

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast®

Against the Wastelords

by Dominic Covey



AGAINST THE WASTELORDS

A Darwin's World Adventure v1.0

Writer: Dominic and Chris Covey

Editor: Chris Davis

Additional Editing: John Shaw, Don Kiesling

Cover Art: John Longenbaugh

Interior Art: John Longenbaugh, V. Shane

Layout: Chris Davis

DarwinRPG.com

Darwin's World is heavily supported by its official web site, www.DarwinRPG.com. At DarwinRPG.com you will find many resources such as maps, gazetteers, character sheets, as well as products only sold via the web.

The 'd20 System' and the 'd20 System' logo are Trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast and are used according to the terms of the d20 System License version 1.0a. A copy of this License can be found at www.wizards.com. Portions of this work are derived from the d20 System Reference Document.

Dungeons & Dragons(R) and Wizards of the Coast(R) are Registered Trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, and are used with Permission.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

AGAINST THE WASTELORDS	2	THE SCRAP MINE	33
GETTING INVOLVED	2	ON THE WAY BACK	34
ADVENTURE BACKGROUND	3	RETURN TO DRY FORT	34
BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE	4	THE HORSE HUNT	35
BAZAAR	6	MESSENGERS ARRIVE	36
JOURNEY THROUGH THE WASTELAND	10	CRUISE MISSILE SITE	36
BLACK STUMP	12	MONASTERY	40
EBB	13	THE WARHEAD SECURED	46
SEEKING AN AUDIENCE	14	WAR WITH THE WASTELORDS	46
GLADIATORIAL GAMES	14	THE BATTLE OF DRY BED	47
TWO TREES	18	THE BATTLE OF BIG ROCK	49
RETURN TO EBB	19	SHOOTOUT AT SHINY HOUSE	51
SPIUNK	19	FINAL BATTLE AT DRY FORT	53
MEETING WITH THE ELDERS	21	ENDING A	55
HAUNTED CANYON	23	ENDING B	56
DRY FORT	27	FINAL REWARDS	57
MEETING WITH CAPTAIN ULZ	29	SANDYVILLE	59
THE DRY FOREST	30	PLAYER AIDS	61



AGAINST THE WASTELORDS

Against The Wastelords is a complete adventure for the role-playing game, DARWIN'S WORLD. The adventure is set in an indistinct corner of the desolate Forbidden Lands, a valley known as the "Tradelands" due to the traffic of important goods that moves through the area. The scenario involves the characters being hired by a merchant consortium to rid the area of a powerful raider threat – the "Wastelords".

Against the Wastelords is intended as a handy introduction to the dangerous and gritty atmosphere of DARWIN'S WORLD. Consisting of an easy means to gather disparate individuals together (as players often have quite diverse concepts behind their characters), the scenario features a few scattered encounters which soon build up to a conflict of wide-ranging impact; *battles* in fact, in which the characters will be given the authority to lead the soldiers of the region against the raiders in all-out, large-scale war.

This scenario features a few early encounters to encourage players to learn to coordinate their activities because the later battles of the adventure can get very deadly, very fast. Although the characters will have access to healing at various points from their sponsors (the alliance of the "Three Towns"), the individual running this adventure should pull no punches. Remember that DARWIN'S WORLD is a cruel and unforgiving setting, and in it only the strong deserve to survive.

LANGUAGE

The dialogue of *Against The Wastelords* often features confusing and "bad" language. This is deliberate, to stress the decay of civilization and to allow the players to tell much about an individual from his speech (such as tech level, education, etc.). It is important that the GM thoroughly read this adventure before beginning; to better play the denizens of the wasteland and to understand the flow and plot of the adventure.

GETTING INVOLVED

There are a number of means that the GM can use to introduce the characters to this adventure. While you are free to come up with your own lead-ins, a few are listed herein by character class:

Guardian. The most obvious choice for mercenaries, a guardian character could be hired by the merchants of Bazaar to clear the area of its raider infestation, or he might actually be from one of the communities in this adventure (Bazaar, Dry Fort, or Spilunk). The mercantile interests of each settlement would be very apt to order some of their retainers

to clear the trade routes of the valley, and even communities outside of the area (the Trade Lands) might contribute a warrior or two to the common goal of making the valley safe for trade and travel.

Raider. Perhaps a survivor from a shattered, rival gang seeking vengeance against the Wastelords, a raider character would make an excellent contribution to any group taking on this epic mission. His understanding of the raider ways and their tactics would make him a definite asset. A confrontation with fellow killers might also make a dramatic scene for role-playing a change of heart – or a last minute switching of sides! The drawback to such a character is that the communities of the area would be at the very least distrustful of his presence in the group... and this could cause problems when the PCs need charity, healing, and trade.

Scav. A scav character might find the opportunity of brief employment by an established settlement enticing, enabling him to earn some raw corium and possible trade goods (from treasure found along the way), while allowing the character to retain his beloved freedom out in the wilds. Any good scav also knows that future conflict often creates the opportunity to earn artifacts and other treasures as spoils of war.

Thinker. A thinker would most likely be hired by the merchants of Bazaar or Spilunk to lend aid to the group as an advisor, coordinator, or leader. Knowing full well the perils of sending a small group against the Wastelords, the merchants would want to ensure success by hiring the canniest individuals around. Or, alternatively, a thinker character could simply be a native of the valley, seeking to gain prestige in order to further a political "career" among one of the various communities. There is no better way to earn your people's admiration than by being part of a heroic struggle...even if you spend most of the time "behind the lines".

Trader. A trader character could accompany any group as an employee of one of the Bazaar merchants, interested as they are in thwarting the Wastelords once and for all. This person would be responsible for keeping the group on track and making sure any goods found are brought to Bazaar to trade! In this case the trader character might well be the most trusted of the ensemble, and his presence would mean better relations – and rewards – from the coalition. As an alternative, a PC trader might represent one of the major factions of the Twisted Earth (for example, the Cartel or the Clean), who have heard of the plight of the Three Towns and have sent an emissary to help deal with the threat.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

For years the people of the “Trade Lands”, one of many valleys crisscrossing the Forbidden Lands, have been prey to raiders and wasteland beasts. Though situated on the main trade routes connecting these lands with other, wealthier regions, the towns of the Trade Lands are far enough away to lack the protection and civilization of the major trading houses.

Years ago a major raider band began to see in the Trade Lands a convenient means of lining their coffers with purloined goods – and to satisfy their bloodthirsty lust for raiding, raping, and extortion. These raiders, who call themselves the “Wastelords”, proved themselves early on to be too much for the people of the valley towns to handle; with literally hundreds of raider scum in their army, and fleets of oily vehicles, they have crushed all resistance and hope under their heel.

Since that time the Wastelords have made annual “visits” to the Trade Lands, sweeping up from southern lands beyond the mountains of the valley to take what they want, demand tribute, and wrench the hard-earned wealth from the hands of the bitter natives.

This reign of terror and humiliation has not gone without raising the ire of the local people, however. Burned by the constant depravations and atrocities against their people, the natives of the Trade Lands dared to dream of a way to fight back. But alone, each village was helpless to stop the yearly attacks.

But together they had a chance.

Meeting in secret, emissaries of the valley’s three largest towns – the strange albino mutants of Spilunk, the primitive but honorable warriors of Dry Fort, and the cunning traders of Bazaar (largest of the three) – were able to forge a fragile alliance to hopefully defeat the Wastelords, and cast off their yoke of oppression once and for all. The “Alliance of Three Towns” (as it is known) is ready for war.

Recently

While the Three Towns prepare for their epic rebellion against their cruel overlords, other events have occurred out in the wasteland in recent days. A short time ago, out in the desert, a great and ancient weapon of unbelievable power was uncovered by one of

many powerful sandstorms that ravage the region. So far from the well-traveled trade routes it would probably have been buried again with the next storm, if not for a nameless, wandering scav who stumbled upon it in the foothills of the valley’s central mountain spur.

Although he had no idea what the weapon truly was (an air-launched nuclear cruise missile that crashed minutes after being fired, more than two hundred years ago), he knew that it had to be valuable to someone, somewhere. Unable to cart the whole weapon away, the scav combed through the relatively intact debris until he could find a piece small enough to take. The piece he took, the weapon’s computerized **guidance system**, was just sizeable enough for him to carry off – and he did, taking it to the small seasonal village of “Ebb” (not one of the Alliance towns) where he hoped to sell it.

Unfortunately for the scav, the traders in Ebb did not see the same value in the object as he did, and they flatly refused to buy it. Incensed the scav left, hoping to travel to another desert town (Sandyville) where he might make at least a few corium pieces on its sale.

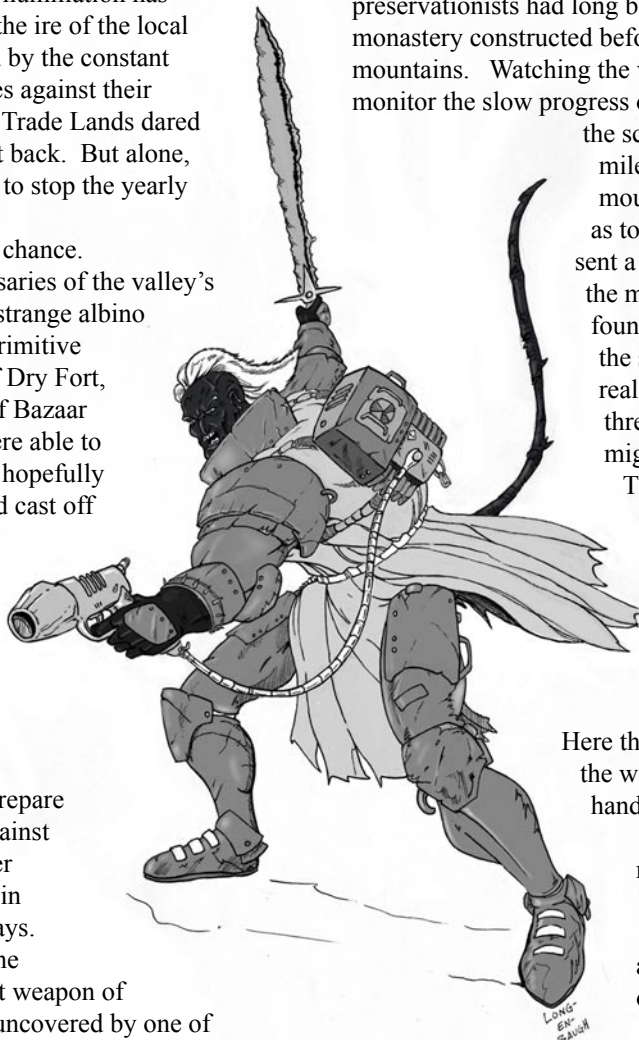
The Scav’s discovery of the missile at the foot of the mountains did not go unnoticed, however. Unknown to anyone, a group of strange religious preservationists had long been living in an old monastery constructed before the Fall, high in the mountains. Watching the valley floor regularly to monitor the slow progress of civilization, they spotted

the scav as he came within miles of their long-forgotten mountaintop citadel. Curious as to what he was up to, they sent a scouting party by night to the missile crash site. They too found the missile, but unlike the scav they immediately realized what it was - and the threat its uncovered existence might pose to the world.

These monks, pacifist by nature, extracted the **warhead** from the missile wreckage under the cover of darkness, and hurried it back to their monastery-fortress.

Here they planned on keeping the warhead out of everyone’s hands, forever.

Fortune, however, was not to be so kind. The Wastelords, returning from over the mountains, also discovered the ruins of the missile by chance. Although not immediately





THE FORBIDDEN LANDS

A vast expanse of dry desert skirting the eastern edges of the Big Rocks, the “Forbidden Lands” are known throughout the Twisted Earth as a chaotic region. This is a land of canyons, gorges, dry rivers, and at times even seas of seemingly endless dunes. The region has long been a haven to the dozens of raider gangs that make the Forbidden Lands so treacherous, keeping away the encroach of even the most well-organized and fortified merchant groups (the only exception being the Cartel, and even they have been cautious in their forays into these wide open lands beneath the shadow of the distant Rockies) – and thus the foothold of any possible civilization.

Despite the threat of horizon-spanning raider armies, smaller gangs of outcasts from the settler tribes and clans, and many natural dangers/predatory mutants (in particular, the sandmen that dwell in unusual abundance beneath the surface of the region), life goes on in the Forbidden Lands. People, usually traveling in small, violently xenophobic groups, cling to life through a nomadic existence that keeps them on the move, always a step ahead of the more powerful raider gangs. Life is harsh, pitiless, and cruel in the Forbidden Lands. Everyone and everything serves a practical purpose; those that do not are cast out as junk (whether person or object), for the predators to do with as they will, and buy time for the rest to get away.

In this bleak and brutal land, communities are seldom permanent; transient tent cities, temporary encampments, and open “oasis” where no one stays long are more likely features of the region. Though few groups welcome the sight of others here in these wastes, every now and again the various tribes, clans, or gangs do get together at temporary “towns” (again, just tent cities or camps) to do trade for the vital things needed to keep this fragile way of life going: food, water, ammunition, weapons, gasoline, vehicle parts, and women change hands frequently at these much-anticipated gatherings.

Still, though the nomads of the Forbidden Lands do sometimes find a time to celebrate and join with their fellow man in brutal entertainments (e.g. gladiatorial games) at such gatherings, their guard is never down. The raider gangs are ever-present, ever watchful. Inevitably the gangs hear of these camps, or stumble upon them in the desert, and their brief but important contribution to nomad society and interaction comes to an end.

But such is life in the Forbidden Lands. Few things are permanent. And nothing lasts forever.

aware of the potential of this ancient device, a *mech* thrall (named “Sprocket”) in the Wastelord’s employ realized what the wreckage was and, furthermore, recognized that he could *repair* it.

The Wastelords understood they had a great weapon – but were discouraged to find out from their *mech* that vital components were missing. The Wastelords realized, by the still-fresh tracks in the sand, that others had been there and taken the pieces only recently. They have decided it is time to pay a visit to the villages of the region and take for their own the pieces to this great, ancient weapon of destruction!

Starting Out

Against The Wastelords begins with the PCs being gathered to a secret meeting of the Alliance of Three Towns in Bazaar, where they will for the first time learn of the Wastelords, the Alliance, and the desperate plan to destroy the raiders once and for all. At first the PCs are merely charged with uniting the remaining villages of the valley for the coming conflict – but this effort quickly leads to the trail of the enigmatic scav who first found the Great Weapon, and along a difficult quest to wrest control of the weapon from the hands of the Wastelords, with a climactic ending of epic proportions!

The New World Order

Against The Wastelords is only the first in a planned two-part series in the Forbidden Lands. Though the PCs won’t learn of it until the ending, the true motivations behind the Wastelords wanting the nuclear missile are not to terrorize the people of the Trade Lands, but to resurrect the weapon so that they can turn it against their *own* enemy, a much more malevolent threat to the entire Twisted Earth.

The details of this new threat, the “New World Order”, are to be covered in part two of this adventure series...

If you wish to play this scenario by itself, however, *Against The Wastelords* presents an alternate ending for just this purpose.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The story begins in the village of “Bazaar”, one of several insignificant towns in the Trade Lands where life is cheap and the need for brave men is constant. Times are changing in the Trade Lands; great raider armies, known throughout the region as the “Wastelords”, have terrorized the innocent people of the valley for too many years. Their annual raids, which come like clockwork, will no longer be suffered without resistance.

The PCs are about to become embroiled in an epic

struggle of terrorized peoples against a bitterly hated enemy.

The adventure begins with the player characters being issued into a secret meeting of a council of elders from the three major settlements of the Trade Lands – Bazaar, Dry Fort, and Spilunk, at the merchant’s lodge (**area L**) of Bazaar. Whatever their individual reasons, the PCs have been hand selected to form a party that will hopefully bring to an end the reign of the Trade Lands’ most formidable threat – the Wastelords.

Born into this hostile world, you each have struggled relentlessly to survive despite the best efforts of many men and mutants. Each of you has a long story to tell of a childhood amongst the ruins of a time your forebears don’t remember, the shattered remains of the Ancients standing alone and devastated in a world gone dry. The elders say water once flowed across the ground, and even fell from the sky. These fairy tales of long ago are well-known lies, told only to children and the followers of ignorant cults. Remembering back to siblings who were killed during the hunt, or caught by the disease gods as they sifted the sands to separate the weak from the strong; you have learned, and lived. Through their weaknesses you have grown wiser and remained strong.

You now find yourselves in a dusty chamber, lit only through portals blocked with slowly rotating blades, allowing a little circulation into this dirty room. Around the walls sit chairs bearing delegates from the most influential communities of the area: Bazaar (the town hosting the council), Dry Fort, and Spilunk. You have been introduced to a few of the representatives, standing in a group in the center of the room, being examined from all sides like animals ready for sale.

“They looking like not much, eh?” states the tall yet withered, viscusly pale form of Elder Vilic of Spilunk. “Are you sure will do?” he says with a look of worry easily discernable on his hideous face, seemingly composed of a mass of chunky tumors and subtly misplaced features.

“More like grubs than bronze, eh?” says the handsome and cleanly white-clad Trademaster Gorgel of the merchants.

“Trash. All of them trash. You have wasted my time, Gorgel,” mutters Captain Ulz, an apparent veteran soldier from the settlement of Dry Fort, his proud bearing marred by deformations and hunched back; clearly a mutant as well from his withered nose, jagged teeth, and misaligned eyes.

“They answered the call. No others. Our future may depend on these scags.” These words come from Trademaster Gorgel of Bazaar, standing now to address all present. Standing in one of the beams of light, you see his bald dome of a head appearing as if it has never grown hair.

“You may have come seeking profit or to answer

the duty of your various communities. You may or may not even be from the Trade Lands – I do not know. But I will tell you what is happening. Raiders have been much trouble over these many years. Time and time again junk has been taken, homes destroyed, furniture – our women - stolen. This cannot continue. We, the people of Bazaar, Dry Fort, and Spilunk comprise a secret alliance of towns unwilling to suffer this humiliation any longer.

“You...”

His voice lingers for a moment, as if he too were on the verge of reconsidering.

“...are to help us win our freedom. Simple, no?”

“Ahem...” cuts in Elder Vilic. “About the...”

“Yes, I will get to that,” interrupts Trademaster Gorgel, holding up his hand, revealing his short, stubby fingers. “As we do not know the true strength of our enemy, we cannot risk the raiders thinking you work for us. The Wastelords, as they are known, are legendary for their brutal reprisals. You will be ‘simple wanderers’ or ‘phantoms’ if you fail or are captured. Understood?”

“I can see worry on your faces. We must survive and trade is important to survival. If you help, you will get much. If you do as needed, we are willing to give you each five hundred chunks of corium. In addition, the leaders of the communities will give you more...maybe.”

“What do you say?”

Of course the characters should agree to undertake the mission! This is an opportunity to make a name for themselves, earn goods for trade or survival, and escape the wrath of an angry mercantile establishment!

In the unlikely event that they wish to negotiate further, it is possible to convince Master Gorgel to promise an extra 100 corium upon completion of the mission, with a successful Diplomacy check (DC 18).

QUESTIONS

The characters will be encouraged to set out immediately; and urged only to return to Bazaar if in desperate need of aid or resupply. Before the characters leave, they may ask the representatives a number of questions. The questions and answers the representatives will know are listed below for the GM’s convenience:

Who are the Wastelords?

A great raider army, larger than any these people have seen in more than a generation. The Wastelords have been responsible for the destruction of numerous villages, temporary trade towns, and trading posts throughout the desert. At first they did this out of sheer brutality, but over time it seems the Wastelords learned the value in merely terrorizing the





Bazaar: (Resurrectors; ruled by merchant consortium); AL N; 500 cp limit; Assets 3,500 cp; Population 140; Isolated (first-generation mutant 4, second-generation mutant 96).

Authority Figure: Trademaster Volgen, male second-generation mutant Tr4.

Important Characters: Armsmaster Tolorin, male second-generation mutant Gu6; Dust-Walker, male first-generation mutant Sc4; Armsmaster Saur, male second-generation mutant Gu3; Armsmaster Lurin, male second-generation mutant Gu3; Trademaster Gorgel, male second-generation mutant Tr2.

Others: Town guards, Gu2 (4), Gu1 (8); Militia, Gu1 (30); Merchant Consortium, Tr2, Tr1 (4); Sc2, Sc1 (2); Th2, Th1 (2).

● **Typical Warrior of Bazaar, Guardian1:** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+2; hp 6; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather armor); Atk Police baton +2 melee 1d4+1, or *sport rifle* +4 ranged 1d12; SQ Defender; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Speak Trade, Speak Unislang, Spot +2. Feel for Weapon (heirloom sport rifle), Quick Draw.

Possessions: *Sport rifle* (30 rounds), police baton, studded leather armor, bullet bandoleer, bedroll, blanket, signal whistle, sling bag, *sungoggles*, two doses of *juju salve*, one dose of *oil of remedy*.

Mutations and Defects: Accumulated Resistance (disease), Independent Cerebral Control, Sensitive Sight, Spontaneous Electric Charge Generation, Superior Kidney Development. Adrenaline Deficiency, Alopecia, Brachydactyly, Photosensitivity.

people – taking tribute from those larger communities that would prove to be too difficult to take head-on without major casualties. These tactics have worked, skinning loners, scavs, and traders and leaving their bodies within sight of their respective communities. The people had been culled into obedience, surrendering foodstuffs, water, and women perhaps once each year.

How many raiders in the army?

“We guess two hundred or more, over the mountains. But the Wastelords only come to the Trade Lands in small groups. Vehicle parties assembled to cross great distances or attack caravans often number only ten men or so.”

Where do you think the raiders are based?

“They come from the south; they must have a village of their own over the mountains. But there are other areas here that would make good forward bases for their raids.”

How hostile is the wilderness?

“Better than elsewhere. Our warriors have driven off or killed most hostile life. Raiders are the greatest problem. In the mountains there are mutant creatures, however, that are far too deadly for a party of your size to confront.”

Where do you want us to begin?

“The envoys of two other communities, Ebb and Sandyville, did not come to the council meeting. You must find out why. Go to these towns and discover why their envoys have not made the journey.”

Taking them aside before leaving, Elder Vilic will give each character two plastic containers, each containing a single dose of *juju salve* (a maximum

of ten doses for the entire group). Captain Ulz, normally hesitant to aid those who haven’t earned his trust, will grudgingly hand over a map of the area, with areas of interest marked on it (see map).

This is the only material aid the elders can offer.

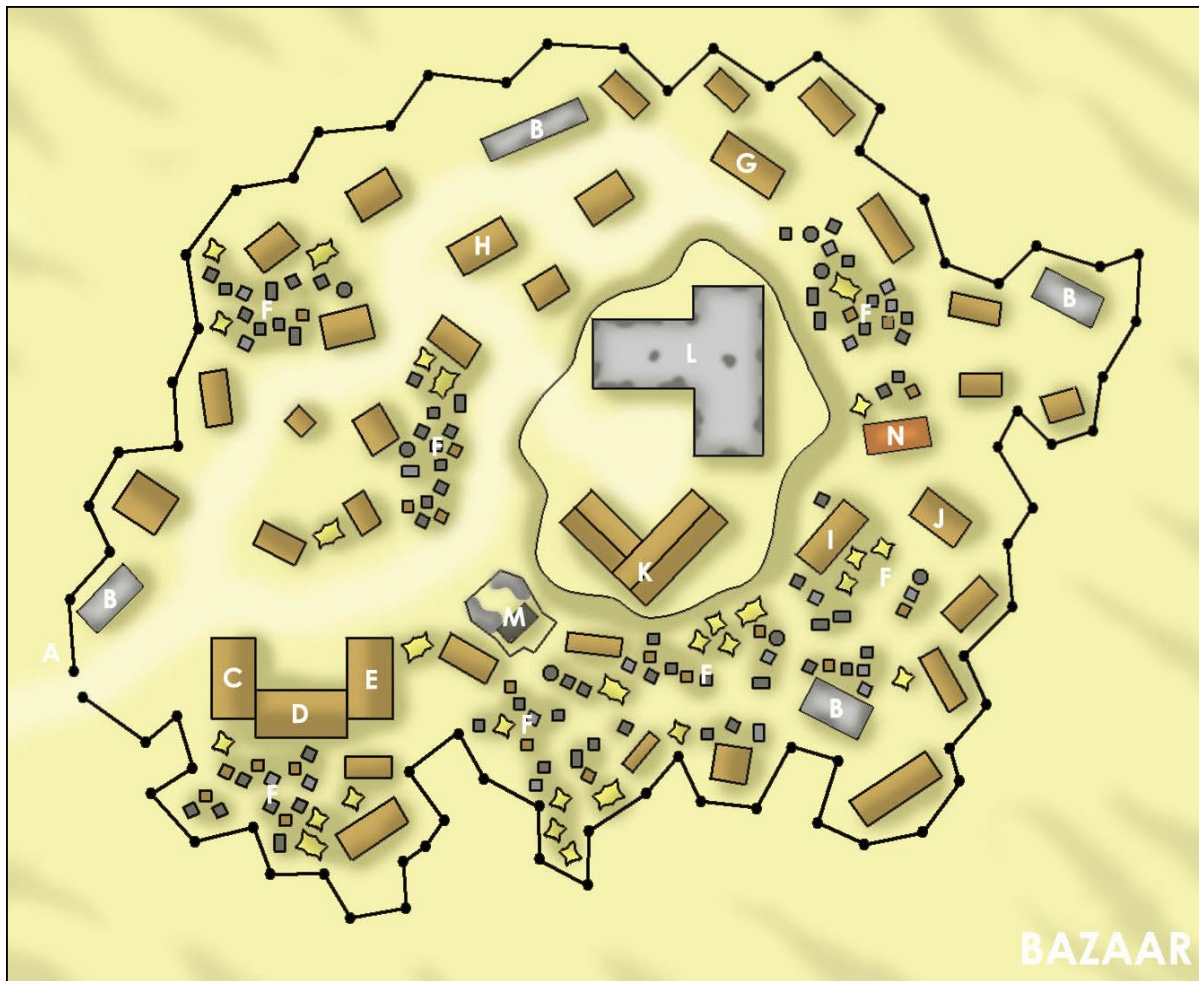
THE BAZAAR

The PCs may wish to explore Bazaar while they have the time, before committing to the long journey to the nearest town mentioned by the elders, Ebb. Bazaar will also likely become a base of operations and supply for the PCs, and so a brief overview is included herein.

The Town

“Bazaar” is the largest settlement in the Trade Lands region, and is the nexus of all trade passing through the valley. Consisting of a small cluster of unrecognizable buildings left over from before the Fall, the town grows exponentially in size every season when the population booms with the influx of traders and others moving through the area. During these times, wagons, carts, tents, and yurts spring up in the open spaces filling the town out to its normal proportions (see map).

Those wishing to do business with the caravans which passes through the valley regularly often leave their home communities and travel to Bazaar to conduct trade, usually when the community is at its largest. As a consortium of merchants, the leaders of Bazaar have an agreement with caravan masters that they stop only in Bazaar, giving the settlement a definite edge over any other community in this area. Obviously the other settlements in the region maintain cordial relations with Bazaar (because they rely on it to some extent), and in return the merchants



do not act aggressively to risk the profitable situation there.

As one would expect from a town ruled by traders, the law here is relatively non-restrictive but aimed at generating trade while protecting those within the walls. Hence the laws are quite strict regarding crimes of violence and theft, while all sorts of goods remain legal due to an “anything goes” policy towards possession.

