



# Apocalypse Now!

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**Dedicated to:**

Ashe, Charles, Dave & Jason,  
for letting me maim and kill their characters.

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# Man on the Run





## Chapter One: Man on the Run



Our first excursion into the Wasted West takes us to the scenic foothills of the Sierra Nevadas and straight into a swirling maelstrom of bitterness, cruelty, and madness.

### The Story So Far

To get to the beginning of this twisted tale we need to go back a few years, 13 to be exact—the last year of the Last War.

In May of 2081, a Southern Alliance syker team managed to infiltrate one of the Northern Alliance's nuclear-weapon storage sites and destroy many of the warheads. Besides embarrassing the sykers tasked with guarding the base, it got the high command worried about how safe the Northern Alliance's nuclear arsenal really was.

One of the bright bulbs on the General Staff cooked up Operation: Valkyrie as an answer. This plan called for a portion of the Northern Alliance's nuclear-capable fighters to be deployed forward to small, local airfields along with a like number of ghost-rock warheads. The theory behind this desperate strategy was that by spreading the warheads out the enemy would be forced to commit more resources to finding and destroying them. Even if some were located, the Southern Alliance would only be able to destroy a handful at a time (which sounded good—in theory at least).

### Deploy, Deploy!

The plan was approved, and two squadrons of F-40 Tigersharks were broken up and deployed to local airfields along the front. These fighters didn't fly regular missions. Their pilots simply sat and waited for a call they hoped would never come.

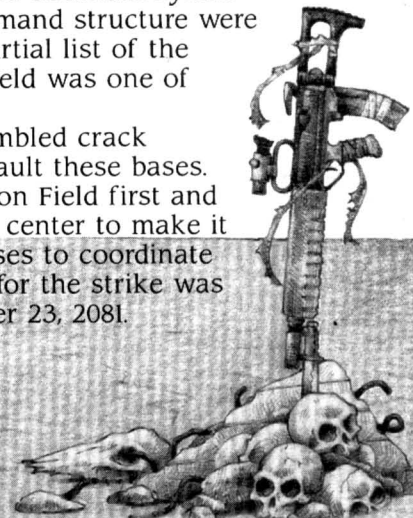
Enter our hero, Jim Greer. He and his wingman were assigned to Polson Field, a small airstrip in northern Nevada just east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. This strip served as the command hub for a number of other small airfields in the area and had a larger garrison than the others. The base was commanded by General George McMasters.

### Loose Lips

Unfortunately for all involved, the Southern Alliance caught wind of Operation: Valkyrie and decided to put a stop to it. Southern sykers inside the Northern command structure were able to smuggle out a partial list of the Valkyrie bases. Polson Field was one of the bases on the list.

The Southerners assembled crack commando teams to assault these bases. The plan was to hit Polson Field first and knock out the command center to make it difficult for the other bases to coordinate their defenses. The time for the strike was set for 0500 on September 23, 2081.

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## Man on the Run



### The Call

As the first choppers carrying the commandos lifted off, the phone rang at Polson Field. The codes spoken by the voice at the other end were quickly verified, and the order was given to scramble the fighters at once. Nuclear war had begun!

The ghost-rock warheads were brought up from the underground storage bunker and fitted to the waiting jets. Greer and his wingman began their preflight checklist. Things were proceeding as planned until a wrench was thrown in the works—literally.

### The Monkey and the Wrench

Greer's crew chief, Ed Nuebauer, had built himself a small still in the hills near the base. Whenever he got bored, which was often, he'd take himself a little stroll up into the hills and have some of his nasty homebrew. Well, the night of the 22<sup>nd</sup> was one of the most boring nights Nuebauer had ever had the misfortune to experience, and he was pretty well pickled by the time he collapsed in his bunk—only to be shaken rudely awake 30 minutes later as the general alarm sounded across the base.

Nuebauer staggered over to the hangar and began prepping Greer's plane. As he and the crew (who was used to seeing the chief four sheets to the wind) finished attaching the bomb to the jet, he accidentally laid his wrench down inside the air intake of the fighter's starboard engine. When Greer powered the airplane up, the wrench was sucked into the engine and mangled the turbine blades. Greer's plane was not going anywhere!

Greer's crew reacted quickly and began to pull the damaged engine out so it could be replaced with a spare. Before they could even get started, though, a call came down from the command center that four helicopters had been spotted on radar and the fighters had to launch immediately. Greer's wingman powered up, rolled his fighter out onto the runway, and took off.

### Rebs in the Wire!

Greer climbed down to help his crew out. While he and Nuebauer were assessing the damage, the pilot caught a whiff of his crew chief's highly-flammable breath. Leaving the crew to work on the crippled jet, Greer pulled Nuebauer aside to chew him out. He was just getting a good harangue going when the sound of chopper blades filled the hangar, and the shooting started outside.

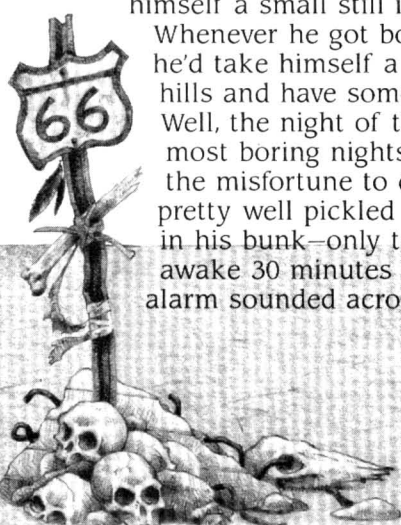
There was a tremendous explosion as one of the watchtowers was hit by a salvo of rockets from the attacking SA helicopters. The burning fragments pattered down on the runway like some sort of Hellish rain.

A second explosion sounded as the base's anti-aircraft battery scored a hit on the lead chopper. The crew's victory celebration was cut short by a second salvo of rockets that tossed its vehicle in the air like a toy.

The remaining Southern helicopters landed inside the base's perimeter; and the commandos hit the ground running. Their first target was the hangars. They stormed inside, and their bullets knocked down the laboring ground crew like so many bowling pins. Greer and Nuebauer ducked down behind a tool cabinet and went unnoticed.

### Drive Like the Wind

The commandos moved on to attack the command center and Greer and Nuebauer came out of hiding. Greer was determined to make sure that the ghost-rock bomb didn't fall into Southern hands, so he and his crew chief removed it from the crippled jet and loaded it on a motorized bomb dolly.





# Man on the Run

Using the wreckage of the downed Southern helicopter as cover, the pair raced across the runway on the dolly to the weapons bunker. A few shots headed their way, but Nuebauer's alcohol-induced weaving kept them safe.

Once inside the upper bunker, the pair rode the elevator down with the bomb. They parked the dolly in the vault, activated the self-destruct charge that would collapse the tunnel and seal the vault beneath hundreds of tons of rubble, and high-tailed it for the surface.

The fight for the base was still raging when they emerged topside. The two had only a pistol between them, and Nuebauer convinced Greer that they had done all they could. The two shanghaied an unused Humm-Vee, crashed the barricade, and got the Hell out of Dodge.

## Homecoming

The pair returned later to find the place deserted. The Southern commandos had left, and the few survivors of the base's garrison had departed for greener pastures. Greer and Nuebauer started to dig graves for the comrades, but they gave up when they realized the number of dead scattered about the base.

The two had no idea what was happening in the world, so they scrounged up a working radio to get an update on the situation. They listened in horror as the number of dead from the ghost-rock bomb exchange grew with each fresh report. Reports of strange creatures appearing near the bomb sites began. Then one by one, the stations began dropping off the air.

Greer and his crew chief decided it was time to move on. They fueled up their vehicle, loaded it down with rations, weapons, and ammunition and hit the road.

## Trinity Springs

The pair ended up in Trinity Springs, a small town in the eastern foothills of the Sierra Nevadas. The town is near one of the major passes through the mountains and it has been plagued by refugee and marauder problems from nearly day one of the war—mostly people fleeing the devastated cities along the California coast.

The two men offered to trade their military experience and weapons for a place to settle down. The townspeople accepted, and Greer immediately set about organizing a town militia. He led a foraging party up to Polson Field and used his ID card to open up the weapons lockers there. The group returned to Trinity Springs with a sizable arsenal.

## Roots

Greer fit right in with the people of Trinity Springs and soon decided to call the place home. He married a local girl, Mary Costanza, fixed up an abandoned home at the edge of town, and settled down to raise a family in the ruins as best he could. A year after he arrived in town, he became the father of a baby girl. Sadly, his wife died of a strange fever five years later.

The weapons and leadership Greer provided allowed the town to weather the aftermath of the Reckoners' arrival fairly unscathed. The townspeople helped who they could, turned away those they couldn't, and killed those who tried to help themselves to what they had.

Greer has been the town's sheriff for the past 10 years. The citizens don't bother with elections. Everyone is satisfied with the job Greer's doing, and he has the job as long as he wants it.

## Bitterness

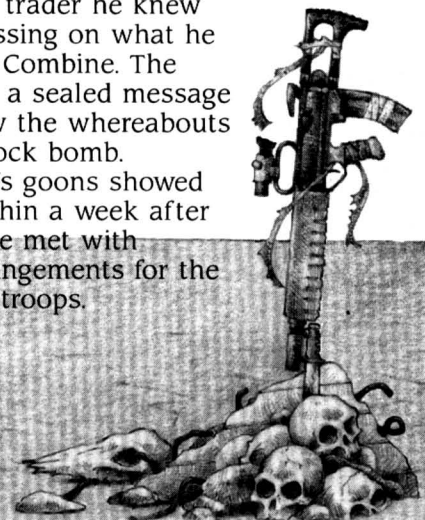
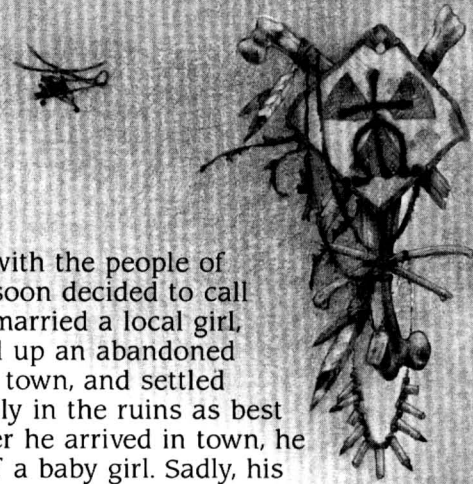
Nuebauer shared the warm welcome to town with Greer, but his story doesn't turn out so well. In the years immediately following Judgment Day, he helped the townspeople battle the minions of the Reckoners and the desperate and lawless gangs which followed in their wake. He earned their respect and friendship and then proceeded to piss it all away.

Once things quieted down, Nuebauer started hitting the bottle again. He spent most of his day drunk out of his gourd on home-brewed hootch and the rest of the day brewing up more. He stopped showing up for militia drills and generally made a nuisance of himself. Only Greer's friendship and the townspeople's gratitude for his past help prevented him from having his worthless butt kicked out of town.

The open contempt many of the townsfolk showed him began to rankle, and after one too many jokes was played at Nuebauer's expense, his alcohol-hazed mind decided he would show these people who was boss.

Nuebauer contacted a trader he knew earned extra cash by passing on what he saw in his travels to the Combine. The crew chief gave the man a sealed message mentioning that he knew the whereabouts of a functioning ghost-rock bomb.

One of Throckmorton's goons showed up in Trinity Springs within a week after the message was sent. He met with Nuebauer and made arrangements for the arrival of the Combine's troops.





# Man on the Run

With gleeful thoughts of his revenge as motivation, the ex-crew chief was able to stay off the sauce for the next few weeks. He began attending drills again and was soon pulling guard duty on the roadblocks at the edge of town. Everyone in town was amazed at his sudden transformation.

## Et tu!

Hours before Throckmorton's troops were due to arrive in town, Nuebauer told Greer that armed scavengers had been seen in the ruins of Wise, an abandoned town about 10 miles east of Trinity Springs. He knew Greer liked to check out these things personally, and this time was no exception.

The sheriff rode out on his motorcycle to see if these strangers represented a threat to the town. What he didn't know was that he was riding straight into an ambush. It had been decided to try to capture him outside of town, where he couldn't try to organize a defense with the militia.

## The Setup

Hooking your posse into this story doesn't require much of a setup. The first encounter of the adventure assumes the heroes are simply traveling from one place to another and get dragged into the unfolding situation.

There are many reasons why your posse might be traveling through the area. Trinity Springs security has made it a fairly prosperous trading town, so the simplest reason is that the heroes are traveling with a small caravan of traders as guards or riding as traders themselves. The heroes could also have heard rumors of an old air base in the area and be on their way to do some serious scrounging. Lastly, the characters could be on their way to the Maze to mine for ghost rock and stumble into the adventure.



## The Combine

One of the posse's major adversaries in this adventure is the Combine. For you to run Throckmorton's goons effectively, there are a few things you need to know.

For those of you tuning in late, the Combine is a group run by General Samuel Throckmorton, a former Southern Alliance general. It was formed just after the end of

the Last War. Throckmorton called on veterans from both sides of the border to follow him and together they would carve a new civilization out of what was left of the old. Noble sentiments, but the General's actions since then seem like those of yet another crackpot dictator out to rule the world.

Unfortunately, he's a well-armed crackpot. He controls one of Hellstromme's automated factories in Denver. The factory produced weapons for the Northern Alliance during the war, and it now makes them for Throckmorton's army. His men are better armed and equipped than any other force in the Wasted West.

## This Weapon Will Self-Destruct in 5...4...3

Throckmorton intends to keep his edge. Each of his soldiers has been implanted with a personal identity chip at the base of his or her skull. Each weapon and vehicle used by his Black Hats also possesses a similar chip. These chips only allow the equipment to operate for someone implanted with one of Throckmorton's identity chips. To make matters worse, any attempt by someone without a chip to use or tamper with the equipment causes the hardware to self-destruct.

Self-destruction is usually accomplished via the detonation of a small thermite charge which melts the equipment and damages the would-be user. Damage from one of these charges is 3d8 for small equipment like rifles and pistols, and as much as 3d20 for vehicle-sized equipment. The charge damages anyone within 1 yard of the equipment.

Throckmorton is so concerned about his opponents using his weapons against him, he doesn't even leave shell casings lying around for them to reload. His troops use caseless ammo. This ammo has no casing (hence the name); the bullet is simply embedded in a solid piece of propellant. This type of ammo can only be produced in specially-equipped factories and only works in guns with sophisticated electronic-ignition systems.

The ammo is issued to the troops in sealed magazines. The seal can only be safely broken by a Combine weapon in the hands of a Black Hat. Unauthorized personnel tampering with the magazine ignites the ammo. It explodes doing 3d12 damage with a Burst Radius of 5.

This information is common knowledge, and the heroes should be made well aware of it before they blow their hands off trying to fire a captured gun.



# Man on the Run

## The Chase is On!

The adventure begins near a back-country road in western Nevada, 15 miles from Trinity Springs. It's twilight, and the posse has set up camp for the evening in a small clearing among some pine trees. The heroes have just begun to heat up some chow when the sound of gunfire shatters the peace and quiet. A few seconds after the first blast of automatic fire is heard, the unmistakable whine of a dirtbike engine fills the air.

The noise is coming from the direction of the road the characters were traveling on earlier. If the posse rushes to investigate (why is it that players always run toward the sound of gunfire when everyone else is looking for cover?), they see the following:

*As you look down the road to the west, you see a man on a dirtbike. If the high-pitched whine of the engine is any indication, he's running it flat out. The man is hunched down so low on the bike it seems as if he's trying to become part of the machine. The road behind him curves out of sight behind some trees, but you catch quick flashes of headlights moving between them. Whatever owns them is headed your way fast!*

### Ohh, That's Gotta Hurt!

The man on the dirt bike is Jim Greer. If the posse goes to investigate, he spots them and moves toward them. If the posse stays put at camp, Greer cuts off road to try and lose his pursuers. Either way, the outcome is the same:

*As the dirt bike approaches, it slows and begins to wobble erratically. The man on it slumps forward over the handle bars, and the front wheel snaps hard to the left, throwing the bike down on its side. The rider is catapulted clear as the motorcycle cartwheels another 30 yards and smashes itself against a tree.*

*The battered rider struggles valiantly to get to his feet, but he loses the battle and drops back to the ground. He looks up as you approach him and manages to croak, "Black hats," before falling unconscious. You hear the snarl of several powerful engines in the distance. It sounds as if they're getting closer.*



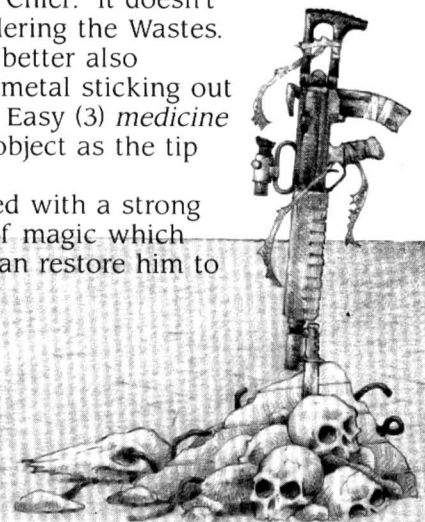
### Mystery Man

The posse has about two minutes before the Combine soldiers chasing Greer arrive.

If the heroes examine Greer, they discover that he has a number of bruises and cuts from his spill, but he's otherwise uninjured. He's wearing jeans, a T-shirt, boots, and a heavy leather jacket. His jeans are pretty ripped up from his accident. He's also wearing a holstered NA officer's pistol with four full magazines stored in pouches on the pistol belt. There's an NA assault rifle and three full magazines for it on his bike.

Have all the heroes examining Greer make a *Cognition* roll. Characters who get a 5 or better notice his clothes are clean and he's wearing a badge that reads, "Police Chief." It doesn't look like he's been wandering the Wastes. Anyone who gets a 9 or better also notices a small piece of metal sticking out of his right shoulder. An Easy (3) *medicine* roll identifies the shiny object as the tip of a large syringe.

Greer has been drugged with a strong sedative. Nothing short of magic which flushes out his system can restore him to consciousness.







# Man on the Run

## Jim Greer

Greer stands about six feet tall. He has blue eyes and close-cropped brown hair flecked with bits of gray. He dresses casually in jeans and T-shirts. His body has the trim, fit look of a professional military man.

### Profile

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:3d12, S:3d8, Q:3d10, V:4d10  
Dodge 4d8, drivin': motorcycle, car, jet fighter, helicopter 6d12, fightin': brawlin' 4d12, ridin' 2d12, quick draw: pistol 4d10, shootin': assault rifle, pistol, rifle 4d8, sneak 4d12, speed load: pistol, rifle 4d10, swimmin' 2d12, throwin': balanced, unbalanced 2d8

**Mental:** C:2d10, K:2d6, M:2d8, Sm:2d8, Sp:2d8  
Academia: occult 2d6, area knowledge: Trinity Springs 4d6, artillery 3d10, guts 4d8, leadership 4d8, medicine: general 2d6, overawe 4d8, professional: fighter pilot 5d6, scroungin' 3d8, scrutinize 3d10, search 4d10, survival 3d8, trackin' 3d10

**Edges:** Lawman, brave

**Hindrances:** Stubborn, obligation (people of Trinity Springs).

**Gear:** NA officer's sidearm, NA assault rifle, four magazines for each, hunting knife, compass, and binoculars.

## Uninvited Guests

There is a sizable posse on Greer's tail. The Combine troops have two dune-buggy-like ATAVs (All-Terrain Attack Vehicles) and three motorcycles. All told, there are 10 men after him: a driver and gunner in each ATAV and a driver and passenger on each motorcycle.

