

Project Garnet

Credits: Michael King, Wendy Misuinas
Revised: July 2005

Introduction

Project Garnet started as a small operation formed by a group of scientists who broke off from SETI in 1986 after the evidence from their project disappeared and their Project Manager was murdered. It has changed over the years, evolving into a secret, independent agency with members from all walks of life. Its message has spread across many nations, and one member of Project Garnet can almost always find another, if they look hard enough.

Project Garnet's particular area of expertise is the truth – and hiding it from those who can't handle it. Because members of Project Garnet know what the rest of the world only dreams about: there is life beyond Earth. And it doesn't like us.

On the surface, Project Garnet is a “consulting firm,” having erected several front organizations which allow it to centralize resources and provide secure communication and transportation networks across national lines. Underneath the artificial facade is tightly hierarchical agency that relies on local Units and a division of labor that allows each individual to contribute to the Project to the best of his abilities, while maintaining a centralized method of operation.

Garnet focuses on UFOs and alien visitations, but individual agents sometimes use their skills in information management for other things as well. Project Garnet became a member of the Round Table in 2001.

Philosophy

- To promote the continued comfortable feeling that humans are alone.
- To investigate and keep quiet UFO activity in and around member nations.
- To infiltrate governments at every level in order to achieve information control.

Mission:

To insure the control of information concerning and related to extraterrestrial creatures never reaches the public as a whole, or to make sure such information appears false or ridiculous.

Structure & Organization

Sections

There are five Sections which make up “Project Garnet.”

GARNET -- This is the core founding group of Project Garnet, the actual suit-wearing “agents.” Whether they truly work for the governments they claim to work for is another question entirely. They have large budgets, and are the hub for intelligence gathering and dispersal. They’re also the ones who make the polite “requests” to cease publishing “sensitive” information.

ANASAZI -- ANASAZI’s purpose was to create an information web using current (and future) technology. Today, they represent some of the leaders in cutting edge surveillance and information gathering technology.

MATTERHORN -- This group exists solely to debunk UFO investigations. They pose as UFOlogists and UFO investigators, infiltrating organizations that get too close to the truth and making fools of themselves so that members in those societies look like nutcases and paranoid freaks.

APOCRYPHA -- This group comprises the media hounds of Project Garnet. They watch the media outlets, big and small, for stories that need investigating, altering, or covering up. They’re also the group who puts out intelligence pieces to sleeper agents cleverly hidden in “press releases.”

PAPERCLIP -- Of all the groups, this is the newest within Project Garnet. The purpose of PAPERCLIP is to work outside the Grid - that is, without technology. This assures that the highly sensitive information they safeguard cannot fall into the hands of someone snooping the Grid for patterns or information. They’re typically found in extremely rural areas where technology isn’t always available, but after the massive blackout in the USA in 2003, PAPERCLIP has set up operations in urban areas as well, as a backup to ANASAZI. Just in case...

Organization of Project Garnet

Unit: All Agents in Project Garnet in a city or area work together as one Unit. The **Unit Leader** is the highest ranking member in the Unit. The Unit Leader reports to the **Joint Section Board**. If there is only one Project Garnet Agent in an area, she may be part of a Unit in a different area, or she may operate solo and report directly to her **Section Leader**.

Section Leader: The Section Leader is in charge of all the members of his Section. The Section Leader may issue orders to the whole Section or to individual members

International Section Committee: The International Section Committee is formed by all Rank 5 Agents in Project Garnet. Known as the “ISC” for short, it handles all promotions to Rank x 5, and is responsible for insuring that every Section is doing its job. They also act as a check upon the power of the Joint Section Board.

Joint Section Board: A five member board made up of the Section Leaders, this is the

highest authority in Project Garnet.

Titles, Ranks, & Status

Status

You may have general Project Garnet Status to reflect how well known you are among the entire organization. You may also purchase Section Status which reflects how well known you are in your Section. Ranks have minimum Status requirements.

On being a general member of Project Garnet:

A member of a Unit has no special title and no special duties other than to follow the orders of his Unit Leader and to work as part of the team formed by the Unit. She may decide to file regular reports with her National Section Leader or she may prefer to be left alone to do her own thing. Opportunities for plots and politics above the local level will be available to players who wish to pursue them, but there is no IC structure above the local level that your character is required to be part of. However, promotion beyond Rank x 2 will require at least some interaction with PCs above the local level.