Well-equipped and loyal soldiers - one of the major benefits of being an important trade center, garrison Bazaar. The entirety of the settlement is surrounded by a wooden palisade of thick board, lashed together with all manner of rope, cables, barbed wire, etc., and reinforced by irregularly placed wooded poles (telephone poles scavenged from the desert). More cables hang from these metal poles, dangling down into the town like the branches of willow trees. Inside the walls, the poles are fitted with simple rungs, allowing lookouts to climb any of the poles to see far into the desert in all directions.

KEY TO BAZAAR

A. Gates

The gates of Bazaar are made from thick reinforced wood, but despite their formidable appearance they do not present much of a barrier to a determined

attacker. Unknown to most, the walls of bazaar are actually weaker than the gates, and almost any vehicle moving at speed could potentially punch a hole through any section.

B. Guardhouses

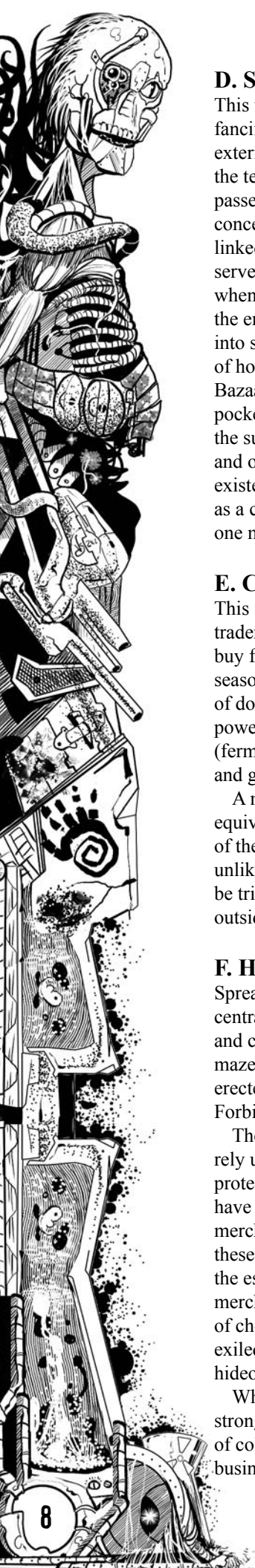
These low concrete structures are the homes of the guards. Permanent structures, these buildings all contain cisterns, and this regular access to drinking water is one of the reasons for Bazaar’s guards having such a strong sense of loyalty to the merchants. Those miserable peasants who live in the shadow of the merchant house have only limited access to this water, and must beg or pay (or submit to some humiliation) for a bucket or even a cup at a time.

This system encourages natives to sign up for the guard - or at least have cordial relations with town officials.

C. Stables

This establishment (an extension of **area D**) caters to the steeds of natives and visitors. Care here is almost non-existent, consisting only of sparse feeding. It is assumed that a steed is the owner’s responsibility, though with all the begging natives about, it is not hard to find someone reasonably trustworthy to watch after a horse or mount for a paltry sum.





D. Sleeping Hall

This temporary structure appears colorful and fanciful despite the faded paint and weather-beaten exterior of its wooden walls. It stands out against the tents and wooden shacks of the vicinity, drawing passerby from all around. Actually a series of circus concession stands scavenged from the wastes, and linked together in one long building, this place now serves as a “hotel” of sorts. Erected every season when the population of Bazaar begins to overflow, the entire building can be broken down and put back into storage beneath the merchant’s lodge in a matter of hours. Owned and operated by the merchants of Bazaar, the “sleeping hall” adds more money to their pockets by providing visitors reasonable shelter from the sun and the cold of the desert night. Furnishings and other comforts, however, are virtually non-existent; a large dirt-floor chamber serves all guests as a common room (though by curtaining off an area, one may achieve a modest degree of privacy).

E. Common House

This sheltered extension of **area D** is where visiting traders, passing wanderers, and locals alike can buy food and drink during the height of the trade season. The “specialties” of the house are haunches of dog meat cooked over a spit (tiny portions), and a powerful blend of liquids salvaged from the wastes (fermented goat’s milk, horse blood, engine coolant, and gasoline) called *othyhol*.

A meal here costs a ridiculous 25 cp - or its equivalent in bartered goods. The owner, a member of the merchants of Bazaar, is quite shrewd and unlikely to fold under pressure or threats, or even be tricked into accepting worthless junk by wily outsiders.

F.hovels

Spreading out haphazardly from the base of the central mound, in a motley collection of wood, reed, and canvas structures in a wide state of disrepair, is a maze of tents, pavilions, and other temporary shelters erected by visiting clans and tribes from all over the Forbidden Lands.

These are the homes of the huddled masses that rely upon the greedy merchants for shelter and protection during the trade season, or others who have come to rely on parasitic existence in the merchants’ shadow. Without wealth or power, these citizens are nothing more than slaves to the establishment, living only at the whim of the merchant consortium. These folk live lives devoid of cheer or potential; yet are grateful they are not exiled to the mercy of the harsh world outside and the hideous mutants of the wasteland.

While one shelter in the “barrio” can be quite strong, the building next to it may be in severe danger of collapse. As long as this does not interfere with business, the local authority does nothing.

G. Gunsmith

This structure is the home of a wandering gunsmith, Torus, who makes his living handcrafting muskets, zip guns, and pipe guns for the various wasteland communities. The merchants of Bazaar are his best customer (he maintains the weapons of the town guard and militia), and in recent years Torus has begun considering settling down for good.

Torus is a skilled tradesman and has a number of items for general sale. This is a basic list of the goods he is willing to trade:

Item	Qty	Price
Pipe rifle	2	250 cp
Pistol, black powder	2	250 cp
Rifle, black powder	2	500 cp
Zip gun	1	75 cp
Bullets, pistol (10)	6	30 cp
Bullets, rifle (10)	20	30 cp
Cartridges, pistol(10)	2	40 cp
Cartridges, rifle (30)	3	90 cp

The gunsmith is not interested in buying arms, only making them and selling them to visitors, traders, and mercenaries.

H. Carpenter

This large wooden building appears to have been here for some time.

The clan that inhabits this shelter is skilled enough, and are credited with having built almost the entirety of Bazaar’s defenses (including the walls) and many of the semi-permanent structures. While practicing what is considered a relatively humble profession in other lands, this clan enjoys real prestige and privilege here.

I. Store

This building, resembling a pre-war “fruit market”, is made of shoddy wood and painted in the gaudiest colors. Here foodstuffs and drink are stockpiled and sold to the seasonal populace at ridiculous prices. Things are rigidly inventoried and regulated by the merchant lodge, to keep theft to a minimum.

Those who come to Bazaar without barter goods or corium can exchange *service* for goods. This usually amounts to a stint of a season or longer as a guard in the Bazaar militia. This is a favorite option of many deep wilderness tribals, who in exchange for food for their entire village often sell themselves (and their sons) into military service for the merchants here.

In addition to its regular business, the food dealer also enjoys a growing trade in general goods. Those items for sale include: *bedrolls, map cases, chains*, crowbars*, flasks*, hammers*, clay jugs, lamps*, manacles, mirrors*, pitons, pole, pouches, trail rations, hemp rope, sacks, sledges, tents, torches, vials*, waterskins, and most clothing*. Items marked

with an asterisk are all scavenged from the wasteland, and are not actually manufactured here. As such, the price for these items is *doubled*.

J. Armorer

The men who comprise the armorer clan jealously guards their rare skills – the creation and maintenance of the armor for the militia of Bazaar. Their establishment reeks of dead animals and potent chemicals, both of which are used in the making of the cured leather armors worn by the town guard.

The Armorers don't normally do business with outsiders, but may be willing to make an exception if useful goods and/or curious artifacts are offered. The Armorers can make *leather*, *studded leather*, *hide*, and *beast chitin* armors only.

K. Caravan Hall

This large, permanent structure atop the merchant's mound is where all visiting caravans of recognized merchant clans (e.g. the "Cartel") are quartered when stopping at Bazaar. Well-built, maintained, and protected, only members of the merchant's consortium, or honored guests, are allowed to keep goods, steeds, and livestock here.

L. Merchant Lodge

The entire town of Bazaar is built around a small rise, where the *merchant's lodge* sits. This lodge is a well-fortified structure of old weathered concrete – and as such is a permanent part of town, not a temporary fixture like many other buildings. This is where the merchants of the consortium live and rule from.

The lodge is the government building and home to Trademasters Volgen and Gorgel. A tall, two-story concrete structure of great strength, the merchant's lodge is the main defensive installation in town, although only members of the merchant's consortium or very special guests are allowed to take refuge here.

During the off-season (when the town has shrunk in size), the merchants remain quartered here until the coming of outsiders once more, several months later.

GM's Note: The adventure begins with the characters meeting at the lodge for the council's offer of employment. From here they will be escorted down the hill into town, and left to their own devices.

M. Home and Junkyard

This ramshackle wood and aluminum construction is the home of "Dust-Walker", one of Bazaar's most colorful – and skilled - scavs. Behind the decrepit shack a fenced-off yard contains piles of metal and junk, the result of decades of scavenging.

There is little of particular interest here for characters (except for those items shown below), as Dust-Walker's activities are geared more towards supplying Bazaar with raw materials and scrap to build new structures, repairing the town walls, etc.. Despite this he has, over the years, found a few odd

items, which he may be willing to sell to individuals who visit his 'yard.

Item	Qty	Price
Canned food	5	5 cp
Cigarette lighter	1	250 cp
Firestarter cube	1	25 cp
Fragmentation grenade	2	150 cp
Light rod	5	25 cp
Rad tab	2	300 cp

Dust-Walker is a curious old man, with a penchant for all manner of curios scavenged from the desert. He is likely to buy any artifact of a technological nature (no matter what it really is) for a good price, since he considers himself something of a collector. He has 1,000 corium pieces saved up and hidden beneath a loose floorboard in his shack, which he will trade with if offered such an item.

N. Home

This long, well-constructed home of brick is the home of Armsmaster Tolorin, the captain of the watch of Bazaar, and his wife Tera. A skilled soldier, he has been given his own separate home as a reward for his many years of service to the merchants of Bazaar.

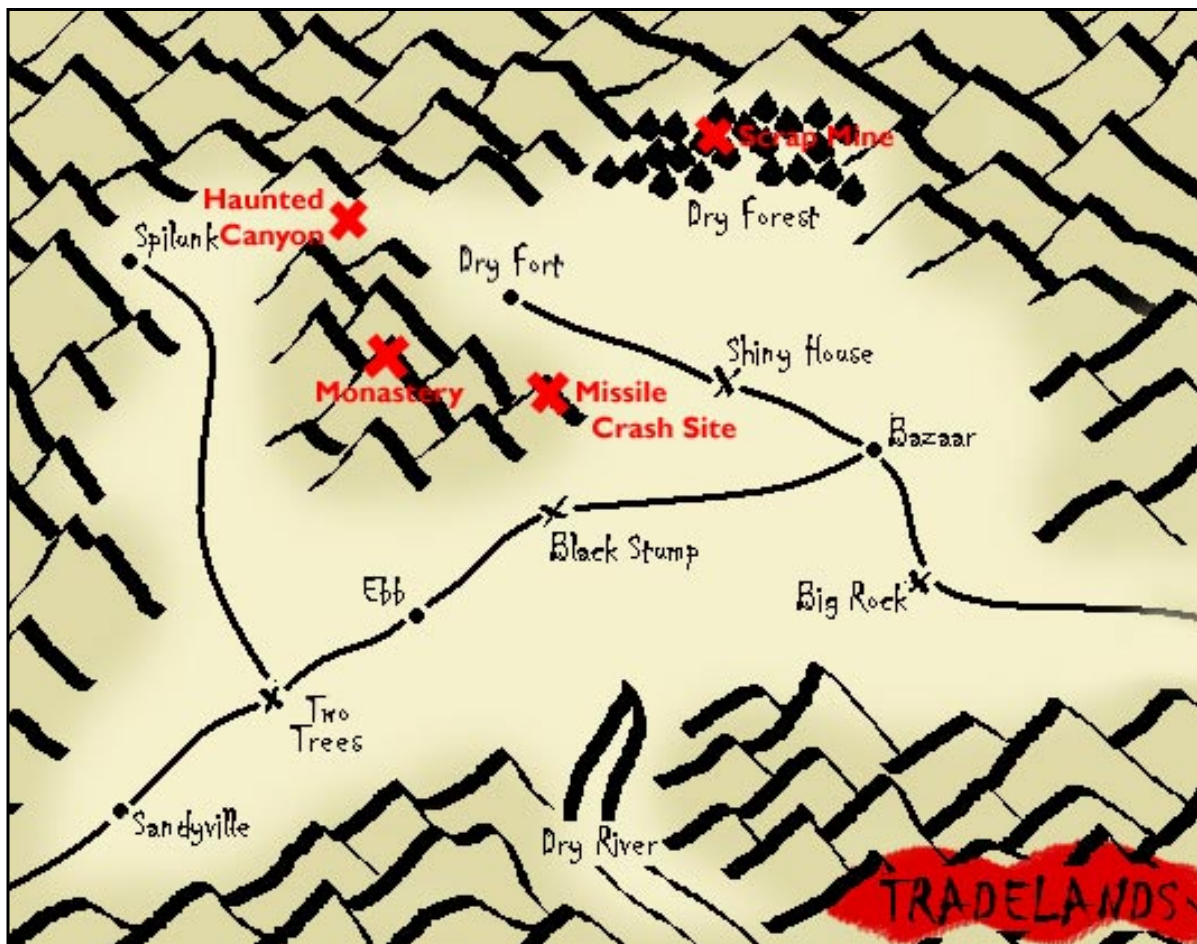
The place is quite strong, and the shutters all lock from the inside. If needed, this building would make a modest stronghold. Only the resident has the keys to the sturdy locks, and greatly values his privacy.

Renowned in the locale as a "witch", Tolorin's wife sells some of her concoctions to those willing to meet her outrageous prices. Her stock includes the following items of her of manufacture, as well as juju items sold by passing merchants at her establishment:

Item	Qty	Price
Drink of fools	3	25 cp
Infusion of valor	3	100 cp
Juju salve	15	50 cp
Oil of remedy	4	100 cp
Purgative	1	125 cp
Sleeping potion	1	100 cp
Halazone tablets	7	50 cp
Rad-purge shot	1	375 cp
Ready syringes	3	5 cp
Stimshot A	2	150 cp
Stimshot B	1	300 cp

Other buildings in Bazaar are, as stated before, of a number of different materials and conditions. Some are empty; others are full of people or are establishments for some service or another. The details of these structures are left to the GM to determine.





JOURNEY THROUGH THE WASTELAND

The environs of the Trade Lands are primarily arid desert along the central valley, which is also the trade route that gives life to the region. To the north and south rise tall, sand blasted peaks, riddled with passes and hidden valleys. To the far north, an ancient forest still stands, the trees either withered by the drying climate or mutated into more hardy forms that still cling to life in this inhospitable land.

The dry desert plains that allow trade are susceptible to the occasional sandstorm that can cause a group to become lost, endangering them to lost time or forcing to take shelter in a cave that is already occupied by some dangerous creature. For ease of navigation, the merchant consortium of the valley towns has arranged large standing stones and other monuments to serve as markers for caravans passing through the area. These “Great Markers” also serve to help reduce the effects of sandstorms, offering some protection to those sheltering at their bases.

In addition to the peril offered by the Wastelords, the valley is home to a number of other mutant things that can spell the end of any group of survivors. To manage travel between key areas and/or scenes, the GM should use the following random event table.

One roll should be made on the table for every leg of the characters’ travel. For example, the characters leave Bazaar to travel to Black Stump. One roll should be made on the table to determine what event the characters must deal with before reaching their destination.

D20	Encounter
1-5	No Event
6-8	Bones
9-10	Carcass
11-12	Lurking Panther
13-14	Centipedes
15-16	Snuffle Hog
17-18	Battle of Giants
19-20	Sandstorm

Battle of Giants (EL 4): The desert echoes with the sound of battle between two giants. As the PCs approach they come across an epic scene: a giant mutated *scorpion* battling for its life against an equally enormous mutant *spider*.

The two creatures will continue fighting each other until either makes a Spot check to notice the PCs. If they notice the PCs (much smaller, and therefore much more convenient for a meal) the two giant creatures will break off their battle and begin pursuing the party instead!

☛ **Monstrous Scorpion (1):** CR 2; Large Vermin; HD 4d8+8; hp 32; Init +0; Spd 50 ft; AC 14 (-1 size, +5 natural); Atk 2 claws +5 melee 1d6+3, sting +0 melee 1d6+1 and poison; SA Improved grab, squeeze, poison; SQ Vermin; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +3, Spot +7.

☛ **Monstrous Spider (1):** CR 2; Large Vermin; HD 4d8+4; hp 30; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft, climb 20 ft; AC 14 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural); Atk Bite +4 melee 1d8+3 and poison; SA Poison, web; SQ Vermin; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Hide +6, Jump +2*, Spot +7*.

Bones: The characters come across the bleached white bones of some huge, long-dead creature with six legs, large armored bones, and gigantic straight tusks. A close inspection reveals that, when alive, the creature stood some 15 feet tall and spanned 20 feet in length. As successful Knowledge (Mutant Lore) check (DC 15) reveals the remains are those of a creature no longer seen on the Twisted Earth.

Carcass (EL 2): Here, the carcass of a doom harvester is discovered, huge mouth agape and its skin broken in a number of places. A successful Heal check (DC 15) reveals that the creature died when a number of creatures exploded from within its body. If anyone approaches within 15 feet of the dead beast, an *utarn* attacks from beneath the sands. The pregnant mutant creature has been using the corpse as bait to attract a host for its own young.

☛ **Utarn (1):** CR 3; Medium-sized Aberration; HD 3d8+3; hp 17; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk Bite +2 melee 1d2; SA Impregnation, paralysis; SQ Scent, Blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will -3; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 5, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7, Jump +5. Improved Initiative.

Centipedes (EL 3): As the PCs walk among the seemingly endless dunes, the sand suddenly shifts as the ground erupts from below. A mass of writhing, segmented *centipedes* come scuttling up from the depths, looking for prey to consume.

☛ **Monstrous Centipedes (4):** CR 1; Large Vermin; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft; AC 14 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural); Atk Bite +2 melee 1d8+1 and poison; SA Poison; SQ Vermin; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Hide +3, Spot +8. Weapon Finesse (bite).

Lurking Panther (EL 3): A *lurking panther* hides nearby and will seek to attack the characters when a good opportunity presents itself. The lurking panther will go so far as to stalk the characters and attack as soon as it has the advantage, being quite hungry due to a lack of sustenance. A relentless predator, a Lurking Panther will stalk its chosen prey until killed.

☛ **Lurking Panther (1):** CR 3; Medium-sized Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 20; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 40 ft, climb 20 ft; AC 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural); Atk Bite +6 melee 1d6+3; 2 claws +1 melee 1d3+1; SA Pounce, improved grab, rake 1d3+1; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +13*, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +10*. Weapon Finesse (bite, claw).

Sandstorm: A dark smudge appears on the horizon as the sandstorm approaches, heralded by a hollow screaming sound, faint at first, but growing stronger until it is nearly deafening when the characters are in the midst of the storm. Characters may make a Wilderness Lore or Knowledge (Nature) check (DC 12) to foresee the approaching storm. If successful at another Wilderness Lore check (DC 15), the characters will be able to make it to the nearest merchant markers (see map) before the full force of the storm is upon them.

Once the full force of the storm arrives, the characters are blasted by sand and small debris; vision is reduced to 30 feet and hearing is useless due to the intense screaming of the wind as it is channeled through the bare-rock valley. The sandstorm deals 1d3 points of subdual damage each round to anyone not protected by large cover, powered Armor, or an enclosed vehicle. The storm lasts 1d4 days.

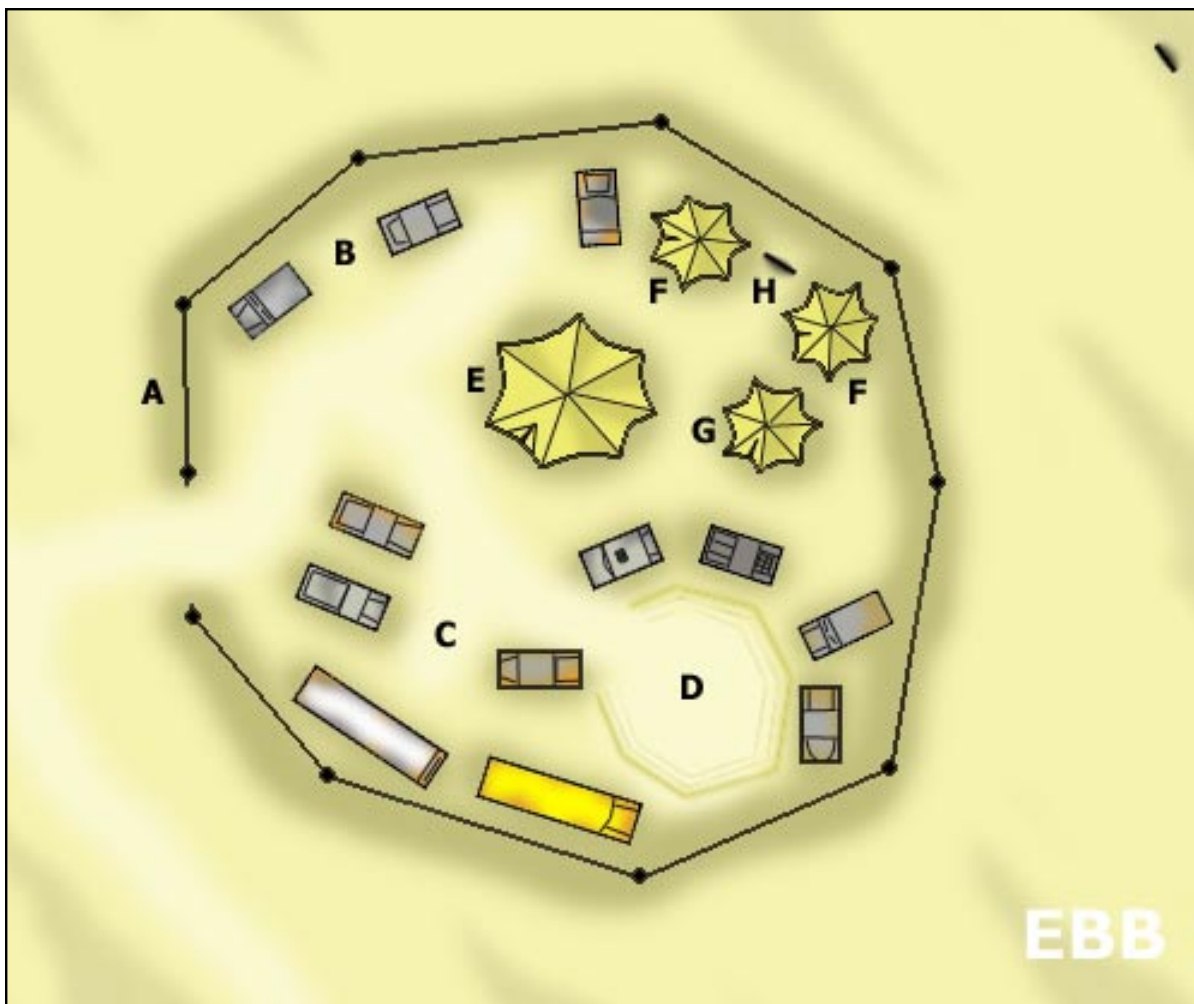
When the storm subsides, the deafening sound will slowly fade, a ringing still in the character's ears. Silence will triumph, until the characters realize they can hear each other speaking again. It will take a further six hours before the dust settles, allowing normal vision.

Snozzle Hog (EL 3): A lone, foul-tempered *Snozzle hog* has wandered into the path chosen by the characters, and steadfastly refuses to surrender his territory. If the Snozzle hog notices the characters, it will attack immediately unless the characters clearly retreat.

☛ **Snozzle Hog (1):** CR 3; Medium-sized Beast; HD 3d10+12; hp 22; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft; AC 20 (+2 Dex, +8 natural); Atk Gore +6 melee 1d6+6; SA Quills; SQ Scent, stubborn; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will -2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 4, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5. Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack.





BLACK STUMP

The trade route through the Trade Lands is marked by a series of easily recognized landmarks, monuments that break up the otherwise monotonous and featureless desert that comprises the vast valley basin. While unexceptional in their own right, these landmarks have been used by the traders of the region for generations to navigate the wasteland from one community to the other.

Each of the major landmarks is marked on the party's map, to also aid in finding their way to the various settlements of the alliance.

While headed for Ebb, the PCs are set to pass one of these landmarks, known as "Black Stump".

Having traveled for more than a day, the sun's deadly rays are beginning to take their toll on your energy. Water, even when shared among you, proves too scarce to totally take the debilitating effects of thirst away. To make matters worse, even though you have a map, you afraid you may be lost in this endless landscape of low sand dunes and cracked open flats.

Just as despair begins to become serious in your ranks, up ahead a dark smudge is seen on the horizon. Minutes later, as you trudge on with renewed hope, the "smudge" proves to be the remains of some giant mutant tree from ages long gone. Standing above the sands like the skeleton of a tent, the roots of the ancient tree extend deep into the earth, forming a solid foundation. This must be "Black Stump", the first landmark on the trail to Ebb, as indicated on your map.

Black Stump should be a welcome sight for the PCs. Long used as a shelter and "way station" of sorts, it is possible for men and mounts to squeeze in between the roots of the ancient stump and take shelter in the area underneath it. Stretching tarps over the roots and securing them makes shelter, in effect a very large and strong structure capable of weathering the most powerful sandstorms.

In addition to the shelter, at the base of the old stump, in the shadow of the branches, is a shallow pool of fresh water that slowly replenishes by deep underground moisture. Here the PCs can refill most of their canteens and waterskins, and rest for a few hours, before moving on.

EBB

Like fragile bubbles of civilization that might last a year, a month, or a single night, gatherings at the tiny towns of the Forbidden Lands are a much-anticipated event throughout the region. The town of “Ebb”, temporary at best, is just one of many nomadic camps set up along the trade routes linking the three permanent towns of the Trade Lands (Bazaar, Dry Fort, and Spilunk) with the outside world.

Up ahead, the bleak monotony of the sandy wasteland is finally broken. As your band comes over what seems like just one of a thousand dunes, there before you, in a small depression between sandy hills, is a tiny cluster of tents and vehicles, surrounded by a makeshift palisade of wood and wire. Protected from sun and wind, the miniature settlement echoes with the sound of traders hawking goods, of bloody gladiatorial games being played out within, and an overall raucous merriment.

This, you surmise, must be the town of “Ebb”.

KEY TO EBB

A. Walls

The walls of Ebb are merely wooden planks and boards thrust vertically into the sand and roped together by hemp, cord, or wire. The barrier is effective in keeping out most desert animals, but serves as nothing more than an amusing nuisance for a determined attacker.

B. Vehicles

Visitors (mostly traders) from the far reaches of the Forbidden Lands come to Ebb to either do business or simply use the village as a “way station” before moving on the Bazaar. The collection of rusted, stripped-down, and horse- or slave-drawn vehicles are the property of many of these wayfarers, who park their rides wherever they like around the compound.

Laden as they are with trade goods and supplies for their owner’s very survival, tampering with any of these vehicles is a serious offense likely to be punished by death. Mangy guard dogs are usually enough to dissuade thieves.

C. Market

The vehicles here are inhabited most of the day, their owners selling goods straight from the back seat or the trunk to anyone interested in buying. Each trader has his own specialty, and the chances of finding one or more selling the same goods is unlikely (though when they do, they compete for customers rabidly).

