



by Steven E. Schend

# THE MARVEL-PHILE

Everything Uatu™ know: the return of the colossal Bulletin Box



Well, it's been another hectic year in the MARVEL UNIVERSE™, and many more changes are taking place than your "MARVEL-Phile" scribes can keep up with. I've decided to clean my files of all my update notes and cover a whole slew of topics in one mega-Bulletin Box. This format is used when character changes are not important enough to merit either a full "MARVEL-Phile" column or a page in the *Gamer's Handbooks of the MARVEL UNIVERSE Updates* published by TSR, Inc. As we did last year in DRAGON® issue #168, we'll discuss overall team changes and news first, then turn our attention to individual figures on both sides of the law. And now, the news.

## Team changes

**Alpha Flight:** Alpha Flight has gone through a number of membership and cosmetic changes in the past year. The entire membership of Alpha now wears uniforms for a more unified look. Of course, losing their luggage on their most recent jaunt to the United States saw Canada's heroes donning the colors of X-Factor.

The group has been restructured to better operate with the new Department H and its Canadian government contacts. Windshear is the Chief Administrator of Alpha, dealing with day-to-day operations. He and Puck are backup members of "Core Alpha," the front-line combat team of Guardian, Aurora, Northstar, Sasquatch, and Weapon Omega. Box and Diamond Lil are now married and have retired from Alpha. Shaman is still operating as an instructor for Beta Flight, and Talisman is still recuperating from injuries sustained while fighting the Master.

**Avengers:** The Avengers have had another rough year. Membership instability and bouts of interpersonal conflicts could soon have divisive effects on the performance of the Earth's premier fighting team. Many of the East Coast "Primary Team" have been noticeably absent from the Avengers' rank and file for months, so



many of the Reservists have seen action with the team. Current primary members are still led by Captain America and include the Black Knight, the Black Widow, Crystal, Hercules, Thor, and the Vision. The Reservists now include Captain Marvel, the Falcon, Quasar, Sersi, She-Hulk, and Spider-Man. Two probationary Avengers, Rage and the Sandman, have since left the group. Rage was relieved of his Avengers' status due to his age (14-year-old super heroes aren't eligible for Avengers' membership). The Sandman resigned his Avengers' status due to a mixup in communications with Captain America over stopping a weapons-smuggling operations. He is now a full-time member of Silver Sable's Wild Pack.

The Avengers' West Coast team has been a bit more stable after some tumultuous years. Soon after the raising of Demonica, Tigra, the Wasp, and Dr. Pym resigned from the Avengers, and Spider-Woman, Living Lightning, and USAgent were named as their replacements. The West Coast reserves now stand as Dr. Pym, Mockingbird, Tigra, and the Wasp. The chairmanship was also officially placed in Iron Man's hands, much to the chagrin of the former chairman, Hawkeye.

"Operation: Galactic Storm" has unified the Avengers into various teams for the express purpose of protecting the Earth and its sun from the excesses of the warring Kree and Shi'ar empires. The teams were assembled on the basis of their experience in space, technical know-how, and power levels. Their missions are to act as envoys to the respective interstellar empires and as protectors of Earth. The teams are as follows:

**Earth Force:** Dr. Pym, Wasp, Falcon, She-Hulk, Mockingbird, USAgent, Gilgamesh, Spider-Woman.

**Kree envoys:** Captain America, Iron Man, Goliath (Hawkeye), Hercules, Black Knight, Sersi, Crystal.

**Shi'ar envoys:** Captain Marvel, Scarlet Witch, Vision, Wonder Man, Starfox, Thor, Living Lightning.

Of the remaining Avengers, the Black Widow seems to be staying on hand at the New York HQ to coordinate efforts with the Earth Force and Quasar, whose duty it is to guard the stargates near the Sun. The entire scope and effect of this campaign are uncertain, but it's sure to be one of the most exciting Avengers' epics in years!

**Brotherhood of Evil Mutants:** The third incarnation of this mutant terrorist group has been formed by the Toad, and it includes Pyro, the Blob, Sauron, and Phantazia. It is also allied with Masque and his Morlocks, who are bent on revenge on Feral for abandoning her fellow Morlocks.