Unless the posse begins firing on sight, Throckmorton's goons stop about 100 yards short of the heroes' position, and the passengers on each motorcycle dismount and fan out. Once the dismounted troops have gotten behind cover, one of the motorcycles moves towards the posse.

The driver stops within 20 yards of the first visible posse member and demands that Greer be handed over. If asked why, he responds that Greer is a dangerous outlaw they have been tracking for days. If the heroes refuse, the driver threatens them with force. If they still refuse, he turns around and drives back toward the Combine troops.

His buddies, who have listened to the entire conversation over the biker's headset, start shooting as soon as he is safely out of the line of fire.

## The Combine Troops

The Combine soldiers are armed with a variety of weapons—all booby-trapped, of course.

The driver of each ATAV has an HI (Hellstromme Industries) Thunderer pistol. If forced to leave his vehicle, he also has an HI Blazer SMG clipped just inside the door of the buggy. The ATAV gunner has an HI SAW mounted on the roof. The roof-mount absorbs a lot of the machine gun's recoil and reduces the recoil penalty to -1 per additional burst. If the ATAV is knocked out, the gunner can remove the SAW in 2 actions and carry it with him.

The driver of each motorcycle carries an HI Blazer. Each of the riders carries an HI Damnation assault rifle. One of them also has a powerful air gun which fires sedative-filled syringes, but he doesn't bother to use this against posse members.

All of these weapons are detailed on page 45.

The grenades each trooper carries are booby-trapped like the rest of their gear, only they don't just burn up. They explode. The radios are booby-trapped, but their scavenged Kevlar vests are safe to use.

### Profile

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:3d6, S:3d8, Q:3d6, V:2d8  
Dodge 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 3d6, lockpickin' 2d8, shootin': pistol, SMG, rifle, SAW 3d8, sneak 3d6, speed load: pistol, rifle, SMG 2d8, swimmin' 2d6, throwin': balanced, unbalanced 2d8

**Mental:** C:2d6, K:2d6, M:2d8, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6  
Academia: occult 2d6, area knowledge: Denver 2d6, artillery 1d6, demolition 2d6, gamblin' 4d6, guts 3d6, leadership (leader only) 2d8, medicine: general 2d6, overawe 2d6, scroungin' 3d6, scrutinize 2d6, search 3d6, survival 3d6, trackin' 3d6

**Gear:** Combine pistol, SMG, assault rifle, or SAW, two grenades, Kevlar vest, headset radio, and four magazines for each weapon.

## Winning the Fight

The Combine troopers know how important Greer is to their commander, so they press the attack hard. If things turn against them (50% or more are killed or incapacitated), they withdraw.

Once the heroes manage to defeat or elude the Combine troops, Greer regains consciousness (hopefully they lugged his carcass along). He thanks the survivors profusely for their help and tells them everything he knows. As far as the attack by Throckmorton's troops goes, Greer tells them the following:



**Marshal: 8**

# Man on the Run

*One of my deputies told me that some armed scavengers had been spotted east of town. I usually scope out any groups passing through the area to make sure they're not a threat, so I saddled up and headed out to take a quick look around.*

*I spotted what looked like a fresh campsite in the ruins of Wise, a town about three miles back down the highway, so I stopped to get a closer look.*

*I saw the Black Hats before I was completely inside their ambush. I took off running and one of them popped me with a tranquilizer, but I managed to get to my bike and escape. After a while, whatever was in that dart got the better of me, and I wiped out. I think you know the rest.*

Greer has no idea what the Combine troops are doing in the area or why they seem to be interested in taking him alive. He tells the heroes that they should be safe if they take him back to Trinity Springs. He can provide them with a warm bed and replace any ammo they used up against Throckmorton's goons.

## Interrogation

Remember that chip implant all Throckmorton troops have? Well, it does more than just unlock their equipment. It also monitors their vital signs. The chip has limited artificial intelligence all its own, and it can usually tell when its wearer is about to say something she shouldn't (according to Throckmorton's policies). When that happens, it detonates a small charge at the base of its wearer's skull, killing her instantly.

If the posse attempts to interrogate any prisoners, give them a +4 to any rolls made to resist. They know what happens if they spill their guts! If a trooper is about to give away some vital information like troop numbers, where the hostages are being kept in the school, etc., roll the chip's 4d10 *Cognition* against an Easy (3) TN. If it succeeds, the conversation is over, and the interrogator needs a clean shirt.

## Bounty

This is the section where you find out all the goodies the players get. The posse can earn chips as well as valuable goods, services, and allies. Oh, and enemies too.

**Defeating the Combine troops:** 1 white chip.

**Rescuing Greer:** 1 red chip.

**Ally:** Sheriff Jim Greer of Trinity Springs.

## Losing Greer

If the posse gives Greer up or somehow loses his unconscious body in the firefight, it can throw a big 20-inch spanner in the works. As long as the heroes make an effort to bring him along, cut them some slack and let them succeed.

Sometimes, though, things just don't play out as expected. If the group does lose Greer to the Combine, all is not lost (although things have just gotten much tougher). Assume things go according to the following timetable unless the posse does something to interrupt it (Some of this may not make sense until you've read the rest of the adventure.)

The troops who captured Greer arrive in Trinity Springs 30 minutes after they grab him. He is immediately placed in a truck and sent north with an escort to Polson Field. The truck arrives at the airfield two and a half hours later.

The excavation of the front of the weapons bunker at the airfield is finished at around 11:30 P.M. Greer and his daughter are dragged to the bunker so he can deactivate the security system. The wormlings attack, and Greer and his daughter are captured. McMasters orders Greer to be cocooned in the Queen's Chamber.

McMasters sets the bomb to detonate at exactly 12 P.M. the next day. If the posse does not arrive in time, Polson Field is destroyed by an atomic blast. The area becomes a Deadlands and every living creature within six miles of the field is instantly killed.

At about the same time, Piatek and his troops torch Trinity Springs and pull out. They head east toward Denver.



# Trinity Springs







## Chapter Two:

# Trinity Springs



Trinity Springs is a town of about 100 people—a fairly large settlement for these times. It owes its existence to its location and a strong militia.

The town is located in the eastern foothills of the Sierra Nevadas. It's located close enough to one of the major passes through the mountains that it gets a fair amount of traffic from traders and other wanderers crossing the range in the summer months, but it's far enough from the main interstate that it was missed by the flood of refugees that washed over the mountains when Famine appeared in the Great Maze.

### The Town

Compared to most survivors of the Last War, the people of Trinity Springs have done well for themselves. They have electricity and running water, and although no one's getting fat, no one's starving either.

### The North End

The north end of town is the inhabited portion. Most of the buildings, including the uninhabited ones, are well-maintained, although there are a few burnt-out shells. The citizens have been farsighted enough to realize they may some day need more buildings than they currently use, and it's easier to maintain an existing building than to build one from scratch. All of the empty buildings have been stripped of anything useful over the years.

The inhabited buildings all have electrical power provided by a ghost-rock-fired generator in the boiler room of the elementary school. Power was cut off to the empty buildings after electrical shorts started a few fires.

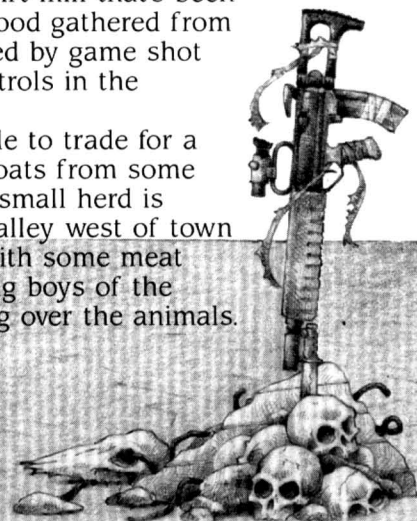
The homes have running water thanks to a water pump rigged up by some of the more technically inclined inhabitants. It fills a storage tank in the hills just upstream from the town. The quality of the river water is sometimes questionable, so most people boil it before drinking.

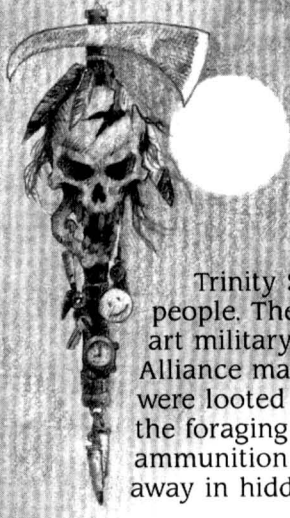
### The Fields

The south end of town is the people's main source of food. Two entire neighborhoods were torn down and plowed under. The fields have been planted with corn, wheat, and a few other staple crops.

Everyone in town takes a turn working in the fields and in the makeshift mill that's been set up by the river. The food gathered from the fields is supplemented by game shot or captured by militia patrols in the surrounding hills.

The town was also able to trade for a few head of cattle and goats from some passing merchants. This small herd is kept in a small, grassy valley west of town and provides the town with some meat and fresh milk. The young boys of the town take turns watching over the animals.





# Trinity Springs

## The Militia

Trinity Spring's militia numbers about 30 people. They are all armed with state-of-the-art military weaponry, mostly of Northern Alliance manufacture. Most of these weapons were looted from the ruins of Polson Field by the foraging party led by Greer. Stockpiles of ammunition and extra weapons are squirreled away in hidden caches around town.

## The Roadblocks

Thanks to the mountainous terrain surrounding Trinity Springs, there are only three ways into town. This has allowed the militia to keep out unwanted visitors fairly easily (until now) by blocking off these entrances.

The militia maintains a roadblock at each point. Each roadblock has a sandbagged trench line on each side of the road, with a heavy machine gun. The road itself is blocked by an oversized vehicle, like a school bus or dump truck, which has had armor plating welded to the side facing the enemy.

## Betrayal

Of course, all of this changed when the Black Hats came to town.

Once Greer left, Nuebauer went to stand sentry duty at the roadblock at the southern end of town. When the column of Combine troops appeared on the road, the crew chief pulled his gun on the other guards and allowed the Black Hats to pass without a shot fired.

## The Round Up

Once they were in town, the Combine troops moved quickly. The first thing they did was to grab hostages. Using these as a shield, they rounded up the rest of the townsfolk. Any militia who tried to fight back were cut down in a hail of automatic fire.

Everyone was taken to the parking lot of the elementary school and kept under guard while other troops led by Nuebauer performed a house-to-house search for weapons. As a member of the militia, he knew where the town's hidden weapon caches were. These were gathered up and brought to the school.

With the entire town looking on, the weapons were piled in the school parking lot. Some of the Black Hats tossed thermite grenades on the pile, and soon the town's entire arsenal was a twisted, melted mass of glowing metal.

Now that he was sure he had the townspeople's undivided attention, the Black Hat commander Major Piatek addressed them. The terrified crowd was informed that their town was now under Combine rule and that as the senior commander on the scene, Piatek's word was law. He declared a 7 P.M. curfew. Anyone violating it would be shot on sight, as would anyone found in possession of a weapon.

To ensure the town's good behavior, Piatek selected 20 people from the crowd as hostages. The Combine commander threatened that any attacks against his men would be dealt with in the most severe way. Two hostages would be executed for every one of his men injured or killed in town.

To drive his point home, the Major had some of the militia men who had resisted the Combine forces earlier brought forward. They were forced to kneel, and Piatek walked down the line and personally put a bullet in each one's skull with his pistol. After this grisly demonstration, the people were dismissed back to their homes.

## The Combine

Throckmorton's Combine has 60 men in Trinity Springs. They have only one goal: Find Jim Greer, capture him, and transport him to Polson Field.

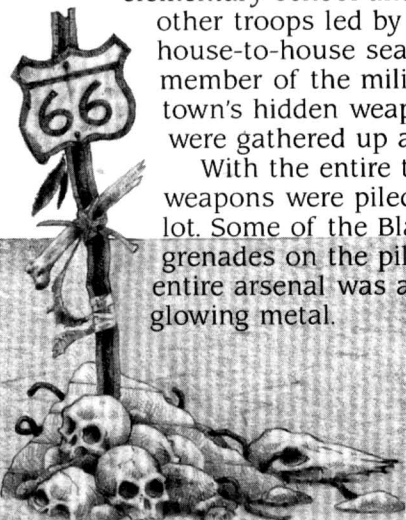
If the posse accompanies Greer into town, they are going to spend a lot of time sneaking around, avoiding confrontations with the Black Hats. To make things easier on you, here's a breakdown of the Combine troops in town, their locations, and their likely reactions.

## Major Piatek

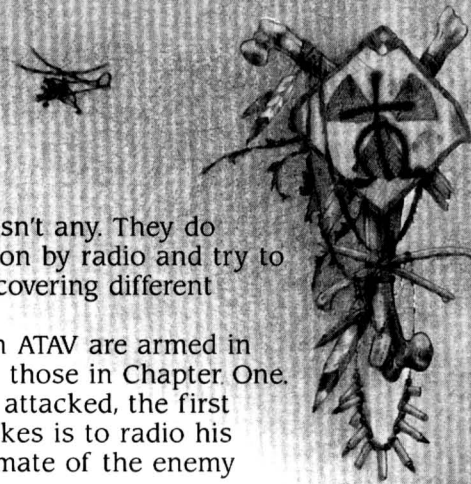
The Combine troops in Trinity Springs are commanded by Major Stanislav Piatek. Piatek was an officer in the Southern Alliance. He came to North America with a contingent of Russian troops. When the war ended, he had no way to get home, so he and some of his men formed a road gang and lived off of what they could scrounge or steal.

The depredations of his gang eventually came to Throckmorton's attention, and he sent an emissary to invite Piatek and his men to join his army. He and his troops enlisted without hesitation.

Piatek's ruthlessness has allowed him to rise quickly in the Combine, and he has become one of Throckmorton's most-trusted field commanders. Throckmorton is counting on him to get the job done in Trinity Springs.



# Trinity Springs



## Profile

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:3d6, S:3d6, Q:2d10, V:2d8  
Dodge 4d6, fightin': brawlin' 4d6, shootin': pistol,  
SMG, assault rifle 4d8, sneak 3d6, speed load:  
pistol, SMG 3d8, swimmin' 2d6, throwin':  
balanced, unbalanced 4d8

**Mental:** C:3d10, K:3d8, M:2d8, Sm:4d12, Sp:2d8  
Academia: occult 2d8, area knowledge: Denver  
4d8, artillery 4d10, bluff 6d12, guts 4d8,  
leadership 5d8, medicine: general 2d6, overawe  
5d8, professional: interrogation 5d8, scroungin'  
3d12, scrutinize 4d10, search 3d10, survival 3d8

**Edges:** Level-headed, "the voice"

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, mean as a rattler,  
vengeful

**Gear:** HI Thunderer pistol, HI Blazer, two  
grenades, infantry battlesuit, headset radio,  
four magazines for each weapon, and a radio  
detonator.

## The Roadblocks

Throckmorton troops now man the roadblocks at the edges of town. There are eight men at each one. They have orders to search anyone entering town and relieve them of their weapons. Anyone caught sneaking a weapon into town is to be held for interrogation and taken to the school. Piatek doesn't want word getting out that the town is under Combine control, so anyone who approaches a roadblock must enter town.

The troops at the roadblocks are under orders not to leave them unless instructed to by Piatek.

The northern and southern roadblocks are manned by motorcycle troopers. They've taken up positions in the trenches, but their bikes are parked nearby, in case they have to bug out in a hurry. Each trooper is armed with an HI Blazer, four loaded magazines, and two grenades. Two troopers have disposable, one-shot antitank rockets in case anyone tries to rush the roadblock with a vehicle (see page 45 for details).

The roadblock at the bridge is manned by regular Combine infantry. They are each armed with Combine assault rifles, two grenades, four loaded magazines, and a bayonet for their rifle. They also have two antitank rockets and are backed up by an ATAV and crew.

## ATAV Patrols

The streets of Trinity Springs are patrolled by two ATAVs. They aren't following any particular route. The drivers simply turn down different streets at random. Any attempt by the posse to time them or establish a pattern to their patrols

fails, because there isn't any. They do stay in communication by radio and try to make sure they are covering different areas of town.

The crews of each ATAV are armed in the same manner as those in Chapter One. If a patrol vehicle is attacked, the first action the gunner takes is to radio his position and an estimate of the enemy numbers.

The ATAVs are not interested in getting into a pitched battle. If they face more than one or two opponents, the driver tries to zip away while the gunner lays down fire with the SAW. Once out of the line of fire, the ATAV stays nearby and waits for a foot patrol to arrive from the school to check things out. When the patrol arrives, the ATAV accompanies them as fire support.

As the posse moves around town, draw a card from the Action Deck each time they move a block or cross a street. If a Joker is pulled they've run into a patrol. Have all the characters make surprise checks against Fair (5) TN.

Those that aren't surprised can take cover. Have them make *sneak* rolls. Roll a *Cognition* check for the ATAV's crew against a TN equal to the lowest *sneak* total in the group to spot the heroes.

## Foot Patrols

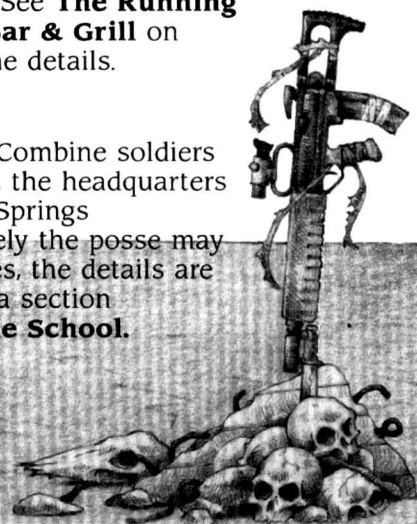
Any disturbance reported by the soldiers in the ATAVs or the troops at the roadblocks is checked out by an eight-man foot patrol dispatched from the school. These soldiers are armed in the same manner as the troops at the bridge roadblock.

## The Nevada Bar & Grill

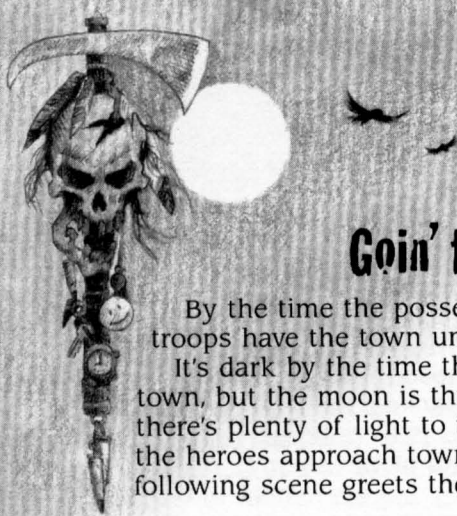
A group of Piatek's men heard that the owner of the Nevada has some whiskey stashed away, and they decided to see if there was any truth to the story. They headed down there in a captured pickup truck and proceeded to get smashed. There are eight drunken soldiers here when the posse first gets to town. See **The Running Man** and **The Nevada Bar & Grill** on pages 19 and 20 for all the details.

## The Elementary School

The remainder of the Combine soldiers and their hostages are at the headquarters they've set up at Trinity Springs Elementary. Since it's likely the posse may try to rescue the hostages, the details are described on page 22 in a section appropriately entitled **The School**.







# Trinity Springs

## Goin' to Town

By the time the posse arrives, the Combine troops have the town under their control.