Character interested in perusing the “market”

will find only a limited selection of common goods (about 50% of those items listed on page 47 of the DARWIN’S WORLD rules, and only 1-2 of each item, if at all). There is also water and gasoline for sale, in relative abundance. In addition, the traders here have a number of minor artifacts for sale, including the following:

Item	Qty	Price
Canned food	20	5 cp
Hologram projector	1	1,000 cp
Image cards (pornographic)	3	50 cp
Light rod	3	25 cp
Light stick	4	5 cp
Salt pills	10	10 cp

The traders will buy any useful, practical items, up to 500 cp in value. All told there is no more than 1,500 cp (not including trade goods) in the entire marketplace.

D. The Pit

When slave women are not enough to sate their lusts (or if they lack the money to pay for an hour’s entertainment), the locals of Ebb turn to gladiatorial games in “the Pit”. This area is simply a slight depression in the sand, surrounded by a wall of cars in which two men may battle for the pleasure of the spectators.

Traders specializing in training pit fighters often make the circuit to the various towns of the Forbidden Lands to make money off their gladiators. One such visiting trader is Bargin (see below).

In addition to gladiator fights, tribals from the desert often use the Pit to settle feuds and other arguments. As such there is almost always some kind of fighting going on in the Pit.

E. Main Tent

This main tent is made of hides stretched over a framework of sturdy animal bones, and can be packed up in a day for transport. The merchants of Ebb are nomads like any other, and their tents, walls, and other belongings all must be able to be carried by their slaves, horses, and vehicles.

This main tent houses the merchant family that runs Ebb, consisting mainly of five “elders” (ages 25-40), their sons, and male children. In addition to furs, blankets, trade goods, a small collection of arms and armor, and other valuables, the tent is sectioned off with hanging sheets to create small private rooms for storage or sleeping quarters. Though it is cramped and smells strongly of human occupation, it is cooler than outside in the sun, and protects against the prospect of sand storms.





F. Side Tents

These small tents are made of patchwork hides and set aside for the guards of the local merchant clan. Each is little more than a shelter from the elements, containing blankets, cooking pots and utensils, clothing, etc.

G. Slave Tent

Though they make money off of a set tax (20% of all money made) on traders using the village to sell their wares or stay overnight, the merchants of Ebb make most of their money off of the three or four concubines they own and “rent” out to travelers. A brothel of sorts, this tent houses the miserable young women who never get a moment of free time unto themselves.

An hour with one of these women runs about 40-50 cp, paid upfront. A girl may not be rented for longer than 30 minutes (there is quite a demand for their “services”), though multiple visits are allowed, assuming one goes to the end of the line each time.

Any troublemakers are likely to rouse the ire of not only the local merchants of Ebb, but also those patrons waiting their turn!

H. Secret Tunnel

The merchants to provide a quick and easy escape, in case crafty raiders manage to infiltrate the camp and take the guard by surprise, dug this secret tunnel under the sands. A large panel of sheet metal conceals the tunnel. The exit, almost 50 yards away, is concealed by trash. The tunnel can be found with a successful Search check (DC 20).

SEEKING AN AUDIENCE

The PCs have been sent to Ebb to find out why the merchants there failed to send representatives to the council meeting in Bazaar. When they arrive, they are probably expecting Ebb to have been devastated by attack - but instead they find the town intact and very much alive.

When and if the PCs attempt to arrange an audience with the leaders of Ebb, they must make a Diplomacy check (DC 12), or a Bluff check (DC 15) to convince the guards outside of **area E** (the main tent) that they are, in fact, emissaries from Bazaar. Even then they must surrender all potential weapons to the guards before being allowed in.

As you enter the main tent, you notice the entirety of this dark and cool place is made from patchwork hides stretched over a temporary framework of animal bones. Little more than a great big tent, you imagine the whole of this place could be packed up in a few hours' time. These people are surely nomads.

The Trademasters you seek are gathered around

a planning table in the central chamber, sectioned off from storage spaces and sleeping alcoves by thick blankets and furs. As you enter, the five or so elders look you over a few times with hard-boiled stares, before they break off their talk of business to hear what you have to say.

Allow the players to role-play their address to the Trademasters however they see fit. The answers they receive will depend on the questions asked. The following lists the most likely questions and answers:

The council at Bazaar was expecting a representative from Ebb. Why didn't he arrive?

“Because no representative was sent. We do not want to risk our lives supporting the “foolish” idea of rebelling against the Wastelords! Instead of getting our people killed, we have decided to appease the raiders...as usual.”

How?

“Payment in ‘furniture’ (women), as well as water and gasoline. This is the standard arrangement. It is a high price to pay, but it is better than dying!”

What about Sandyville?

“They agree with the wisdom (and caution) of us here at Ebb, and have also refused to send representatives to the rebel council.” The elders advise the PCs not to waste their time by traveling there; they will only squander their water pursuing a fool's errand.

Any chance they will reconsider?

“No.” But the elders want the PCs to take a message back to Trademaster Gorgel of Bazaar. “Your actions will bring death to the tribes of your alliance, and hard times to everyone else in the Trade Lands. Reconsider what you are about to do before damning us all!”

With that, the council has the PCs issued out of the main tent and back to the market. The audience is over.

GLADIATORIAL GAMES (EL 2)

Just as they begin to discuss their options from here, standing outside of the main tent amidst the hustle and bustle, the PCs are interrupted by a shout from the crowds.

“You – yes you! The tiny one hiding among his friends! Yes you! What's the matter – don't like being called tiny? Why, I overheard that from one of the furniture who lay with you last night! Said you were the smallest one she'd ever had to work with! And speaking of working – she said yours didn't!!!”

The shouting is coming from an average-sized man in hides standing on the edge of the crowds. Though his voice is at first lost in all the cheering coming from the gladiatorial pits, his continued slurs against one of your number draws attention. In moments the crowd is snickering and laughing at the butt of his jibes.

The antagonist is a traveling “merchant”, a man by the name of “Bargin”. A professional pit fight organizer, he makes his living off of individuals who prove easy to anger, luring them into a fight with his “prize fighter”, the aptly named “Skag”.

Unless the PCs show remarkable cool, Bargin will continue his insults, hoping they will engage in a heated dialogue – which, with luck, Bargin will steer towards a *challenge*. Putting up no less than 100 pieces of corium, Bargin challenges the best the party has to offer against his fighter. If the PC wins, the party gets the purse; if Skag wins, why of course the PCs must surrender something of equal value (if they don’t have 100 corium, Bargin will look them over and appraise what they have, and accept the object with the highest value in their group).

Once they agree to settle the fight in the pit, the crowds cheer and immediately enter a frenzy of betting. This is a good chance for other PCs to bet for (or against) their companion, to hopefully make money to spend in the market or back in Bazaar.

In any event, the fighting begins as soon as both contestants enter the Pit. No rules, no holds barred, and the fight will continue until one combatant dies, is knocked out, or surrenders.

❖ **Bargin, Trader5 (1):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (1st Generation Mutant Resentful); HD 5d6; hp 17; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 hide armor); Atk Light crossbow +5 ranged 1d8; SQ Protector, spit polish, ear to the ground, money talks, going once going twice (x1.5); AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +10, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +7, Intuit Direction +4, Sense Motive +6, Speak Trade, Speak Unislang, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3. Silver Tongue, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (light crossbow).

Possessions: Hide armor, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, 100 cp.

Mutations and Defects: Gamma-Ray Visual Sensitivity, Sensitive Sight. Mongoloid, Negative Chemical Reaction.

❖ **Skag, Guardian3 (1):** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Feral); HD 3d12+12; hp 32; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Init); Spd 15 ft; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +5 breastplate armor); Atk Heavy flail +9 melee 1d10+7 (used two-handed); SQ Defender; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +4. Improved Hit Dice, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (heavy flail).

Possessions: Breastplate armor, heavy flail.

Mutations and Defects: Extreme Resilience, Multiple Stomachs. Bilirubin Imbalance, Hunchback, Atrophied Cerebellum, Under-Developed Organ (voice box).

Skag is a real piece of work. Bargin “found” him, a feral, wandering the mountains like a pitiful caveman several years ago, and barely managed to lure him with food into his camp. It took five servants to put Skag down, but the effort paid off in dividends – Bargin has since trained the hulking brute as a real pit-fighter and takes him with his caravan all along the trails (usually chained, but by now Skag is almost completely “domesticated”). Playing the townspeople along the routes as chumps, Bargin has developed a real knack at showmanship; he usually tricks the locals into fighting Skag through insult or slander, pricking at their manhood or bravery. His fighter, Skag, has yet to lose a fight, and they seldom stay long enough in a town to suffer the repercussions of sore egos.

The fight between Skag and the PC will continue as far as the GM decides is enough – Skag is a pretty tough customer, and he may very well be more than one character can handle. The GM may decide to have the next encounter (see below) occur just as Skag is about to deal a killing blow, thereby saving that character’s life “by chance”. Alternatively, the event could happen just as Skag has fallen to the worthy PC instead.

A Sudden Interruption

As the gladiatorial game nears its climax, the sudden excitement is broken by an even more startling, fearful event.

The horizon suddenly echoes with a strange, unexpected thunder. At first, the gladiatorial game continues, with the two opponents struggling among puffs of dust kicked up by their scuffle. But the audience is distracted – the noise is getting louder. One by one the hard-faced, shouting spectators turn from the fight and – as one – begin running towards the flimsy palisade encompassing the town.

Something is obviously afoot. The fight will continue for another round before even Bargin calls off his thrall, Skag, to find out what’s the matter. The pit fight effectively breaks up.

Joining the other spectators despite the scuffle, you melt into the group to see what’s going on for yourselves. The roar has gotten louder; those among you familiar with them recognize the growl of nearly a dozen vehicle engines, getting closer





and closer.

Peering over the edge of the wall, you see the bleak horizon stretching as far as the eye can see, but now broken by a towering smudge of dust rising into the sky. Only a few hundred yards away, a loose collection of ironclad motorcycles and dune buggies are making a beeline for the town!

Suddenly a nearby local – a vendor – screams a single phrase: “THE WASTELORDS!”

More shouts echo amongst the locals. A small number of “guardsmen” rush to the entranceway to the temporary village and hastily begin closing the barricades. A few more gather outside a nearby tent, and dispatch muskets and spears to those waiting. In moments, the camp has turned to utter chaos – the town is under attack!

Allow your PCs to react how they will. Whatever the result, Bargin declares the fight over; if Skag lost, in the chaos he tries to slip away without paying. If he won, he hastily collects before vanishing among the crowds.

The thunder continues, but the vehicles have come to a stop – just out of range of muskets and bows. They continue to rev and roar their engines, sending impressive columns of churning black smoke – tainted with the smell of overpowering exhaust - into the sky.

From this distance, their faces can be seen. Dust-covered. Sun tanned and hardened. Grotesque tattoos emblazoned across their skin wherever their hodgepodge of leather and chains lets up look like a motley canvas of faded colors.

The engines finally die down as a solitary figure rises from the back of one of the vehicles. He lifts an ancient bullhorn, and speaks into it.

“Townfolk of Ebb...” he seems amused at using the word ‘town’ when speaking of this tiny settlement. Beneath his voice can be detected an underlying ruthlessness.

“You have disappointed us! Did you think you could really get away with trickery? The fools at Sandyville denied having the device, just like you!”

For a moment it is quiet. Then the speaker raises the horn to his lips and continues.

“We *laid waste* to Sandyville. Now they are all dead. Wild dogs pick at their bones as we speak.”

Again he lets his words sink in, before continuing.

“I am a reasonable man. My men, they are reasonable warriors. And we have come such a long way at the behest of our leader. You know him. You know he is not a patient man. Let the games end here and now. Surrender the device. Surrender it now, and there will be no more death.

No more suffering! No more cruelty! Surrender it now, and I may be able to prevent our leader from crushing you in his anger.

“Surrender it. Surrender it to us!”

If the characters did not participate in the gladiatorial games, you can simply modify the dialogue above to fit whatever situation they are in just before they attempt to leave the Ebb compound.

A Little Explanation Would Be Nice

The Trademasters who set up this village are rightly concerned, but unless the PCs barge into their tent for an explanation or offer of assistance, they plan on dealing with this themselves. Of course, any PCs worthy of the name “hero” are likely to confront them...

The following is the low-down on what the traders are now willing to admit; as with other conversations, the GM should feel free to either use this as a monologue to get things rolling, or implement the information here as part of their conversation with the PCs:

What is going on?

“We are under siege by raiders! Though the force outside is relatively small, it is just a scouting party. With their vehicles and weapons, they could easily destroy all of Ebb!”

What is the “device” the raiders are demanding?

The traders look to each other pensively before explaining what little they know. Recently an unidentified scav, a true wasteland wanderer, visited Ebb with a strange item of technology in his possession – a bizarre device encompassing a computerized unit and a bundle of wiring. The traders are at a loss to explain what it was meant to do, or even if it was still functional. To them it was just a piece of rusted junk.

What happened to the “device”?

Since they had no use for such a strange device, the traders of Ebb declined to buy it from the man. The mysterious scav left soon afterwards; he said he was heading for Sandyville, to perhaps sell it there. He did not leave a name. That was the last the traders heard of him.

Who else has come looking for the “device”?

“The Wastelords came soon after the scav departed. They said they were tracking a scavenger, and demanded we hand over whatever he had sold us. We swore we bought nothing. When they specifically demanded the device, we vowed to them we did not have it, but told them what the scav had said, that he would go to Sandyville to try and sell it there.”

Where did the “device” come from?

“We have no idea where it was found. Only the scav who found it knows. He did not reveal this information either (smart scavs never do).”

Why did the raiders attack Sandyville?

Apparently the scav never made it to Sandyville. When they also denied having the device, the Wastelords must have assumed they were lying and destroyed the entire town as retribution.

Why have they returned?

“Now that the Wastelords think we have lied to them, they must also think we have been holding onto the device all along. If we do not give them what they want, they are likely to make us all pay for it with our lives!”

Do the Ebb traders have the device?

“No, not at all!”

A Sense Motive check (DC 10) reveals that the traders are telling the truth. They do not have the device.

A Second Job Proposal

The traders aren’t quite sure what to do – certainly a slugging match with the Wastelords would be a hideous and costly proposition. Even if they could get visiting patrons and wanderers to help defend them, the entire town could still be wiped out. Instead, they are planning to organize a small group to slip out of Ebb by night and try to find the device. By giving it to the Wastelord scouts they hope to appease their demands and prevent their own destruction.

The traders are willing to hire the PCs on the spot – they’re certainly desperate enough! The Wastelords are bigger than ever now, with vehicles and modern weapons. All told, Ebb has maybe thirty-five people of fighting ability, of all ages, and only a handful of

muskets and spears amongst them. After a heated argument amongst themselves, the Trademasters offer a sum of 250 corium apiece (or, alternatively, 5 gallons of fresh water in portable cans apiece), payable upon safely retrieving the device, of course.

Getting Away

When you leave the tent, burdened with the hopes of the Ebb traders, darkness is already beginning to set. Normally this would be a bad time to travel the desert, but under these circumstances it is a blessing.

One of the traders’ trusted guards, informed of your mission, leads you not towards the front gate, but rather towards the rear of the compound. Surprised, you see him gather a few men and together they clear some debris from between a collection of tents. Pulling back a huge sheet of scrap steel, they reveal a secret tunnel leading off into darkness!

The trusted guard whispers to you. “With night falling you may be able to escape. This tunnel will take you fifty paces beyond those dunes. Be careful not to draw attention your way. Go now!”

The tunnel is at best a narrow escape route, running just under the earth for about 150 feet. Luckily it is just large enough for them to crawl through, dragging their equipment behind them on the end of a borrowed rope. Once they arrive at the end, they can spy over the crest of the dune:

Looking back, the shallow valley has gotten darker, but the lights of Ebb are glowing strong – torches, lanterns, etc. The raiding party of Wastelords seems focused on the small compound, unaware of your escape. Making sure no one is silhouetted against the setting sun, you scamper off in the opposite direction, deeper into the desert...

CONTINGENCY

It is entirely possible that PCs will be unwilling to leave, even with the odds so obviously stacked against them. If the players insist on trying to fight their way out (instead of fleeing, as the elders of Ebb suggest), this could potentially evolve into a catastrophic fight.

If the PCs face off with the besieging raiders, assume that there are thirty raiders outside. Use the statistics for typical Wastelords (see The Cruise Missile Site), but in addition they also have a number of vehicles. Assume there are three motorcycles (no modifications) and a single car with statistics identical to the “slaughterwagon” (see Final Battle At Dry Fort).

In addition, the people of Ebb themselves do not want to fight the Wastelords (after all, they weren’t even willing to join the Alliance), and have instead put their hopes on appeasing the raiders. If the PCs start trouble now, they won’t get any support from the villagers in an open battle!

If by some reason the PCs do manage to win against the Wastelord force, Ebb will still suffer the wrath of the Wastelords once the group sets out to find the “device”, as reinforcements will show up in due course to exact revenge on what they perceive to be a rebellious town. In this eventuality, the PCs will only have themselves to blame for the destruction of Ebb.





What Next?

The PCs now realize they are on their own. It is safe to assume Sandyville was destroyed, and thus a journey there would prove fruitless (however, in case they do go there, a separate chapter detailing the ruins of Sandyville is included in this module) in their search for allies for the Three Towns.

The PCs have a number of options – not the least of which is probably a desire to return to Bazaar to report on what has happened. Alternately, however, they may be motivated to continue along the trail towards Sandyville, in hopes of finding any clue as to where the mysterious scav (with the equally enigmatic “device”) has disappeared.

With Ebb now under siege, the PCs will probably be spurred on by the importance of finding the “device” as quickly as possible. As such, they will head towards... Two Trees.

TWO TREES (EL 4)

During their journey towards Sandyville (marked on the map given them by the traders of Bazaar), do not check for encounters as normal. A few hours out of Ebb, the characters will either run into the *lurking panther*, *utarn*, or *snozzle hog* encounter. The desert is a dangerous place; what better way to enforce that mindset than to have the PCs tangle with some of the wasteland’s native life?

After this initial encounter, the rest of the journey should take at least a full day (approaching evening) before the PCs arrive at the only notable landmark along the route – a site known only as “Two Trees”.

According to your map, the site up ahead must be “Two Trees”. Just as the map suggests, an identical pair of trees can be seen sticking out of the sand here, defying the harsh environment and the winds it sends against them. Long dead, their hardy nature and the dry air seem to have preserved them like bastions of the forgotten world before the Fall.

Two Trees is a recognizable sight among the traders of the Trade Lands, used to shelter merchant convoys and their animals for the evening and from the elements. To shelter here, one must stretch a tarp between the two trees and shelter behind it. The trees, stately and tall despite being withered and ancient, show no signs of weakness, and have resisted many a sandstorm in the past few decades.

When the PCs arrive, however, they will find a strange scene – and a nesting pair of carrion raptors awaiting their next meal!

As you approach the scene, you notice a jumble of tracks that seem to suggest a recent visitor to Two Trees – perhaps within the last day or so. The

remains of a scattered campsite can be seen, along with a collection of bones cast about here and there.

Suddenly the silence beneath the shadow of the Two Trees is broken by the heavy plod of clawed feet...the rustling of feathers...and the shrill cawing of two giant mutant birds!

● **Carrion Raptors (2):** CR 2; Large Animal; HD 3d8+9; hp 33 and 23; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 45 ft; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size); Atk Bite +3 melee 1d10+3; SQ Tearing beak; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Jump +5, Listen +7, Spot +9*.

Treasure: Littered among the remains of the campsite are a number of items (conspicuously in good condition). These include two blankets, a high quality *silk rope*, a *climber’s kit*, a *firestarter cube*, and a large, shoddy sack. Inside this sack are a variety of worthless trinkets (rusty nails, broken links of chain, crusted pennies and nickels from before the Fall), a number of irregular chunks of corium (the equivalent of 54 corium pieces), two small cylinders made out of black cardboard (a pair of *concussion grenades*, though one is a dud), and a remarkably heavy pouch.

This pouch, when retrieved and opened, proves to have a curious piece of machinery carefully bundled inside. Apparently the owner recognized (to some extent) some inherent value to the item, for it appears to have been wiped clean of dust and grime and only marginally toyed with. 12” long and almost as wide, a jumble of blue and white wires hang down from the boxy device. Faded stenciling on one side is barely visible (any character that speaks Ancient will recognize the letters “USAF”).

This piece of machinery must be the **device** the traders of Ebb spoke of!

The PCs will undoubtedly attempt to find out the nature of the device, but it is assumed that with their limited experiences with such objects, it will be impossible for them to discern its purpose (allow a Knowledge, Technology check at DC 35); even if they somehow manage to recognize the device for what it is (a cruise missile **guidance system**), they will not be able to tell right away if it even works or not.

Once they recognize the item as the **device** they seek, the PCs will certainly return to Ebb.

What The PCs Don’t Know Is...

They are, in fact, being *watched*. The owner of the treasure found at the campsite (the “Scav”), having recently returned from a foray into the hills (and thus missed by the Wastelord scouts), was setting up camp when he heard the bleating of the carrion raptors in the pre-dawn darkness. Not one to risk his life fighting such a powerful beast (let alone *two*), the scav scampered off with only a few items on

his person, hoping the creatures would be gone by morning. Instead of sniping the creatures, he hoped to save his precious ammunition and wait the ‘raptors out. Unfortunately the creatures haven’t moved on as planned, and the scav has been attempting to figure a way to either scare them off or sneak back into camp to get the remainder of his things.

When the PCs arrive and fight the creatures, the Scav is watching them from almost a quarter of a mile away. Hiding among the nearby dunes, the Scav will certainly watch while the PCs risk battle with the ‘raptors. When they do finish them he will be surprised (not suspecting them to be quite so powerful), and thus will hesitate to approach.

If the PCs somehow Spot the Scav (roll to see how well he hides; he has a +13 Hide modifier), they will see him only for a moment (as far away as he is) before he bolts.

Instead of attacking, even if spotted, the Scav now begins *following* the PCs. He will certainly make an appearance later when his patience has run thin...

RETURN TO EBB

Having retrieved the device, the PCs will likely make haste to return to Ebb in hopes of relieving the siege. However, when they arrive a tragic scene confronts them.

Quickening your pace as you near the familiar vicinity of Ebb, you are each taken totally by surprise as you come over the final crest. There, laid out in the slight depression between dunes, is what can only be described as the ruins of that little village. Wisps of smoke still rise from the wreckage of the walls and the burned remnants of tents, and even from this distance you can discern individual corpses scattered throughout the compound.

You have arrived too late. Ebb is gone!

The ruins prove to be utterly destroyed and ransacked. A Wilderness Lore check (DC 13) seems to suggest that what the Wastelord scouts couldn’t take with them on their vehicles, they put to the torch. The destruction is so complete that nothing of use can be salvaged.

As they wander the wreckage of Ebb wondering what is to be done next, they spot a rider on the horizon. Though he lingers for a moment, the man rides in quick.

With puffs of sand kicked up by the tread of his fraxx steed, the rider heads straight for the smoking ruin of the town. As he nears, the man’s white armor marks him as a scout from Bazaar. The man finally comes to a stop, his face etched with a look of horror at the carnage of the scene.

Seeing you and recognizing you as agents of the council, he sheathes his bolt-action rifle and prepares to speak.

The man is, in fact, a scout from Bazaar, sent to deliver word to the traders of Ebb that the Wastelords are on the move, and to give them one last chance to join the alliance.

When the scout learns of all that has transpired (including the siege, the importance the Wastelords have put on finding the **device**, and of the destruction of Sandyville), he is shocked, devastated, and for a moment seems not to know what to do. However, regaining his composure, he turns to the PCs and informs them of their next task.

“There must be some lethal power to this device, if the Wastelords seek it as you say. We cannot let it fall into their hands! My people, Bazaar, suspect war is imminent. Our allies at Dry Fort prepare their defenses even as we speak. But I suspect nothing we have will stand up to whatever power the Wastelords are seeking. You must travel to Spilunk and deliver the device to them. With their great thinkers, they may know what the item does and why the Wastelords want it so badly. Go now! Long live the alliance!”

The rider wraps the scarf of his turban about his face to shield from sand kicked up by his mount, and then rides off over the dunes towards Bazaar.

You know what you must do. The fate of the Trade Lands may be in your hands!

SPIUNK

Check for wasteland encounters as normal for the journey from Ebb to Spilunk. As they arrive in the vicinity (within a few miles), however, the chance of encountering wild life drops to nil. As they approach the village of Spilunk itself, read the following:

The map given you by the council at Bazaar said nothing about the dramatic beauty of this dangerous cliff country, and as you round the final bend leading to the cliff-town of Spilunk, you each take a moment to observe the unique character of the place.

Carved by hand from pinnacles of towering rock that stretch into the sky, the entire town looks more like a collection of lopsided clay pillars, riddled with cave openings and holes, connected at its various levels by treacherous wood and rope bridges like a delicate web suspended in space.

Almost as soon as you see the town in its full glory, the low rumble of a horn signals that you, too, have been spotted by the town’s own lookouts. A number of figures emerge, ready to welcome you to this curious mountain settlement.





Spilunk: (Resentfuls; ruled by priesthood); AL NG; 100 cp limit; Assets 200 cp; Population 40; Isolated (third-generation mutant 50).

Authority Figure: Elder Voclin, male third-generation mutant Th6.

Important Characters: Elder Vilic, male third-generation mutant Th3; Elder Zilhon, male third-generation mutant Th3.

Others: Town guards, Gu1 (2); Militia, Gu1 (4); Sc2, Sc1 (2); Th2 (4), Th1 (8); Tr1.

● **Typical Warrior of Spilunk, Guardian1:** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (3rd Generation Mutant Resentfuls); HD 1d10; hp 4 each; Init +4 (Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 10; Atk Fist +0 melee 1d3-1; SQ Defender; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 3.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Listen +4, Sense Motive +6, Speak Trade, Speak Unislang, Spot +4. Fertile/Potent, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: None.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Independent Cerebral Control, Neural Domination, Neural Fear, Neural Life-Force Destruction Field, Neural Shield, Sensitive Sight, Super-Sensitive Sight. Albinism, Atrophied Cerebellum, Neuro-Fibromatosis, Non-Malignant Tumors, Pituitary Deformation.

The Town

“Spilunk” rests in a box canyon, the walls lined with colorful strata of ancient rock. A small, steep, and roughly carved stairway runs up the west side of the canyon, leading up to jagged rock formations that comprise the settlement of Spilunk. A cave in the first spire is the entrance cave to Spilunk - and is well guarded. From here, the settlement is crammed inside the tall hollowed-out spires, making use of every bit of confined space. Where one spiral is fully hollowed out, a small wood and rope bridge connects to an opening in the next spire, making the community a complex of structures and caves reaching further and further upwards.

The spires do have small windows, which are used to circulate air and as dumping points for offal and other trash.

The inhabitants of Spilunk, are, unknown to others, a fully viable new species able to breed true. A quasi-priesthood that teaches that a soul is made of flesh rules Spilunk. It is their belief that what befell the Ancients was that they embraced technology, leading to their forsaking their souls and bringing upon them their doom. For this reason, the people of Spilunk are loathe to utilize technology - but ironically, due to their extensive knowledge of technology and its evils, they alone

have the skills to identify the **device** (and later, piece the “Great Weapon” back together). In fact, the people of Spilunk are genuinely concerned for the fate of the other, corrupted species and seek often to convert them from their ways, hoping to save them from certain doom.