**Excalibur:** Finally, Britain's team of superhumans has come to the battle that it was created for! It was recently revealed that Roma was manipulating Captain Britain and the other members of Excalibur to

join together as a team for the purpose of battling certain impending evils surrounding Earth. They were recently joined by Cerise and Kylun, but the final battle against the sorcerer Necrom and the power of the Anti-Phoenix still looks grim. Cerise's power is Energy Solidification, Manipulation, and Generation at Amazing levels (for another hero with similar powers, look at Quasar). Kylun's power is minor-Sound Duplication of Incredible ability-compared to his Incredible Fighting ability and swordsmanship; Weapons Mastery gives him a +2CS with his two swords, with which he can disrupt up to Incredible magical energy.

**Guardians of the Galaxy:** The Guardians have now split into two teams. One is based on Earth and is led by Major Victory (see the entry "Astro, Major Vance"); its members include Charlie, Nikki, Yondu, and the newest member, Talon. They have focused their attentions on dismantling the organization of the Punishers, a group of Earth natives basing their dress and ethics on the 20th-century vigilante called the Punisher. This group was secretly under the control of the Brotherhood of the Badoon, and the Guardians are working to disrupt both Punisher and Badoon influences on Earth.

Martinez and Mainframe (the worldwide computer net that was once the Vision) are starting a new galactic-based team, with a wider range of responsibilities than the Guardians. This organization might be based around the 20th-century Avengers Bylaws. Hinted members include Replica and Firelord, but Martinez should have his Galactic Guardians up and running soon.

## Character changes

As always, keep in mind a number of factors when reading the information herein. When anyone is reported dead or alive, we are simply stating the facts as they are reported to us. When we suggest probabilities for survival, we are simply judging some of the events with our prior knowledge of characters and history. Remember the ultimate rule of fictional death: If there's no body to discover, there's no guaranteed death. (It's not a hard-and-fast rule, but it does seem to hold true for many Marvel mutants!)

## Deaths-Heroes:

**Vindicator:** The former leader of Alpha Flight, James MacDonald Hudson's recent return from the dead lasted less than a year. While half of Alpha Flight and the Avengers fought an alien invasion coordinated by the Consortium, Vindicator and the rest of the team were pressed into saving the Quirrl'n and Ganymede from Galactus and his herald, Nova. Vindicator managed to fight off the Quirrl'n's control of his mechanical side and consciously saved all his teammates and Ganymede by sacrificing his life to force Galactus away

from his intended meal.

## Deaths-Villains:

**Legion:** The son of Charles Xavier and Gabrielle Haller died due to manipulations by the Shadow King. The multiple personalities of David Haller had fallen under the control of the Shadow King, and his body acted as the King's corporeal host on this plane. When the X-Men disrupted the Shadow King's power, the backlash from the King's death on the Astral Plane simultaneously wiped out David's mind, causing his death. Probability of survival: nil.

**Magneto and his Acolytes:** The mutant Master of Magnetism and his latest mutant followers were allegedly killed in the destruction of Asteroid M by an orbital Soviet laser. Probability of survival: high, due to Magneto's ability to manipulate energy and matter with his powers.

**Pierce, Donald:** Donald Pierce and his cyborg assassins, collectively known as the Reavers, were massacred by a number of Sentinels under the control of Fitzroy. Fitzroy used his assassination of Pierce as his membership initiation into the Upstarts. Probability of survival: nil.

**Shadow King:** Long thought dead after his defeat as Amahl Farouk by Charles Xavier, the Shadow King returned through the Astral Plane and possessed a number of hosts before finally being defeated by the combined efforts of the X-Men and X-Factor. Once his connections to the Earthly plane were severed, the Shadow King was destroyed on the Astral Plane by Xavier and his students, and his consciousness was dispersed. Probability of survival: questionable, since he survived an end such as this 20 years ago.