It's dark by the time the posse reaches town, but the moon is three-quarters full, and there's plenty of light to travel by. Assuming the heroes approach town from the east, the following scene greets them:

*As you top a rise in the road, you see your destination, Trinity Springs, across the river to the west. Unlike many towns you've seen, this place seems to have weathered the war and its aftermath better than most. Many of the buildings at the north end of town look in good repair, and the street lights burn brightly.*

*At the southern end of town, you can see neat rows of corn and fields of wheat gently swaying in the night breeze. This looks like a place you could get a hot meal and a clean bed!*

*You start to head down the hill toward the bridge leading into town, when Greer calls for you to stop.*

## Blackout

Greer quickly explains that the town doesn't normally use the street lights for fear that they might call attention to the town from the air. The lights also burn a lot of ghost rock.

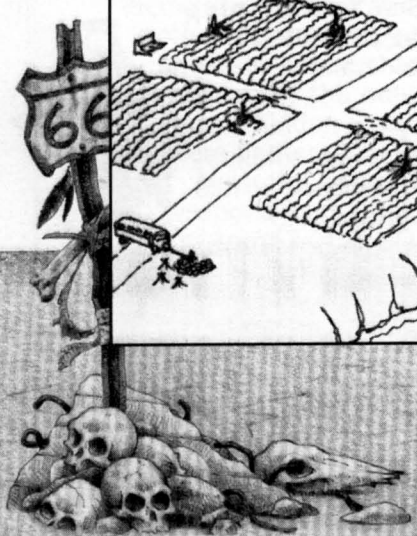
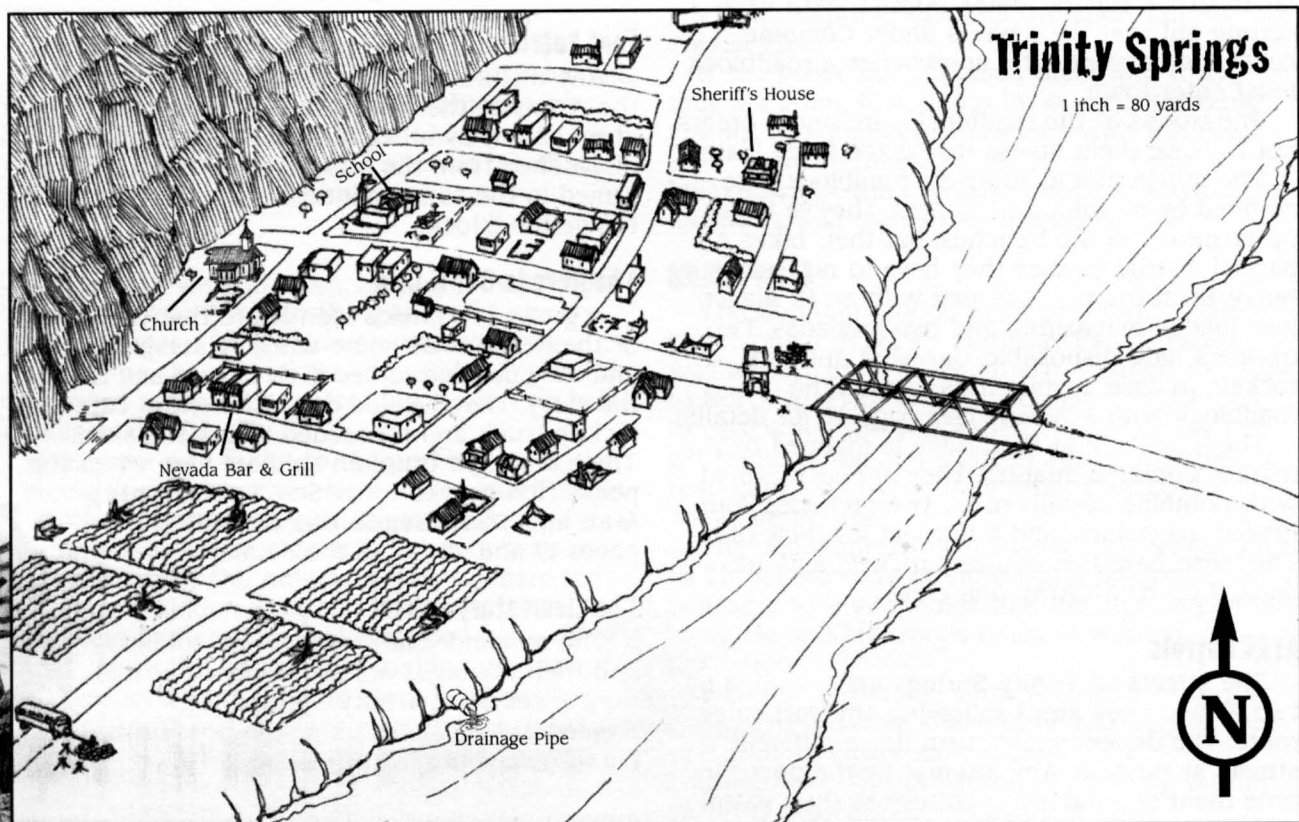
In fact, most buildings have heavy curtains over their windows to shade light at night. They don't want to advertise their presence or that they have electricity to passing gangs.

The sheriff pulls out his binoculars and scans the town below. "We've got trouble," he mutters as he passes them to one of the posse members, "Take a look at the bridge."

A scan of the bridge shows:

*As you train the binoculars on the bridge, a grisly sight meets your eyes. Five bodies dangle from the upper supports of the span like some sort of macabre marionettes.*

*You catch a glimpse of movement behind the barricade blocking the bridge. Zooming in, you see a number of men casually leaning against the sandbags. Each one of them is wearing a black beret, just like the soldiers you fought earlier.*



# Trinity Springs

*Greer stands up and adjusts his rifle, a look of grim determination on his face. "I'm going down there, and I'm gonna find out what's going on," he growls.*

## The Cavalry Arrives

Nothing the posse says can persuade Greer not to go to town. The people there are his responsibility, and more importantly, his daughter is in town.

Greer asks the posse to accompany him. If they aren't willing to help out of the goodness of their hearts, he offers to replace any common ammo they use while helping him and to pay them an additional \$100 dollars each in bullets or trade goods.

Once the haggling is out of the way, Greer cautions the group to be extremely careful. He's heard stories from refugees about other Combine takeovers. One of their common tactic is to hold hostages to ensure the rest of the town behaves.

## Getting There

There are a number of ways the heroes can get into town. Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages. (Okay, some have only disadvantages.) The posse may find that a combination of approaches works best.

### The Roadblocks

There's always the direct approach.

The posse can simply walk up to one of the roadblocks and demand to be let into town. Believe it or not, this tactic can actually work. As long as the posse is willing to surrender its weapons, that is.

If the heroes try this, when they get within 50 yards of the barricade they are ordered to halt, drop their weapons, and step back five paces. Failure to comply quickly and completely results in the guards opening fire. They're not interested in arguments. Once the group's weapons are on the ground, two of the guards approach and take their weapons.

After the weapons have been confiscated, the group is herded to the roadblock at gunpoint. There they are searched for hidden weapons. Roll the guard's *search* versus the character's *sneak/Smarts* (a *sneak* roll based on *Smarts*). The guard finds one hidden weapon for each raise he gets. If the weapon is hidden in an obvious place (say the back of the waistband), you should give the guard a substantial bonus—at least +4.

All those found to be clean of weapons are allowed to enter town. They are warned that they have 10 minutes to get indoors or they will be shot for violating the curfew. They are also informed that attacks on Combine troops will result in the execution of hostages.

Those caught with concealed weapons are detained. Ten minutes later the foot patrol arrives at the roadblock to escort the prisoners to the elementary school. Unless the unfortunate sods are able to escape, they are lined up against the wall of the school and shot.

Passing through a roadblock has another disadvantage. If Greer is with the group, there is a chance that he's recognized by the guards. Roll a Fair (5) *Cognition* check for each guard. A success indicates they recognize him. If Greer is disguised, roll the guard's *Cognition* versus the *disguise* of the character who gussied him up. If Greer is recognized, the entire party is detained and taken to see Piatek.

### Swim the River

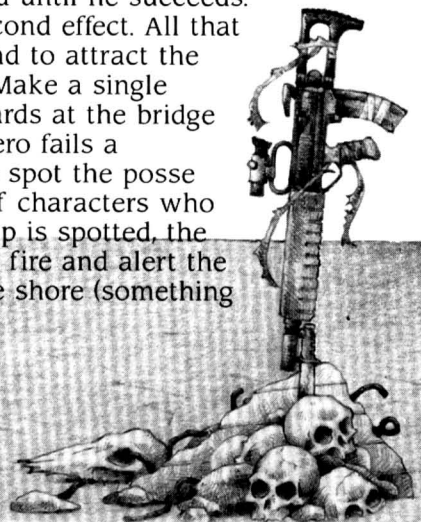
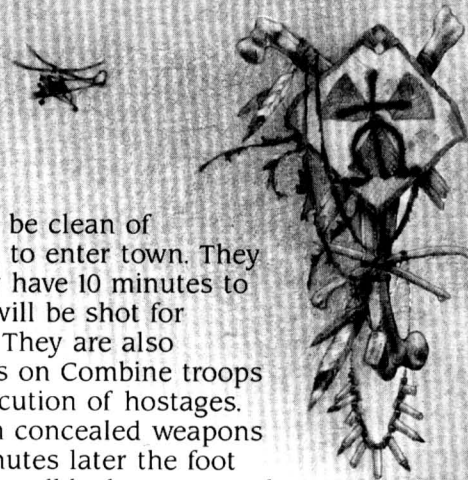
It's possible to swim across the river and sneak into town. There are two major obstacles the posse has to overcome with this approach: swimming across the river with their gear, and doing it without being spotted by Black Hats at the roadblocks or on patrol.

Each hero swimming the river must make two *swimmin'* rolls: one at the midpoint of his swim and one just before he reaches the opposite bank. If the heroes swim together as a group, have them all make their midpoint rolls before they make their final rolls.

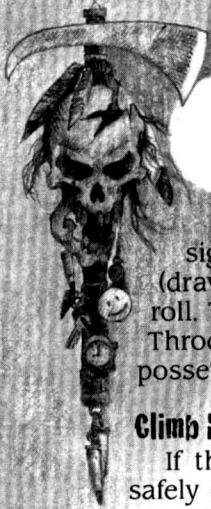
The TN for these rolls is 5 if the character is carrying a light load or less. If the hero is trying to swim with a heavier load, the TN is increased by +4 for each level the load is above light. If the heroes devise a way to float their stuff across, reduce or ignore these penalties.

If a roll fails, the swimmer takes Wind damage from drowning. He must make a *swimmin'* roll each round until he succeeds.

Failing a roll has a second effect. All that thrashing around is bound to attract the attention of the guards. Make a single *Cognition* roll for the guards at the bridge roadblock each time a hero fails a *swimmin'* roll. The TN to spot the posse is 9 minus the number of characters who failed the roll. If the group is spotted, the guards immediately open fire and alert the ATAV patrols to guard the shore (something about fish and a barrel).







## Trinity Springs

If the group emerges from the river in sight of a roadblock or an ATAV patrol (draw a card), have each hero make a *sneak* roll. Then make a single *search* roll for Throckmorton's boys with a TN equal to the posse's lowest *sneak* total.

### Climb Every Mountain

If the heroes aren't in any rush, they can safely cross the river at a bridge out of sight of town. Once across, they can circle around town and come down the side of the mountain on the west side of town.

Should the posse decide to go this route, it takes two hours to cross the river and work around to where the survivors can start their descent. Climbing down this steep, rocky slope requires three *climbin'* rolls: one at the top, one halfway down, and one just before reaching the bottom. The TN for these rolls is 7.

A failed roll means the hapless hero slides or falls to the next level of the slope and takes 3d6 damage to a random location. Going bust on a roll means the hero lands on some particularly nasty rocks and takes double that damage.

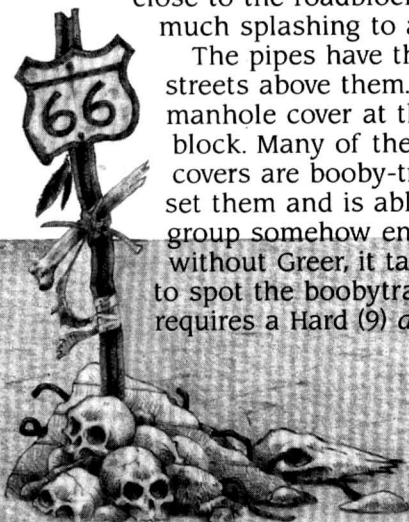
A failed roll also means a chance for the Combine troops to spot the posse. Each time a hero fails her *climbin'* roll, roll an Onerous (7) *Cognition* roll for the guards closest to the character. If the roll succeeds, the posse is spotted. Have fun!

### The Storm Drains

The last possibility for covert entry into town is the storm drains. The posse can gain entrance to these through the outflow pipe near the southern roadblock. The entrance to the pipe is booby-trapped to prevent anyone from sneaking in, but Greer knows how to disarm it.

Getting in here requires the group to swim the river as described above. Even though the group doesn't have to leave the water, it's still necessary to make a *sneak* roll versus the guard's *Cognition*. The group is operating very close to the roadblock, and it doesn't take much splashing to alert the guards.

The pipes have the same layout as the streets above them. Assume there is a manhole cover at the midpoint of each block. Many of the ladders and manhole covers are booby-trapped, but Greer helped set them and is able to disarm them. If the group somehow ends up in the drains without Greer, it takes a Hard (9) *search* roll to spot the boobytraps. Disarming them requires a Hard (9) *demolition* roll.



## Now What?

Now that the heroes have gone to all this trouble to get into town, where do they go?

### Greer's House

The first thing Greer wants to do in town is to go to his house and check on his daughter.

The sheriff lives in an old, two-story Victorian house at the north edge of town, near the riverbank. The east edge of his property ends at the river bank, and another two-story home borders the west edge of his yard. A small, one-story home sits directly across the street.

The reason this real estate description is important is because Piatek has ordered his men to set an ambush around the house in case Greer returns. There is half a platoon (10 men) stationed in and around the sheriff's place. Four of them are inside the house, three are in the lower floor of the house next door, and three are in the house across the street. One man in each group is armed with a tranquilizer rifle like the one carried by the goon in Chapter One.

The men in Greer's house operate in pairs. Two watch the riverbank, the other two watch the backyard. The men in the other houses also have areas of responsibility to watch. Two men in each house watch the street leading to the sheriff's abode. The third man in each of the other houses is rear security. He watches the backyard of his house to make sure the ambushers aren't ambushed themselves.

As the posse nears the house, Greer stops the group before they enter the ambush's kill zone:

*"Something's wrong," he whispers, "Whenever I'm out of town after dark, Vicky always leaves a light on in the top turret of the house and leaves the curtain open. She says that way I can always find my way back to her." He sounds embarrassed to be telling this to a bunch of jaded warriors like yourselves.*

*"I still need to check on her though. You don't have to come if you don't want to."*

Greer continues toward the house with or without the posse. If the group doesn't go with him (and shame on them), assume he spots the ambush and returns to them undetected. If the heroes tag along, have them make a contested *search* roll versus the Combine troopers' *sneak* and vice versa. Give the troopers a +4 to their



# Trinity Springs

*sneak* rolls. (They're sitting in a dark house peeking out from behind a black curtain.) If a character on either side gets a raise on his *search* roll, he's managed to spot someone from the other side.

If the posse spots the ambush, it takes an Onerous (7) *persuasion* roll to convince Greer not to continue toward the house. The TN for this roll drops to Easy (3) if the group knows about the hostages being held at the school.

If a trooper spots the group, he alerts the others and the patrol by radio. So they can catch them in a crossfire, the ambushers hold their fire until the heroes have reached Greer's home.

Before they open fire, the Black Hats yell for the heroes to drop their weapons and surrender. Anyone who makes a break for it or begins firing is immediately fired on by one of the soldiers with a tranq gun. Make an Onerous (7) *Cognition* roll for the troopers on each of their actions (just roll once for all of them) until they succeed and identify Greer. They don't open fire with their assault rifles until they succeed. (None of them want to be the one who kills Piatek's golden goose.) They also don't fire on full auto if there is a chance one of the stray rounds may injure Greer.

## Nuebauer's House

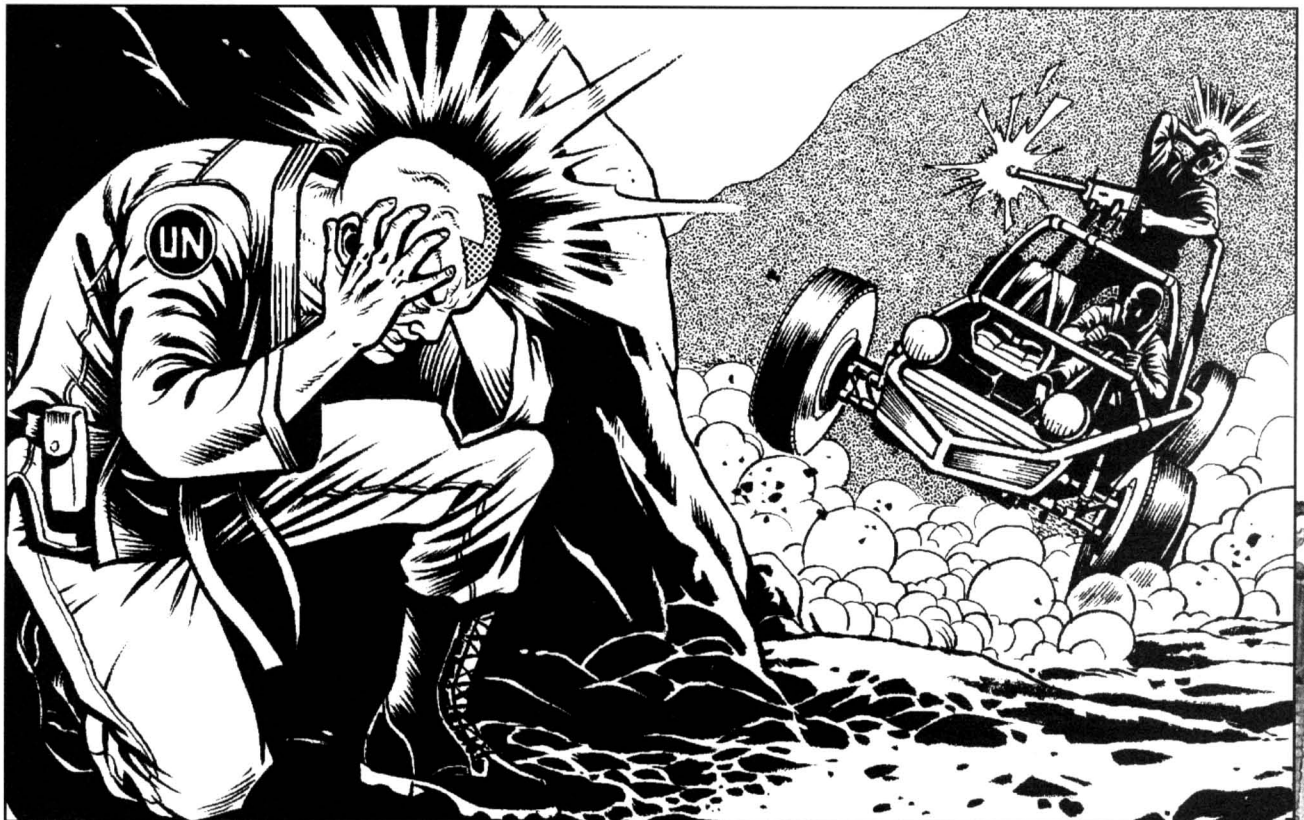
Greer suggests that the next best place to find out what's going on in town is to go to his old war buddy's house and talk to Nuebauer.