KEY TO SPILUNK

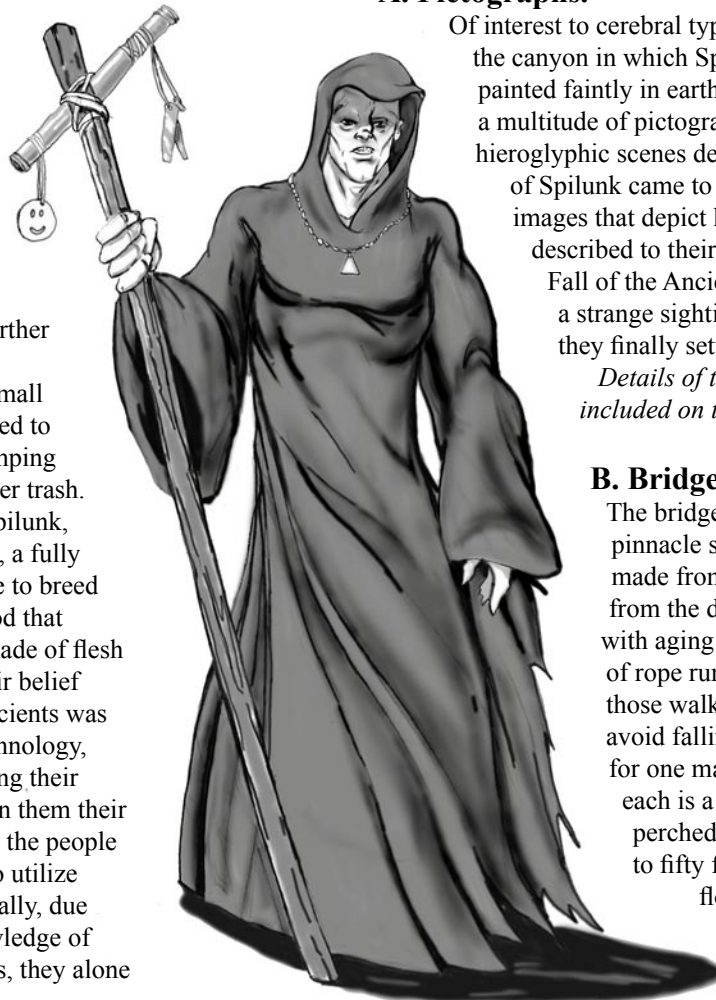
A. Pictographs.

Of interest to cerebral types, the walls of the canyon in which Spilunk lies are painted faintly in earthen tones, revealing a multitude of pictographs. These hieroglyphic scenes depict how the people of Spilunk came to the canyon, including images that depict how their ancestors described to their children the actual Fall of the Ancients, and details of a strange sighting in the sky before they finally settled at Spilunk.

Details of these pictographs are included on these pages.

B. Bridges.

The bridges connecting each pinnacle spur of Spilunk is made from wood scavenged from the desert, lashed together with aging hemp rope. Railings of rope run the length, allowing those walking on the bridge to avoid falling. Just wide enough for one man to walk across, each is a precarious walkway perched anywhere from thirty to fifty feet above the canyon floor.





C. Market.

The hollow caves of this pinnacle rock are reserved for the Spilunk marketplace. Though it has seen better days, there are a few goods for sale (including precious juju) to anyone with goods to trade.

Item	Qty	Price
Basket	4	½ cp
Jug, clay	10	½ cp
Pot, iron	5	1 cp
Scale, merchant's	1	2 cp
Sled	1	20 cp
Juju salve	12	50 cp
Oil of remedy	2	100 cp
Sleeping potion	2	100 cp

There are no weapons for sale here; in fact, characters will notice that no one seems to have a weapon in Spilunk whatsoever. They will not explain why, but the truth is each member of this small society has powerful mutations with which to defend their own.

The trader in Spilunk will only accept barter goods in exchange for his own merchandise, not corium pieces (they have no value here). The GM should decide what items he will or will not accept – generally speaking, the trader will only buy practical, useful goods, and not exotic artifacts or gadgets that have no immediate use to the community.

D. Alcoves.

These various alcoves and caves are where the inhabitants of Spilunk live out their lives. Each is sheltered from the cold of the desert night by hanging furs or hide. Few have anything larger than a small hole for ventilation and light, while some have a small fire pit for additional warmth and/or cooking.

None of the chambers has anything of particular interest to the PCs.

E. Elder Council.

This large chamber has no ceiling, allowing either the bright sun or the brilliant stars to shine down on gatherings of the Spilunk council. Pictograms of simple but beautiful artistry cover every inch of the walls, depicting the intricate history and belief system of these curious people.

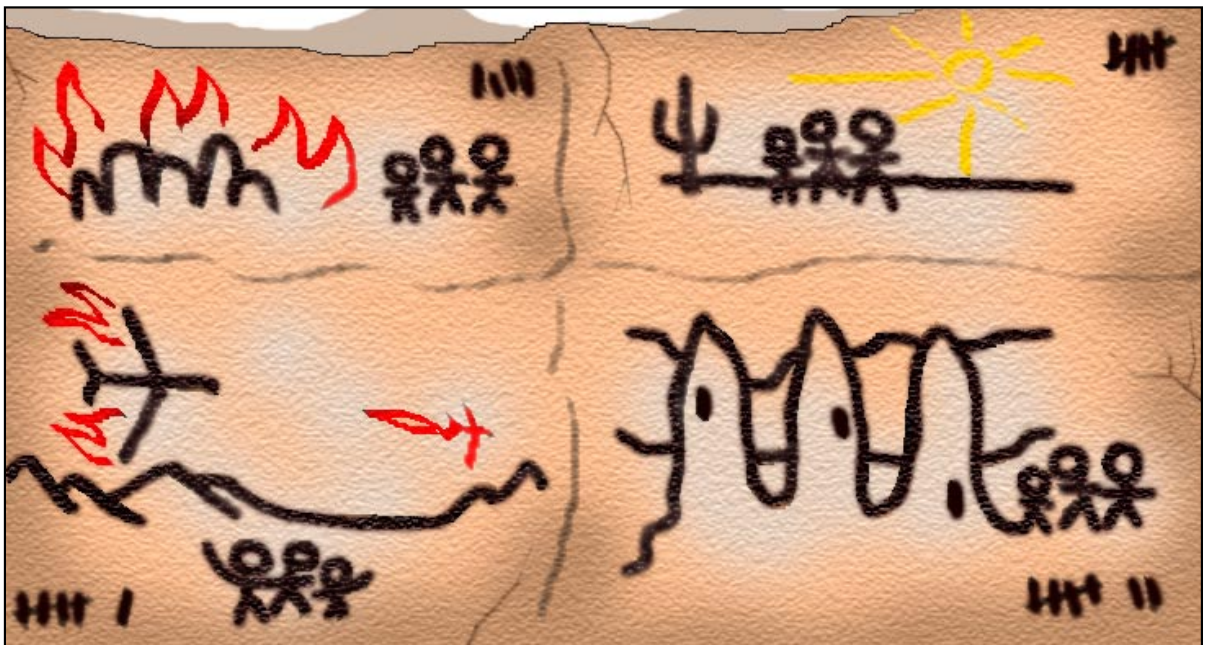
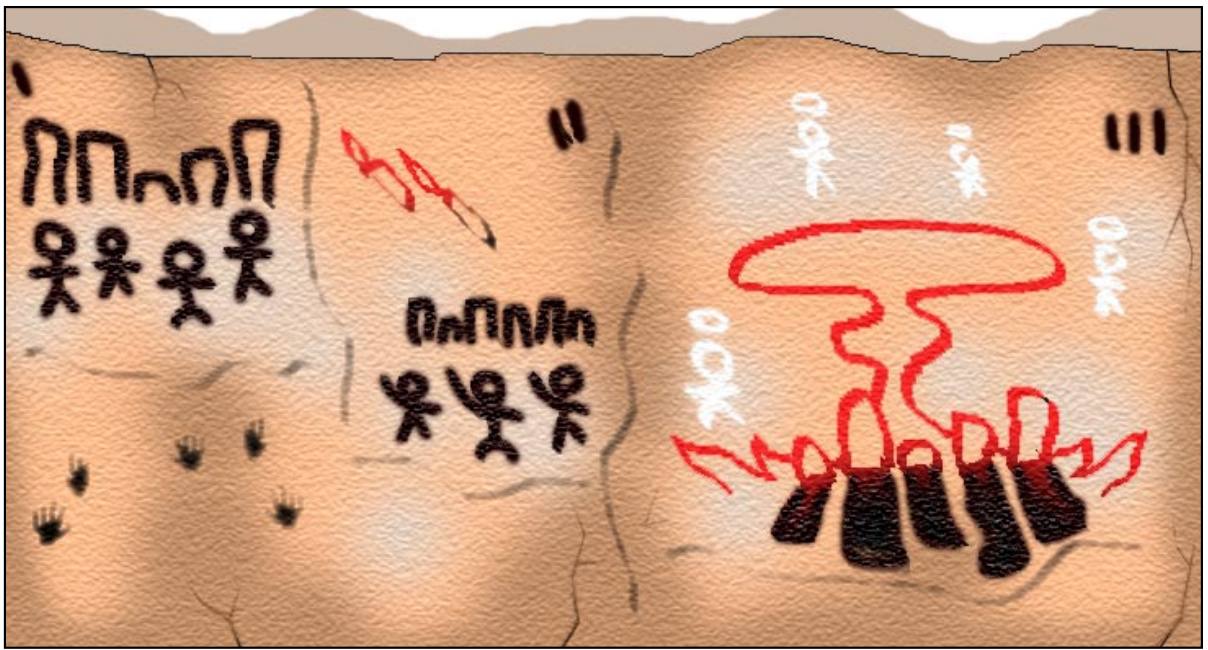
It is here that the PCs will be led for their meeting with the elder council.

MEETING WITH THE ELDERS

Allow the PCs time to interact with the local populace, including stopping to visit the market (area C). This may be especially important if the PCs have taken wounds, since the marketplace of Spilunk has a small supply of juju which may be of use.

Once they're ready, they will be escorted to the meeting with the elders of Spilunk.





Though politely given time to restock your supplies and rations, it is obvious the elders of Spilunk eagerly await your counsel about the alliance - and recent news.

Escorted through the village and over a narrow and treacherous bridge, you ascend into the central pinnacle of rock to an open council chamber. There are one or two guards present, but their lack of physical weaponry seems to suggest that either the mutants of Spilunk are pacifists, or they have alternate means of defending themselves. In any event they seem to have nothing to fear from your group, and within moments a small group of venerable albino elders issue into the room with the fluttering of long robes and the hollow echo of ritual quarterstaves knocked against the earth to announce the meeting's beginning.

The elders are eager to hear of news from Bazaar, Ebb, and Sandyville. However, assuming the PCs tell the entire story of what has happened, they become concerned quite quickly for the survival of the alliance.

Ebb and Sandyville have been destroyed

"This is terrible news. They were to provide the first line of defense against the Wastelord armies. Now that they have fallen, the Wastelords will be able to strike the Three Towns with impunity – and without warning."

The Wastelords are searching for this device

The elders are extremely curious when the PCs explain about the device, and ask them to produce it. Taking it amongst them, they begin murmuring and examining it.

“Whatever this device belongs to, it must be very important if the Wastelords were willing to destroy two villages to find it. We will look into it and hope to identify what the item is and what it is used for.”

What should we do in the meantime?

“Identifying the device will take some time. Until we can further research this ancient item, you can help the alliance by performing a very important task. Now that the route to Sandyville and Ebb is compromised, we must find another way to keep the Three Towns in contact, to facilitate supply, messengers, and move our forces unimpeded.

“We have long considered using the canyon through the mountains as a means of reaching Dry Fort. However, those scouts who attempted to blaze that route never returned, and so it was abandoned years ago.

“But in light of recent events, the risk must be taken to open this route once more. Gather your strength and go there with all speed. You must clear a route to Dry Fort so the alliance can survive.”

Shouldn't we wait for your judgment on the device?

“No. Proceed on to Dry Fort, and help them with whatever preparations are needed for war. They are a suspicious, warlike people, and to keep the alliance alive we must show that we are willing to protect their people as much as our own.

“We will send a mounted messenger to Dry Fort when we have reached a consensus on the nature of the device. Until then there is still much to be done.”

What Next?

The course for the adventurers is clear – now that the desert wilderness offers no guarantees against the Wastelords, they must find and clear another route to Dry Fort to keep the Three Towns united. To do this they will have to ascend to the Haunted Canyon, a perilous gorge inhabited by a terrible people...

THE HAUNTED CANYON

The so-called “haunted canyon” is less than a day’s march from Spilunk, along a forgotten wilderness trail meandering through bleak sandy crag country and flat open desert valleys. Eventually the passage leads to a bottleneck of sorts, where the cliffs become sheer on either side of the gorge.

The twisting valley finally opens up into a canyon with sheer cliff walls. Slow winds blow up wisps of sand, and across the valley, what appears to be a mirage is visible in the shimmering distortion caused by the ever-baking heat of the wasteland. Set into the cliff wall is a collection of buildings,

all carved from the stone of the cliff, and intact. Faint movement can be seen in a few of the windows, and there is the glittering of metallic objects farther from you, closer to the cliff dwellings.

A character can make a Wilderness Lore check (DC 20) to determine that the sand here is thicker and more coarse than in the main valley. This less-worn sand indicates that this valley is a very good shelter from the sandstorms that devastate the region.

Unbeknownst to the characters, primitive wind-powered contraptions that slowly turn, giving the illusion that the cliff dwellings are occupied, cause the movement in the cliff dwellings! In fact, this is an elaborate bait set by the inhabitants of the valley... sandmen!

Simple artifacts left by the sandmen as the lures into their snares cause the glimmering seen ahead. There are nine such snares, and the numerous lures used vary widely, but none are of any value (they are merely shiny baubles). Examples of lures include a half-buried chrome bumper, a hand mirror set upright in the sand, etc. When a character approaches within 10 feet of such a lure, he must make a Reflex save (DC 20), or fall into the chamber below (**area 1**). Keep in mind that the soft sand forms a slight “funnel”, barely held intact by a jury-rigged support below; as a result, any appreciable weight (50 lbs. or more) causes the sand to fall inwards, dragging anyone standing near the lure down into the lair of the creatures. See **area 1** for details.

Once inside the underground community, it is assumed the characters make use of light sources. If not, they are sure to be at a major disadvantage against the occupants of the under dwelling!

⊙ **Funnel Trap:** CR 1/3; Reflex save (DC 20) to avoid falling into the chamber below; Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 20).

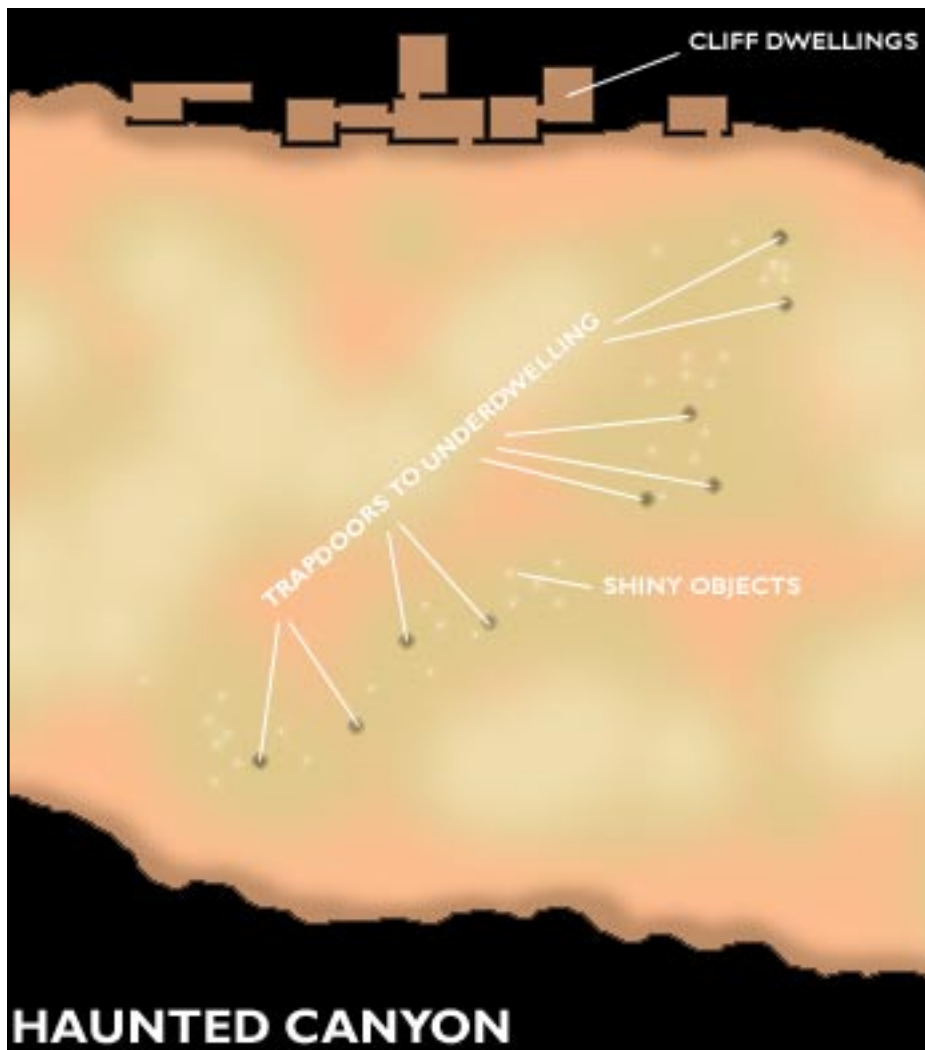
KEY TO THE UNDERDWELLING

1. Entrance

Sucked into the sand, you fall a short distance into a small cave, landing on the fallen sand, which luckily softens your fall. Noisemakers set at the base of the shaft and on the ground cause a cacophony of echoes that reverberate out of the cave, into a narrow tunnel that winds away into total darkness. These echoes soon return, carrying with them the sounds of strange alien hooting and hungry howls.

The falling sand absorbs the impact of any prey that fall into the snares, even while the noisemakers alert the sentries lurking further within the caverns. There is nothing of interest in any of these chambers.





GM's Note: If the PC(s) do not fall into the trap, or make their Reflex saves, they may still descend down into the darkness with little risk of injury, if they wish. If this is the case, alter the description above accordingly.

2. Gathering Rooms (EL 3)

The narrow tunnel opens up into a larger room. A second narrow tunnel joins the one you emerge from in heading away into darkness, obviously leading to another chute. The room before you is littered with garbage and debris of old battles. Spent shell casings and broken weapons lay about haphazardly, while dark splashes of dried blood spread about the walls, a silent testimony to the grim purpose of these rooms. A slight shuffling sound is heard, and then three naked men advance. These decrepit, hunched-over men have long, shaggy white hair and ragged, unkempt beards. Their pale bluish-gray skin is barely visible through the layers of dirt and filth caking their bodies. Each of these men move forward, their long claws clacking together in anticipation of a feast, and grim smiles spread across their horrid countenances.

The noises of the characters' entry into the warrens have summoned a hunting party from the Commons (see **area 3**) to slaughter them and deliver the meat to the rest of the community. Here the characters will have their first taste in fighting underground, against a determined enemy that will not retreat or give quarter.

The sandmen will seek to kill and butcher the characters as quickly as possible. If confronted with any light source, the sandmen will call out to their kin elsewhere in the complex that "light-bringers" are inside the community.

☠ **Sandmen (3):**

CR 1; Medium-sized Humanoid; HD 2d8; hp 9, 8, and 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft, burrow 10 ft; AC 10; Atk Bite +1 melee 1d4; 2 claws +0 melee 1d3;

SQ Photosensitive, tremorsense; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 3.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7. Alertness, Blind-Fight, Multiattack.

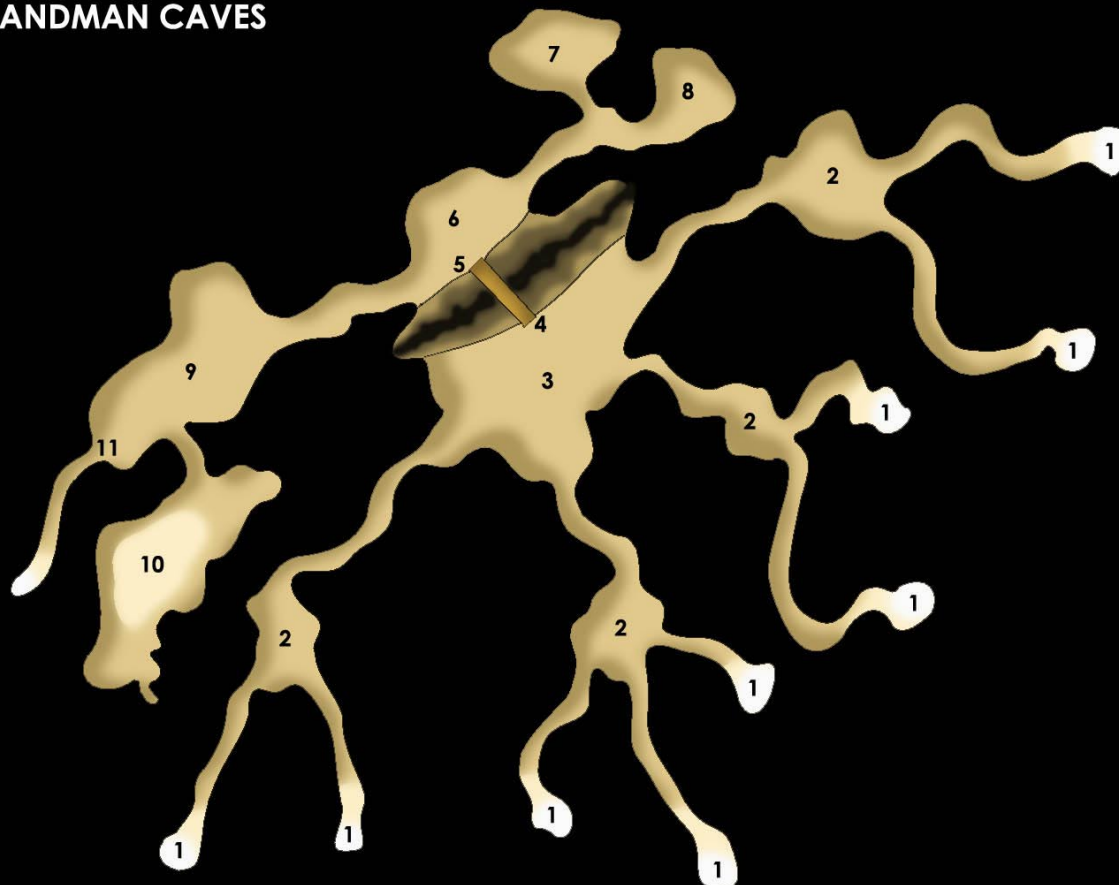
3. Commons (EL 6)

You emerge from the passage into a larger, squalid chamber filled with the offal of centuries of constant occupation; bones and tattered rags, remains of old armor and bones still heavy with meat. Trash and remains of past victims are scattered about the floor. Two other passages disappear into darkness; these passages are black and silent.

A deep chasm splits this cavern from the other half, which is at a higher elevation. An untrustworthy rope bridge spans the chasm, connecting the two halves.

A small crowd of the hideous pale blue blind people has organized and now advances on you, eager to defend their home and to feed. Their milky eyes show no emotion; only the hungry smiles on their lips betray their malicious intent.

SANDMAN CAVES



The commons hold the mass of the sandman tribe, populated by six sandmen males, one elderly female, and two children. Although the children are non-combatants and can be easily slain, the female is the equal to the males and fights alongside them in defending their lair.

- ♣ **Sandmen (6):** hp 9, 8, 7 (x2), 6, 3.
- ♣ **Sandwoman (1):** hp 2.

4. The Chasm

This deep chasm splits the cavern, and plummets deep down into the earth, its nearly sheer walls jagged and rough. No sound can be heard from within, and no measure of its depth is available, only a disturbing pitch darkness.

Any character that falls into the pit is lost and doomed. The pit formed by the chasm is some 90 feet deep, and the remains of centuries of victims clog its bottom. Bones, bits of armor, and other castoffs from above are the only company for any who find their way to the bottom.

5. The Rope Bridge

This rickety bridge is made of old junk and sinew rope, most of it probably having its origins in the sentient beings of the upper world. While

debating whether or not to cross the chasm, loud shouts and screams of defiance echo from the other side. Obviously the rest of the tribe is gathering somewhere beyond the limits of your vision.

Although the bridge appears unsound, it is quite strong and can handle up to twenty medium-sized creatures at once before snapping. It may please the GM to describe the unseen depths of the chasm, and the swaying of the bridge as they cross.

6. Shrine (EL 3)

A large poster on a wooden backboard dominates this chamber. Thick rusty nails secure it in place, and this piece of "art" dominates the chamber. Small bowls and indentations in the rock hold rotting meat and small bits of bone, primitive offerings before this icon holy to the sandmen. Upon closer inspection, the poster offers a look into the past, before the fall. The picture depicts a family of four; father, mother, son, and daughter, all sharing a sumptuous meal at a stout table in a well-furnished room. The rest of the poster effectively portrays an underground shelter, which seems to reassure the family as explosions and symbols of death, disease, and radiation indicate the surface.





Four sandmen wait here for any trespassers who cross the bridge. Canny foes, they attempt to overwhelm each enemy as they reach this side of the bridge, forcing their enemies to fight at a great disadvantage.

Other than the historical curiosity of the old sign (advertising the “nuclear fallout shelters soon to be built in this state”, to anyone who can read Ancient), there is nothing of interest here.

♥ **Sandmen (4):** hp 9 (x2), 8, 7.

7. Pantry

This grim room is decorated with corpses in varying degrees of decomposition. All hang from stone hooks, carved from the walls to hold the sandmen’s meat until consumption. The most recent victim is hideously mangled, his limbs all twisted and snapped. He is long dead, but the look of pain on his face indicates he died slowly and deliberately at the hands of his captors.

The corpse’s armor, now tattered and soiled, is utterly worthless. It does have a few items of note, however.

Treasure: The corpse’s clothing, if searched, earns the characters 65 corium pieces from various pockets, and a *Swiss-army knife* (feature include a knife blade, spoon/fork, nail clippers, nail file, and corkscrew; worth perhaps 50 cp back at Bazaar) tucked into a torn and gnawed boot.

8. Spare Chamber

This chamber is curiously bare and devoid of all trace of the sandmen. No garbage litters the floor, no food is store; nothing at all indicates the use for this cave.

This chamber serves a religious purpose to the sandmen, although the characters probably have no way of knowing this. There is nothing of value or interest here.

9. Chief’s Lair (EL 4)

This chamber is ankle deep in detritus and filth, a hellish hovel even in this grim domain. Hides of humans and mutants decorate the walls, and a pile of softer children’s skins marks a bed. Makeshift wooden frames hold stretched faces, decorating this place in a way that chills you to the bone. It seems here the sandmen will make their final stand, as four large warriors and one particularly strong and scarred individual wait for you to enter before attacking with great fury.

The creatures here fight without mercy or fear, automatically ignoring any effect that would force their retreat.



☛ **Sandman Chief, Guardian2 (1):** CR 3; Medium-sized Humanoid; HD 2d8+2d10; hp 27; Init +0; Spd 30 ft, burrow 10 ft; AC 10; Atk Bite +3 melee 1d4; 2 claws +2 melee 1d3; SQ Defender, photosensitive, tremorsense; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 3.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +1, Listen +7, Spot +8. Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack.

☛ **Sandmen (4):** hp 9 (x4).

Treasure: Once the last sandman is killed, a search will discover a small trove of items of interest: a *flashlight* (no power cell, however), a surgeon's scalpel (caked in gore, this can be cleaned and used as a dagger), and a broken *revolver* (this last item can be repaired with a Craft, Weaponsmithing check, DC 15). There is no ammunition, however.

10. Harem (EL 3)

The stench of this den is overpowering. A simple curtain of cloth, formed of captured garments in many styles stitched together with the sinew and tendon of numerous victims, covers the entrance. Within, a ghastly sight awaits you; as a dank and dusty room filled with old garbage and worthless items rise from the ankle deep refuse. Within the piles of trash can be seen barrels, metal-spoked wheels, a broken clock, and other such trash.

