombification -- but definitely one that could be a problem, given enough time.

The material presented here is my original creation, intended for use with the GURPS system from Steve Jackson Games. This material is not official and is not endorsed by Steve Jackson Games.

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