Also, if you are playing the only member of Project Garnet in your domain, you should make an effort to be in touch with your National Section Leader. This can be as simple as joining your Section's IC list. Garnet does not let its agents "fall off the map." If you're playing a solo agent who cannot prove he is in touch with at least his Section or a Unit some where near him, then he will be considered a rogue, and IC consequences might befall your character.

Titles and Duties

Unit Leader – The Unit Leader is the highest ranking agent in the unit and is in charge of leading all members of Project Garnet in his area. He is responsible for making sure that every member of the Unit is working together as a team. All Unit Leaders report directly to the Joint Section Board. Unit Leaders may grant promotions to Rank x 2, including granting a promotion from Rookie to Agent (Rank x 1). Unit Leaders may be removed by stripping them of Rank. *Minimum Rank: 3*

ST Note: Where there are two or more characters of equal rank vying for Unit Leader, the Storytellers and players should decide together who is going to be the Unit Leader.

Section Leader: The Section Leader is in charge of all the members of his section. He is appointed by the International Section Committee. Section Leaders may grant promotions to up to Rank x 4. The Section Leader may issue orders to the whole Section or to individual members. The National Sectional Leader can only be removed by the Joint Section Board or by being stripped of rank. *Minimum Rank: 5*
Requires Top Approval and verification of IC appointment; only one per Section.

International Section Committee: The ISC formed by all Rank 5 Agents in Project Garnet. The ISC handles all promotions to Rank x 5, and is responsible for insuring that every Section is doing its job. The ISC can issue orders to the Section as a whole, but not to individual members. The ISC is responsible for appointing Section Leaders. Members may be removed from the ISC by being stripped of Rank.

Joint Section Board: Members of the Joint Section Board are Rank 6 Agents. The Joint Section Board is the highest authority in Project Garnet. A member of the Joint Section Board may only be removed by the other Section Leaders in a simple majority vote, or by being stripped of rank. The Joint Section Board may institute reforms in the structure of Project Garnet.

Rank

Rank is free; it is earned and lost through roleplay.

Rank is common to all members of Project Garnet, so a Rank 2 GARNET Agent is equal to a Rank 2 PAPERCLIP Agent.

Rookie Agent – A Rookie Agent has a Rank of 0. Rookies are the grunts of Project Garnet – everyone out ranks them, and everyone is waiting for them to screw up. A Rookie Agent is considered a full member of Project Garnet, but may not have Project Garnet Status. He simply has not proven himself enough to hold Status.

Rank 1 – Operative – A Level 1 Agent has proven himself trustworthy, and has shown he can work as part of a Unit or as a reliable solo agent. *Minimum Status: Section 1*

Rank 2 – Junior Agent – A Level 2 Agent has proven herself to her Unit Leader or Section Leader. *Minimum Status: Project Garnet 1 and Section 2.*

Rank 3 – Field Agent – A Level 3 Agent is a specialist with some particular field essential to the operations within a Section. For APOCRYPHA, this might be a Senior Journalist at a major newspaper. *Minimum Status: Project Garnet 2 and Section 3.*

Rank 4 – Lieutenant – A Level 4 Agent is a specialist who has made his or herself very valuable to a Section. A particular example might be a GARNET agent who has a great number of contacts within one of the other groups who participate in the Round Table. *Minimum Status: Project Garnet 3 and Section 4.*

Rank 5 – Senior Agent – A Level 5 Agent has spent years working within the system, and has had enough pieces of the “need to know” bits of information to see the bigger picture and be entrusted with the over all running and management of their Section. Level 5 Agents automatically become members of the Section Committee. *Minimum Status: Garnet 4 and Section 5.*

Rank 6 – Rank 6 is reserved for members of the Joint Section Board, who hold that Rank

only as long as they serve on the Section Board and as Section Leader.

Gaining Rank

Rank is awarded by your Unit Leader or by your Section Leader. The ISC can also award Rank. Players should document the change in Rank in their experience log.

Stripping Rank

Rank may be automatically stripped from a PC by 2/3 majority vote of the ISC, or the Joint Section Board. Rank may also be stripped by other PCs. The PCs must get a declaration from a character whose rank is equal to, or greater than, that of the target. That declaration must be supported by characters whose collective Section Status Traits *or* Project Garnet Status traits are equal to **five times** the rank being stripped, and then the action must be roleplayed (either at a game session or via e-mail or IRC if there is a Storyteller to witness the scene).