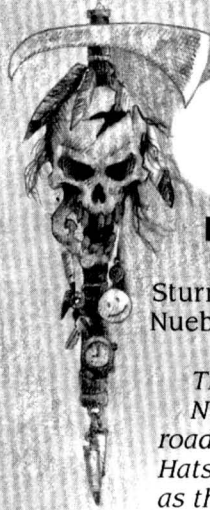
### Your Coat, Sir?

There are no signs of an ambush at Nuebauer's place. Have all of the heroes who go inside make Hard (9) *Cognition* rolls. Any who succeed hear a slight creaking noise come from a closet near the front door. Opening the door reveals Eric Sturm, a member of the Trinity Springs militia. As soon as his hiding place is revealed, he attacks whoever opened the door, using a knife. Have the posse make surprise checks against a Fair (5) TN.

If the group doesn't hear Eric in the closet, pick a character at random. This unfortunate soul is nearest the closet when the angry militia man bursts out. The posse needs to check for surprise against an Incredible (11) TN.

Once he recovers from his surprise (if any), Greer immediately recognizes Sturm and pulls him off the target of his anger.





## Trinity Springs

### Revenge Served Hot

Once things have cooled down some, Sturm relates why he was hiding in Nuebauer's coat closet:

*That drunken wretch, he sold us out!*

*Nuebauer was on duty at the southern roadblock this afternoon when the Black Hats showed up. We manned the trenches as they drove up and were getting ready to light them up when he pulled a gun on us and told us to lay down our weapons. There wasn't much we could do.*

*Before we could stop it, some of the Combine bikers were on top of us. They took the roadblock without a shot fired.*

*The rest of Throckmorton's goons just breezed past us into town. They gunned down anyone who even thought about resisting. They rounded everyone up and marched them to the elementary school while that weasel Nuebauer showed them where all of the militia's weapons were hidden. They brought all of our gear up to the school and torched it with thermite.*

*Their leader, some creep named Piatek, shot Wilson, Nichols, Marler, and the rest of the guys from the bridge roadblock because they put up a fight before surrendering—just blew their brains out!*

*Then he selected a bunch of women and children from the crowd and had them taken inside the school. He told the rest of us that anyone seen outside after 7 o'clock would be shot on sight. If anyone attacks his men, he says he'll kill two hostages for every one of his men killed. My mom and sister are in the school!*

### Honey, I'm Home!

Once he has finished his story, the boy drops to the floor and sobs quietly. His sorrow is quickly drowned out by the sound of an engine coming down the street. Anyone peeking out a window sees a Combine ATAV stop in front of Nuebauer's house and a man get out. He says something to the two men in the vehicle and starts walking toward the house.

If the posse bolts out the back door, have the heroes make contested *sneak* rolls versus the ATAV crew's *Cognition* to get away without being spotted. If the group decides to stick around and see what's up, have them make *sneak* rolls to see how well they can imitate an end table.

The front door opens to reveal none other than Nuebauer himself. Roll his *Cognition* at -4 (he's been nipping at his flask all afternoon since the Combine troops arrived) to see if he notices the additions to his living room furniture. If he spots anyone, he runs screaming back to the waiting vehicle. It's time to make some *Quickness* rolls and break out the Action Deck. Make surprise rolls for the crew of the ATAV against an Incredible (11) TN.

On the first action the crew gets, they radio for help. If the posse can take them out before that happens, the alarm isn't sounded (assuming its done quietly).

If his two buddies in the ATAV are put down, Nuebauer collapses into a quivering, drunken mass on the front lawn. He starts telling anyone who listens that he can explain everything.

### Edward Nuebauer

Nuebauer is a heavyset man in his early fifties. He's mostly bald with a small fringe of close-cropped hair circling his head. He looks like he may have once been muscular, but years of hitting the sauce have turned it all to flab. His forearms are covered with intertwined tattoos.

### Profile

**Corporeal:** D:2d6, N:3d6, S:3d8, Q:3d6, V:2d8

Dodge 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 4d6, shootin': pistol, assault rifle 4d6, sneak 2d6, speed load: pistol 3d6, swimmin' 2d6, throwin': balanced, unbalanced 3d6

**Mental:** C:2d8, K:3d6, M:2d6, Sm:3d8, Sp:4d6

Area knowledge: Trinity Springs 4d8, artillery 4d8, guts 2d6, leadership 1d6, scroungin' 3d8, scrutinize 4d8, search 3d8, survival 2d8, tinkerin' 6d8, trade: aircraft mechanic 5d6

**Hindrances:** Hankerin' (alcohol)

**Gear:** Whiskey flask, and a .45 pistol with 7 rounds.

### Nuebauer's Story

Assuming that no one puts a bullet in his head, Nuebauer spins the posse a tale. He's spent the last month cooking it up, so it's not bad:

*Throckmorton forced me to help him. He found out about the bomb on his own. He got his hands on some Air Force personnel rosters and target lists, and he's had his computer cross-checking the list with reports from his troops in the field. When the computer discovered that the base Greer was supposed to bomb hadn't*



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been hit, it searched its records to determine which Northern Alliance base had been assigned that target.

Throckmorton sent agents to the base, and they found Greer's plane there. Then they went searching for anyone who might know where the bomb is. It's no secret that Greer was a fighter pilot or that the militia got its weapons from the base. I guess they put it all together.

They eventually found me and forced me to help them. Throckmorton has my sister in Denver. He threatened to kill her if I didn't cooperate. I didn't know what else to do. I didn't think they would kill anybody if we give them what they want.

Unfortunately for Nuebauer, he planned on telling this story to people after the sheriff had been hauled away. Greer expresses his doubts that Throckmorton could get any records about Polson Field, since it became part of a top-secret program only months before the war ended. He also adds that Nuebauer never once mentioned having a sister in the 15 years he's known him.

Have anyone listening to this story make an opposed *scrutinize* roll versus Nuebauer's *performin'* -2 (-4 for the alcohol; +2 because he's spent weeks rehearsing). Any hero who gets a raise feels confident the crew chief is lying.

In his current condition, tripping Nuebauer up isn't hard to do. An *overawe* attempt that gets a broken result or a successful *professional: interrogation* roll against a TN of (9), makes him realize his story doesn't wash. Once this happens, he breaks down and tells the truth.

If the group buys Nuebauer's story, he tags along with them and waits for the first opportunity to betray them to Piatek's men.

If the posse doesn't swallow his generous helping of lies, Nuebauer's fate is in their hands.

## The Running Man

At some point during their visit to town, the posse hears shots coming from the direction of the Nevada Bar & Grill. Exactly when this happens is up to you, Marshal, but this is a good encounter to throw at your players if they're unsure what to do in town.

The shots don't sound like a firefight. They're spaced out too evenly, and it sounds like it's the same weapon firing repeatedly. If the group investigates, they see the following scene. If they don't, bring the scene to them by having Ingram run past their location:

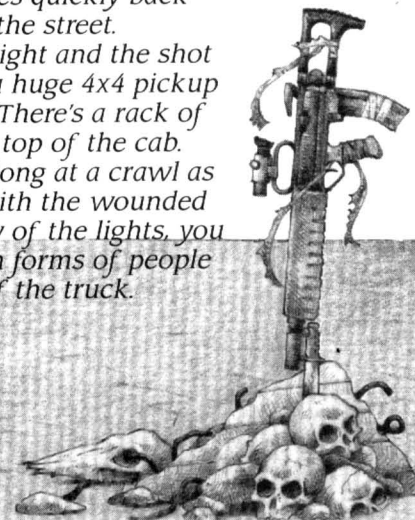


You see a man stumbling down the center of the road toward you. His right pants leg is soaked a bright scarlet, and every step he takes leaves a bloody footprint behind on the pavement. He looks back over his shoulder and shields his eyes against a bright light coming from behind him.

"That's Doug Ingram," mutters Greer.

Ingram looks frantically from side to side, hunting for a place to hide. He begins to limp toward a house on the right side of the street, but then there's a loud boom, and an old metal garbage can near him falls over and begins rolling away. The man hobbles quickly back toward the center of the street.

The source of the light and the shot becomes obvious as a huge 4x4 pickup truck rolls into view. There's a rack of large lights along the top of the cab. The truck is rolling along at a crawl as if it's keeping pace with the wounded man. Behind the glow of the lights, you can make out the dim forms of people standing in the bed of the truck.







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*The crack of a large-caliber weapon comes from the truck again, and a bullet plows up the pavement just behind Ingram's heels. The man almost falls as he tries to move faster. You hear laughter from the truck.*

If the posse does nothing to help, the Combine soldiers in the truck chase Ingram for another few blocks before they get tired of their game and riddle him with bullets.

If the heroes intervene, there are five Combine soldiers in the truck. The truck was captured from the local militia. It's equipped with an old .50 caliber machine gun mounted on a post in the truck's bed, and a rack of four halogen lamps on the roof of the cab. Anyone firing at the truck from the front is at -4 to hit from the blinding light. The lights can be targeted at -4 to hit. Each one destroyed reduces the lighting penalty by 1.

The Black Hats in the truck have checked in with the patrol and told them the gunfire was due to their having some fun with one of the locals. If the posse takes these bozos out quickly, two rounds tops, the patrol assumes it's their buddies shooting and doesn't investigate immediately. They've been drinking, so apply a -2 penalty to their rolls.

## Ingram's Tale

Ingram's bleeding from a heavy leg wound. Once treated, he tells the heroes what happened:

*After Piatek let everyone go, I got together with some of the other militia members and compared notes. We figured out that there are roughly 50 to 60 of the bastards in town, minus the creeps you just capped. We also realized that Nuebauer must have forgotten about the weapons stash at the Nevada, because the Combine never went into the place.*

*We decided to head over there before it got dark and dig those weapons up. They left me in a building across the street as a lookout. It took a while for them to get at the weapons, because they were under the floor in the meatlocker.*

*While they were working, some of Piatek's boys must have heard about Hinckle's homebrew and came down to sample it. They started having a real party and wouldn't leave. The guys in the meatlocker couldn't get out without going right past the Combiners.*

*Once it looked like the soldiers in the Nevada were pretty well trashed, I decided to cause a distraction. I thought I would be able to lose them fairly easily, but I didn't count on them chasing me with the pickup truck. I think there may have been two or three others that stayed behind, but hopefully the guys in the meatlocker have taken care of them.*

Ingram can't get around very well, so he asks the posse to check on his friends at the bar and make sure they were able to escape.

## The Nevada Bar & Grill

The Nevada Bar & Grill is a small bar near the center of town. The owner, Hiram Hinckle, operates a small still. Under normal conditions, the place serves whiskey and a tasty stew (made from game his three boys hunt in the mountains) to travelers passing through town. Tonight the place has been transformed into the center of resistance against the Combine invaders.

It's possible the posse may inadvertently draw the Combine troops attention to the bar, so a quick description of the interior is in order. (You might also have a patrol come by to prod the posse along if the heroes are spending inordinate amounts of time planing the assault on the school.)

The bar has one large main room with six tables. One of these tables is occupied by three very dead Black Hats who were too busy pickling their livers to join the fun outside. They paid for their sin with their lives. Once their buddies left in the pickup, the militia members trapped in the meatlocker slipped out and attacked. The Combiners were too tanked to put up anything resembling resistance and died quickly with their throats slit from ear to ear.

The southern corner of the bar is taken up by a well-used pool table. The table was in bad condition before the war, 13 years of being abused by transient truckers has left the table's surface a ripped and pockmarked mess.

A battered bar spans the rear of the room. The shelves behind it were once well-stocked with a variety of liquors, but now only hold an ample supply of Hinckle's rotgut whiskey.

Behind the bar is small kitchen. The meatlocker occupies a large portion of this room. The floor inside the freezer has been pried up with crowbars to expose the weapon cache concealed beneath.

# Trinity Springs

## Getting There

The heroes most likely end up here as a result of their encounter with Ingram, but they could also be sent here if they take shelter in an inhabited house. Have the inhabitants of the house be the family of one of the militia members at the bar. They're worried because their loved one hasn't returned and they'd like someone to check on her.

## Rebel HQ

The Nevada is buzzing with activity when the posse arrives. A small group of armed civilians is easily visible through the plate glass windows at the front of the bar. Greer immediately recognizes many of them as militia members.

If the posse goes inside, they are greeted by Stuart Peck, the leader of the expedition to retrieve the weapons from the bar. He quickly explains to Greer that rather than try to carry all the weapons away, he sent runners to summon as many people as possible to the bar so they could distribute the weapons and come up with a plan. There are 15 armed people in the bar.

Peck points to the three dead Combine soldiers, "They are going to be missed by the others sooner or later. We have to move fast."

If the heroes have looked competent to this point, they are invited to help devise a plan of attack. Greer favors taking the posse (and a few militia to beef them up if it's a small group) to hit the school and rescue the hostages. The rest of the militia should then deploy in small groups along the roads leading to the school and ambush any reinforcements which try to get there from the roadblocks.

The citizens of Trinity Springs have claimed most of the weaponry from the cache, but a few items remain if the posse is interested. Greer scoops up all of the grenades if the posse doesn't.

## Cache Items

- 1 NA assault rifle
- 30 rounds of 5.56 ammo
- 2 .38 snub-nosed revolvers
- 20 rounds of .38 ammo
- 1 ancient-looking Thompson submachine-gun with a 50-round drum magazine
- 50 rounds of .45 ammo
- 2 teargas grenades
- 2 flash-bang grenades
- 3 police handset radios

## The Militia

The militia is made up of the citizens of Trinity Springs. Militia members drill frequently and stand regular watches, but nearly everyone in town knows how to handle a gun and is expected to help in the event of a full-fledged attack. There are nearly as many women as men among the militia members at the Nevada. Every hand helps.

Many of those at the bar have loved ones at the school.

## Profile

**Corporeal:** D:2d6, N:3d6, S:3d6, Q:3d6, V:2d8  
Dodge 3d6, fightin': brawlin', knife 3d6, shootin': pistol, assault rifle, shotgun, SMG 4d6, sneak 2d6, speed load: pistol, rifle, shotgun, SMG 3d6, swimmin' 2d6, throwin': balanced, unbalanced 3d6

**Mental:** C:3d6, K:2d6, M:2d6, Sm:3d6, Sp:2d8  
Area knowledge: Trinity Springs 3d6, guts 2d8, scroungin' 3d6, scrutinize 2d6, search 3d6, survival 3d6

**Gear:** NA assault rifle, two loaded magazines, and a large knife



# Trinity Springs

## The School

The school is a very tough nut to crack. Piatek's men are on their guard, and they have 20 hostages chained up in the lunch room (maybe less depending on the posse's actions). Let's take a look at what your heroes are up against.

### The Fence

The school grounds are surrounded by a normal 10-foot high chain-link fence. There's no barbed-wire or anything atop the fence, so it's possible for a character to get up and over it in a single action with a successful *climbin'* roll against an Onerous (7) TN. Climbing the fence is the only movement the character may make on that action.

If the heroes think to ask, they can get some wirecutters from the militia. Snipping a hole in the fence large enough for an adult to move through takes 3 actions. Getting through the hole without getting snagged requires a Fair (5) *Nimbleness* roll.

Piatek's men have closed the two openings in the fence. The western gap has been closed with a barricade of tables, desks, and chairs dragged out of the school. These have just been loosely stacked on one another and are very unstable. Putting any weight on them causes them to shift. Climbing over this makeshift barricade requires a Hard (9) *Nimbleness* roll.

More importantly, the defenders have booby-trapped the mess. The first hero going over the barricade sets off a grenade bundle doing 8d12 damage with a Burst Radius of 10 yards.

The eastern entrance has been blocked off with a Combine supply truck. Like all Combine vehicles, if someone without an identity chip tries to start it, boom! The truck explodes for 3d20 damage with a Burst Radius of 5 yards.

### Rooftop Machine Guns

There are three sandbagged fighting positions on the roof of the school. Each one has a pair of soldiers in it. They are armed just like the foot patrol, but in addition each position has a captured .50 machine gun in it.

If the school is attacked, one soldier mans the machine gun. His buddy supports him with rifle fire and clips a new belt of ammo onto the machine gun when it begins to run low (this takes 1 action). Each position has one extra 100-round ammo belt.

### The Barricade

There is another barricade across the main entrance to the school. This is also constructed of tables and desks from inside the school. There is a gap in the center to let people pass through, but in the event of an attack the men behind it slide a table to cover the gap. The barricade provides 1 level of Armor to the men behind it.

There are normally four troopers manning the barricade.

### The Parking Lot

In the parking lot on the east side of the school is another Combine supply truck and four motorcycles. There is also a beat-up Humm-Vee belonging to Greer that was captured from the militia.

### The Church Tower

A block away from the school is the Antioch Baptist Church. Its bell tower has a commanding view of the roof and front entrance of the school. While planning their attack on the school, if the posse asks if there is any place that looks like a good sniper position, the church is the obvious place.

Unfortunately for the posse, Piatek thought of it first. He's already got a sniper in the tower.

The sniper is actually the personal bodyguard assigned to him by Throckmorton, Sharon "Scopes" Stegner. She's a deadly shot with rifle and pistol and as utterly ruthless as the man she's guarding (actually she does more than just guard him, but that's beside the point).

Stegner has taken up a position in the tower overlooking the school. She's there to pick off anyone she sees trying to sneak into the school grounds and to cover Piatek's retreat if he's forced to abandon the town.

Her weapon of choice is a high-powered .50 sniper rifle. It's equipped with a powerful night-vision scope that adds 30 yards to the weapon's Range Increment as long as she spends an action drawing a bead on her target. This means that the 200 yards from the tower to the school only adds +4 to her *shootin'* Target Numbers. If she doesn't spend an action drawing a bead, she gets no benefit from the scope and suffers the -2 hip-shootin' modifier.

Scopes doesn't want to give away her position needlessly, so before she opens fire on any infiltrators she spots, she radios the school and has them deal with them. If they can't spot the targets, though, she takes them down.