## Resurrected-Heroes

**Iron Fist:** Daniel Rand is back from the dead after long months as a prisoner of the H'ylthri of K'un Lun. The "Iron Fist" that died was actually a H'ylthri doppelganger made to replace the hero and act as an agent for the plant creatures' invasion of Earth. Danny is now recuperating from his long captivity; all the meditation and energy of the Iron Fist has apparently cured him of his cancer.

**Rasputin, Colonel Mikhail:** His "death" actually a cover-up by the Soviet powers of the time, Mikhail did not perish in a spacecraft accident as was believed for years. He was instead sent through a black hole on Sakhalin Island as part of a Soviet exploratory team; he is the only survivor. He recently returned to Earth with the X-Men and his little brother, Colossus, and is recovering at the X-Men's mansion.

**Swordsman:** The erstwhile villain-cum-Avenger appears to have returned from beyond the grave. Little is known at this time for certain, other than he is wracked with great pain and knows everything the original Swordsman would know. Cloning has been ruled out, since all of the

Swordsman's skills were learned traits and cannot be duplicated by cellular reconstruction. The only facts known for certain are that he is accompanied by a woman known as Magdalene (who appears to have great affection for him) and is secretly backed by a mysterious and powerful man named Proctor.

## Resurrected-Villains

**Mystique:** Mystique's death at the hands of Val Cooper many months ago was staged to sidetrack the Shadow King. Mystique defeated Cooper, placed her under Nick Fury's protection, and had herself hypnotized into believing that she was Val. With the assault on Muir Island, Mystique revealed her presence and killed one of the Shadow King's host bodies, temporarily disrupting his plans. Mystique is now a free agent after the dissolution of Freedom Force; she has not, however, returned to her former life of crime. Perhaps by next year, she will no longer be considered a villain.

**Silvermane:** The cybernetic crimelord, Silvio Manfredi (a.k.a. Silvermane), is still alive despite apparent stoppage of his life-support machinery by the vigilantes Cloak and Dagger. His recent battle with Spider-Man left him weak, but he escaped. It is assumed that he and many other crime-lords are planning his rise to power to take over the Kingpin's vacant overlordship of New York's underworld.

**Terrax:** Although reduced to little more than topsoil after his encounter with the New Warriors, the irradiated and cosmically powered rock that composed Terrax was reconstituted and melded with the body of Harmon Furmintz, the CEO of Genetech. Harmon, having failed to qualify for Project Rebirth (which spawned Captain America), sought to become the super hero he'd always wanted to be; unfortunately, the merging of Terrax's energy with his body apparently erased Furmintz's mind, leaving only Terrax the Terrible. With a little help from the Fantastic Four, the New Warriors managed to contain Terrax until the Silver Surfer could remove him from Earth. Terrax now resides on an uninhabited planet many light years from Earth; he is trapped there since his flight power is now gone.

## Miscellaneous changes

**Astro, Major Vance:** Vance Astro, the 1000-year-old astronaut and Guardian of the Galaxy, had a degenerative skin condition that left him trapped in a reinforced suit for the past few years. Now, thanks to a number of spells and healing treatments from Krugarr and the Ancient One (Earth's Sorcerer Supreme and his mentor, Stephen Strange, respectively) and the help of Hollywood (the 20th century's Wonder Man), Vance is out of the suit and has restyled his costume to become Major Victory, the leader of the Earth-bound

Guardians contingent. His suit, styled after Captain America's, is of adamantium weave and provides him with Monstrous protection from physical and energy attacks; mental and magical attacks still affect him normally. He still wields Captain America's shield.

**Aurora:** Due to psychological torture by the villain Headlok, Aurora has returned to her original state of having two very strong personalities: Jeanne-Marie Beaubier, the stern, pious, and proper schoolteacher; and Aurora, the devil-may-care, hedonistic, and irresponsible super heroine. Despite her former distaste for Aurora's place in Alpha Flight, it was Jeanne-Marie who returned to the fold and offered her (their) services in Core Alpha.