Example: David has Rank 3 and is a member of ANASAZI. Wendy decides to strip him of Rank. She also has Rank 3, but she is a member of PAPERCLIP. Wendy cannot use her Section Status to strip David of Rank, but she has many ANASAZI allies, each of them with ANASAZI Status of 5. Wendy convinces three of her allies to support her declaration to strip David's Rank. She notifies the Storyteller, who verifies that Wendy and her allies together have 15 ANASAZI Status traits. Wendy is allowed to roleplay stripping David's rank at the next session.

Stripping Rank is serious business and can result in serious IC consequences.

Players must work together to strip a character of Rank. However, the Storytellers should watch this carefully. A person should not be stripping rank from some one outside their domain without a good reason!

Membership & Duties

Project Garnet looks for true believers first and foremost. Not the idiots who show up at Roswell Anniversary conventions or auction off X-Rays of alien implants on E-Bay, but the rational, intelligent individuals who have looked around them and realized that the truth is everywhere, once they know how to find it.

There are several attributes that the Sections look for in potential recruits, but the most important attribute is the ability to keep a secret without appearing to hiding something. Respect for authority is also very important; Project Garnet doesn't put up with attitude. It's got a mission to accomplish, and it won't let someone's attitude problem stand in the way.

Recruitment into Project Garnet is a simple process. Any Agent may recruit an individual. Once the Agent is convinced his target is a suitable and trustworthy candidate, the individual is brought into the Unit as a Rookie and given a chance to prove

himself. When he does, the Unit Leader can promote him to Rank 1.

Recruitment is done with the utmost discretion, and only after a long and careful process to be certain that once the recruit learns of Project Garnet, they will be ready to join. Secrecy cannot be maintained if agents reveal the existence of Project Garnet for the sake of recruitment. Therefore, recruitment should only be undertaken in extreme circumstances. Your PC should not be running around trying to recruit people on a daily basis, and certainly will not recruit from other secret societies.

Solo agents may recruit, however, they put their own Rank on the line when doing so – if the Rookie screws up, the Section will know exactly who is to blame. Solo agents may not grant Rank without permission from the Section Leader.

Practices & Rites

Project Garnet is a centralized operation, so from time to time orders will come from the ISC or from the Section Leaders, and it is expected that those orders will be carried out. Higher ranking agents may issue orders to lower ranking agents with the same expectation. However, the organization would fall apart if it weren't for the local Units, and for the most part it's assumed that the members of a Unit know the best way to serve the organization and advance the mission in their city or area.

With regard to the International Round Table, Project Garnet is always represented by the Unit leaders of the largest two Units. *(ST Note: "Largest" is defined by number of player characters. NPCs don't count.)*

Requirements for Membership

Membership in Project Garnet is Low Approval.

Players may start play with any Rank, regardless of MC. Ranks 1 through 3 are Low Approval, Rank 4 is Mid-Approval, and Rank 5 is High Approval.

ANASAZI: Prized Attributes are Intelligence and Wits. Computer skills are required. Most are typically recruited from tiger teams, both legal and illegal, though individuals who have their skills for purely criminal gain are seen as greedy and untrustworthy and rarely are recruited.

APOCRYPHA: The media hounds require strong social skills and must be able to think on their feet. Socials Attributes are often primary. Unbiased media workers, or those who can spin a story without appearing to have bias, are typical recruits. Tabloid reporters are often brought into this Section.

GARNET: GARNET Agents are expected to have equally strong Mental, Physical, and Social Attributes. After all, it takes more than muscle to be persuasive. Former military

and government service employees with exemplary records tend to be the new recruits into “GARNET,” as well as traditional scientists and academics.

MATTERHORN: Social and Mental Attributes are necessary for this section. Investigation skills are also quite useful. The ability to make yourself look like a fool isn't as easy as it sounds.

PAPERCLIP: As with ANASAZI, this Section recruits the best and the brightest, but not from among the tech-savvy. PAPERCLIP looks for high intelligence combined with stamina and determination. Survival skills are favored by PAPERCLIP. Once recruited, an Agent is expected to give up most things which could be used to trace them, including credit cards, cell phones, and sometimes their identity.

Benefits of Membership

Despite appearances, Project Garnet is not a government agency. It is not your day job. Many Garnet agents do find day jobs where their employment overlaps with their duties to the section. Many members of APOCRYPHA work in media outlets, PAPERCLIP members often work as mail carriers, GARNET members quite frequently work as lawyers or local law enforcement.