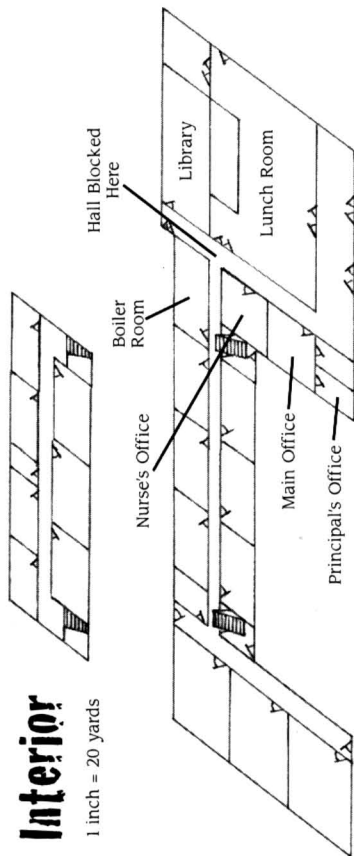


# Trinity Springs

## Trinity Springs School

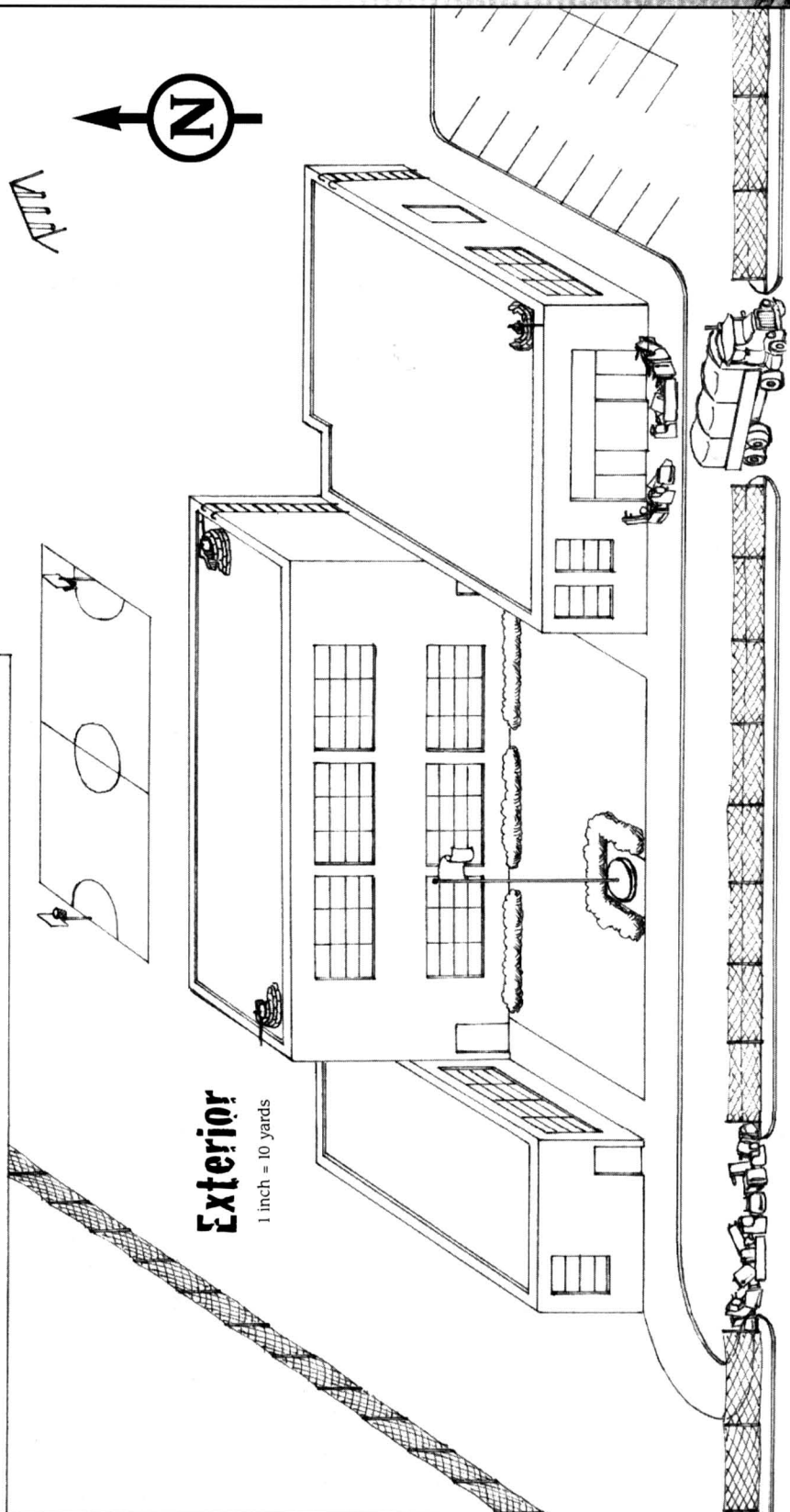
### Interior

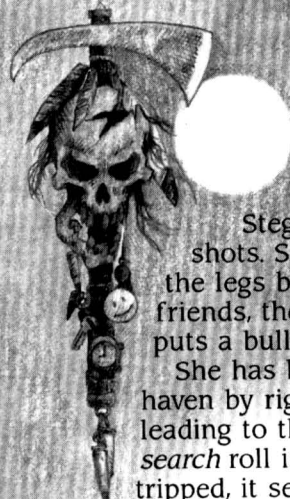
1 inch = 20 yards



### Exterior

1 inch = 10 yards





# Trinity Springs

Stegner doesn't usually go for killing shots. She prefers to take called shots to the legs because if a crippled target has any friends, they often run out to help. Then she puts a bullet in them too!

She has booby-trapped her little sniper haven by rigging up a tripwire on the ladder leading to the top of the tower. A Hard (9) search roll is needed to spot it. If the wire is tripped, it sets off a frag grenade.

Stegner has rope, and she plans to rappel down from the tower when the time to leave comes.

## Sharon "Scopes" Stegner

Stegner was a member of Throckmorton's unit during the Last War. She is utterly loyal to him. That's one of the reasons she's been assigned to guard Piatek. If he gets too ambitious, she has orders to retire him.

Stegner is a brunette in her early thirties. She wears black fatigues and a black beret.

### Profile

**Corporeal:** D:3d12, N:3d8, S:3d8, Q:4d10, V:2d8  
Climbin' 5d8, dodge 4d8, fightin': brawlin', knife 5d8, shootin': pistol, SMG, rifle, 6d12, sneak 5d8, speed load: pistol, rifle 3d12, swimmin' 4d8, throwin': balanced, unbalanced 4d12

**Mental:** C:3d10, K:3d8, M:2d8, Sm:4d8, Sp:2d10  
Academia: occult 3d8, area knowledge: Denver 4d8, artillery 4d10, guts 3d10, leadership 2d8, medicine: general 2d8, overawe 4d8, professional: interrogation 5d8, scroungin' 4d8, scrutinize 4d10, search 4d10, survival 5d8

**Edges:** Level-headed, two-fisted, light sleeper

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, vengeful

**Gear:** HI Thunderer pistol, sniper rifle with night vision scope, two grenades, infantry battlesuit, headset radio, four magazines for each weapon, and rope and rappeling gear.

## Inside the School

Piatek and his men have set up shop in the eastern half of the school.

### The Big Cheese

Piatek himself has taken over the principal's office. His aid and radio operator are in the main office (both of these are armed like motorcycle troopers). The nurse's office has been set up as an aid station for wounded troopers. Any soldiers wounded by the posse who managed to get back to the school are here.

## Inside Barricade

Piatek's forces are spread pretty thin, so he opted to only occupy a small portion of the school. There is yet another makeshift barricade of desks and tables across the hall leading to the western end of the school. Four men are stationed here to guard the barricade and the rear fire door leading into the school.

## The Hostages

The hostages are being kept in the assembly/lunch room. They have been handcuffed to six folding lunch tables (roughly three to a table) which have been arranged in a circle at the center of the room. Any hostages which have been executed are still handcuffed to the table.

There are six guards in the room. Two stand in the center of the circle made by the tables. The other four simply wander around the room.

## Foot Patrol

If a patrol is sent out from the school, Piatek sends two of the hostage guards, the four guards manning the inside barricade, and two of the soldiers manning the barricade at the school entrance. He has his aide and the radio operator take over the interior barricade.

## Reinforcements

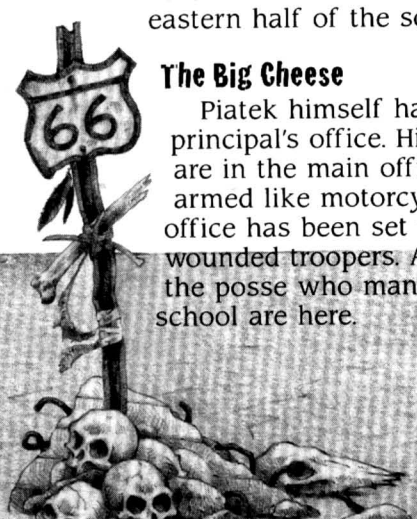
Once it's obvious that an assault is being made on the school, Piatek orders the men on the roadblocks to abandon them and come to his aid. Unless the posse is having too easy a time taking the school (not likely), assume that militia ambushes stop or slow them down long enough for the heroes to finish up.

Once Piatek is killed or flees, the rest of the Combine troops make their way out of town as quickly as they can.

## The Last Hurrah

Piatek heads for the hostages if it looks as if the posse might defeat his men. Once there, he climbs inside the circle. If the posse makes it this far, he threatens to start shooting hostages if they don't leave immediately.

Each of the lunch tables has been wired with explosives which can be triggered by the radio detonator carried by Piatek. This is his trump card. If he feels he faces death or capture, he threatens to blow up the hostages. The button on the detonator is a deadman's switch. Once Piatek presses it, releasing it without disarming the detonators causes the explosives to go off.



# Trinity Springs

If backed into a corner, Piatek uses the explosives as leverage to secure his safe passage out of town. He promises to disarm the explosives once he and his remaining men are safely out of Trinity Springs.

The major has no intention of keeping this promise, of course. Once safely outside of town, he detonates the explosives. This gives the posse roughly 10 minutes to disarm the explosives under the tables or free the 20 hostages from their handcuffs.

Disarming the explosives requires six separate *demolitions* rolls against a TN of 9. Each attempt takes a full minute. A failed attempt means the charge is still active. Going bust means it goes off. Each charge explodes for 4d20 damage with a Burst Radius of 10 yards.

Getting the hostages free from the tables is also difficult because there are no keys for the handcuffs. There are many different ways the posse might go about doing this, so we leave it up to you to figure out exactly how long it takes to free all 20.

Greer's daughter Vicky is not there. The other hostages can tell the group that she was there, but they overheard Piatek order one of his motorcycle troopers to take her to "the airfield." That was over four hours ago, so unless the driver was delayed, he has already arrived at Polson Field.

## Aftermath

If things go well and the town is liberated, the posse members are hailed as heroes.

Before they break out the moonshine and start celebrating, Greer informs them that he's headed north to Polson Field. He is going to get his daughter back and make damn sure that Throckmorton doesn't get his hands on the ghost-rock bomb.

Greer would appreciate it if the posse came with him. Some of the Combine troops are still skulking around out there, and he doesn't want to strip the town's defenses any more than they've already been.

Before leaving, Greer heads back to his house at the north end of town. Down in the basement, he digs up an old footlocker. In it is his old Air Force uniform, his flight helmet, some photos, some extra ammo for his pistol, and—most importantly—his Air Force ID card. He explains to the posse that they may need it to get into parts of the base if the security system is still up and running.

## Bounty

**Rescuing All of the Hostages:** 1 blue chip.

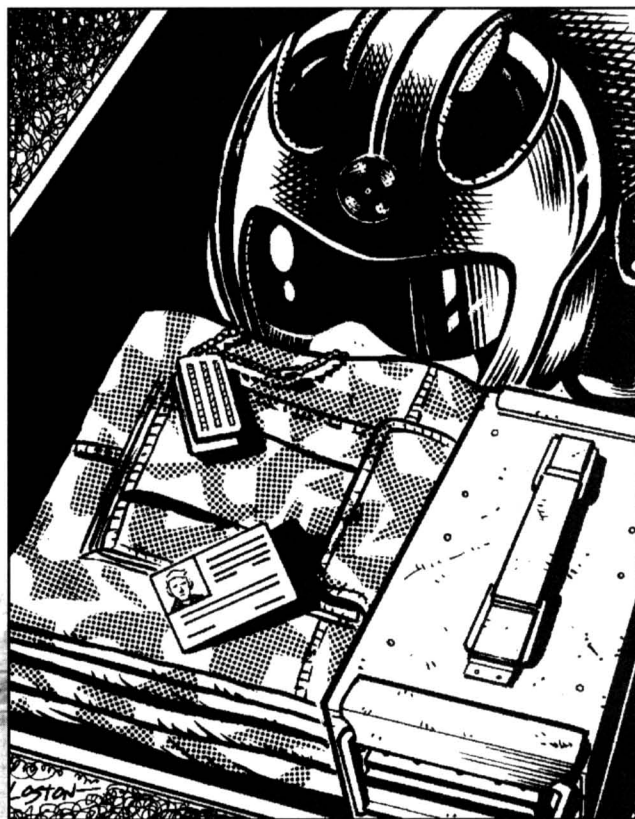
**Rescuing More than Half of the Hostages:** 1 red chip.

**Rescuing Some of the Hostages:** 1 white chip.

**Saving Ingram:** 1 white chip.

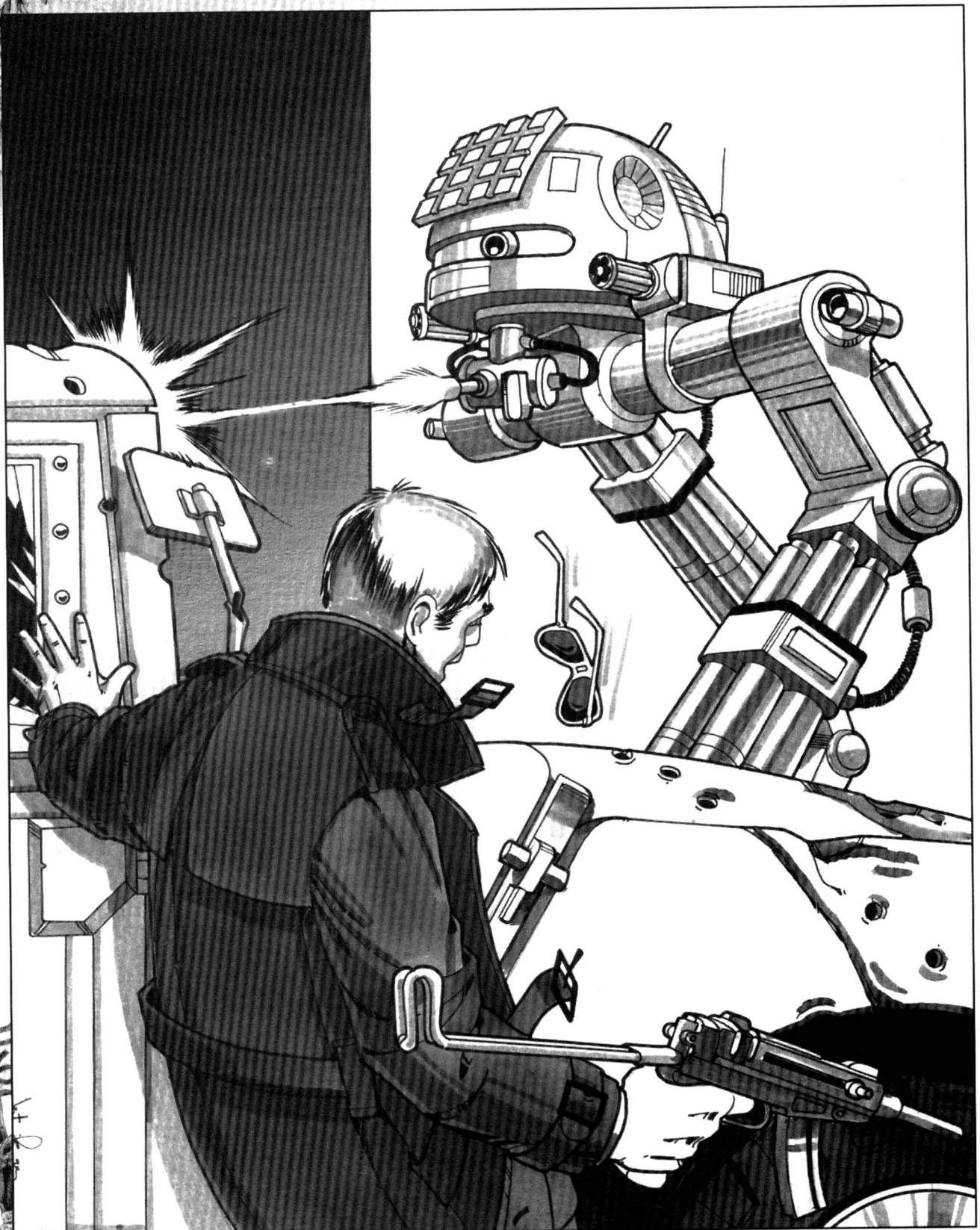
**Base o' Operations:** If the posse was able to rescue the majority of the hostages, they've just made a lot of new friends. They are given their pick of one of the uninhabited houses in town and told they can stay as long as they'd like. This gratitude is genuine, and the heroes are welcome in town as long as they behave in a civilized manner (as defined by their new neighbors). If the group decides to call Trinity Springs home, the townspeople are happy to have them, but the heroes are expected to work the fields and pull sentry duty like everyone else in town.

**Enemy:** The posse can now number the Combine among their enemies if any of the troopers escaped town. If Major Piatek or Stegner survived, they are most definitely looking for payback.





# Blast From the Past





## Chapter Three:

# Blast From the Past



The posse probably believes they are in for another fight with more of Throckmorton's flunkys. Man, are they in for a surprise.

### What's Going On Here

A brief summary of what happened at the base prior to the posse's arrival is in order. We must go back 13 years to start at the beginning.

#### Wipe Out!

With the exception of Greer and Nuebauer, the base's entire garrison was killed during the attack by the Southern Alliance commandos.

One of those killed was General McMasters, the base commander. The problem is, he didn't stay dead. He returned to the land of the living (sort of) as a Harrowed five days after the attack.

McMasters was a career military man and he worked hard to attain the rank he had. When he learned of Operation Valkyrie, he saw an opportunity for promotion and pulled every string he could to get himself assigned to one of the bases involved in the project.

When McMasters "revived," the triple whammy of dying, coming back to share his body with an evil spirit, and seeing his command in ruins caused his already battered mind to snap. He became convinced that the base was still operational. He just had to hold on until reinforcements arrived. He's spent every day for the last 13 years "running" the base.

#### Greer Returns

When Greer returned to the base almost a year later, McMasters was overjoyed. He thought Greer had brought the civilians with him to help rebuild the base. He watched them from afar, trying to figure out how he could greet them without frightening them out of their wits. Before he solved that problem, the salvage crew from Trinity Springs packed up and left.

McMasters was furious. He considered Greer a traitor and resolved to defend the base against anyone else who might try to loot its arsenal.

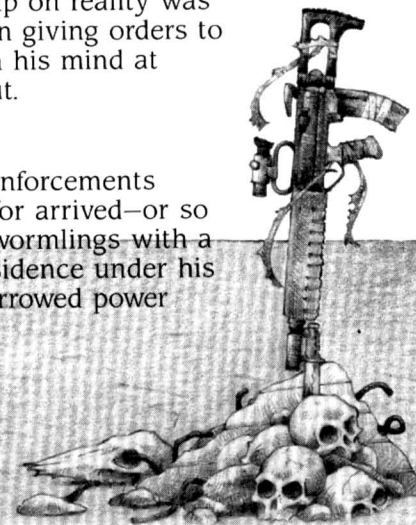
#### Invaders

Over the years, many people have tried to scavenge for supplies in the ruins of the base. Most have died at McMasters' hands. Those who escaped spread stories of ghosts haunting the abandoned airfield.

The general's madness deepened with every passing year, until his grip on reality was tenuous at best. He began giving orders to his fallen soldiers, and in his mind at least, they carry them out.

#### Reinforcements Arrive!

Four years ago, the reinforcements McMasters was waiting for arrived—or so he believed. A group of wormlings with a young queen took up residence under his base. While using his Harrowed power



# Blast From the Past



which allows him to burrow through the earth, he ran into them. To his surprise, he found that he could communicate with them. Even more surprisingly, when he gave orders, they obeyed.

He declared the wormlings the base's new security force. They willingly help him guard the base. All they ask in return is that McMasters occasionally lure some humans to the base for them to feed on. Between the general and his wormling troops, no one who has entered Polson Field in the last four years has escaped alive.