**Black Knight:** The Black Knight has created an energy sword that should be safer both for his opponents and himself, considering the curse on his original Ebony Blade. The sword can slice through Remarkable or lesser materials, and it only stuns the nervous systems of living beings (roll on the Stun column versus Incredible Intensity Stun effect).

**Dreadface:** Encountered on a South Seas island by the Thing and the Human Torch, this alien stowaway on their crashed spaceship exhibited many of the characteristics of the alien costume now bonded with Edward Brock, a.k.a. Venom. If this alien is connected to the Venom alien, there is a high probability that it wasn't destroyed by an explosion on the island. It had previously possessed various animals and both the Human Torch and the Thing. Regardless of any connections to Venom, it would be safest to avoid this island.

**Her:** Her has returned to Earth. After causing much havoc in Ottawa resisting the Consortium with Alpha Flight and the Avengers, she sought out a perfect mate among the male superhumans of Earth. Her plans were thwarted by Quasar, though she still is quite attracted to the Earth-born Protector of the Universe and has been seen in his company quite often in the past weeks. She has also adopted a variation of a costume that Adam Warlock wore just before his "death" at the hands of Thanos.

**Mandroids:** The latest model of Mandroid armor in use by U.S. Government forces (including SHIELD and various U.S. allies) is a 15'-tall suit of armor with Body Armor, enhanced Strength, and Force Blasts all at Amazing rank or intensity. The new Mandroids were first seen in action in Trans-Sabal against the Hulk and the Pantheon.

**Marvel Boy:** Marvel Boy has been arrested and is currently being held in prison in his identity as Vance Astro. He is on trial for causing the death of his abusive father with his telekinetic powers.

**Owl:** For years, Leland Owlsley has been ingesting a serum that allowed him to glide like an owl; the long-term effects of this serum are now taking their toll on

him. He cannot walk without elaborate prosthetics on his legs. His eyes and ears, while as sensitive as an owl's, need prosthetics to focus them as well. His body has now adapted more fully to flying, adding additional air sacs to his lungs and hollowing his bones, and his neck even has additional vertebrae to allow him to turn his neck nearly 360° around. However, this transformation drove him mad, and he killed dozens of people trying to usurp the leadership of the underworld. His madness nearly cost him his own life as well until he was saved by Daredevil. The Owl is undergoing psychiatric treatment.

**Power Pack:** Power Pack is now reunited and back on Earth, and their powers have been exchanged for perhaps a final time, returning to their original state. Katie has her energy powers, Jack controls his density, Alex manipulates gravity, and Julie has her flight powers again. Alex's transformation into a Kymelian was a hoax; this was a simulacrum created by the Snarks, and Alex was their prisoner for that time.

**Rhino:** The Rhino's old suit was finally removed from his skin, and he now has a new suit supplied by Justin Hammer. It closely resembles his original suit, but has such modifications as a clear plastic shield over his eyes that disintegrates Spider-Man's webbing.

**Speedfreak:** Speedfreak is an assassin-for-hire currently working for an L.A. crimelord by the name of Lang. Speedfreak attacked an AIDS clinic benefit, nearly killing Jim Wilson and injuring Rick Jones before being stopped by the Hulk. Much of his power seems to be in his battlesuit, though his sheer tenacity, ferociousness, and manic behavior seem to be products of his addiction to the drug Snap. He moves at Shift X land speed due to his boot jets and has a limited flight speed of Good rank. His battlesuit also provides him with Remarkable Body Armor, Remarkable strength and damage blades, and a rocket-propelled Adamantium barb (Monstrous Edged Attacks damage) with a two-area range. Currently, Speedfreak and Lang are both in an L.A. jail awaiting trial for the attempted murders at the clinic.

**Vulture:** Adrian Toomes is dying of cancer, which he contracted from his electromagnetic flying harness. Before he goes, he wants to balance the scales with those he dealt with in life. He has made numerous unsuccessful attempts to gain May Parker's forgiveness for his part in the death of Nathan Lubensky. A number of his other underworld contacts and various people connected to him have been killed. All he wants to do now is to kill Spider-Man before his own time runs out.

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