This means that Project Garnet's resources are patched together through the efforts of individual members. The Project as a whole has no direct influence on governmental affairs. Through two decades of cultivating contacts and resources, however, the amount of influence Project Garnet can exert in other areas is formidable. However, it always comes with a price.

All PCs in Project Garnet may purchase the merit Contacts and Allies at half-price.

All PCs who join Project Garnet must join a Section. Sections represent specialized divisions of labor within the Project.

All PCs in Project Garnet gain 1 free Specialization in a skill relevant to their Section.

Stereotypes

The Round Table

“We don't need their help, but they need ours - even if they don't know it.”

Priory of Scion

“Next thing I know, he pulls out a cross and starts blessing my computer. They're nuts..”

The Hermetic Circle

“...then he pointed at me and started chanting in some weird language, so I pointed my piece at him and started to ten. Problem solved. Nice guy, otherwise.”

Scarecrows

*“What is up with these guys? We’re working towards the same goal but they’re far too disorganized. How in the hell do they ever get anything **done**?”*

Vampires and Werewolves

“Right. And I’m the tooth fairy. We know about these visitors, and they’re a hoax.”

History

Commonly thought to have started in the mid-1940’s with the rash of UFO sightings during that decade, Project Garnet was actually formed in 1986 by a small contingent of scientists and researchers working with the SETI Institute – the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. Not long after SETI had been founded in 1984, new evidence came to light through one of its projects, evidence that was quickly whisked away from the researchers on the project and shipped off to NASA. At first the members of the project were thrilled that bigger, more “important” institutions were taking their work seriously.

Then the Project Manager was murdered.

The remaining scientists realized they had stumbled onto something big. Something that could change the world forever. Something that people would kill to protect. The researchers, together with some junior staff, salvaged as much evidence as they could and ran. They resigned their posts with SETI, fabricated new identities, and formed an underground project. They christened it Project Garnet, after the birthstone for January. January implied Janus, the Roman god of gates, the representative of beginnings. Project Garnet would be the gate between the world and extraterrestrial visitors. It was a gate meant to remain closed.

The founding members of Project Garnet were in possession of fragments of conclusive proof that there was intelligent, hostile life on other planets. The members realized they would need help with their mission to document extraterrestrial visitors, and to uncover more information about the conspiracy they had unwittingly become a part of. Project Garnet’s also continued investigate UFOs and worked to insure the facts from those investigations did not become corrupted or tainted, either by the media or by interference from others. The founding members quickly realized that to discourage hoaxes and glory hounds, UFOs must appear to be debunked and turned into a myth. From there, reports would be more easily discerned as fake or real.

But Project Garnet’s members couldn’t turn to the scientific and academic communities for the help they needed -- they still didn’t know who had killed their colleague, and it was their fellow researchers at SETI who had conspired to make the evidence from the project disappear in the first place. So Project Garnet reached out to the true experts: the amateurs, the enthusiasts, the conspiracy theorists, and the respectable professors who secretly published in fringe science journals...membership in Project Garnet boomed.

No longer a small cabal of scientists, Project Garnet stretched into an international

network of individuals. Local, independent Units began springing up, some of which would fold almost as quickly as they appeared, while others persist as fringe Units to this day. Project Garnet's founders knew that something had to be done if the Project was going to continue operating, but they debated for too long. When UFO activity peaked in Europe between 1989 and 1991, Project Garnet wasn't able to mobilize itself quickly or efficiently enough to prevent what it regarded as a catastrophe: the Belgian Air Force carefully documenting and investigating all evidence and sharing its findings with the public at large.

The Belgian UFO craze provided the catalyst for change. The founders of Project Garnet, together with the more prominent members, met in New Mexico in 1992. They began drafting a series of reforms and consolidations. It would take years for Project Garnet to fully assimilate, but through time, effort, and some say spilled blood, Project Garnet assembled itself into a secret, independent organization with five Sections, with GARNET serving as the premier Section. During the consolidation, however, the founders of Project Garnet left the agency in the hands of a new generation of members, and once again went deep underground.

After the restructuring, Project Garnet became more organized in pursuing its goal, and this often brought into contact and conflict with other secret societies. In 2000, Project Garnet was invited to join the Round Table, becoming a full member in 2001.

Players interested in playing PCs who were recruited between 1987 – 1992 and/or who were present at the 1992 conventions in New Mexico should contact the AAMST Mortals and CC their VST. Members of the original SETI team are not available as PC concepts.