A long procession of skulls lie on the floor here left behind as some offering to whatever dwells here. The skulls are easily identifiable as those of surface-dwellers and their like, although a few animal skulls are scattered amongst the others.

As you investigate deeper into the caverns, you discover that the large cave has a natural rise in the center, piled high with the skins of many animals and even sentient creatures. Atop this bed lies a horrible thing, screaming in alarm and outrage upon detecting intruders into its domain. This thing is composed of two females of the sandmen, somehow fused together side-by-side; conjoined twins. These females are filthy, bloody and swollen, in a double pregnancy, the weight of which has immobilized the composite beast. The weak pale blue skin of the creatures' abdomens move with the excited movements of the unborn within.

The Siamese twin "mothers" of the tribe are swollen, fat, and almost entirely immobile. The thing is a gigantic mass of pale white flesh, albino from it's life underground (like all sand people), connected by misshapen shared limbs and ropy tendon coils, almost like a pair of identical sandmen the Creator smashed together in a fit on anger on the day of their formation. Yet it is decidedly neither a sandman nor a monster – but a combination of both. Some players may wish to show the wailing, helpless thing mercy,

but the brood that will be born (four males and a single female) will most assuredly be raised as their kin were, and will yearn to exact revenge on those "who walk above" for their transgressions.

☛ **"Brood Mother", Abomination (1):** CR 3; Large Aberration; HD 4d8+16; hp 28; Init +0; Spd 10 ft; AC 16 (+7 natural, -1 size); Atk 4 slams +6 melee 1d4+6; SQ Accelerated white blood cell activity, amorphous, dark vision, photosensitive, frightful presence; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 5, Wis 5, Cha 3.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2. Multiattack.

Treasure: While it appears that the room is a vast repository of useless junk, there are in fact a few useful items lying around. Each item may be discovered on a successful Search skill check (DC 15). Each use of the Search skill will take twenty minutes to achieve any fruition. The piles contain (in order of discovery): a rusted harmonica (worth perhaps 15 cp at Bazaar), a grimy one-liter plastic bottle containing three *salt pills*, a capsule of *hercurin* (one dose, in pill form), and a fully functional *automatic pistol* with three cartridges remaining in the magazine.

11. Exit

This area is a steeply rising ramp, which emerges onto the surface through a sand-covered trapdoor. This exit must be the one used by the dwellers below when setting their lures, and provides you with your only escape.

With the revelation of light pouring down through the trapdoor, the characters realize they have escaped the lightless domain of the sandmen - and may now return to the relative comfort and security of the blistering surface world.

DRY FORT

Having cleared the route to Dry Fort from Spilunk, the PCs have been instructed to go on to that fortress and see how they can aid the locals there. When they arrive they find a weather-beaten old promontory of rock on which stands the village of Dry Fort.

Still nursing wounds from your terrible encounter with the sandmen of the haunted gorge, you have descended from that high country into what can only be described as true badlands of sand, cliffs, and ravines. Following your map you have finally come to the shadow of Dry Fort – a rough fortress made from brick, dry mud, and freestone worked from the sparse elements of this land. Though simple and savage, the citadel of Dry Fort is an impressive sight in this otherwise desolate wasteland, standing high on a promontory of solid rock.





Dry Fort: (Resentfuls; ruled by warrior brotherhood); AL LN; 0 cp limit (will not trade); Assets 350 cp; Population 70; Isolated (second-generation mutant 100).

Authority Figure: Warlord Thrakas, male second-generation mutant Gu8.

Important Characters: Captain Ulz, male second-generation mutant Gu4; Captain Razner, male second-generation mutant Gu4.

Others: Town guards, Gu2 (4), Gu1 (12); Militia, Gu1 (16); Sc2 (2), Sc1 (4); Th2, Th1 (2); Tr2, Tr1 (2).

● **Typical Warrior of Dry Fort, Guardian1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resentfuls); HD 1d10+2; hp 8; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 25 ft; AC 18 (+1 Dex, +5 beast chitin, +2 large steel shield); Atk Battleaxe +4 melee 1d8+2; SQ Defender; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +1, Listen +3, Ride +5, Speak Gutter Talk, Speak Unislang, Spot +3. Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).

Possessions: Battle axe, beast chitin armor, large steel shield, backpack, bedroll, blanket, three doses of *juju salve*, light horse with trappings. *Mutations and Defects:* Aberrant Endoskeletal Encasing, Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Extreme Resilience, Sensitive Sight. Cystic Fibrosis, Hunchback, Mongoloid, Under-Developed Organ (nose).

THE TOWN

The village of “Dry Fort” rests on a small steep-sided rise in a wide-open area, allowing the residents to clearly see for a great distance in any direction. A low-rounded wall completely encircles the settlement; this wall is made of dried mud reinforced with thick wood and steel bar, or any other material that lends strength to the structure. Windows with upward-swinging slats provide ventilation and observation areas. A steep ramp leads up to the gates, which are crafted of old rusted iron bars.

Inside, Dry Fort is made up of another ring much like the outer wall. The only entrance is at the opposite side as the front gate, making any assault difficult, as the same shutters circumnavigate the inner wall, allowing the defenders to attack any trespassers with short bows kept on hand. This inner ring opens up into a central courtyard where the day-to-day life of the village occurs. The folk of Dry Fort live communally, with a large central fire pit. The inner ring is pierced on the inside with the curtained off arches leading into the private residences of the natives.

Dry Fort is ruled by a proud and fierce warrior brotherhood that drills rigorously in anticipation of any future conflict. These warriors have absolute authority over every aspect of life in Dry Fort, including ownership of property and the distribution of food. The few non-combatants that live in Dry Fort do so at the mercy of their benefactors, and must contribute some skill to the community or are cast out to face the perils of the world.

KEY TO DRY FORT

A. Gate

The front gate of Dry Fort is reached by a sloping ramp that leads from the desert floor up the natural rock promontory to the entrance. The slope is gradual enough for carts and wagons to navigate, and also serves to buy time for the garrison to rain arrows and other missiles down on attackers who have to ascend the slope.

When the PCs arrive they will be acutely aware that solemn, unfriendly faces watch them as they ascend the ramp towards the gate...

B. Ring

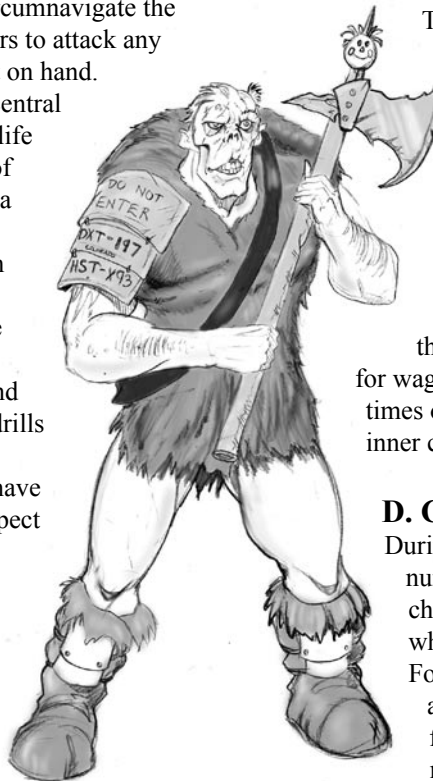
The inner ring is an open area behind the first mud wall, where soldiers of Dry Fort can remain under cover while firing on attackers below. Shuttered windows and arrow slits provide a good 360-degree view of the approaches to the village.

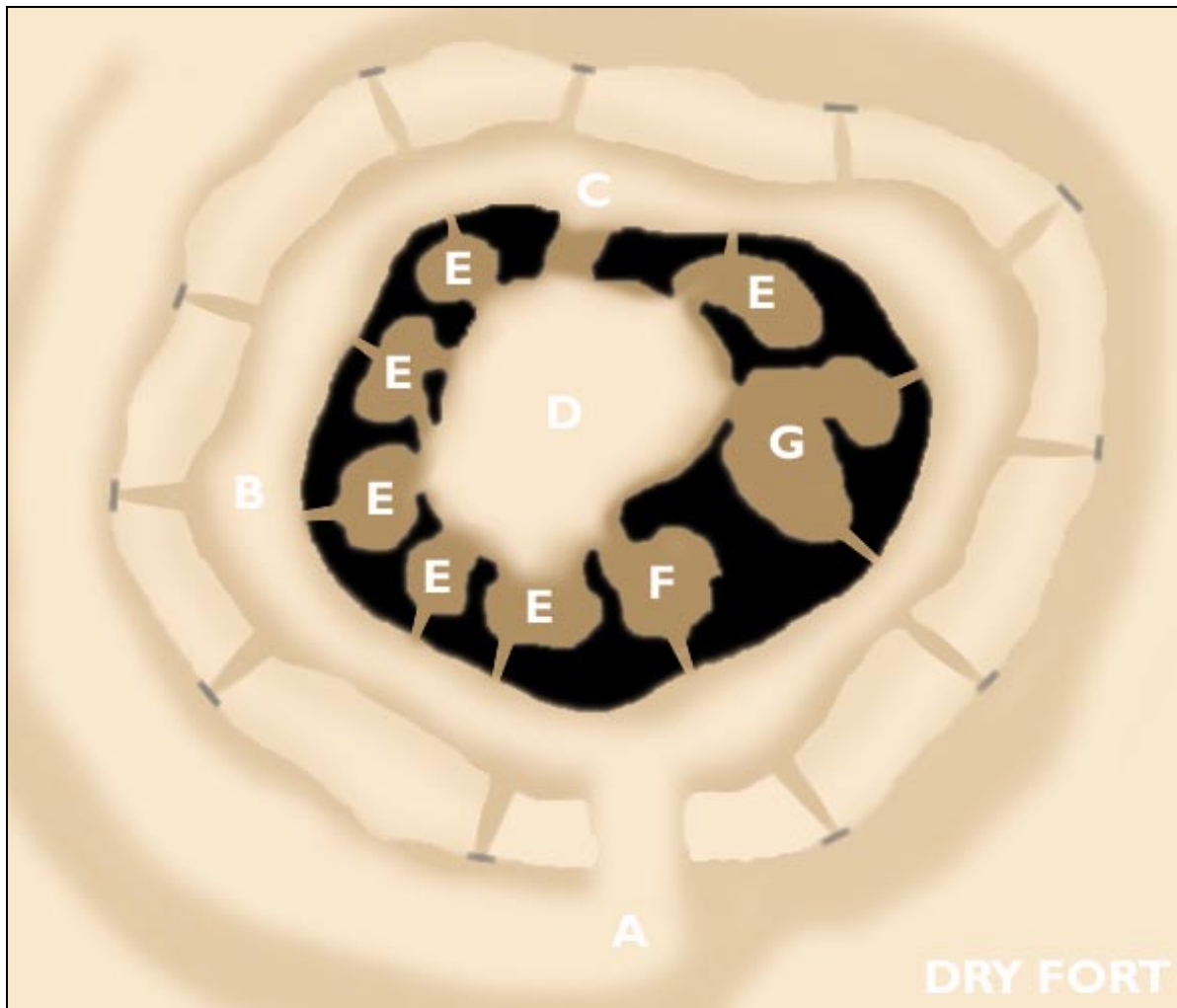
C. Inner Gate

The inner gate is a narrower opening than the main gate, but still large enough for wagons and carts. It can be closed up in times of war by materials kept within the inner compound.

D. Communal Area

During the day this open area is home to numerous warriors, womenfolk, and children, as well as many mangy dogs, which are kept by the people of Dry Fort as additional guardians and watch animals. The smoke of smoldering fires, with traces of the morning's meal, lingers here for hours. When not cooking or preparing the next meal,





those present in this open area will be telling tales of Dry Fort's past, reliving old battles, sparring for future conflicts, repairing weapons and armor, or fletching scores of new arrows to replace those lost by hunting parties.

E. Alcoves

These primitive alcoves are little more than mud dens. Some have an opening in the roof for ventilation or permitting sunshine in, though some are completely enclosed. Each houses a warrior's family and belongings; animals also live communally with the populace.

None of these chambers has anything of particular interest to the PCs.

F. Warlord's Hall

The chief of Dry Fort (known as the "warlord") resides in this, the largest and most spacious den in the village. It is reserved for his family, including loyal sons and favored concubines.

G. Cistern And Stores

This cool, enclosed mud den is used to store perishable foods and water. A cistern shaft has been sunk to a depth of thirty feet (it is only a quarter

full, however), while the meat of rare game is salted and hung here for preservation. Most of the foods consumed by the people of Dry Fort comprise tough hardy roots and various forms of cactus, though they also have honey in relative abundance (Dry Fort has access to the Dry Forest, which has bees).

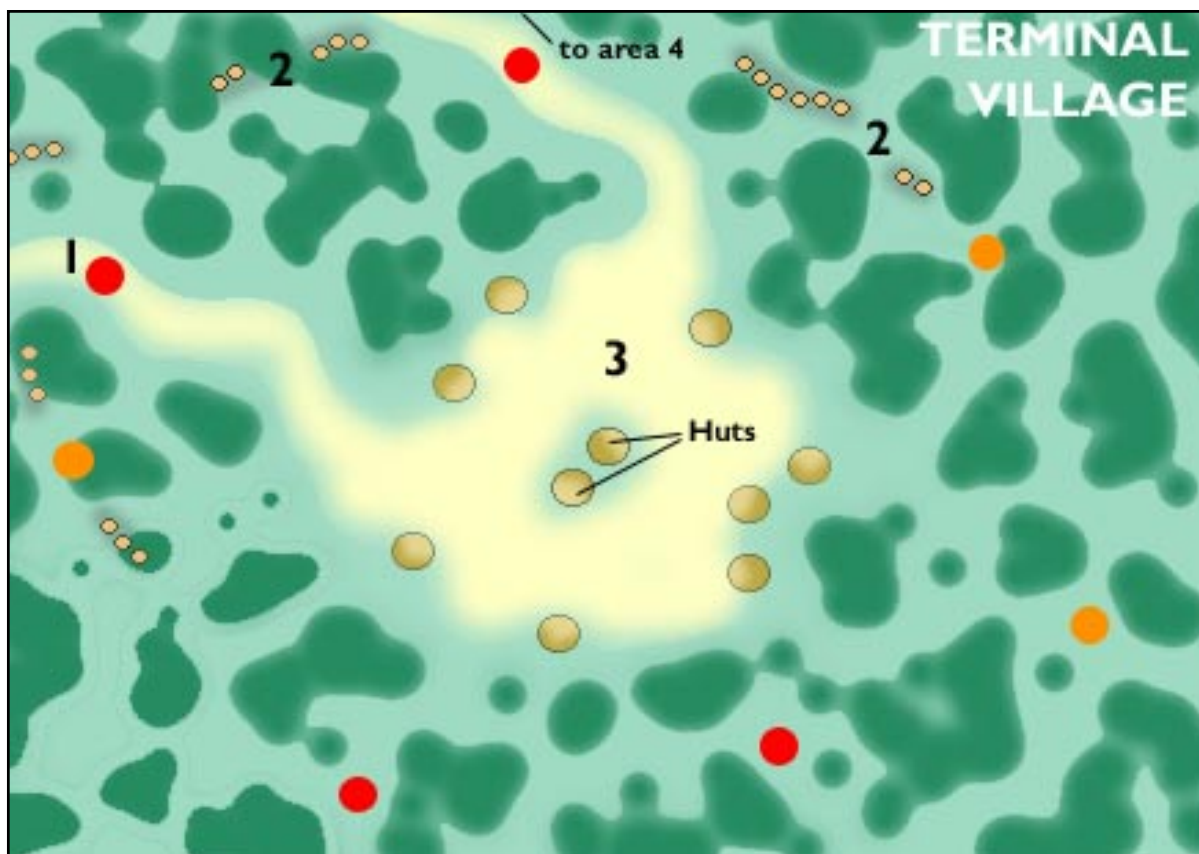
Dry Fort does not have a market, and they are not interested in trading any goods to "outsiders" now that war is imminent. The PCs will be unable to restock or resupply while they are here.

MEETING WITH CAPTAIN ULZ

As you near the compound of Dry Fort, it is clear that news of the Wastelords' destruction of Ebb and Sandyville has reached every corner of the desert. The warrior people of Dry Fort are busy preparing their defenses, repairing the damage to the stonework caused by last year's sandstorms. As you approach, a few humorless faces turn from their solemn work to stare down at you. Watchmen, standing atop the walls, stare without any sign of hospitality as you ascend, breathless, to the gate to their village.

But at least they're not shooting at you...





Though not exactly greeted as heroes (they have yet to prove themselves), the PCs are at least recognized as agents of the council and permitted sanctuary and shelter at Dry Fort. When they announce their intention to give word of recent events, only a single guard can be spared from the fortification effort to escort them to meet with Captain Ulz.

The PCs are escorted into the central yard, where Captain Ulz is overseeing the construction plans for his commander, the warlord of Dry Fort. Ulz, who met the PCs at the meeting of the Council of Three Towns (see introduction), is surprised to see them, but will reluctantly set aside time to hear what they have to say.

Once they inform him of recent events, he will cool his natural suspicion of them and consider their words.

Captain Ulz strokes his chin.

"You scags learn much in short time. This device...what purpose for it? What good I ask you? Nothing. Spilunk wastes time figuring it out. It junk, like other junk of Ancients. Worthless. Bah. And Bazaar's busy counting its beans. They traders, not warriors. We are warriors. But we not ready. Storm season has done much damage to Dry Fort. What, we supposed to fight whole war by ourselves?!?"

"Now they send you to us. What good can you do? You little more than pups..."

He continues to rub his chin, apparently very disappointed at the state of affairs in the alliance.

"There may be something you scags *can* do. Maybe. We need our warriors here to build and keep lookout. If Wastelords attack, we need all our warriors here. But we need more iron to build up defenses. The scrap mine a day away in the dry forest. We go once each year to fetch scrap, but this year we cannot spare warriors to make trip."

Ulz's eyes glimmer.

"*You* will do this. You will take cart to dry forest, retrieve enough scrap metal, and bring back. Then defenses will be complete.

"Do this, and maybe you will earn respect as warriors of Dry Fort."

THE DRY FOREST

The "scrap mine" used by the people of Dry Fort is located some distance from that settlement, high up in the crag country that leads to more monumental peaks further north. The "mine" itself is located deep within the Dry Forest, an ancient hinterland of a unique kind in this part of the world for its trees and animal life.

When the PCs finally come to the edges of the forest, read the following:

The broken crag country you have traveled through finally ends at a wall of trees. Dry and naked, the trees resemble stands of kindling waiting to catch fire during the next lightning storm. Fallen husks of tree trunks vanish into

tall stands of golden grass, and weird fungi of white and orange colors sprout all over the upper branches of many of the trees. The distant calls of birds echo through the dry woods, but beyond these odd sights and sounds the forest seems eerily...dead.

Captain Ulz of Dry Fort said the scrap mine is to be found at the heart of this ancient woodland. Though there are trees everywhere, enough distance between each withered trunk means your wagon can pass easily into the forest. On your guard, you proceed with caution.

The forest is not, in fact “dead”, but rather a refuge for many forms of life that have escaped the harsh conditions of the desert wasteland for a dwindling existence among the sheltered trees. These include small birds, hawks, insects of all kinds including bees (the honey of which the people of Dry Fort harvest each year) small mammals (or deformed variations) and a particular tribe of *terminals*.

There will be no major encounters in the Dry Forest (except perhaps for rare sightings of hawks hunting smaller birds overhead, or the flash of a squirrel running past on a high treetop), unless the PCs near the site of the “scrap mine”, when they will stumble upon the defensive traps of the terminal village.

KEY TO THE DRY FOREST

1. Traps

Those areas marked as traps on the map indicate either clever snares or concealed spiked pits, constructed by the terminals to catch wild animals (for meals) as well as trespassers in the vicinity of the village. *Snares* are marked with an **orange** circle; *spiked pit raps* are marked with a **red** circle.

⊗ **Snare:** CR 1/3; no attack roll necessary; Reflex save (DC 18) to avoid being *immobilized*; Search (DC 18); Disable Device (DC 18).

⊗ **Spiked Pit Trap (10 Ft. Deep):** CR 1; no attack roll necessary (1d6), +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+1 points of damage per successful hit); Reflex save (DC 18) avoids; Search (DC 18); Disable Device (DC 18).

GM's Note: A character caught in a *snare* is instantly hurled 20' into the air and dangled upside down. He must make a Reflex save (DC 18) or also drop anything held in the hands. He is effectively immobilized while snared.

Bells worked into the snares and pits will be triggered when the trap is set off, alerting the terminals in the village that a trespasser has been caught. A scouting force of three to six terminals will arrive in 1d4+2 rounds.

2. Wall Sections

Here and there is evidence that someone has been building some kind of wall, digging holes in the forest floor and placing fallen tree trunks upright to create a makeshift barrier.

The wall structure is only marginally complete; given time, however, the terminals are likely to fence off the entire village and scrap mine to prevent outside intrusion.

3. Village (EL 7)

The forest thins as it approaches a clearing, where apparently some primitive tribe of people has created a village motley huts and lean-tos made from fallen tree limbs, trunks, and leaves. The smoking remains of campfires offer evidence that the village was recently occupied...

The status of the village when first encountered depends on whether or not the PCs have been heard approaching. Lookouts for the village make take a 10 on their Listen checks (for a total of 11), which must defeat the Move Silently checks of the approaching group. If any snares or pit traps have been triggered, the villagers are automatically alerted to the PCs' presence.

Alerted: If the terminals are alerted to the presence of the PCs, the entire tribe will arm themselves, and retreat into their huts. Two gronts, domesticated by the tribe to serve as beasts of burden, will be left to attack the PCs when they are roughly in the center of the settlement. Once distracted by the gronts, the entire terminal population will come pouring from all over the village to attack the intruders from all directions.

Not Alerted: If they weren't already alerted to the PCs' presence through their various snares and spiked pits (or through their ability to listen), the occupants of the village will be found in the various huts or around the dwindling fires, cleaning the carcass of unidentifiable animals, making twine and leather from the same, or using stone tools to create spears, spikes for their pits, etc.

If encountered in this manner (i.e. taken off guard), this gives the PCs more leverage when attempting to prove their intentions are benign. In this case the PCs receive a +5 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks when trying to arrange a peaceful solution to the scrap problem.

● **Gronts (2):** CR 4; Large Beast; HD 4d10+28; hp 35; Init +4 (Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (-1 size, +7 natural); Atk Bite +10 melee 1d8+10; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 25, Dex 11, Con 25, Int 2, Wis 2, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +1, Climb +1, Jump +1, Move Silently +2. Improved Initiative, Iron Will.





POTENTIAL ALLIES

Despite the inherent difficulties, you may want to award players who persist in attempts at making peace with the terminal village with success, instead of leading them into a potential bloodbath.

A Diplomacy check, **DC 15**, is enough to convince the tribe that the PCs mean them no harm. However, though this will stave off attack, it is a far cry from getting the terminals' cooperation. Even though they may be able to prove they mean no harm, the terminals wish to be left alone.

Any request to investigate the site of the "scrap mine" will anger the terminals and rouse their suspicions, and the PCs will thereafter be shadowed to ensure they do not violate that sanctuary.

With a Diplomacy check at **DC 20**, however, the PCs may be able to convince the terminals that the steel is needed for the very survival of the Three Towns alliance. Though the terminals have no love for the Three Towns (who shut their doors to them), stories of the depravations of the Wastelords make it clear to the terminals that unless something is done to stop them, they might be among the villages destroyed in the future.

If successful, the terminals will finally relent and let the PCs take enough scrap to fill one wagonload. But they tell the PCs to return to Dry Fort and tell the warriors there that the "scrap mine" has new owners, and any further attempts to take metal from the site must be negotiated with them. They will expect some kind of payment or compensation from now on to appease the "Sky God".

Finally, if the Diplomacy check to convince the terminals about the Wastelord threat was made by a margin of more than 5, the terminals become so concerned that they offer to send some of their warriors to join the alliance of the Three Towns. This force will consist of half the tribe (six terminals and one gront), who will appear later in the scenario during the war with the Wastelords.

• **Terminals (12):** CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8-2; hp 7 each; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 9 (-1 Dex); Atk 2 claws +3 melee 1d4+3, javelin -1 ranged 1d6+3 (smeared with *small centipede poison*); AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -2; Str 16, Dex 8, Con 8, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Move Silently +0, Spot +0.

Treasure: Only if the terminals are killed off will the PCs be able to take stock of their meager possessions. These consist of some thirty javelins, six slings, four short spears, and some ten extra doses of *small centipede poison* for smearing on their weapons. In addition, a rusted set of night vision goggles (treat these as *infra-red goggles*) are also in their possession, recovered from the wreckage of their "Sky God" a few months ago (the terminals do not know how it works, however, and thus keep it solely as a curiosity).

4. Scrap Mine

See "The Scrap Mine" for details.

Diplomacy

Normally the creatures called "terminals" are not known for their civility, and the occupants of the village are no exception. Their story is a rather sad one: a collection of outcasts driven from the communities of the Trade Lands, they banded together and left the valley for the protection and relative abundance for the forest. Though they are promised only short and miserable lives, the terminals of the tribe have sworn to live out what little time they have away from the hatred and prejudice of the outside world.

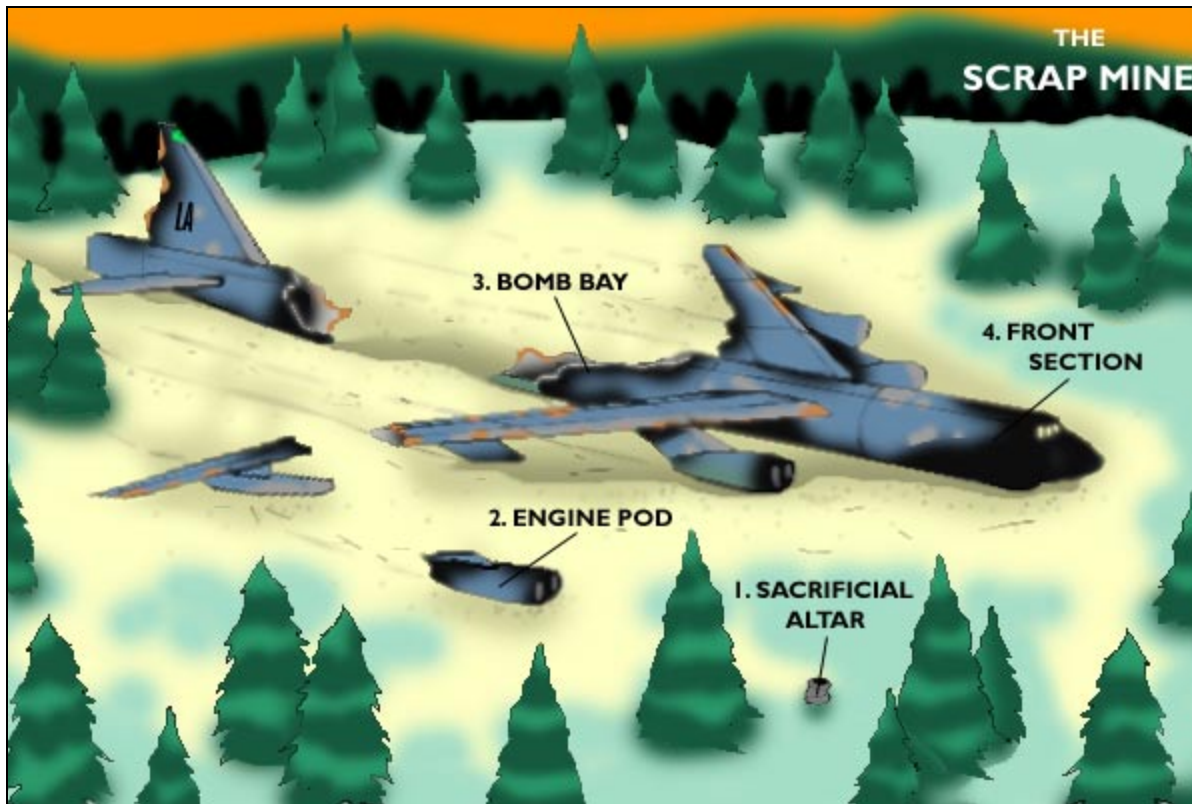
The terminals have made for themselves a small village with adequate defenses, and have begun to learn how to hunt for the benefit of the entire tribe, as well as to make important items such as javelins and spears. They have learned to treat their injured instead of eating them, and have come to feel a sense of uncanny camaraderie among their fellows. Though fragile at best, their attempt at living separate from the world is working.