## The Combine

The advance force of Combine troops sent to recover the bomb arrived by helicopter at the base two days before the posse. This group included junker Herbert Hobbs and his assistants. This small group set up shop in the southern hangar, and Hobbs and his men began repairing Greer's fighter.

McMasters overheard some of the soldiers talking about a second group arriving the following day and decided to wait and see what they were up to before he had his "security troops" remove them from the base.

The next morning (the same day Piatek arrived in Trinity Springs) a Combine supply truck arrived at the base. It brought with it more troopers, a tractor, and some robots. These troops immediately began excavating the tunnel leading to the underground weapons bunker.

## Security!

McMasters had no idea that there were any ghost-rock bombs left on the base. He was killed before Greer and Nuebauer returned the bomb to the bunker. As he spied on the Combiners, he learned the truth. What he heard only confirmed to him that Greer was a traitor.

Just before the war went nuclear, McMasters had received orders emphasizing the fact that he was not to let any of the weapons stored at the base fall into enemy hands, even if it meant destroying them. As he watched the invaders dig deeper, the general knew what he had to do.

The Combine digging crew worked well into the night and finally unearthed the entrance to the bunker around midnight. That was when McMasters and his troops struck. All around the base, wormlings burrowed up out of the ground to tear at unsuspecting soldiers and drag them beneath the earth.

Although McMasters and his wormy minions had the element of surprise, the battle was not an easy one. The Combine troopers at the base were some of Throckmorton's finest, and they put up a Hell of a fight. They were all killed or worse, captured, but so were many wormlings.

## Last Stand

The only humans to survive the onslaught were Hobbs and his assistants. The wormlings couldn't get at them directly through the concrete floor of the hangar, so they were forced to storm the place above ground. Each time they rushed the hangar, they were mowed down by the blazing minigun of the UP-309 combat robot the Denver AI had provided.

McMasters used the confusion caused by the wormlings' attack to slip inside the hangar and toss a grenade inside the Combine helicopter. The junker and his helpers were not leaving.

## Armageddon Delayed

Once the Combine troops had been taken care of, McMasters used his ID card to open the newly unearthed weapons bunker. He and his remaining minions took the bomb from the bunker and transported it deep into the heart of the wormling nest.



# Blast From the Past

Vicky Greer was among those who were captured by the wormlings. She and the other captives were taken to the Queen's chamber to be cocooned and transformed into new worm men.

Before undergoing this terrifying ordeal, she caught sight of McMasters. She recognized him from an old photo her father had shown her, and she appealed to him for help. When the general discovered who she was, he decided to delay detonating the bomb for a while to see if her traitorous father would come to rescue his offspring.

## A Coward Dies a Thousand Deaths

Hobbs and his assistants spent a sleepless night waiting for the wormlings to renew their attacks. Once the first glow of dawn appeared on the horizon, they decided they had to flee the base. Their only means of escape was the supply truck parked on the opposite side of the base.

Two of Hobbs' lackeys made a run for the truck. Before they were halfway to their objective, they were grabbed by wormlings concealed beneath the ground and dragged to their deaths under the earth.

When the last assistant saw this, he broke and ran for the main gate. He only made it a few steps before he too was dragged out of sight.

Hobbs, a card-carrying coward, was terrified. He recalled the robot, reloaded its gun, and eventually worked up enough nerve to explore the base for another means of transportation (being careful to never leave the hard surface of the runway, of course).

He discovered an old, beat-up Blackhawk helicopter in the southern hangar. He quickly locked himself and the robot inside the hangar and began working on modifications to the antique chopper.

## Getting There

Now that you know all the good times the Black Hats have had at the air base, it's time to let the posse have some fun of their own.

Unless it was destroyed in the fighting around the school, Greer takes his Humm-Vee. The trip takes about three hours. After all the excitement in town, the posse should arrive at the base shortly after dawn.

Unless you're feeling sadistic, assume the trip itself is uneventful. Piatek and his men don't have much fight left in them after being chased out of town.

On the way to airfield, Greer fills the group in on what happened on that day 13 years ago. He also mentions that since then the place has gained a reputation for being haunted. He's heard stories of a ghostly Air Force officer luring people to their deaths with promises of salvage.

## Polson Field

Polson Field was a small local airfield before it was pressed into military service.

## Checking It Out

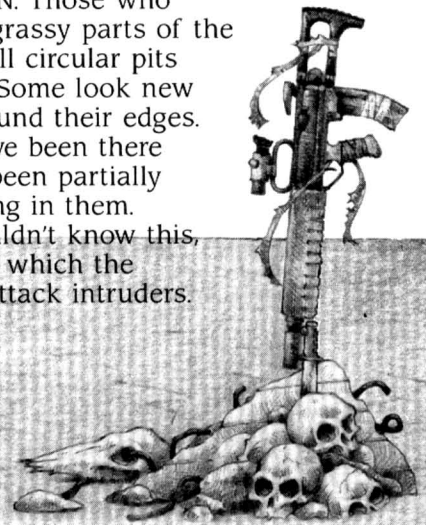
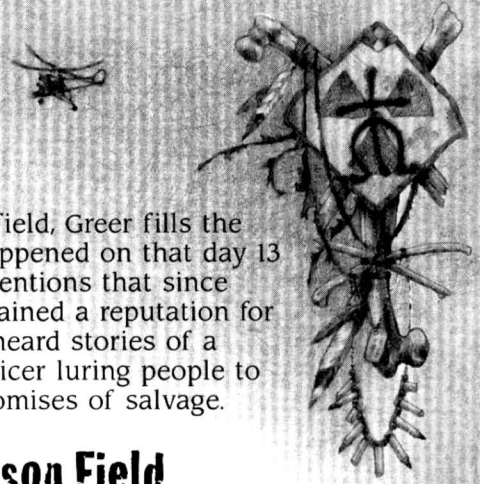
After their last experience with Combine troops, the heroes probably want to check the place out from a distance before traipsing in. If they do, read them the following description:

*An air of neglect and decay hangs over the old airfield like a shroud. The blackened hulks of vehicles destroyed on the last day of the Last War litter the runways. The rusted wreckage of a transport chopper rests at the southern end of the field like the picked-over skeleton of an enormous bird. The skeletal remains of soldiers killed that day still lie where they fell, their uniforms so tattered and bleached by the sun it's impossible to tell for which side they fought.*

*The only sound that can be heard is the occasional banging of a door in the wind and the creak and pop of the rusty metal hangars as they warm in the sun.*

*One thing stands out clearly against this backdrop of destruction. On the western edge of the field sits a Combine supply truck with a large trailer hitched to it. A few yards away, a backhoe tractor rests by an enormous pile of freshly dug earth.*

Have everyone viewing the field make search rolls against a Hard (9) TN. Those who succeed notice that the grassy parts of the field are dimpled by small circular pits about two feet in width. Some look new and have fresh earth around their edges. Others look like they have been there much longer: they have been partially filled and grass is growing in them. Although the posse shouldn't know this, these are the holes from which the wormlings appeared to attack intruders.



# Blast From the Past

## Messing with Their Heads

There are a lot of skeletons lying around the base. Many of your players, especially those who have played *Deadlands* or other horror games, may be expecting them to get up and attack. This isn't going to happen, but there's really no need for the players to know that.

Play to their fears, and make them jumpy. Have a skeleton occasionally shift while the group is poking around near it—no blatant movement, just something that could be explained by it being accidentally jostled. Drape skeletons over things the posse might want to check out, so they're forced to move them.

## Getting In

The base is surrounded by two 10 foot tall fences topped with razorwire. There's a 20 foot gap between the fences which has been mined with a mix of antipersonnel and anti-vehicle mines. A few gaps have been blasted in the southwestern corner where rockets impacted.

Greer recommends avoiding the minefields. Many of the mines may not work, but an old mine can kill you just as dead as a new one.

## The Front Door

The only other way into the base is through the main entrance. There's a small guard shack there with skeletal soldier hanging half out of the shack's shattered window.

## The Chop Shop

A number of rusted vehicles are scattered around the parking lot beyond the entrance. There's a mixture of civilian and military vehicles in the lot, and they all show obvious signs of battle damage: bullet holes, shattered windshields, shredded tires, etc. There are also a few skeletons scattered around the parking lot. They look as if they were casualties of whatever fighting took place here.

Before the heroes advance very far into the parking area, have them all make Fair (5) *Cognition* rolls. Those who succeed notice that a few of the vehicles in the center of the lot have fresh damage. Many are missing large portions of their bodies: fender panels, bumpers, roofs, etc. In each case, there are obvious cut marks which look as if someone took a metal saw to the vehicle. The cuts were made recently. Although the vehicles are badly rusted, the metal along the edges of the cuts is still shiny.

While the heroes puzzle over this, have them make another *Cognition* roll against a Hard (9) TN. The characters who succeed begin to hear a light metallic chittering and a high-pitched whirring among the disabled cars. Have everyone make a surprise check. The TN is 5 for anyone who heard the noises, and 11 for everyone else.

## Chop-Bots

The posse is attacked by six chop-bots. These are small (slightly larger than a cat), spiderlike robots built by the Denver AI to salvage raw materials from abandoned cities. The robots' legs end in small, hooked claws which allow them to cling to nearly any surface. Where a spider would have mandibles, the robots have a pair of circular tungsten-carbide saw blades capable of cutting through nearly any material.

The chop-bots at Polson Field were brought along by the Combine forces in case it was necessary to cut their way into the weapons bunker. While they were excavating the bunker, Hobbs put the bots to work carving up the vehicles in the parking lot into pieces he could use in his junker devices. After the Combine troops were wiped out by the wormlings, he placed the bots in standby mode with orders to attack anyone who entered the parking lot.



# Blast From the Past

The chop-bots are nasty opponents. Due to their size, all ranged attacks are at -2 to hit them. They can also scuttle along underneath cars and attack from unexpected directions.

## Profile

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:3d12, S:4d8, Q:2d10, V:2d8  
Climbin' 5d12, dodge 4d12, fightin' brawlin' 4d12

**Mental:** C:3d8, K:2d6, M:—, Sm:3d6, Sp:—  
Search 3d8

**Size:** 3

**Armor:** 3

**Terror:** 3

**Pace:** 12

## Special Abilities:

**Damage:** Saw Blades (STR+2d8; AP 4)

**Leap:** Cutter-bots can leap up to 10' horizontally and attack.

## Out of the Frying Pan?

Sounds of fighting in the parking lot automatically catch the attention of Hobbs. Hoping it's Combine reinforcements, he sends UP-309, or Yoopie as the troops call him, over to check things out. He gives the robot orders not to fire unless attacked. If the contacts are not hostile, it's to lead them to the apron in front of the northern hangar and call for him.

The robot quickly stomps its way over there to see what's up. It takes it 5 rounds to arrive.

If the posse opens up on the robot, it returns fire. If they take cover in a building Yoopie can't enter (pretty much any building other than the hangars), it sits outside and waits for them to come out. It opens fire if it spots anyone at a window or door.

If the heroes don't antagonize the robot, it begins booming in a loud, metallic voice, "Follow me. Follow me." It continues to repeat this until the group follows it or shoots at it.

If the group does follow the robot, it stops in front of the northern hangar and begins a new chant, "Hobbs. Hobbs." Once he hears this, Hobbs peeks out and checks the group out. He's willing to accept help from Satan himself at this point, so after studying them for a few seconds he frantically calls for them to run to the hangar.

## Urban Pacification Robot Model 309 (UP-309)

The Hellstromme Industries UP-309 series is an armored bipedal walker robot which stands 10' tall. It is intended for light scouting duties and combat in broken terrain such as that found in an urban environment. It's armed with a rapid-fire 12mm minigun. This weapon is gyro-stabilized and laser-targeted.

The UP-309 has an impressive sensor package including a high-frequency radar, which allows it to engage airborne threats, and a state-of-the-art thermal imaging system. The unit also has limited artificial intelligence allowing it to operate independently without constant command-guidance.

All electronic components of the UP-309 are fully hardened against the effects of a nuclear explosion's electromagnetic pulse (as well as the Doomsayer's EMP miracle).

Yoopie suffered some minor damage during the fight against the wormlings. One of them actually got close enough to leap up on its shoulder and spit acid. The robot quickly scraped the offending critter off against the side of a building, but the acid weakened a patch of its armor on the left side.

It takes a Hard (9) *Cognition* roll to notice this in the heat of battle. Targeting this area requires a called shot with a -4 modifier. The damaged area has an Armor rating of 2.

## Profile

**Corporeal:** D:4d10, N:3d6, S:4d12+4, Q:3d8, V:4d10  
Fightin' brawlin' 3d6, shootin' minigun 4d10

**Mental:** C:3d8, K:2d6, M:—, Sm:3d8, Sp:—  
Search 4d8

**Size:** 12

**Armor:** 4

**Terror:** 3

**Pace:** 36

## Special Abilities:

**Damage:** Stomp (STR+2d8)

**Gyro-Stabilization:** The gyro-stabilization system allows the minigun to fire continuously with no penalties for recoil or movement by the robot.

**Laser Sight:** The laser sight on the minigun gives the UP-309 a bonus to hit as if it has spent an action drawin' a bead (+2) on each shot.

**Thermal Imager:** This system allows the robot to ignore all penalties for bad lighting. It also gives the UP-309 a +4 bonus to *Cognition* rolls made to spot hidden characters by their heat signature (this doesn't apply against Harrowed characters—they're normally room temperature). Characters hidden out of sight near a window or door can be spotted by this system. The heat radiated by their bodies gives off a telltale glow which the thermal imager can detect.





# Blast From the Past

## Exploring

Provided the group survives its encounter with the chop-bots and Yoopie, the heroes are going to want to take a look around.

## Operations & Control Tower

The bottom floor of this building is filled with administrative offices and a small lounge with vending machines (should anybody look there are actually two Cokes left in one of the machines).

The posse may find the offices rather strange. Each one is uncannily neat and possesses a skeletal occupant wearing an Air Force dress uniform. Each skeletal office worker is sitting ramrod straight at his or her desk. Some have pens clutched in their hands. This is the work of General McMasters. He got tired of everyone lying around on the job and tidied the place up.

One office is unoccupied. The name plate on the door reads General George McMasters. If the posse asks about him, Greer informs them that he was the base commander and he was killed during the attack on the base.

## The Head Honcho's Office

McMasters office is as neat as the others. On his desk is a thick loose leaf binder: the base commander's log. It's open to the most current entry, dated the day before the posse arrives at the base:

*1200—More unauthorized personnel arrived today. They have begun excavating the field over the weapons storage bunker. I must summon security.*

*2100—The security forces were able to defeat the invaders, but with heavy casualties. Prisoners taken. The weapon has been secured. I must ensure that it doesn't fall into the wrong hands.*

Another entry dated the day before that reads:

*1000—An unauthorized aircraft landed at the base today. The personnel from the aircraft have taken over the northern hangar.*

*1300—The invaders appear to be after a nuclear weapon. Captain Greer's name came up in their conversations. I think he refused to fly his mission!*

If the group bothers to flip through the book, they see mostly page after page of entries reading, "No scheduled sorties." There are also a few scattered entries about unauthorized personnel entering the base and being dealt with by "security."

If the reader flips to the front of the log, there are six months of operational entries for the air base. These lead up to September 23, 2081, the last day of the war. The entry for that day reads:

*0400—We have received authenticated authorization codes. The weapons have been removed from storage, and Greer and Collington's aircraft are being prepped on the flight line. God save us all!*

The next entry is dated six days later:

*1300—The base was hit by an SA commando team as the fighters were preparing to launch. I was knocked unconscious in the fighting and when I awoke, the base had been overrun. I have radioed for reinforcements.*

*Captain Greer's F-40 is in the hangar. I can only assume he completed his mission and returned safely. No sign of Lieutenant Collington's aircraft. I'll write a letter to his mother.*

The last three entries of interest require a Fair (5) search roll to find. They read:

*September 18, 2082*

*1400—Captain Greer has returned with some local civilians. I should put them to work immediately, but I am hesitant to greet them in my current state. They may be frightened.*

*September 19, 2082*

*1100—Greer and his group have left and taken most of the base's remaining weapons with them! I never figured him for a traitor. I must take care to safeguard the remainder of the base's inventory.*

*October 15, 2090*

*1200—Reinforcements have finally arrived. The troops are a bit unconventional, but appear adequate. They have begun building new quarters. I must secure provisions for the new garrison.*

# Blast From the Past

## The Control Tower

The control tower has also been cleaned up, and two skeletal air controllers keep silent vigil over the airway. If there is a junker in the party, have her make a Fair (5) *Cognition*. If the roll is successful, the character notices that although some of the control panels in the tower have been damaged by rain blowing in through the shattered windows, they appear otherwise untouched. On a Fair (5) *scroungin'* roll, a junker can recover 2d6 electronic components from the tower's gear.

Of course, a junker who does this is probably doing it alone with two skeletons for company. Greer is too worried about his daughter to stand around while some techno-geek dismantles the control tower. He moves on and insists the rest of the heroes do likewise.

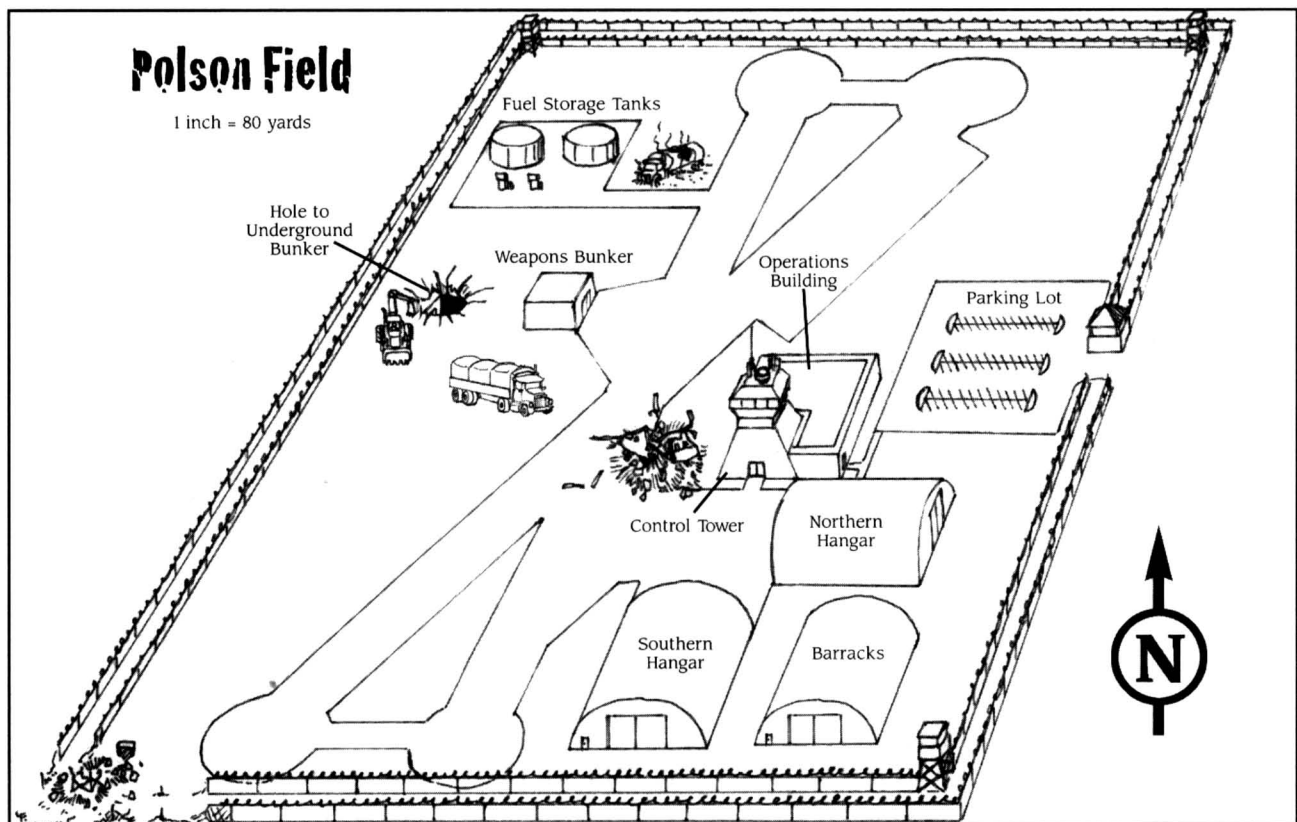
## The Northern Hangar

Remnants of the fighting are visible around the hangar. Congealing puddles of a dark purplish-red liquid are beginning to attract flies as they warm in the sun. The concrete apron is pockmarked here and there by splashed acid.