Complications

Unfortunately for the alliance, the terminals have decided to make their village near the "scrap mine". The terminals, having only recently arrived, do not realize the value the scrap mine has to the people of Dry Fort, and instead of using it for parts and scrap metal, have themselves taken to "worshipping" it. Believing the ancient aircraft to be the remains of a winged god from long ago, they perform monthly sacrifices of burnt animals there in a semblance of primitive worship.

This fact may pose a major problem in any attempts at diplomacy with the terminal tribe. Under no circumstances will they allow "outsiders" (even ones with a previous claim to the site, such as the people of Dry Fort) to violate their religious site or take from it.

The terminals would make useful allies of the Three Towns alliance, but convincing them that the party isn't hostile would be a difficult challenge to say the least. Trespassing onto what the terminals consider their "last chance at peace", as well as ransacking their holy site (the "scrap mine"), the PCs will likely be seen as enemies rather than potential friends.



THE SCRAP MINE

Though so far in the future no one is left to recognize it for what it is, the so-called “scrap mine” is in fact the wreckage of a B-52 that crashed in the mountains during the Fall, just as it launched the last of its air-launched nuclear cruise missile payload. Though shielded against EMP detonation, the intensity of airbursts at distant NORAD and Denver caused enough disruption to bring the bomber down.

The bomber crash-landed relatively intact, though the crew was killed instantly on impact. The wreckage has remained in place for hundreds of years, the forest slowly rebuilding itself around the metallic hulk. When the PCs arrive, it will seem just another leftover from the time of the Ancients.

If the PCs avoid the terminal village, or even if they approach from a direction that means they don’t discover it, they may come to the scrap mine without encountering the local inhabitants of the forest. If this is the case, keep in mind that any activity here that makes loud noise (including loading scrap into the wagon) has a good chance of alerting the terminals of the party’s presence at their religious site.

KEY TO THE “SCRAP MINE”

1. Sacrificial Altar

Up ahead a cairn of stones stacked one on top of the other seems to mark the spot of the scrap mine.

You find its presence a bit odd, since Captain Ulz never mentioned a cairn...

Beyond the cairn the forest dwindles into a broad clearing bathed by the sun, wherein rests an enormous metallic hulk, longer than any metal structure you have ever seen, left bare and naked to the elements by the lack of trees. Rusted over in many parts, and much of its surface overgrown with dry vegetation, it is a truly impressive sight.

Atop the cairn rests a small wooden bowl, its concave surface turned black by fires lit within. An examination reveals a collection of sooty animal bones, apparently burned here as some kind of religious “offering”.

If the PCs have not yet encountered the inhabitants of the terminal village, they will now have reason to suspect that others live in the vicinity of the scrap mine...

2. Engine Pod

A huge metal object, almost as large as a house, sits here exposed to the elements. The metal casing of the thing is torn and battered, and the heat of some ancient fire seems to have burned it black. Twisted debris extends from this point on; the growth of grass and wild flowers throughout seems to indicate that this wreckage has been here for generations.

There is nothing of interest to be found here.





3. Bomb Bay

This part of the wreckage appears to be the focus of the scavenging efforts of the scrap miners of Dry Fort.

There is ample room here for the characters to pull up the cart and begin work immediately. Extracting steel from the wreckage is a difficult and time-consuming process that involves prying off the bent and twisted plating of the plane's fuselage, hauling it to the cart, and securing it.

The effort should take three hours for four reasonably strong characters working non-stop. Keep in mind that activity here is likely to draw the attention of the terminals at the village, unless measures are taken to be as quiet as possible.

4. Front Section

Climbing into this confined front part of the aging metal structure, you are confronted by a rusted, ruined interior, the only light coming through a number of portals in the far end. Coarse vegetation such as vines and ivy have grown through these windows and covered much of the metallic consoles and machinery cluttering the place. The stench of rot is heavy here.

This area was once the cockpit and electronics monitoring station of the bomber; there are three rotted seats, two in the front with a third (facing aft) behind the pilot seat. Skeletal remains are evident in each of these seats, but time and the elements have stripped them of any identification.

Treasure: A thorough Search (DC 18) will uncover a *power pack* with about an hour's charge left in it, concealed beneath some panels. Wires – which can be safely disconnected with a Craft (Electronics) check at DC 15 (each failure induces a shock for 1d4 points of electricity damage) – appear to connect this pack to a computer screen in the electronic monitoring station (behind the pilot).

Any character making a Knowledge (Technology) check, DC 13, will be able to turn the console on. Sputtering to life, the small glass screen displays the last few moments of the bomber's flight course and its missile launching activity (see player aid).

GM's Note: Black out the written messages if none of the PCs present speaks Ancient. Also, do not explain what any of this information actually means! Clever players, however, will probably note the general contours of the mountains and, cross-referencing with their map of the Trade Lands, come to realize a nuclear cruise missile crashed into the hills south of Dry Fort!

ON THE WAY BACK (EL 3)

Assuming they are able to secure a wagonload of scrap for Dry Fort's defenses, the PCs will quickly head back to Dry Fort.

If he has not already made an appearance, the Scav who has been tailing the PCs since they recovered the "device" will now make his move.

The Scav has picked out the perfect spot to ambush the characters, among a maze of crags and boulders that if anything resembles the surface of Mars or some alien planet. Hidden among the heights, he can snipe at approaching PCs while keeping his position hidden. Because of the echoing effect of the crags country, his opponents must make a Listen check (DC 12) to hear the direction from which the attack came. A second Spot check (DC 15) is required to pick out where the Scav is among the shaded niches of the hundreds of boulders.

Characters taking cover once he opens fire may choose their concealment (from none to total), but those who do not know where the Scav is located have a 50% chance of being completely exposed (after all, not knowing where he is, they may be right in his sights)!

If characters fail to hear or spot the Scav, he may be able to pick them off one by one until it is too late!

● **"The Scav", Scav5 (1):** CR 3; Medium-size Humanoid (1st Generation Mutant Feral); HD 5d8+5; hp 37; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 leather armor); Atk Scimitar +4 melee 1d6+1; or *sport rifle* +8 ranged (+9 when *stabilized*) 1d12; SQ Nature sense, sneak attack (+2d6), radiation sense; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Hide +13, Intuit Direction +8, Move Silently +11, Search +4, Spot +10, Wilderness Lore +12. Far Shot, Forsaken, Point Blank Shot.

Possessions: *Sport rifle w/ bipod and target weapon modifications* +2 (8 shots), scimitar, one dose of *stimshot A* in *ready syringe*, map (see detail), and leather armor.

Mutations and Defects: Accumulated Resistance (disease). Cystic Fibrosis.

RETURN TO DRY FORT

When the PCs return to Dry Fort, they will receive a much more hospitable welcome, having earned the title of "allies" for the risk they took to retrieve the scrap for their town's defenses. Though having gained their appreciation, their friendship is another matter, but in general they will be greeted as useful members of the alliance and accorded the respect due allies.

This respect includes being allowed to trade for a hot meal, and secure lodgings for however long they plan on staying to help with the construction.

For his part Captain Ulz will immediately order the scrap be put to use bolstering the outer wall and the shutters defending the arrow slits. If he learns about any conflict with the terminals (and assuming they were wiped out, ending their threat to scavenging efforts in the Dry Forest), the warlord of Dry Fort has Ulz reward the PCs with six doses of *juju salve* and a pouch filled with twelve pistol cartridges and two *shotgun slugs* (since they don't have firearms themselves, these items are of no use to the warriors of Dry Fort).

THE HORSE HUNT (EL SPECIAL)

The next day a group of warriors from Spilunk, led by Warlord Thrakas and Captain Ulz, set out to engage in the annual round-up of new mounts for the tribe's cavalry. While this important undertaking has evolved into as much a sport as a necessity over the years, with the impending war with the Wastelords the need for additional mounts adds immediacy to the event.

The PCs are invited to attend the ritual round up of these new mounts, assuming they are up to it. Warlord Thrakas, who has so far declined to meet the PCs, wants to see how they handle a horse first hand. The invitation is nothing more than an invitation, meaning that if the PCs decline there will be no hard feelings.

If the PCs choose to join the hunt, they are each given a light riding horse (unless they have steeds of their own) for the event, as well as rope, sap, and a weighted net for ensnaring the wild desert horses of the wasteland. With no further instruction, Warlord Thrakas, Captain Ulz, and two other riders from Dry Fort ride off to catch up with a herd spotted this morning only miles from the village.

The Hunt

The hunters finally come to a stop on a small sandy crest, overlooking a broad open plain. As you catch up you see a herd of desert horses milling about in the open, the hot summer wind catching their manes in a gentle gale. One of the horses, a proud male with a silvery color, looks up as if keeping a wary eye on your hunting party. Captain Ulz speaks.

"The object of the hunt is to catch as many horses as possible. Each man in the party will be expected to catch at least one horse. If you catch a horse, you will share tonight's meal with the other warriors of the tribe, for this rite will initiate you as one of us."

Warlord Thrakas finally speaks.

"That one there. *The silvery stallion.*"

Captain Ulz explains.

"Warlord Thrakas has called his choice. Normally no warrior would dare interfere with his choice.

But if you can catch that horse before him, you earn the right to sit at the head of the feast, in his place. Consider it...a game."

The hunt begins immediately. There are fifteen desert horses in the herd, at a distance of 40 feet from the hunting party, which will instantly scatter and begin to run when the group moves to attack. The hunting party must try to divide and corner the individual desert horses and attempt to net them; this is not an easy task. Throwing a net is a close-range effort, and without the *Mounted Archery* feat there are serious penalties. If a character misses with his net he must stop and retrieve it, costing him valuable time (and possibly letting the horses get away).

A desert horse, if netted, will stop running away and will fight with hooves and bite. They normally attack the mounts of the PCs, but a PC who gets off his horse will be fair game. PCs are expected to grapple and/or subdue the horse, not kill it (to do so brings great shame, since the horses are quite valuable). If a horse is netted, it cannot be "stolen" (that is, other riders cannot try to take it from the PC that netted it).

To complicate things, however, part of the "sport" of the horse hunt is *competition*. Warlord Thrakas will *expect* the PCs to take up his challenge for the silver stallion. But the challenge involves more than just beating him to the target; Thrakas will ride up alongside the challengers to his claim and beat them senseless with his sap! The PCs may, of course, fight back, but during the course of the sporting, inflicting anything other than subdual damage will be considered very poor sportsmanship.

If Warlord Thrakas is beaten to the stallion, or knocked unconscious, he will laugh despite losing, having thoroughly enjoyed himself. The PCs will be hailed as true warriors for having bested the Warlord of Dry Fort!

🐾 **Desert Horses (15):** CR 1; Large Animal; HD 3d8+9; hp 30 (x1), 22 (x2), 21, and 20 (x2); Init +5 (Dex, Improved Init); Spd 60 ft; AC 14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk 2 kicks +4 melee 1d3+3, or bite -1 melee 1d3+1; SQ Scent, stampede, tremorsense; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +10. Improved Initiative.

🐾 **Warlord Thrakas, Guardian5 (1):** CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resentful); HD 5d10+15; hp 45; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 25 ft; AC 18 (+1 Dex, +5 beast chitin, +2 large steel shield); Atk Sap +7 melee 1d6+2, or net +6 ranged *special*; SQ Defender, called shot (+1d6); AL LN; SV Fort +6; Ref +2; Will +1; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +8, Listen +2, Ride +8, Sense Motive +4, Spot +2. Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Ride By Attack, Trample, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).





Possessions: Net, sap, beast chitin armor, large steel shield, light horse with trappings.

Mutations and Defects: Aberrant Endoskeletal Encasing, Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Extreme Resilience, Sensitive Sight. Cystic Fibrosis, Hunchback, Mongoloid, Under-Developed Organ (nose).

❖ **Light Horses (one for each party member):**

CR 1; Large Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 60 ft; AC 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Atk 2 hooves +2 melee 1d4+1; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +6.

GM's Note: Award the PCs normal experience points for capturing and subduing the desert horses.

MESSENGERS ARRIVE

Whether or not the PCs participate in the horse hunt, for the next few days the PCs will be expected to get down to serious business and lend a hand in readying Dry Fort for the inevitable war.

The GM can use this time to allow the PCs to recuperate from their injuries, to train (and level up), or make plans once their duty here is complete. It will also give the PCs a chance to make firmer contact with the warriors of Dry Fort, and engender a sense of camaraderie that could do wonders for fortifying relations between the allied Three Towns for generations to come.

Eventually a group arrives at Dry Fort from Spilunk. Bearing important news, they are taken immediately to Warlord Thrakas' presence to inform them of the news.

The PCs, who have been recuperating at the village (and hopefully earning the trust of the people of Dry Fort), are given a chance to join the meeting of the messengers and the leaders of the village.

Meeting within the hall of the Warlord of Dry Fort is like descending into a cave from prehistoric times. Torches on the wall create a smoky, biting air, while colorful scenes painted on the rock are reminiscent of Spilunk – but depict victorious hunting forays against monstrous prey, or past deeds of valor by the elite of the village. Furs cover parts of the floor where young boys sit sharpening their spears with bits of sharpened flint.

The messengers from Spilunk stop murmuring amongst themselves before finally moving over to the stump in front of the imposing figure of Warlord Thrakas, leader of Dry Fort. One of them pulls back his cloak and opens a satchel beneath, pulling out the device and placing it before Warlord Thrakas.

The warlord, staring down from his perch on a stony throne, seems unimpressed.

The first messenger speaks.

"This device is what the Wastelords seek. Our elders have looked back through the mists of the past to discover what it is. We think it is called a 'guidance system', a device that through unknown magic guides a great fiery weapon of untold power unerringly to its target."

As the man speaks, his arms make a great motion as if recreating the rising sun.

"It is a piece of one of the Great Weapons of the Ancients."

Warlord Thrakas' eyes glimmer, but for a moment he says nothing. Captain Ulz, at his side, leans in and whispers. Eventually he speaks.

"With this weapon they destroy any of our villages. With this weapon they destroy the alliance!"

The messenger is quick to cut in.

"We must find where they keep the weapon.

They seek the guidance system as we speak, so as long as we keep it from them we buy ourselves time."

"We must get the weapon for ourselves..." says Warlord Thrakas.

"The leaders of my community, Spilunk, and also those of Bazaar, agree," replies the messenger.

"With it we will be able to destroy the Wastelord threat and win our freedom once and for all."

Warlord Thrakas whispers with Captain Ulz for a moment.

"These men," he says, motioning to your party, "have proven themselves to all of the Three Towns in the alliance. We nominate them for this task."

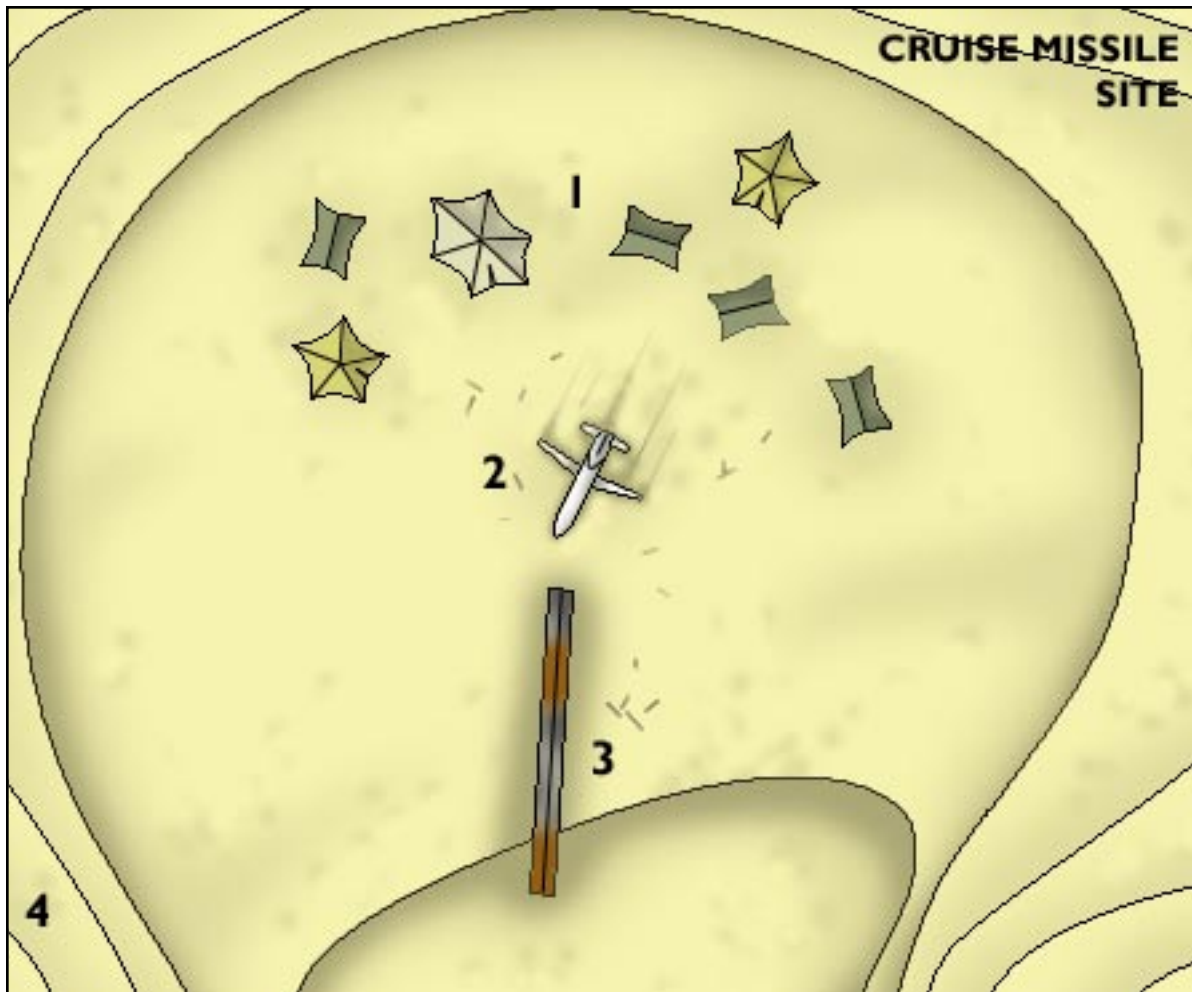
The messenger looks to you, then nods.

"Assuming they are willing..."

Now might be a good time re-negotiate their contract! Players who think of it may have their characters strike a deal with the allied representatives for a bolstering of their original pay. If they make a Diplomacy check (DC 18), they may be able to convince the leaders to throw in an additional 500 corium apiece, as well as enough food and fresh water to get the PCs out of the Trade Lands and to the nearest civilized nexus once the war is won.

THE CRUISE MISSILE SITE (EL 7)

Unless they missed them, there are clues to lead the PCs to the site of the crashed cruise missile, fortunately located only a few miles to the south of Dry Fort. The computer display in the crashed bomber (see "The Scrap Mine") shows the direction and distance from the Dry Forest crash site, and the shoddy map carried by the Scav haunting them since they retrieved the device also has an enigmatic "X"



labeling the same area as being of particular note.

The journey to the site is wrought with uncertainty, with the pressure of knowing that the Great Weapon they seek to steal from the hands of the Wastelords is of a kind lost to antiquity. Characters may know nothing of the nature of the weapon, or may have heard legends of such great devices used during the Fall, but to actually find one intact and turn it against the raiders is a terrifying prospect.

Roll for random encounters as normal during the trip. Following a roughly straight line south from Dry Fort, they will soon find tracks (Wilderness Lore, DC 12) left by the Wastelords leading to the resting place of the Great Weapon.

It is almost twilight. Here, in the boulder-strewn foothills of the mountainous spur dividing the Trade Lands, the sky seems to take on a much deeper and more ominous red color, with the stars barely visible like the eyes of the Ancients themselves luring you to the resting place of their forgotten, infernal weapon. Towering cliffs and pillar-like formations of rock serve to channel the wind into a deafening gale, buffeting you and your mounts as you ascend further up the slopes.

A series of strange noises echoes through this eerie countryside, barely audible over the roaring

wind. Taking cover behind a huge boulder, you cautiously sneak forward between bits of stony cover to see beyond, perhaps 100 yards in the distance.

There, in a shallow gully, is what appears to be a large “arrow”, broken in a number of pieces, rusted and battered from the countless ages since the Fall. For a moment your minds imagine that the wind is not just raging without purpose, but carrying the whispers of the Ancient dead, beckoning you to revive the weapon and utilize its destructive powers to rule the world.

But it must be your imaginations running wild. Surely.

Sudden movement in the gully distracts your silent awe. There appears to be a camp set up in the depression, complete with many tents, where a large group of raiders in leather, chains, and a hodge-podge of gear studded with wicked barbs mingle about. They appear to have been pursuing work on the Great Weapon, for a glow can be seen from the front hatch of the fallen machine where a worker might be welding or making repairs from inside.

You grip your weapons nervously, knowing that today you will be firing the first shots in a war that could tear the Trade Lands apart.





KEY TO THE CAMP

1. Main Camp

This area is merely a collection of tents and lean-tos temporarily used by the Wastelord raiders while they ready the missile for firing.

Treasure: A search of the Wastelord camp (DC 12) will reveal some important items. These include a collection of books and magazines about WWII rocketry (worth a total of 100 cp outside of the Trade Lands; worth 250 cp to members of the Paradise Believers cult, a major faction of the Twisted Earth), a logbook, and a single *communicator* (a hand-held walkie talkie, worth 500 cp), though the *power cell* has just run out of power.

The log vaguely reveals that the Wastelords are indeed “from the south”, beyond the mountains and that they are using the Dry River to move their vehicles in the Trade Lands undetected. Not only is this the only pass through the mountains, but also the hard-packed earth of its bed does not create a dust-cloud when a large force moves over it.

The radio allows the raider patrol to communicate with other Wastelord forces in the Trade Lands, giving the entire army a decisive advantage over the natives of the valley.

2. Missile

The “Great Weapon”, originally an air-launched AGM-86 cruise missile, crashed here, by some trick of fate suffering only minor damage. It has been stripped somewhat, however; first by the Scav who found the wreckage (he took the only part he could carry, the **guidance system**), then by the people of Monastery under cover of night. The entire missile is almost 15 feet long and weighs nearly 2,000 lbs.

3. Launch Ramp

The Wastelords have built a ramp out of scrap metal, rocks, and wood. The ramp will hopefully allow the missile to be launched (not unlike some archaic “V-weapon” from WWII).

GM’s Note: If you are playing with part two of this campaign, the PCs will notice that the ramp was built facing *south*, not towards any known settlement in the Trade Lands. Though they don’t know it, this is because the Wastelords are in fact attempting to use the missile against a much greater threat to the world, on the other side of the mountains, from which they themselves come.

If this adventure is being played stand-alone, the missile ramp is built facing towards Bazaar.

4. Witnesses

Two scouts from Monastery are hiding here, watching the battle. See later for details.

There is a force of eight Wastelords at the missile salvage site, including seven warriors and a single – but invaluable – mech (“Sprocket”) in their “employ”.

Three of the raiders will be on guard, taking a 10 on their Spot and Listen checks to avoid being taken by surprise. Another guard is off to the side, playing with the camp’s radio attempting to get it to work (the power cell has just run out of power; this fact will prevent the raiders from alerting the rest of the Wastelords of the PCs’ attack).

The remainder of the raiders are moving around assisting the mech in repairing the missile, but are not far from their weapons. Whether discovered first or not, a battle to the death will occur when the PCs emerge from hiding.

♥ **Sprocket, Thinker3/Mech5 (1):** CR 9; Medium-size Humanoid (1st Generation Mutant Visionary Reinventor); HD 8d4; hp 20; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+4 Dex); Atk Light crossbow +7 ranged 1d8 (smeared with *poison*); SQ Knowledge, repair mechanical damage (1d8+5), growing toolkit (+5), identify, artifice (8,000 cp or more), minor helper; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +11, Will +2; Str 7, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 19, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Bluff +4, Craft (mechanics) +14, Craft (technician) +14, Decipher Script +15, Disable Device +14, Knowledge (ancient lore) +10, Knowledge (computers) +15, Knowledge (technology) +15, Knowledge (weaponsmithing) +11, Speak Ancient, Speak Computer, Speak Unislang. Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (craft, mechanics), Vulture.

Possessions: Light crossbow (folds down so can be concealed within a coat; springs open when a switch is hit), 12 bolts, four poisoned bolts smeared with *terinav root* (see DMG) in special quiver, two *ready syringes of stimshot A*.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accumulated Resistance (disease). Bilirubin Imbalance, Terminal Limb Deficiency (genitals).

Sprocket looks completely out of place among the other raiders: small, weak, and snot-nosed. He wears a pair of cracked glasses on his thin face that look more like magnifying lenses, and his hair has been completely shaved off on one side of his head – the other dyed a vibrant blue (so that the raiders can keep track of him in battle). He usually wears a long, soiled, military-style trench coat, within which he conceals his various tools, equipment, and folding crossbow.

Sprocket came into the “employ” of the Wastelords after being found thirsting to death in the wastes. He begged to be spared, and only the timely breakdown of one of the raiders’ cycles (and it’s subsequent repair by Sprocket) saved his life. Since then he has been mistreated and bullied, but he considers the Wastelords his “family” despite their horrific

treatment of him. Though considered little more than a “slave”, he is nonetheless loyal to the army.

Sprocket will surrender if reduced to 5 hits points or less.

❖ **Wastelords, Raider1 (7):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+1; hp 6 each; Init +6 (Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +1 chains and chaps, +3 studded leather armor); Atk Dagger +3 melee 1d4+2, or *automatic rifle* +3/+3 ranged 1d12; SQ Chains and chaps (+1); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Speak Ancient, Speak Unislang, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3. Improved Initiative.

Possessions: *Automatic rifle* (60 shots), studded leather armor, dagger, backpack, bedroll, blanket, web belt.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight. Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Immune System Abnormality.

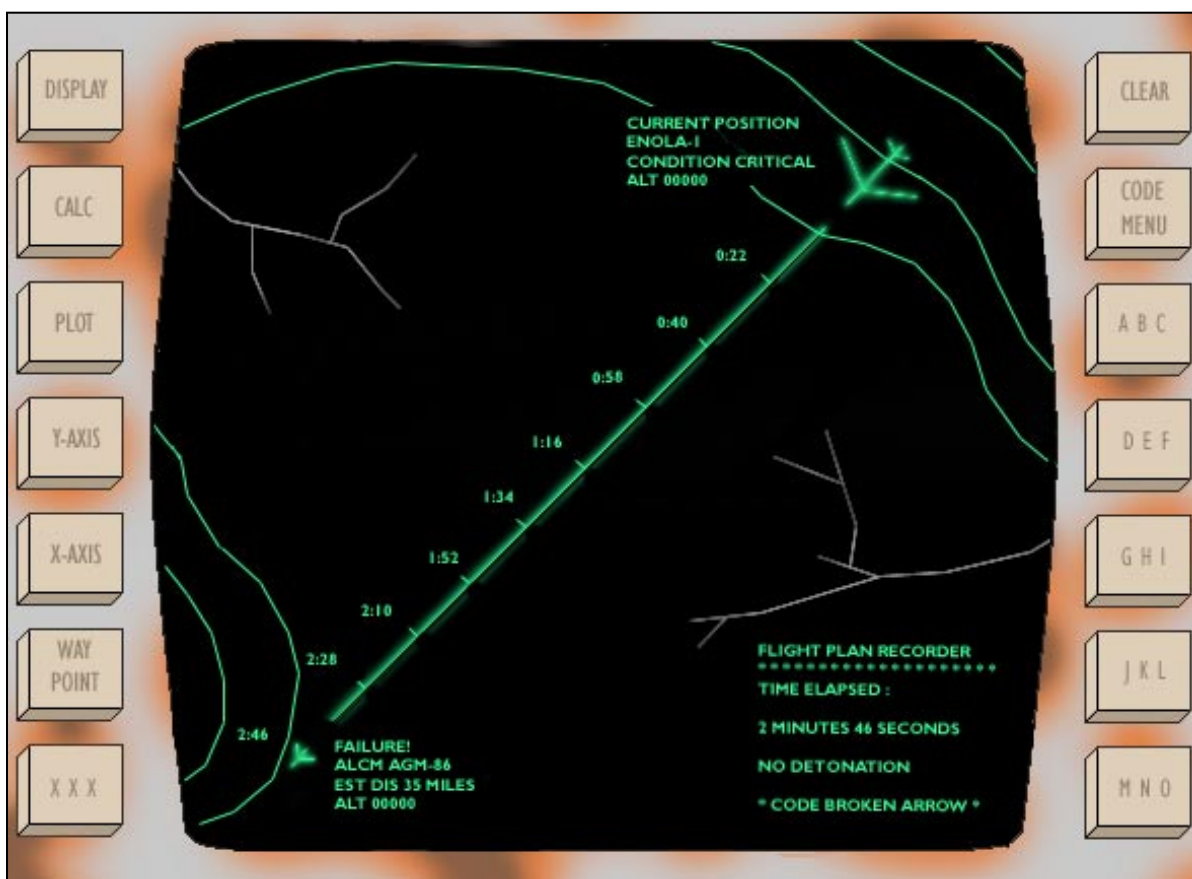
Unexpected Witnesses

As the ambush at the missile site nears its bloody end, allow each PC in the group to make a Spot check at DC 10. If successful, they notice more figures hiding among the crags, watching the scene as it unfolds

Panting heavily from the fighting, you wonder if the sight that caught your eye was just an illusion brought on by wounds and fatigue. But as you look up, there among the rocks you see a pair of huddled figures wearing curious robes of black, perhaps fifty yards up the slopes of the nearest hill. Realizing they have been spotted, the two take off at once. But though you prepare to chase them, fearing them to be more Wastelords, the flap of one’s robe parts revealing a grotesque body more resembling a segmented spider than any human. Stunned (and unable to pursue), you can only watch as they vanish up into the mountains.

Though they don’t know it, these two are scouts from Monastery, a secluded community high in the mountains. Witnesses to the efforts of the Wastelords to salvage the missile, they possess the third – and most important – part of the Great Weapon. The scouts (monks), having witnessed the battle, return by secret trails up to their mountain fortress to spread news that more enemies seek the Great Weapon – and to put their people on alert.

GM’s Note: If the PCs are somehow able to intercept the fleeing scouts, these prove to be two **monks** from Monastery (see that chapter for details), armed with carbines. They will fight to the death to defend the secret location of Monastery, and will die rather than be interrogated.





Examination Of The Missile Site

Once the Wastelords have been killed to a man, the cruise missile site can be further examined.

It is immediately obvious that the Wastelords have yet to fully complete the repair and reconstruction of the missile, for it is still in a number of fragmented parts. Work seems to have focused on the fuselage of the AGM-86, as if the Wastelords were trying to find something in particular amongst the wreckage, to no avail.

If the PCs captured the mech, Sprocket, an Intimidate check (DC 18) may be used to extract more information about their progress:

The weasel of a man cowers, bloody and wounded, raising his hands feebly to fend off more blows. Apparently he is willing to talk.

“Our leader says the weapon must be made ready soon. I...I...I have been working night and day! Your people...you *savages* have destroyed everything! You have the guidance system...and the warhead. Without them we cannot complete our reconstruction effort.”

If asked about the warhead, he looks surprised.

“Surely one of your tribes took it...it isn’t here!”

Hands in the air, he scrambles over to the camp to retrieve a soiled magazine. Flipping the pages frantically, he opens to a page covered in writing and a depiction of the Great Weapon.

“See...see...AGM-86...W-80 nuclear warhead...250 kiloton yield...it looks like a... large metal...cylinder...but it isn’t here. We’ve dissected the entire missile and it is gone. Just a hollow cavity. If you don’t have it, and WE don’t have it...then someone else has it!”

Sprocket knows nothing more about the missile, or who took it. Under no circumstances will he tell why the Wastelords want the bomb, and will let the PCs assume it is for use against them (if you are playing this scenario stand-alone, however, you can assume this is the truth).

WHAT NEXT?

Having secured the site, a handful of thinkers from Spilunk and Bazaar arrive later that night to examine the wreckage more thoroughly (and confirm what Sprocket knew) and make plans to have the missile taken back to Dry Fort where they can install the guidance system and make final repairs. A ramp, similar to the one the Wastelords built here, will also be constructed at Dry Fort.

However, it is clear that the task the PCs set out to do – secure the Great Weapon so it can be turned against the Wastelords – is not yet complete. The warhead is missing!

In addition to this fact, the PCs have learned two very important things. The first is the intelligence in the journal captured from the Wastelord patrol, which gives details on how the raiders move into the Trade Lands from across the mountains. This will prove an important piece of information, allowing the council to plan an ambush on the next batch of reinforcements coming into the valley. By cutting off this road, they can prevent the Wastelords from bolstering their numbers with more men and their infamous iron-clad vehicles, which without access to the riverbed will be unable to cross the mountains.

Most mysterious of all, however, is the sighting of unidentified figures near the missile site. Whoever they were, and whatever community they belonged to, their appearance so close to the salvage efforts makes them prime candidates for having taken the missing warhead. With this in mind, the PCs are instructed to follow the mountain trail and discover where they came from...

A few of the Spilunk thinkers will remain with the PCs, to help recover the warhead if and when it is found. They will not participate in the battle, however, unless things go really bad. They strongly suggest the PCs arm themselves with powerful automatic rifles of the fallen Wastelords, which will come in handy against whatever threat the alliance must now face.

MONASTERY (EL 11)

“Monastery” is a tiny community founded high in the rocky, wind-swept hills overlooking the desert valley. Monastery has stood here for generations; it has certainly stood since before the Fall, evidenced by the aging masonry depicting mourning angels, tearful cherubs, and the images of long-forgotten Christ figures all over its broken façade.

Erected long ago as a monastic retreat for the Carmelite order, Monastery was picked for its isolation among high peaks, and the stunning views of the valley below, to remind its faithful inhabitants of the beauty of God’s Creation. Home to no more than thirty or so monks before the Fall, the retreat was all but forgotten when the Great War broke out – a war that erased all remains of humanity.

Their Involvement

The mutants of Monastery are directly descended from the Ancients who originally inhabited the monastery. Quiet, withdrawn, and benevolent, when the Fall came they survived the nuclear exchange by virtue of their relative isolation, atop this mountain.

In time the monks of the original monastery attempted to leave their high retreat and find out what happened to the rest of mankind. Sadly they were unable to survive among ruthless traders, raiders, and the more savage societies that dominated the rest of the world outside of the region. Most of

the scouts sent out to make friendly contact met with mysterious fates. Only a handful returned, some with men and women willing to follow them back, speaking of horrors they were subjected to by the anarchist gangs that now ruled the world. Civilization, to them, was gone. They took in who they could, and prepared to shut their doors forever.

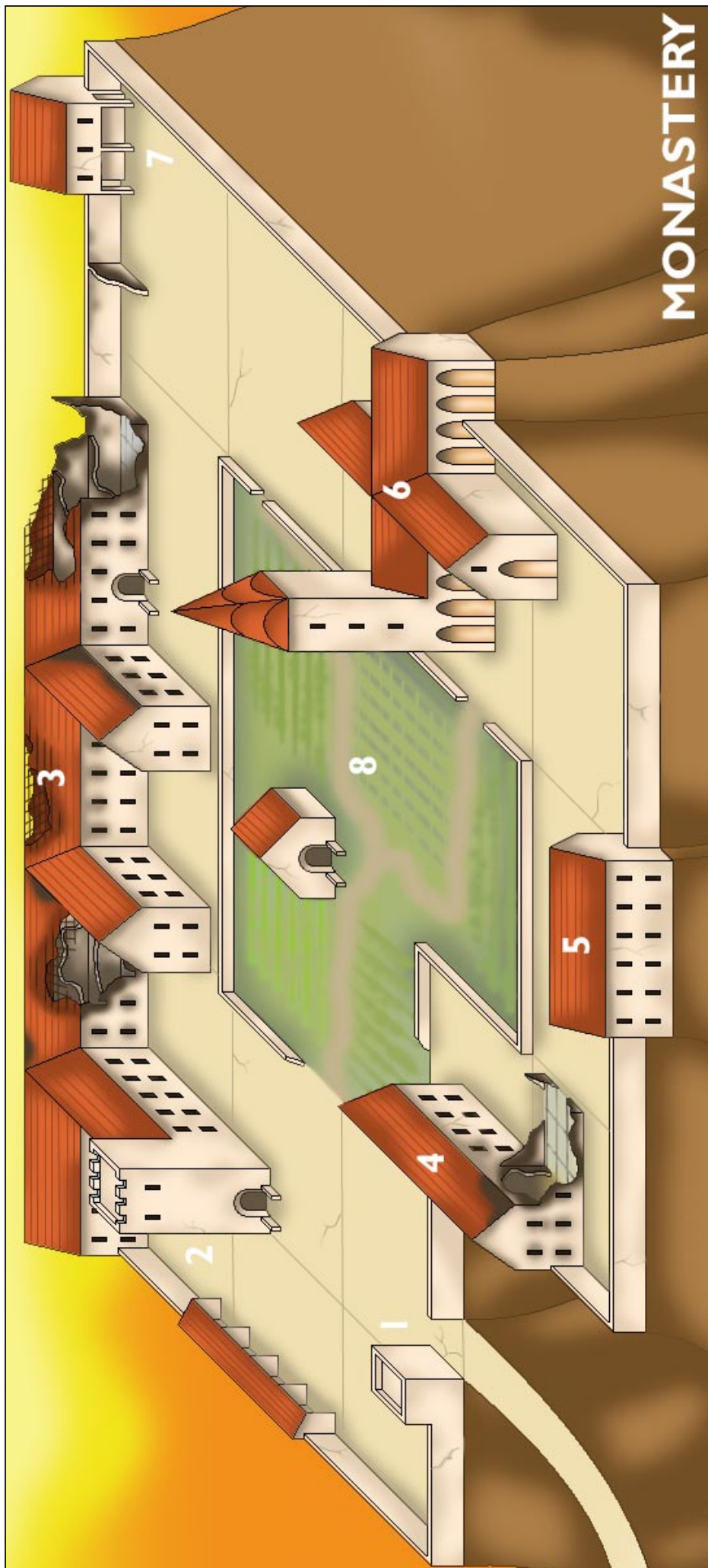
Giving up on the world, the monks made the Monastery their home for generations to come. Over time they began to mutate, and in their isolation changed from humans into truly monstrous things.

The breed of horrible mutants living in Monastery came not only to fortify the old Monastery over time, but also plumb its ancient secrets to keep the ways of the old order alive. With the passing of the years, the simple mutant creatures have kept up the manner and dress of the old Carmelite monks that were their ancestors, in some disjointed attempt to resurrect a way of life more suitable to their withdrawn existence. This way of life has proven fruitful; fasting from meats and cheeses meant they did not need to keep animals (which would complicate the delicate balance of resources on the mountaintop), and a general abstinence from sex has kept the population from exploding out of control.

In time, the inhabitants of Monastery evolved into a deeply ritualistic, isolated community of a quasi-monastic, reclusive nature, but one that was entirely self-sufficient.

The Monastery would have remained a lost secret, content in its retreat, if not for the observations of the monks of the valley floor in the days and weeks past. Seeing the movements of the Wastelords by day (in snaking columns of dust kicked up by their armies), and watching the movement of others through a primitive *spy glass*, they came to realize something was up in the valley. Earlier observation of the movements of a single figure (the Scav, who first found the crashed missile site) alerted them to the presence of the wreckage – a terrible, apocalyptic weapon they recognized from the old writings they had wisely protected in the Sacristy library. Something had to be done!

After much debate, the mutant monks (and “nuns”, who are equal members now) decided they could not stand idly by while one savage faction or another from the valley fought over the ancient weapon – it would certainly end up in the bomb’s detonation, and the issuance of another era of death and misery. In the end, they decided to send a small party out by night and into the valley, to retrieve the most dangerous part of the old weapon – it’s **warhead** – under the cover of darkness.





Dragging it off, they brought it back to Monastery where they now hide it, seeing their actions as protecting the entire valley from its devastating potential.

Unfortunately, though ultimately benevolent in nature, the decrepit mutants of Monastery have long learned not to trust outsiders of any kind. Sadly, they will no doubt view the PCs with the same distrust, and thinking them to be a party of cutthroats come to steal the warhead, will certainly shoot first and ask questions later to defend their mountain stronghold.

Irony

The irony of the whole encounter is, of course, the fact that the monks and nuns of Monastery are not actually a threat to the PCs. The monks sought out the weapon and stole the **warhead** for one simple but dedicated reason – to keep it out of the hands of the raiders of the valley. To this end they have committed themselves to defending the **warhead** against all comers – PCs included.

Sadly their well-meaning resolve will only spell their undoing, and even more tragically, at the hands of none other than the PCs themselves. Though they may approach with goodwill, the monks and nuns believe the characters to be nothing more than a raider scouting party and will fire at them on first sight.

KEY TO THE MONASTERY

1. Front Gate

The wall surrounding the ancient Monastery has been kept up with the best efforts of the monks and nuns of the settlement, using natural stone and mud bricks wherever infrequent sandstorms or rockslides have claimed parts of the structure.

At the end of the mountain trail there is an opening leading into the Monastery compound. However, the walls here have been constructed with arrow slits and loopholes, permitting defenders to rain fire down on those advancing up the mountain.

GM's Note: Defenders firing from behind the cover of these loopholes receive three-quarters cover (+7 cover bonus to AC, +3 cover bonus to Reflex saves).

2. Seminary Tower

This rather impressive stone tower serves as the primary lookout for the occupants of the Monastery, overlooking the only navigable route up the mountainside to the fortress. It can be reached from the ground level by a stone stairwell leading straight up to the upper level lookout, or from the second floor to the Seminary proper.

Treasure: Located at the top of the seminary tower is a makeshift *spy glass* made from old metal parts and glass scavenged from the valley wasteland, and assembled by a past member of Monastery's mutant

clergy (a cunning fellow who studied extensively the science of the Ancients). The spy glass is mounted on a swiveling ring, allowing it to look out any of the openings, in all four cardinal directions. Its range is roughly ten miles on a clear day; it can certainly be used to spy on the various towns and villages across the valley. The spy glass itself weighs a hefty 50 lbs, and would be difficult to port around without risking damaging it.

3. Seminary

The seminary is the domicile of the monks and nuns of the community; it was also once a school, but the old books were long ago removed to the Sacristy library to better protect them.

Though many of the interior walls have long ago crumbled away, the outer walls of this stately building remain intact, creating a shelter from the high winds and cold winters on the mountain. Here the monks and nuns live, on blankets and sleeping bags on the floor, like some decrepit refugee camp that has stood for generations.

Living, sleeping, cooking, and laundry are all done in the same communal area (on all three floors, including the attic); as such there is very little privacy for the occupants – though none is needed. The monks and nuns live in harmony here and do not covet each other's meager belongings, or even each other's mate (a rare decency in this world indeed). Cooking fires add smoke to the cavernous ruined seminary building, but the strictly vegetarian food supply is adequate and the company more than enough to make life here tolerable, if not in many ways truly "utopian".

4. Rectory

This building once served as a refuge and gathering place for the monks for years, but a fire several decades ago effectively damaged the structure beyond use, collapsing the second level in on the first and killing several monks and nuns residing there.

The inhabitants of the Monastery no longer come here, leaving the building abandoned.

5. Sacristy

This building has seen better days, but the monks of Monastery try to maintain it the best they can. Most notable is the library found on the bottom floor. From these books the "monks" of the Monastery continue to educate new generations about the way of life of their ancestors in the order, keeping their society alive. Though their understanding of religion and the monastic way of life is not entirely accurate any more (due to losses of books over time), they are determined to adhere to the order's strictures as best they possibly can.

Treasure: The library is the real "treasure" of the monks (to them, even their powerful weapons are little more than tools, and nothing with any

real value); it is stocked with almost 250 religious books and preserved texts from the time of the Ancients. These range from old decaying Bibles to hagiographical texts on the lives and miraculous deeds of long-forgotten Christian saints. Magazines and newspapers are also in abundance here, and give a fragmented and dramatic history of the weeks before the Fall in faded print.

Though the books are cumbersome and make an unlikely treasure hoard, groups such as the Foundation or other preservationists would certainly like to acquire them. The entire collection would be worth at least 2,500 cp, though extracting the collection could be difficult and time consuming.

6. Chapel

Having forgotten its original purpose, the monks have used the old Chapel building (for the past generation or so) as an armory and workshop in which they tinker with, catalogue, and repair items they have recovered from the wasteland. Years of combing the deserts by night, their movements lit only by the stars, have allowed the monks and nuns to secretly recover a number of powerful weapons from the low country. Though generally picked from the carcasses of raiders or others who have perished by some misfortune in the sands, these weapons serve the monks well in their defense of the Monastery.

Treasure: The monks keep the Chapel in relatively good order, with racks of weapons and ammunition distributed only in times of attack (a very, very rare occurrence). Sentries in the Seminary Tower are usually armed with *carbines* at all times, however, and scouting parties (such as the one sent to recover the warhead) are armed with a combination of arms, as needed.

The following items are kept here: two gauss rifle Mk1s, 11 carbines, automatic shotgun, two submachine guns, six power clips, 330 carbine cartridges, 240 submachine gun cartridges, 15 shotgun shells, five shotgun slugs, two photon grenades, power beltack, four Molotov cocktails, 80 gauss projectiles, and eight doses of juju salve.

Subtract weapons found on defending monks and nuns from this total, as well as ammunition used up in the battle.

Other objects kept in the Chapel (for repairing and maintaining these items) include *masterwork weaponsmith tools* (+2 circumstance bonus to *craft*, *weaponsmith* checks) and a *UV sterilizer* linked to a *power pack* with half charge.

7. Bath House

This dilapidated old building was once a bath house and cistern. Into the solid rock of the mountaintop was sunk a deep shaft, which collects natural moisture in the form of runoff from the mountain to keep itself full. Though the three shallow baths have long been left to dry up (the water is too precious to squander), the cistern is meticulously cared-for by the

monks, being their only real source of replenishing water on the mountain.

Treasure: The water here is only minutely contaminated by sediment from the rock, certainly not enough to cause any adverse effects. All told, there are about 5,000 gallons of water remaining in the cistern well (replaced naturally at a rate of about 100 gallons each year).

8. Gardens

The pride of the Monastery inhabitants is their garden. Here, high up in the mountains, a number of hardy, stubborn vegetables can efficiently be grown – something not often seen in the wasteland at lower elevations. With their nurturing care, the monks have turned what was once a dusty field into a modest garden, growing potatoes, yams, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, and zucchini. Their crop, though small and fragile, has grown to be more than adequate to feed their diminutive population year-round, so long as they strictly abide their rationing and continue to store excess vegetables in the cooler catacombs beneath the monastery for consumption in winter.

Treasure: Should the characters defeat the garrison without damaging the gardens; they may be able to comb the fields for edible foods. There are enough vegetables growing here at the moment to feed 30 people for about a week.

GM's Note: The gardens could easily become victim to the stamping boots of intruders, stray explosives and gunfire, and other misfortunes of an engagement on the monastery grounds. The GM should stress the fragility of this microcosm, and having it burn down as a result of careless actions would be a tragic but appropriate end to the Monastery.

9. Catacombs

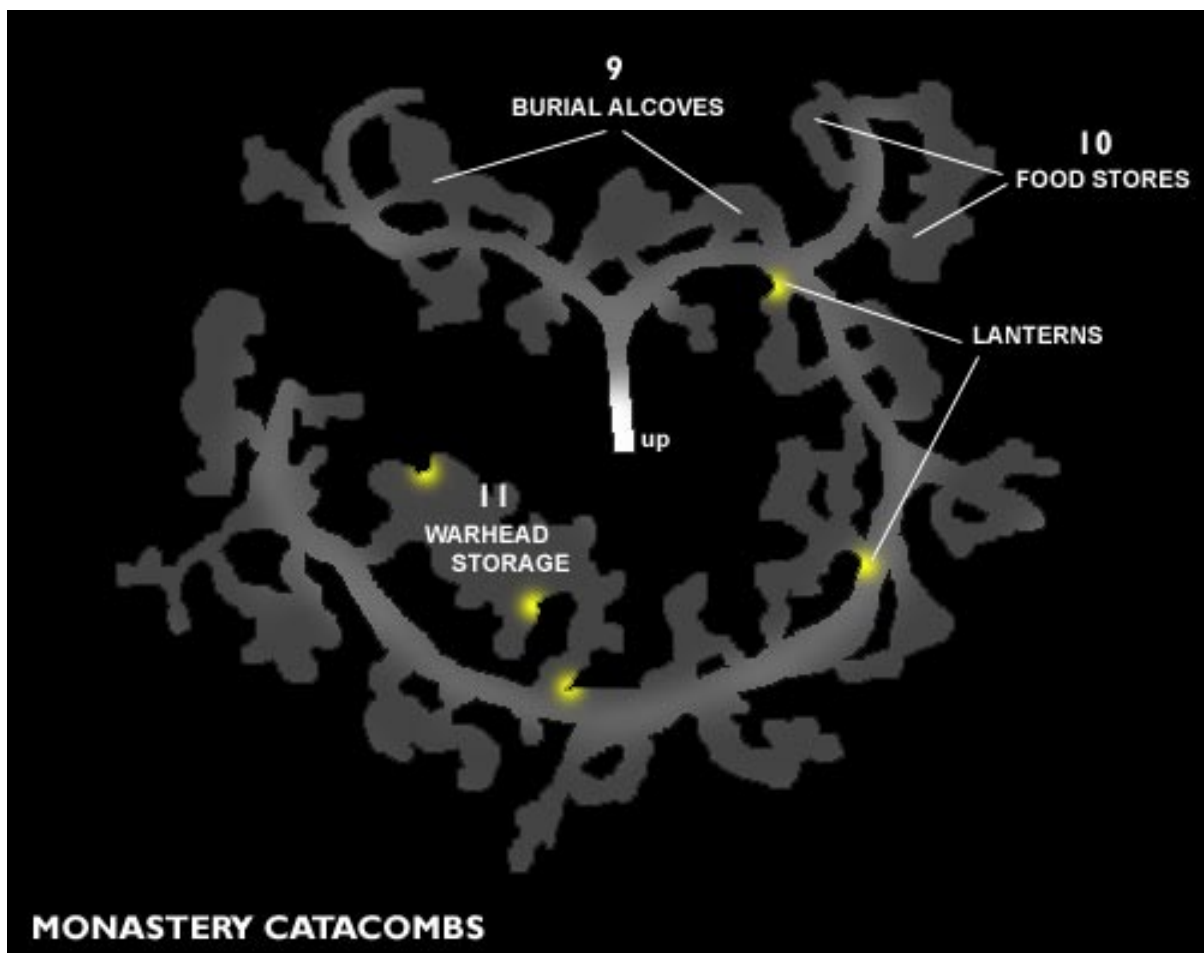
Access to the Monastery catacombs is via a small stone building at the center of the Gardens. This building is empty except for a tight, narrow set of stone steps that descend into darkness below.

The catacombs beneath the old Monastery were carved out of solid rock by the hands of the local monks well before the Fall, and was used for countless decades as a repository for their dead. The tunnels are rough and poorly hewn, in some places just high enough for a man to pass stooped over, and riddled with niches and burial alcoves where bare bones and skulls sit in silent repose, staring out through empty sockets at stunned passerby.

The catacombs would normally be quite difficult to navigate, if not for a series of dim oil lanterns installed by the monks along one particular passage. The lights are spaced just close enough so that the light of one can be seen from the other – effectively leading towards the cave where the monks have secreted the **warhead**.

If any monks retreat to the catacombs during the battle, they will extinguish the lanterns and hide in





various alcoves, only emerging to ambush the party if they near the warhead room. They do this hoping that the PCs will fear getting lost in the darkness and turn back – and not figure out that the warhead is, in fact, down here.

10. Food Stores

A few alcoves near the entrance to the catacombs have been set aside for the storage of surplus vegetables from the gardens. Kept in sacks hung from the ceiling, these consist mainly of potatoes and yams.

Treasure: If taken, the food reserves here would constitute about three month's rations for at least 30 people.

11. Warhead Storage

This last cave was once a communal burial chamber, and even now it's many alcoves and niches are littered with bones and small wooden boxes filled with remains. But in the center of the room is the most dominant feature – a large metal-cased cylinder, only slightly dented, with a faded trefoil stenciled on the exterior. This is the *warhead*.

If they haven't made their move yet, any remaining monks and nuns will attack the PCs in a last-ditch effort to make sure the warhead doesn't fall into their hands. For them, it is do or die time.

PLAYING OUT THE BATTLE

The battle at Monastery can take any number of directions, depending on how the characters come to attack the Monastery. The following is only the expected course.

Upon first sighting the party's approach (through the *spy glass* in the Seminary Tower), the Monastery will go on silent alert. Before the PCs even reach the summit of the mountain, the Chapel will be broken open and the armory's contents spread out among the monks and nuns for defense.

Two sentries (**monks**) will remain in the Seminary Tower to snipe with *carbines* those who approach the walls, at a distance of 600 ft., taking a –4 to their attack roll. This penalty drops to –2 at 400 ft., and –0 at 200 ft. and closer.

A force of four more **monks** and both **superior monks** will move to the walls and fire through the loopholes (benefiting from their cover) in support. *Molotov cocktails* and *photon grenades* will only be used on attackers outside the walls, for fear of the spread of fire or damaging the precious Gardens.

If defense of the courtyard is compromised, the defenders from the wall retreat into the compound. Those in the Seminary Tower, if still alive, will provide cover, as will two **nuns** on the second floor of the Seminary itself (firing down from above from their own loopholes, windows, etc.).

NO POSSIBILITY OF PEACE?

Although this adventure doesn't cover it, players may be upset at the idea of having to destroy the benevolent community at Monastery to wrest the warhead from their control – especially when, at a later date, they discover it to be a dud. Because you can never predict how your players will react (or what they will do), you will have to play potential negotiations by ear.

Keep in mind that at all times the monks and nuns will *absolutely* refuse to give up the warhead, pure and simple, because they believe it will destroy the entire valley. They cannot be convinced otherwise. Even when presented with evidence of the Wastelords' deprivations against the people of the valley, the monks of Monastery cannot bring themselves to relinquishing such a powerful weapon – even if it is to be used for the cause of the greater good.