Opening the hangar doors reveals Greer's F-40 fighter and the Combine helicopter. It's obvious someone has been working on Greer's plane. A number of access panels are open, and one of the engines has been pulled and is sitting on a dolly behind the aircraft.

The Combine helicopter's flying days are obviously over. Its windows are shattered and one rotor has snapped off and fallen to the ground. If the group pokes around here, have them make Onerous (7) *scroungin'* rolls. Each hero who succeeds finds one of the following:

1. A down-filled sleeping bag with a couple of small shrapnel holes in it (\$50).
2. A set of aircraft mechanic's tools (\$40).
3. A Zippo lighter with the name "Buster" inscribed on it (\$10).
4. A field manual (complete with coffee stains and a prominent "Ultra Secret" sticker on the cover) on the proper maintenance and arming of the LGB-140 ghost-rock bomb (\$10,000 or more to someone with a bomb, \$5 to anyone else).
5. Two rolls of charred toilet paper (\$20 each).
6. A pair of bolt-cutters (\$10).





# Blast From the Past

## The Southern Hangar

If the heroes had a friendly encounter with YooPie, they are welcomed by Hobbs.

If not, have the heroes make Onerous (7) Cognition rolls as they approach the building. Those who succeed hear a high-pitched whine and the occasional clang coming from inside.

The doors to this building are locked. It takes an Onerous (7) *lockpickin'* roll open them. Once the posse gains entrance, they see:

*In the center of the hangar is an old military helicopter. It takes a second or two to identify the object hovering beside it as a person. He's a tremendous mountain of a man. At a guess you'd peg his weight at upwards of 600 pounds. He's seated in an enormous, metal chair which has a large turbofan mounted at each corner. A bewildering array of mechanical arms sporting a variety of blades, wrenches, and claws are attached to the sides of the chair. The man is engrossed by his work.*

Once the heroes get Hobbs' attention, he whirls his chair to face them. He warns them to stay back or he'll shoot. He backs up his words by pressing a button which deploys a machine gun from the underside of his flying throne.

### Ticket Out of Here

Hobbs isn't looking for a fight. As long as the posse doesn't open fire, neither does he. If things get ugly, Hobbs uses the gun to clear a path to the door and heads for the hills. His fear of the heroes overcomes any thoughts of wormlings, and he zooms right out the main gate.

If the posse is able to talk to him, he describes what's transpired at the base since he arrived. He also explains that he's in the process of adapting the Blackhawk to run off the spirit battery in his chair so he can escape. If asked about Greer's daughter, he remembers last seeing her near the excavation site.



### Herbert Hobbs

Hobbs once worked for Hellstromme Industries' weapons division. He's one of the world's few remaining experts on ghost-rock bombs. He was sent to refit the fighter and load the recovered bomb on it.

Hobbs is a complete coward. Any threats of violence turn him into a quivering mass (and can he quiver).

### Profile

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:3d4, S:3d6, Q:2d6, V:2d8  
Drivin': helicopter, hover chair 4d4, shootin': pistol, MG 3d8

**Mental:** C:3d10, K:3d12, M:2d6, Sm:4d10, Sp:2d8  
Academia: occult 3d12, area knowledge: Denver 3d12, science: nuclear physics 6d12, science: occult engineering 7d12, scroungin' 5d10, scrutinize 4d10, search 3d10

**Edges:** Arcane background: junker, mechanically inclined

**Hindrances:** Big 'un (Size 8), yellor

**Gear:** G-ray collector, 2 pounds of ghost rock, and a hoverchair.

### The Hoverchair

**Drain:** Hover: 4 GR/hour; Tools: 1 GR/day

If you get in trouble in the Wasted West, you only need to outrun one person. Unfortunately for Hobbs, he was always that person. He used his excess of brains to compensate for his lack of athletic ability and whipped up his chair. Now he can cruise the ruins at almost 20 m.p.h.

Besides hauling Hobbs' ample butt around, the chair also has a variety of mechanical arms and built-in tools that aid him in his work. In the event he runs into trouble, an HI SAW is mounted on the underside of the chair. An ammo compartment in the chair holds 100 rounds for the weapon.

The chair has an enormous 200-point spirit battery built into it.

## Barracks

The barracks haven't weathered the past 13 years well. The roof is extremely leaky, and all of the beds, blankets, and personal effects are a rotten, soggy mess. If the posse insists on poking around anyway, have them make Hard (9) *scroungin'* rolls. The first four players to give you successful totals each find one of the following:

1. A working flashlight (\$70).
2. A diver's watch (still running, \$25).
3. A 13-year-old tube of toothpaste (\$10).
4. A sealed case of milrats (24 meals, \$480).

## Watchtowers

The watchtowers have nothing of interest in them (unless your heroes are starting a human bone collection). The tower in the southwest corner of the base is little more than a charred shell. It was hit by the first salvo of rockets from the SA choppers.



# Blast From the Past

## Fuel Storage

This cluster of fuel tanks is set off by itself. A charred fuel truck sits nearby. Most of the fuel has leaked away (alert the EPA!) or evaporated. All that's left in the tanks is a smelly, black goop.

The heroes can't run any vehicles with this nasty stuff, but it does burn. Wrapping rags coated with the goop around a stick or piece of pipe creates a makeshift torch that could be useful when the posse ventures into the wormling lair.

## Weapons Bunker

The door to this thick, concrete bunker is wide open, and the weapon racks inside are bare. Greer explains that this is the source of most of the militia's weaponry.

At the back of the bunker is an elevator with an electronic keypad. The door is open, and it's obvious from the angle the floor of the elevator is resting at that it's out of service.

A Hard (9) *scroungin'* roll turns up a small box of discarded assault rifle parts in the wreckage at the back of the bunker. The box provides 5 mechanical components for any junker in the group or the parts can be used to repair damaged weapons.

## The Excavation

It looks like Throckmorton's boys have been busy. They've managed to uncover the entrance to the underground storage bunker which once held the base's atomic weapons.

There are obvious signs of heavy fighting around the hole. The grass is heavily stained with blood, and numerous Combine weapons litter the ground. Drag marks in the freshly dug earth lead down into the pit.

The pit itself is roughly 20 feet deep and 40 feet wide. Getting down into the pit is easy. Getting back out requires a Fair (5) *climbin'* roll. The east side of the hole is a jumble of rubble concrete: the remains of the tunnel leading to the bunker.

Anyone climbing down to take a look sees the following:

*Standing at the bottom of the hole, you can see into the unearthed bunker. A motorized bomb dolly sits just inside the doorway: empty. There's an electronic keypad and card slot on the wall near the*

*door. It appears to still be operational. The display above the keypad continuously flashes the words, "ID confirmed" with mocking regularity.*

*About half way down the sides of the hole, the rich, black topsoil gives way to a layer of thick, red clay. The drag marks which start at the top of the pit end at a series of small tunnels in the clay. Judging from the deep, clawing imprints of human fingers around the edges of some of these tunnels, not everyone who entered them went willingly.*

Once Greer reaches the bottom of the hole, he sizes things up quickly. He pulls his pistol, sticks a penlight in his mouth, and wriggles into one of the tunnels.

For the exciting conclusion of *Apocalypse Now!*, please send \$10 to...

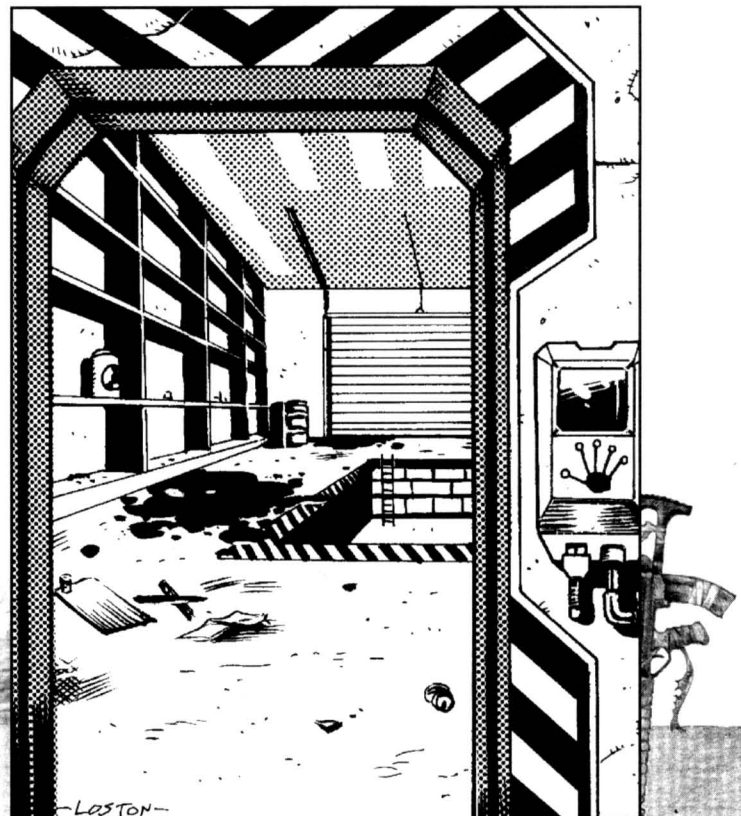
Okay, just turn the page.

## Bounty

**Reading the Log:** 1 white chip.

**Defeating Yoopie:** 1 red chip.

**Not Fighting Yoopie:** 1 blue chip.



## Lair of the Worm





## Chapter Four:

### Lair o' the Worm



In this final chapter, the heroes get to wriggle their way into a wormling lair, have a showdown with McMasters, rescue Greer's daughter, and run like Hell before they're caught in the middle of a ghost-rock bomb explosion.

### The Wormlings

Before you have your heroes crawling around through tunnels on their hands and knees, let's talk turkey about wormlings. There's more to know about them than what you may have read in *Hell on Earth*.

#### Night Vision

One thing we forgot to point out about wormlings in *Hell on Earth* is that wormlings of all types are able to see in complete darkness. This ability makes them sensitive to bright light, so they rarely travel on the surface during the day. All actions they take while exposed to bright light suffer a -2 penalty.

### Worker Bees

The wormlings described in *Hell on Earth* are the type most commonly seen in the Wasted West. These critters are the grunts of the wormling hierarchy. They are responsible for gathering food for the warriors and queens and capturing new "recruits" for the nest.

Besides being able to use their acid as a weapon, "worker" wormlings can also use it as a powerful tool. They use the acid to dissolve the bones of their victims and then mix the resulting slop with a mouthful of dirt.

They can regurgitate this glop and use it as a building tool (gross, but effective). Once it dries it's nearly as hard as concrete. They use this to shore up the main passageways of the nest and also to cocoon prisoners while they undergo transmutation into wormlings (more on that in just a sec).

#### Profile

**Corporeal:** D:2d6, N:4d10, Q:3d8, S:4d10, V:4d8  
Dodge 4d10, fightin': brawling 5d10, sneak 4d10,  
spittin' 4d6

**Mental:** C:3d6, K:2d6, M:3d4, Sm:3d6, Sp:2d8  
Search 4d6, trackin' 5d6

**Size:** 7

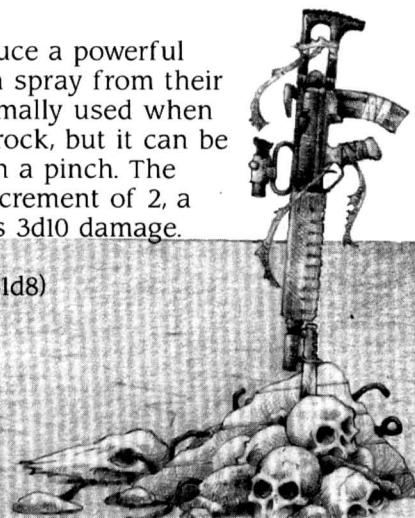
**Terror:** 7

#### Special Abilities:

**Acid:** Wormlings produce a powerful acid which they can spray from their mouths. This is normally used when burrowing through rock, but it can be used as a weapon in a pinch. The acid has a Range Increment of 2, a Speed of 1, and does 3d10 damage.

**Burrowing:** Pace 14

**Damage:** Claws (STR+1d8)







# Lair of the Worm

## Wormling Warriors

One rung above the workers are the warriors. Their sole responsibility is to guard the nest from invaders and to protect the queen from harm. They seldom leave the nest except in times of emergency.

Wormling warriors are larger than the workers. They favor their rattler ancestors and lack legs. Instead they hump along inchworm-style.

Warriors can produce the same cement-like glop the workers do, but instead of building with it, they use it for personal protection. Warriors cover the segments of their body with the stuff, and it dries into a hard, armored shell. They also fashion crude weapons out of it by secreting it on the tip of a human leg bone or staff and sharpening it on a nearby rock.

Warriors have a chink in their armor. To be able to gallump along, they have to leave a portion of their midsection unarmored. Targeting this area in combat requires a called shot with a -4 modifier.

### Profile

**Corporeal:** D:2d6, N:4d10, Q:3d8, S:4d12+2, V:4d8  
Dodge 5d10, fightin': brawling 6d10, sneak 4d10, spittin' 4d6

**Mental:** C:3d6, K:2d6, M:3d4, Sm:3d6, Sp:2d8  
Search 4d6, trackin' 5d6

**Size:** 8

**Terror:** 7

### Special Abilities:

**Acid:** Wormlings produce a powerful acid which they can spray from their mouths. This is normally used when burrowing through rock, but it can be used as a weapon in a pinch. The acid has a Range Increment of 2, a Speed of 1, and does 3d10 damage.

**Armor:** 3

**Burrowing:** Pace 12 (cannot be doubled by running)

**Damage:** Claws (STR+1d8), Bone Axe: (STR+2d10)



## Mama Worm

At the top of the heap is the queen.

Most nests don't have a queen. These lairs are started by wormlings who leave an overcrowded nest that does have a queen.

These new nests are usually not far from the old one and sometimes have interconnecting tunnels.

The opposite is true when a new queen is born. Only about one in 10,000 transmutations (wait just a little longer) results in a queen. Queens bear little resemblance to normal wormlings. They look more like a small Mojave rattler with oversized tentacles.

New queens remain in the nest for about a year and then are driven out by their mama. Escorted by a guard of wormling warriors, the young queen journeys far underground to find a suitable location for a new nest.

Once a good location is found, the new queen digs herself a chamber and sends her warriors out to capture some recruits. This is the stage the local nest was at when McMasters found it.

Luckily for him, one of the powers his manitou manifested allowed him to communicate with mama worm and make a deal with her. In exchange for luring humans onto the base, the young wormling queen agreed to give McMasters authority over her warriors and workers.

### Profile

**Corporeal:** D:3d4, N:4d6 S:5d12+4, Q:3d6 V:4d12+4  
Fightin': brawling 4d6

**Mental:** C:3d8, K:1d4, M:3d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:2d8  
Overawe 4d8

**Size:** 12

**Terror:** 9

### Special Abilities:

**Armor:** 1

**Damage:** Bite (STR+2d12)

**Burrowing:** Pace 12 (cannot be double by running).

**Transmutation:** This power allows the mama worm to create more wormlings.

## Daddy, Where do Wormlings Come From?

Most people have no idea where wormlings come from, and they don't care. They just wish they'd go away. If they knew the truth, they'd be horrified.

New wormlings aren't popped out of their mama, they don't hatch from eggs, and they're not brought by the stork. New wormlings are created from human beings.

Not all humans captured by wormlings end up as a snack. The unlucky ones are cocooned in the queen's chamber and turned into wormlings.

The queen pulls off this nifty trick by ramming one of her oversized tentacles down the victim's throat. The tentacle provides nourishment to the wormling-to-be and also floods his system with a viral form of rattler DNA. The virus attacks the poor sod's cells and

# Lair of the Worm

transforms them into hybrid cells containing both rattler and human DNA. These cells multiply like a carnivorous cancer, devouring healthy cells and replacing them with more hybrid cells. Once the virus has run its course, the victim is no longer human, he has become a wormling.

Most victims transmogrify into workers and about one in 10 become warriors. Only women can be transformed into a new queen, and this requires the old queen to feed the victim special hormones through the feeder tentacle. This is usually only done when the nest is in danger or has become overcrowded and needs to split.

## I am the Wormling, Goo-Goo-Ga-Choo

In the event a hero is cocooned (your call as to whether a character is recruited or eaten), she needs to make a Hard (9) *Vigor* roll each day. As long as she succeeds, her body fights off the infection, and she's fine (other than having a giant worm tentacle shoved down her throat). Once the roll is failed, the infection has taken hold, and the victim is about to switch species.

The transformation takes about two weeks. It begins with the internal organs first and works its way out. By the end of the first week, the victim's internal organs—including the brain—have been replaced with wormling equivalents, and the person has begun to develop wormlike features. Once a person has begun the transformation, interrupting the process by removing the feeding tentacle only condemns her to a slow and painful death as what's left of her human body rejects the wormling portions and her immune system literally tears her body apart.

## Into the Lair

If there are any humans other than Hobbs left alive at the airfield, the clawing hand prints around the edges of the tunnels leave little doubt as to where they are.

There are four tunnels leading through the dense clay at the bottom of the pit into the wormling lair. Each tunnel is slightly over two feet wide. A normal-sized adult must wriggle through on his elbows with his arms close in at his sides. All characters have their *Pace* halved while in these tunnels, and they may not run. Heroes who are *brawny* or a *big 'un* are in for a very tight squeeze; their *Pace* is quartered. This isn't important on the way in, but it could be very important on the way out.

There is no light in the wormling lair except that which the posse brings with it.

## The Main Tunnels

The small burrows eventually connect to the main wormling nest. They all emerge from the wall of the main tunnel at about waist level. Read the heroes the following description as they pull themselves free from the clinging clay tunnels:

*You feel as if you've been crawling on your belly for miles when your light suddenly reveals an opening ahead. You begin crawling faster and soon slither out into a larger tunnel where there is room enough to stand. Relief at being able to move your arms away from your sides quickly gives way to foreboding as your light flickers over your new surroundings.*

*You are standing in a rough-hewn earthen tunnel which curves off in either direction as far as you can see. A few side passages lead off to God knows where. The air is damp and thick and has a peculiar, musky odor.*



## Lair of the Worm



The walls of the tunnel are pierced here and there by the occasional root or broken pipe. Portions of the walls appear to be braced with some sort of milky white substance shot through with red, vein-like streaks.

Anyone touching a support feels a hard, rough substance that feels like a well-gnawed bone. An Onerous (7) *Cognition* realizes that the red streaks are the same color as the clay tunnels.

### Moving Out

The posse isn't in any real danger as it works its way into the lair, but don't let the players know that. Most of the wormlings have gorged themselves on Black Hats and are in a post-meal stupor. The real action doesn't occur until they reach the Queen's chamber.

Once the heroes are assembled and ready to move out, describe to them the directions they can travel, but don't let them see the map or let them draw one of their own unless they specifically say they are taking the time to map the place. Greer isn't pleased by any delay.

If the posse begins to act like a geological survey team, prod them with an occasional noise or bit of falling earth. If gentle prodding doesn't work, have a wormling emerge from a wall of the tunnel into the middle of the group and attack. Once the shooting starts, most groups are going to be inclined to pick up the pace.

### The Feeding Chambers

Once the posse moves within about 20 yards of one of these chambers, the heroes smell the pungent aroma of rotting flesh. Anyone who looks into a feeding chamber needs to make a Hard (9) *guts* roll. Here's what they see:

*You've stumbled upon an earthen-walled abattoir. Bones, many of them obviously human, litter the floor and protrude from the walls. Strips of flesh, some crawling with maggots, hang haphazardly from sharpened femurs. The stench of decay makes your eyes water, and you swallow hard to keep your last meal down.*

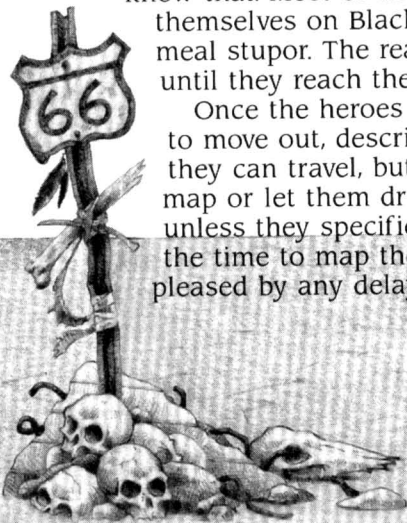
*A low, gurgling, rumbling noise draws your attention to a large, ropy, brown mass in the center of the chamber. As your lights play over it, it shifts uneasily, and long, sinewy bodies slide over each other. The skin of these creatures appears stretched to the breaking point. As they begin to stir, you can see the imprint of a human skull pressing outward against one's hide, its jaw open in a silent scream.*

There are 1d4+3 wormlings in each of the feeding chambers. They are all gorged on their recent victims and have fallen into a food-induced torpor. Have the heroes make *sneak* rolls to get past them, but the creatures don't wake up unless some rocket scientist starts poking them with a stick.

### McMasters' Chamber

This is McMasters' new home. Over the years, he has managed to drag a desk, chair, and bed down here from the base above. All the furniture is badly rusted from such a damp environment.

The walls of the chamber are bound to catch the posse's interest. Greer's name, or various arrangements of the letters in it, is scratched into nearly every square inch of the walls and ceiling. (No, one of these combinations is *not* the bomb's arming code. McMasters just has issues.)





# Lair of the Worm

## The Queen's Chamber

As the posse nears the chamber, inform the heroes that they hear the stifled sobs of a young girl ahead. The walls of the tunnel before them are lit by flickering torch light.

Once the intrepid adventurers work up enough nerve to enter the chamber, they see their goal:

*You look out into an immense cavern carved into the earth beneath the airfield. Soaring columns of red-flecked bone material arch up to support the ceiling 30 feet above. The entire chamber is lit by the fitful sputtering of makeshift torches.*

*The first thing to catch your attention is a torch-lit metal platform in the center of the chamber. On the platform are the objects of your quest: Vicky Greer and the bomb.*

*As your eyes adjust to the flickering gloom, they are drawn to the chamber's other occupant, an enormous wormlike creature coiled against the chamber's northern wall. At first glance, it appears to be a small Mojave rattler, but you've never seen a rattler quite like this one.*

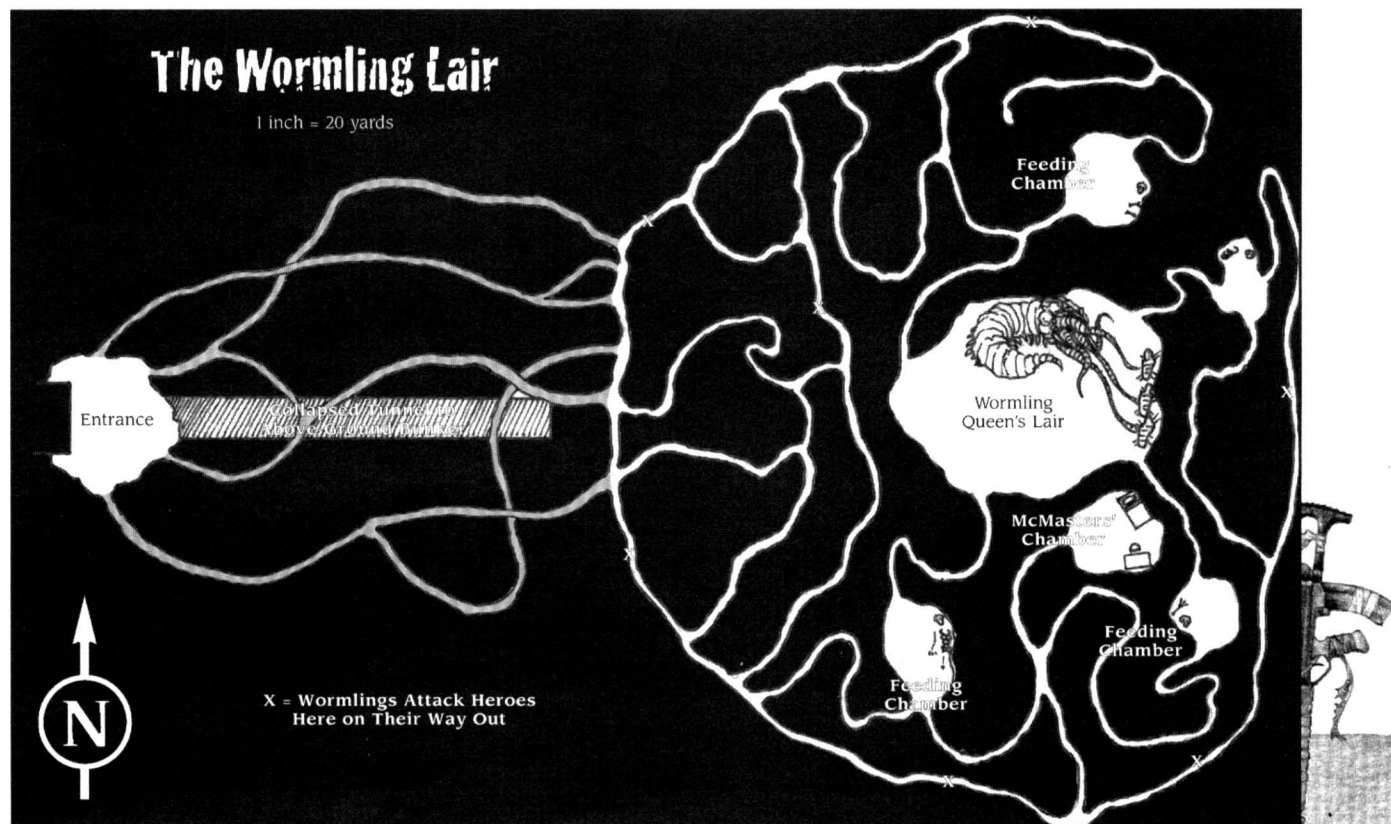
*Long, ropy tentacles extend from the thing's head to objects along the wall. At first you're not sure what these things are, but it soon becomes evident that they are people. They are cocooned in the same material that supports the roof of the chamber. Only their heads are visible, and each one has a tentacle from the creature forced down his throat.*

*The only sounds in the chamber are the girl's muffled sobs and a low electronic beeping from the bomb.*

## Showdown

Greer's daughter has been chained to the platform, so the group is going to eventually have to enter the chamber. The queen wormling doesn't take any action against the group unless they attack her or try to free or attack the cocooned prisoners.

As the first characters near the platform, McMasters erupts from the chamber's dirt floor, directly in their path. He says, "So Greer, the traitor returns. You and your friends will never get your hands on that bomb, I've armed it with the master code. Guards, seize him!"





## Lair of the Worm

At this signal, eight wormling warriors (two at each entrance to the chamber) emerge from the floor and attack. McMasters climbs up on the platform. If the warriors are defeated he uses the girl as a shield, and tries to delay the group long enough that they cannot escape the bomb's blast.

### General George McMasters

McMasters has had years to mull over his "betrayal" by Greer. Thoughts of destroying the former pilot have come to consume most of his waking thoughts. Only his greater sense of obligation to his command kept him from leaving the base to search for Greer. When he discovered that Vicky was the pilot's daughter, he knew the time had come to dispense justice.

McMasters fights to the death. Nothing can get him to reveal the master arming code. If he suspects the group might be able to get the code from him through a syker or other means, he shoots himself in the head.

### Profile

**Corporeal:** D:3d8, N:3d6, S:3d6, Q:2d10, V:2d8

Dodge 4d6, drivin': jet fighter 5d6, fightin':

brawlin' 2d6, shootin': pistol 3d8, sneak 4d6, speed load: pistol 3d8

**Mental:** C:3d10, K:3d8, M:2d8, Sm:4d12, Sp:2d8

Artillery 4d10, guts 4d8, leadership 5d8, overawe 5d8, scrutinize 4d10, search 3d10

**Edges:** Sense o' direction

**Hindrances:** Loco, vengeful

**Harrowed Powers:** Burrow 5, cat Eyes 4, pact 3

**Gear:** NA officer's sidearm, and one extra magazine.

### McMasters' Powers

The general's Harrowed powers are fully covered in *The Book o' the Dead*. This book should be available wherever you purchased this adventure. If you don't have it, here's a quick explanation of what his powers do:

**Burrow** allows the general to tunnel through the ground like his wormling buddies. He doesn't actually dig. The dirt just gets out of his way as a courtesy. The only limitation on this power is that he can't burrow more than six feet below the surface. He has a Pace of 6 while burrowing. Double this if he "runs." Running costs 1 Wind per round.

**Cat Eyes** allows McMasters to see in total darkness.

**Pact** allows McMasters to communicate and make deals with other abominations.

### The Bomb

McMasters' slimy minions reported to him when the posse entered the wormling lair. He immediately armed the bomb with his master code and took up his ambush position in the floor. Unless the group was really slow in getting to the Queen's Chamber, assume that the bomb's timer has 20 minutes showing when McMasters triggers the ambush.

Once this happens, it's important to keep track of how many rounds pass from that moment until the posse leaves the base. Remember that every twelve rounds is a minute.

### The Great Escape

Once the warriors and McMasters have been defeated, the wormling queen begins a shrill shrieking that deafens the heroes (all actions are at -4 while in the same chamber) and awakens every slumbering wormling in the nest. It's time to get the Hell out of Dodge.

Freeing Greer's daughter from her chains requires an Onerous (7) *lockpickin'* roll. Each attempt to pick the lock takes a round. The lock can be cut off in a round if the group has the bolt-cutters. It can be knocked off by doing 30 points of damage to it. The lock has 1 level of Armor.

### Disarming the Bomb

It can't be done. (Did you think we'd actually let the posse get their mitts on a working ghost-rock bomb?) Greer explains (quickly) that all of the weapons have individual arming codes, but that there is also a master code known only to the base commander.

This code was an emergency code the commander could use to prevent the weapons from falling into enemy hands. Once a bomb was armed with the master code, any attempt to move, disarm, or otherwise tamper with it causes it to detonate. Only reentry of the master code can safely disarm the bomb.

If the group found the bomb manual earlier, a quick scan and an Onerous (7) *search* roll confirms this information.

Should the heroes decide to give it a try anyway, they were warned. If you're feeling merciful, you might have Greer try to stop them or some wormlings show up and disrupt the proceedings. If this doesn't work, well, the bomb goes off, and the players get to ponder the error of their ways.

## Lair of the Worm

### You Have 10 Minutes to Reach Minimum Safe Distance

If the players don't think of it, Greer points out that if they can reach Hobbs and the helicopter, they might be able to get outside of the bomb's primary blast radius. (Since this bomb is a tactical ghost-rock bomb, not one of the city-busters used during the Last War, this actually is possible.)

The posse now has to get out of the wormling nest with enough time to get clear. To do this, there are a few obstacles they have to get past.

The worms in the feeding chambers are now wide awake and looking for a fight. If the heroes run into them, they have to battle through them.

The spots marked on the lair map with an "X" are spots where the group runs into angry groups of 1d4 wormlings that have burrowed into the nest from where they were sleeping in the walls. If the group is running behind, use your judgment as to whether they actually encounter anything at any particular location. If the heroes don't get clear of the blast, they're all toast.

If you really want to throw a scare into the heroes or they've got plenty of time, have some wormlings attack them while they're squirming through the entrance tunnels.

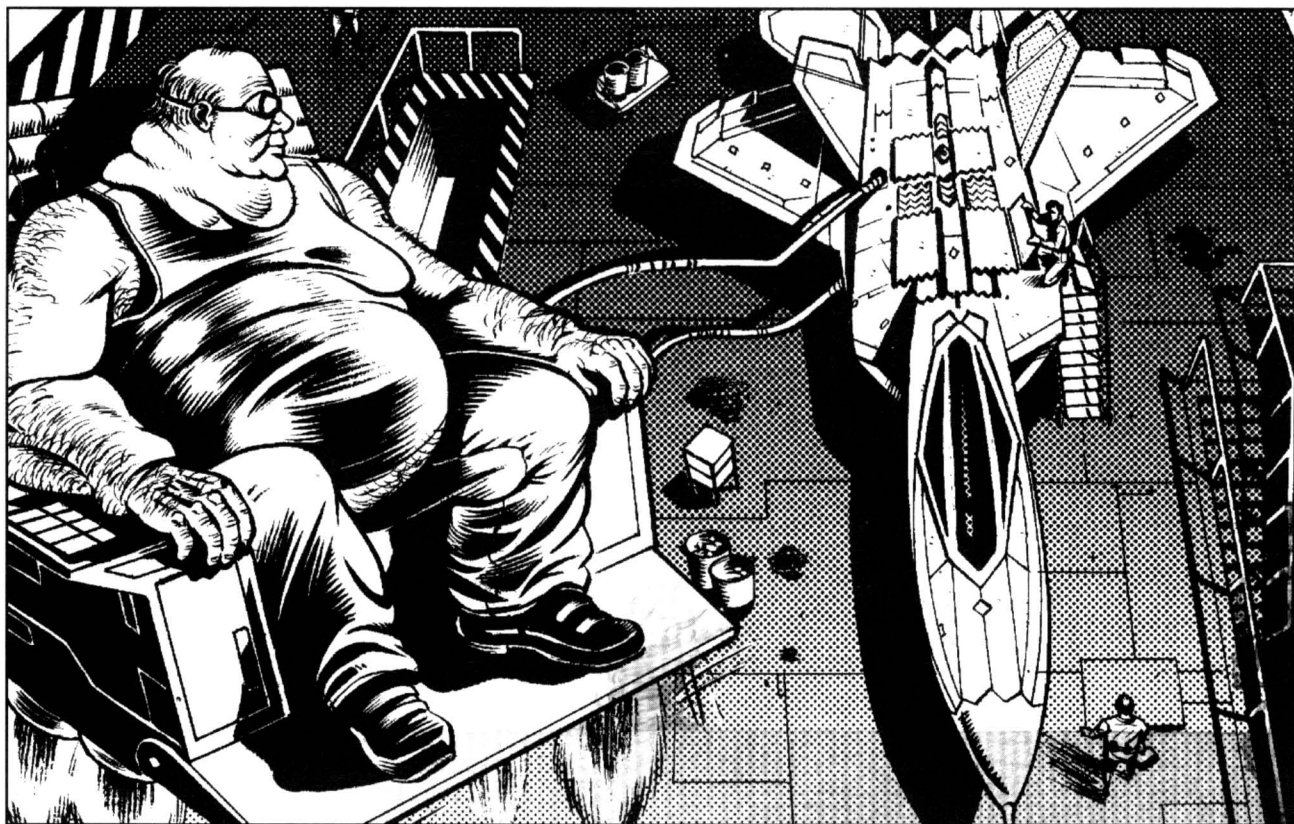
### Back on the Surface

Once on the surface, the posse needs to cover about 200 yards to the southern hangar. Again, if they're running late, you might consider letting them reach the hangar unopposed. If you're feeling malicious though, have some wormlings burrow up under the posse's feet as they're running. Use as many or as few wormlings as you need to make sure the heroes reach the hangar just in the nick of time.

A wormling attacking by surprise like this gets a +4 bonus to its *fightin'* roll. If the critter gets a raise on its attack, it has managed to grab its victim's legs and pull him down into its burrow.

Anyone unfortunate to have this happen is trapped until he can beat the wormling in an opposed *Strength* roll. The trapped character can try this on each of his actions. Until the victim breaks free, the wormling slobbers acid on his legs on each of its actions.

If the heroes stay on the runway, they can avoid being attacked from below, but they may still get attacked by wormlings who have come to the surface.





# Lair of the Worm

## The Hangar

Hobbs has just completed the repairs to the chopper when the posse reaches the surface. Once he hears them coming, he gets ready to takeoff.

Just before the heroes reach the helicopter, have one last wave of wormlings rush the hangar. The exact number depends on how beat-up the group is. If possible, try to have the posse fending off attacks right up until the chopper leaves the ground. If you feel the group is up to it, have one or two wormlings latch onto the vehicle's landing gear and try to slither inside as it takes off.

## I Have Become Death, the Destroyer of Worlds

Once the helicopter is airborne read the players the following:

*The chopper quickly gains altitude and speed, and the base begins to recede into the distance. You can see scores of angry wormlings milling around the hangar where you were just seconds ago.*

*You fly on for a few minutes and then, right on schedule, the bomb explodes. The airfield's runway bulges upward and then explodes outward, a swirling ebony cloud erupting from the ground. Streaks of white whirl through the cloud, and a blast of heat washes over the chopper. The airfield disappears from view in a cloud of dust and debris.*

*Seconds later, you hear a deep rumbling that makes your bones shake within you. Over this noise is a high-pitched shriek which chills you to your very soul.*

Time to make Incredible (11) guts checks.

## Did We Make It?

Once the Blackhawk is airborne, it covers roughly two miles per minute. Use this number to determine how far from the base the posse is when the bomb detonates. Compare this to the Bomb Effect Table to see what effect it has on the heroes.

Even if the group has made it safely outside of the bomb's blast, Hobbs' rushed modifications to the helicopter don't hold up, and he is forced to make a hard landing less than 20 minutes after takeoff.

## Bomb Effects

Distance	Effect
Under 2 miles	The chopper and everyone in it is vaporized.
2-4 miles	All living things are killed by the bomb's wave of supernatural energy.
4-6 miles	The chopper is forced down by the bomb's EMP. It lands safely, but everyone aboard must make an Incredible (11) Vigor roll or gain a random mutation.
6-8 miles	Same as above, but the TN for the Vigor roll drops to 9.
8-10 miles	Same as above, but the TN drops to 7.
Beyond 10 miles	No effect.

## Bounty

**Surviving:** 1 blue chip.

**Rescuing Vicky:** 1 red chip.

**Killing McMasters:** 1 red chip.