On top of this, the thinkers who joined the PCs from Spilunk will be a source of prodding. Though they don't want to see anyone die over it (and would also prefer peace over violence), these men know time is short and the resistance of Monastery, even if justified, may mean the death of not only their tribe, but all the tribes of the valley.

The choice will be a difficult one. But if by some means the PCs can come up with a clever way to trick or deceive the monks of the Monastery (perhaps by slipping in when their guard is down, and stealing the device), the fragile mountain community's total destruction may be averted.

One other way out might be for the players to think up the idea of "bluffing" the Wastelords by pretending the Alliance has the warhead (when in fact they do not), but let the players come up with this idea on their own – and reward them for averting the needless slaughter of the Monastery population!

The remaining monks in the courtyard will make use of this covering fire to retreat to the Seminary, shutting the doors behind them. Here they will turn the building into a fortress, using the numerous loopholes and defenses on the bottom floor to repel the onslaught of the PCs.

From the moment the alarm is raised, the **abbot**, **abbess**, and the two **trusted monks** (and the two remaining **nuns**) will descend into the catacombs, extinguish the lights, and prepare to make a last ditch defense of the **warhead**.

Of course, this well-practiced battle-plan may not go as planned, and the PCs may find other ways of attack and infiltration. Sneaking up under the cover of darkness may be moderately successful; a raid from the air (assuming one of the PCs can fly) would certainly take the monks and nuns by surprise.

☛ **Abbot, Thinker4 (1):** CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (3rd Generation Mutant Resentful); HD 4d6; hp 14; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk *Automatic shotgun* +3/+3 ranged *special*; SQ Knowledge; AL LG; SV Fort -1, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft +8, Decipher Script +5, Knowledge +6, Listen +5, Profession +7, Sense Motive +5, Speak Gutter Talk, Speak Unislang, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +5. Skill Focus (specific craft), Improved Hit Dice, Martial Weapon Proficiency (automatic shotgun).

Possessions: Burlap robes, *automatic shotgun* (15 shells).

Mutations and Defects: Multiple Stomachs, Neural Telepathy, Sensitive Sight, Superior Kidney Development. Aberrant Deformity, Adrenaline Deficiency, Cystic Fibrosis, Skeletal Deterioration.

☛ **Abbess, Thinker1 (1):** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (3rd Generation Mutant Resentful); HD

1d4; hp 3; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk *Carbine* +1 ranged 1d10; AL LG; SV Fort -3, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft +6, Decipher Script +3, Knowledge +5, Listen +3, Profession +6, Sense Motive +4, Speak Gutter Talk, Speak Unislang, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +3. Skill Focus* (specific craft), Martial Weapon Proficiency (carbine).

Possessions: Filthy black habit, *carbine* (30 rounds).

Mutations and Defects: Multiple Stomachs, Neural Telepathy, Sensitive Sight, Superior Kidney Development. Aberrant Deformity, Adrenaline Deficiency, Cystic Fibrosis, Skeletal Deterioration.

☛ **Trusted Monks, Thinker4 (2):** CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (3rd Generation Mutant Resentful); HD 4d6; hp 14 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk *Gauss rifle* +3 ranged 3d6; SQ Knowledge; AL LG; SV Fort -1, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft +8, Decipher Script +5, Knowledge +6, Listen +5, Profession +7, Sense Motive +5, Speak Gutter Talk, Speak Unislang, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +5. Skill Focus* (specific craft), Improved Hit Dice, Martial Weapon Proficiency (gauss rifle).

Possessions: Burlap robes, *gauss rifle Mk1* (20 gauss projectiles), two *power clips*.

Mutations and Defects: Multiple Stomachs, Neural Telepathy, Sensitive Sight, Superior Kidney Development. Aberrant Deformity, Adrenaline Deficiency, Cystic Fibrosis, Skeletal Deterioration.

☛ **Superior Monks, Thinker4 (2):** CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (3rd Generation Mutant Resentful); HD 4d6; hp 14 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk *Submachine gun* +3/+3





ranged 1d10; SQ Knowledge; AL LG; SV Fort -1, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft +8, Decipher Script +5, Knowledge +6, Listen +5, Profession +7, Sense Motive +5, Speak Gutter Talk, Speak Unislang, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +5. Skill Focus* (specific craft), Improved Hit Dice, Martial Weapon Proficiency (submachine gun).

Possessions: Burlap robes, *submachine gun* (40 rounds).

Mutations and Defects: Multiple Stomachs, Neural Telepathy, Sensitive Sight, Superior Kidney Development. Aberrant Deformity, Adrenaline Deficiency, Cystic Fibrosis, Skeletal Deterioration.

☛ **Monks, Male Thinker3 (6):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (3rd Generation Mutant Resentfuls); HD 3d6; hp 11; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk *Carbine* +2 ranged 1d10; SQ Knowledge; AL LG; SV Fort -1, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft +7, Decipher Script +4, Knowledge +5, Listen +5, Profession +6, Sense Motive +5, Speak Gutter Talk, Speak Unislang, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +5. Skill Focus* (specific craft), Improved Hit Dice, Martial Weapon Proficiency (carbine).

Possessions: Burlap robes, *carbine* (30 rounds), *Molotov cocktail* or *photon grenade*.

Mutations and Defects: Multiple Stomachs, Neural Telepathy, Sensitive Sight, Superior Kidney Development. Aberrant Deformity, Adrenaline Deficiency, Cystic Fibrosis, Skeletal Deterioration.

☛ **Nuns, Female Thinker1 (4):** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (3rd Generation Mutant Resentfuls); HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk *Carbine* +1 ranged 1d10; AL LG; SV Fort -3, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft +6, Decipher Script +3, Knowledge +5, Listen +3, Profession +6, Sense Motive +4, Speak Gutter Talk, Speak Unislang, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +3. Skill Focus* (specific craft), Martial Weapon Proficiency (carbine).

Possessions: Filthy black habit, *carbine* (30 rounds).

Mutations and Defects: Multiple Stomachs, Neural Telepathy, Sensitive Sight, Superior Kidney Development. Aberrant Deformity, Adrenaline Deficiency, Cystic Fibrosis, Skeletal Deterioration.

GM's Note: The monks and nuns of Monastery are grotesque human mimics. Each has a spidery, deformed body frame (the result of a weakened skeleton), grossly-bloated mid-section (to house their multiple stomachs), and a set of three lucid blue eyes, set side-by-side in a row across their faces – faces which have only the vaguest, most diminished vestigial human features.

Clad in heavy robes or habits, they present a horrifying sight!

THE WARHEAD SECURED

With the warhead secured, the thinkers from Spilunk who joined the PCs enter the compound and help the characters bring the weapon back up to the surface from the catacombs (it requires some six men to transport, due to its weight). Here they load it onto a cart, and prepare to take it back to Dry Fort with the rest of the missile wreckage.

The PCs are expected to join them, though at this point they may go back to Bazaar instead if they like, to recuperate, train, trade (they now have considerable items with which to barter, assuming they raided the Chapel armory), and prepare for the storm on the horizon. With the raider salvage party having been slaughtered, and the missile now in the Alliance's hands, all-out war with the Wastelords is inevitable.

WHAT'S NEXT?

From this point the PCs have a number of options of where they can go. They can return with the warhead to Dry Fort and fill in Captain Ulz and Warlord Thrakas, or they can return to Bazaar and inform the Trademasters. While they have newfound ties to Dry Fort, a return to Bazaar might well be in order to stock up on supplies, new weapons, and ammunition, which could be vital in the near future. Now would also be a good time to allow the PCs to train and advance in level, as the new abilities, hit points, and skills will be important to surviving the *War With The Wastelords*.

WAR WITH THE WASTELORDS

Since your return, the elders of (*Dry Fort, Spilunk, or Bazaar, depending on where the PCs went*) have pondered the facts of your intelligence gathering for a day and a night – and the implications the theft of the missile will have once the Wastelords realize what has happened. Though given a chance to re-arm yourselves and heal whatever wounds you suffered through rest and medicine, secretly you find yourselves yearning to finish the job and once and for all destroy the savage raiders known as the Wastelords.

Representatives of each community in the alliance have made the journey to your present refuge (including a representative of the terminals, if they were recruited) to discuss what steps are to be taken. An air mixed with excitement, dread, and indefatigable hope lingers into the evening, and everyone is on edge. Everyone knows the council is poised to make a decision that will

change the fate of the Trade Lands forever. Finally, word comes from the council chamber. It is time to declare war.

Of all the warriors in the alliance, your party has been singled out and called into the presence of the elders of the Three Towns. Your devotion to the cause, whether for money or loyalty, has proven you able men. Your counsel will be invaluable in planning the decisive stages of the war against the Wastelords.

As you enter, Captain Ulz of Dry Fort, Trademaster Gorgel, and Elder Vilic of Spilunk are found gathered around a table, across which is splayed a map painted on the leathery hide of some unknown beast. Marked on it are the locations of the Three Towns, the trade route, its many landmarks, and the Dry River.

“They come,” says Captain Ulz, drinking from a tin cup.

Elder Vilic nods in acknowledgement, as does Trademaster Gorgel. Gorgel is quick to sum up the situation.

“The time for open war has finally come. With what you men have learned in your travels of the wasteland, the Wastelords were close to perfecting the Great Weapon. With much of the work already done for us, hopefully we can use it to destroy the Wastelords – or threaten them into abandoning their cruel campaigning in the Trade Lands. The thinkers of Spilunk work on it feverishly even as we speak.

“Though it is now being repaired at Dry Fort, we will not let on where we have hidden the Great Weapon. This will buy us some time, as the Wastelords will be forced to scout out each town’s vicinity before finding the weapon and making their final move.

“We can assume by now the Wastelords are aware the salvage party at the site are dead. This act has sealed our fate, for better or worse. The Wastelords are sure to bring the full might of their armies against us.”

“Our first task must be to find a way to prevent reinforcements from entering the Trade Lands. They have a vast army, and if we can cut off their route into the Trade Lands, we will only have a small part of their army to deal with. The logbook you found on the raider scouts details the route the raiders use to travel over the mountains. By attacking them there we will hopefully cripple their supplies and curb any chance of them reinforcing their brother scum already in our lands.

“Your group will perform the ambush. We will send men to bolster your position once the battle has commenced. Go now to the dry bed.

“Long live the alliance!”

THE BATTLE OF DRY BED (EL 11)

Traveling all night, the journey to the Dry River will be eerie, silent, and uneventful. This is fortunate, because the PCs will need all of their strength for the coming battle...

You crouch down in concealed positions, convinced you have chosen the best spot along the raider’s route through the dry riverbed to ambush them.

Minutes seem to stretch into hours. Hours feel like an eternity, with the hot sun of morning turning to afternoon, and blazing unrelentingly down on each of you.

In time, however, the misery of waiting is shattered by the sounds of an approaching force of men on foot, accompanied by a gas-guzzling, stripped-down transport truck. This must be the first group sent north as reinforcements. You are certain the truck is filled with supplies.

Readying yourselves and taking cover, you spot the large force of raiders, perhaps a dozen in all, all armored and heavily armed. You know that you have the advantage of surprise and will therefore be able to even the odds, but still you remain unsure of who will live today, and who will die.

They are close enough now to see individual faces. The groan of the truck moving along the dry riverbed drowns out all noise. The first raider seems totally oblivious, singing some bawdy tune drowned out by the truck’s engine. The second raider, with a more authoritative presence, seems alert and wary – but he isn’t looking your way. The group of raiders has passed the first of your concealed positions and is now in the “kill zone”. They are unaware as you catch them completely by surprise!

BATTLE INFORMATION

The characters are considered to have *refocused* (taken a 20 on initiative) on the first round. Initiative will be determined normally after this first opening round.

The characters begin hidden and are considered to have some degree of cover and concealment. It is up to the characters to determine where each deploys. The following bits of cover are available at the ambush scene:

Old tree trunk: One character may utilize this feature. The old tree trunk grants one-half cover.

Piles of rocks: Two characters may utilize this feature. The piles of rocks grant one-quarter cover to each character.





Prone and covered with sand: Though not cover per se, any number of characters may utilize this defense by having their companions half-bury them in sand. This defense grants the characters one-half concealment on the first round of combat and one-quarter concealment every round thereafter, unless the character moves (at which time the concealment is negated).

ALLIANCE FORCES

The Alliance forces assembled for the ambush consist of the PCs, as well as two warriors from Dry Fort sent with them as part of the ambush team. Due to an unexpected delay getting ready to move out, the reinforcements promised the PCs will arrive *after* the battle.

• **Warriors of Bazaar, Guardian1 (2):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+2; hp 6 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather armor); Atk Police baton +2 melee 1d4+1, or *sport rifle* +4 ranged 1d12; SQ Defender; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +3. Feel for Weapon (heirloom sport rifle), Quick Draw.

Possessions: Heirloom sport rifle (30 rounds), police baton, studded leather armor, bullet bandoleer, bedroll, blanket, signal whistle, sling bag, *sungoggles*, two doses of *juju salve*, one dose of *oil of remedy*.

Mutations and Defects: Accumulated Resistance (disease), Independent Cerebral Control, Sensitive Sight, Spontaneous Electric Charge Generation, Superior Kidney Development. Adrenaline Deficiency, Alopecia, Brachydactyly, Photosensitivity.

OPPOSITION FORCES

The enemy consists of nearly a dozen raiders, and a *truck*. The Wastelords, realizing that the Three Towns have decided not to “behave”, have called up reinforcements. These men are the first of many.

Nine men are on foot, including one *veteran* raider. Two raiders are in the cab of the truck, and thus receive three-quarters cover.

• **Veteran Wastelord, Raider2 (1):** CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 2d10+2; hp 12; Init +6 (Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +1 chains and chaps, +4 chain shirt); Atk Dagger +4 melee 1d4+2, or *automatic rifle* +4/+4 ranged 1d12; SQ Chains and chaps (+1); AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Speak Ancient, Speak Unislang, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3. Improved

Initiative, Room Broom.

Possessions: *Automatic rifle* (30 shots), chain shirt, *tear gas grenade*, dagger, backpack, bedroll, blanket, web belt.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight. Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Immune System Abnormality.

• **Wastelords, Raider1 (10):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+1; hp 6 each; Init +6 (Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +1 chains and chaps, +3 studded leather armor); Atk Dagger +3 melee 1d4+2, or *automatic rifle* +3/+3 ranged 1d12; SQ Chains and chaps (+1); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Speak Ancient, Speak Unislang, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3. Improved Initiative.

Possessions: *Automatic rifle* (60 shots), studded leather armor, two *concussion grenades*, dagger, backpack, bedroll, blanket, web belt.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight. Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Immune System Abnormality.

• **Transport Truck:** Gargantuan vehicle; AC 16; hardness 10; 75 hp; Spd 50 ft.

Treasure: The transport truck is loaded with ammunition, fuel, and supplies. These include three *automatic rifles*, 600 rifle cartridges, six *concussion grenades*, four *Molotov cocktails*, and 100 gallons of gasoline (which can be sold for a total of upwards of 2,500 cp in Bazaar or outside the Trade Lands).

GM's Note: The Wastelords will attempt to flee if reduced to below half their number, or if the transport truck is destroyed. Any that manage to escape will be present in the second battle (*The Battle of Big Rock*).

AFTERMATH

At the battle's conclusion, read the following:

As the sounds of battle subside, you realize you have won. Lowering your weapons, you look about to check the condition of your comrades.

Looking to the horizon instinctively, you see a trail of dust. A group of riders, accompanied by a large number of warriors on foot, approach. Calling out to your companions, you all prepare to meet this new threat.

After a short time, a rider in white armor atop a horse rides up to your position. Calling out, you show yourselves and he dismounts with a laugh, apparently overjoyed at your victory. The other warriors gather as well.

“How did the battle go? Scum all dead?” the messenger asks, and waits to hear your story, a look of respect and admiration etched on his young face. With short, stubby fingers, he unwraps the strips of cloth from his baldhead, and you recognize him as a native of Bazaar.

The other men in his group move over to the captured truck, and retrieve as many arms and supplies as they can.

“Armsmaster Tolorin has sent me to you. Scouts have seen large numbers of raiders approaching Bazaar from the southeast. There must have been a camp in those hills that we missed. But without vehicles, the raiders there will take a long time to reach Bazaar. Our scout has watched their route, and we believe it will intersect the Trade Road here...” The messenger bends down, and draws a rough map of the valley in the sand. You can see Bazaar, and your current position. Then he shows you where the raiders were and where they are now expected to be, to the east. Then he draws an X in the sand.

Looking up, the messenger continues, “This is Big Rock, one of the Great Markers. It is important that you get there before raiders do. Elders of Spilunk report a large storm coming from the west. You are in the open. Make it to Big Rock and ambush raiders when they look for cover. If raiders no make it, they will maybe lose warriors in the sands. That is good for us.”

“I have brought men to relieve you and keep the riverbed in our hands. We will kill anyone trying to come through.

“These four other riders with us come from Dry Fort. They reinforce you.” He says, gesturing to the group of riders, who nod seriously to you, demonstrating that you are in command. “These four footmen come from Bazaar and will aid as well. The rest will stay here to hold the pass.”

“Luck to you, and long live the alliance!”

The messenger is willing to lend aid to the characters before they depart for Big Rock, giving them one dose of *juju salve* each, two *stimshot As* (total) from a leather pouch strapped to his leg, and a *compass*. The messenger then marks the compass with a strip of tape, and cuts a thin line into the tape. He informs the characters that this line will lead them to Big Rock.

THE BATTLE OF BIG ROCK (EL 10)

Since they are needed for the war (and cannot remain as a garrison of the pass), the characters must now travel to Big Rock (the nearest shelter), making all haste to avoid being trapped in the coming storm.

The raider force, led by a powerful NPC (“Big Bert”), is aggressively advancing, and is wasting no time in their effort to reach the cover of Big Rock as well. Do not roll for random events for this journey; the characters will need their strength for the coming conflict.

You have moved as quickly as possible from the region of the dry riverbed out into the open wastes. The closest shelter will be Big Rock, somewhere to the northeast, and the eerie silence and stillness only seems to magnify your fear of being caught when the storm finally comes.

Several hours later, the silence has diminished with a steadily growing wind. As the gale builds to a true storm of colossal proportions, the dust of the desert is kicked up in a mighty tempest, turning the air into a dusty soup of choking dust - reducing visibility to perhaps 200 feet or less.

You are finally relieved when you see Big Rock up ahead.

“Big Rock” is a gargantuan boulder that juts straight out of the sands, towering above the shifting dunes. On the north face of this monstrous rock is a broad crack that opens up into a small cave below. As you near, you see it is littered with the trash left by the many who have stayed here over the decades.

Alas, as fate would have it, more shapes can be seen approaching from the southeast. This is a large group of footmen, with a singularly huge individual leading them on despite the intense winds.

BATTLE INFORMATION

Both opposing forces of the allied Towns and the raiders have reached Big Rock at the same time, and as such a battle for shelter begins as the faint screaming sound of the coming sandstorm begins to build.

Since this battle is not just a skirmish between opposing groups, but a struggle to secure shelter, there is no possible retreat for any of the NPCs. None wish to be stranded in the storm and all will fight to the death.

ALLIANCE FORCES

The Alliance forces consist of the player characters, four warriors of Dry Fort, and four warriors of Bazaar. Allow the players to control these additional forces for this battle.

❖ **Warriors of Bazaar, Guardian1 (4):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+2; hp 6 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather armor); Atk Police baton +2 melee 1d4+1, or *sport rifle* +4





ranged 1d12; SQ Defender; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +3. Feel for Weapon (heirloom sport rifle), Quick Draw.

Possessions: Heirloom sport rifle (30 rounds), police baton, studded leather armor, bullet bandoleer, bedroll, blanket, signal whistle, sling bag, *sungoggles*, two doses of *juju salve*, one dose of *oil of remedy*.

Mutations and Defects: Accumulated Resistance (disease), Independent Cerebral Control, Sensitive Sight, Spontaneous Electric Charge Generation, Superior Kidney Development. Adrenaline Deficiency, Alopecia, Brachydactyly, Photosensitivity.

• **Warriors of Dry Fort, Guardian1 (4):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resentful); HD 1d10+2; hp 8 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 25 ft; AC 18 (+1 Dex, +5 beast chitin, +2 large steel shield); Atk Battleaxe +4 melee 1d8+2; SQ Defender; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +3, Listen +2, Ride +5, Spot +2. Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).

Possessions: Battle axe, beast chitin armor, large steel shield, backpack, bedroll, blanket, three doses of *juju salve*, light horse with trappings.

Mutations and Defects: Aberrant Endoskeletal Encasing, Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Extreme Resilience, Sensitive Sight. Cystic Fibrosis, Hunchback, Mongoloid, Under-Developed Organ (nose).

• **Light Horses (4):** CR 1; Large Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 60 ft; AC 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Atk 2 hooves +2 melee 1d4+1; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +6.

OPPOSITION FORCES

The Wastelord force is led by a legendary raider warrior of untold brutality that goes by the name of “Big Bert” (named after a plush doll in the shape of a big yellow bird he has carried since birth), and a troupe of eight Wastelord warriors.

Having received word of the Three Towns’ rebellion, they will not be taken by surprise when the PCs attack, instead being quite eager for battle.

• **Big Bert, Raider4 (1):** CR 7; Large Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Feral); HD 4d10+20; hp 55; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+3 natural armor, +1 chains and chaps, +3 hide armor, -1 size); Atk Huge hammer +11 melee 2d8+10, SQ Chains and chaps (+1), boarding party; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 25, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Jump +2, Listen +2, Speak Unislang, Spot +7, Wilderness Lore +3. Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (huge hammer), Weapon Focus (huge hammer).

Possessions: Huge hammer, hide armor, backpack, bedroll, blanket, plush doll.

Mutations and Defects: Gigantism, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Neural Life-Force Destruction Field, Neural Shield, Sensitive Sight. Bilirubin Imbalance, Non-Malignant Tumors, Sensitivity (acid and sonic weapons).

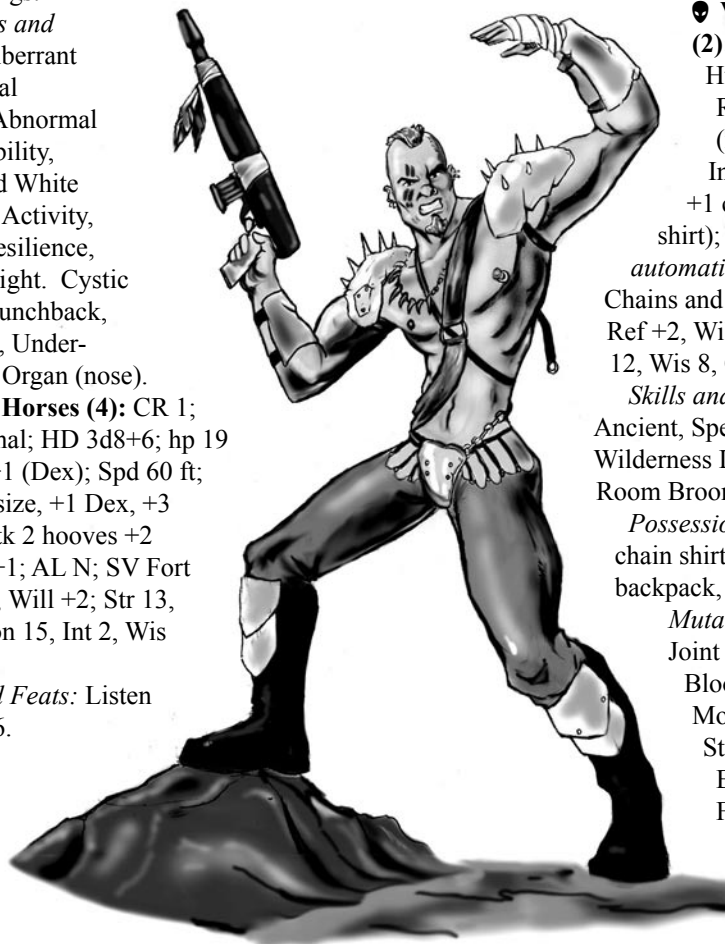
• Veteran Wastelords, Raider2

(2): CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 2d10+2; hp 12 (x2); Init +6 (Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +1 chains and chaps, +4 chain shirt); Atk Dagger +4 melee 1d4+2, or *automatic rifle* +4/+4 ranged 1d12; SQ Chains and chaps (+1); AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Speak Ancient, Speak Unislang, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3. Improved Initiative, Room Broom.

Possessions: *Automatic rifle* (30 shots), chain shirt, *tear gas grenade*, dagger, backpack, bedroll, blanket, web belt.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight. Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Immune System Abnormality.



❖ **Wastelords, Raider1 (6):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+1; hp 6 each; Init +6 (Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +1 chains and chaps, +3 studded leather armor); Atk Dagger +3 melee 1d4+2, or *automatic rifle* +3/+3 ranged 1d12; SQ Chains and chaps (+1); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Speak Ancient, Speak Unislang, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3. Improved Initiative.

Possessions: *Automatic rifle* (60 shots), studded leather armor, two *concussion grenades*, dagger, backpack, bedroll, blanket, web belt.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight. Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Immune System Abnormality.

AFTERMATH

Once the battle for cover at Big Rock is over, read the following to the players:

Almost as soon as the last raider falls, an immense wall of speeding sand assaults you and almost blows you with it into the empty oblivion of the desert. Struggling against the unrelenting force, you hasten back to the cover of Big Rock and set up what shelter you can and prepare to wait out the storm.

For three solid days you lurk in miserable confinement beneath the shadow of the great boulder, pressed into the large cave in its lee, shielded by the canvas brought by the warriors sent to aid you. Sand slowly builds up in the shelter, falling in from the storm above, almost threatening to suffocate you all in the shelter you have been forced into. You wonder if the storm will ever end – and marvel at the cool headedness of your allies who seem used to the ferocity of the roaring sands.

After a time, the horrible sound fades and within hours your normal hearing returns. You dig your way out to the freedom of the open sky and take deep breaths of the still, dusty air, forcing you to cough as your lungs struggle.

The landscape has changed subtly; there are no bodies, no familiar sights at all, everything buried under several feet of newly blown sand.

It seems as though the horrible desert gods have claimed the battle dead as their spoils.

With their double defeat at the Dry River and Big Rock, the Wastelords have lost substantial reinforcements and their sole supply route, and are now forced to press on their campaign of retribution despite being scattered across the valley by the storm.

Although the remaining forces are better equipped to deal with the environment, they are still dirty and haggard – but have suffered only minor losses up to this point.

Also paralyzed by the storm, the Wastelords were not able to take advantage of the PCs' absence. The Alliance, however, has taken the time bought by the storm (three days) to continue work on the Great Weapon.

Still, the war has only begun. After regrouping, cleaning their gear, and attending to other tasks, the remaining Wastelords have decided to send out three parties of scouts to locate the Great Weapon and report in – before joining the rest of the army for a final assault.

SHOOTOUT AT SHINY HOUSE (EL 10)

On your return to Bazaar you are met by a small group of riders with urgent news. You are told that now that the sandstorm has subsided, the main body of the Wastelords has been seen advancing steadily from the desert east of Ebb, towards Black Stump, possibly with the intention of striking north to Dry Fort! Scouts report that this force of Wastelords is well equipped and also possess armored vehicles, bristling with weapons! In addition, smaller scouting parties mounted on similar vehicles have been reported being seen near Spilunk, Dry Fort, and Bazaar.

Though unfortunate, it is safe to assume the raiders now know where the Great Weapon is – Dry Fort. The main body of the raider army, heading northeast, must be coming to make a final retributive strike.

Though certainly willing to die for the alliance, the brave cavalymen of Dry Fort will not be able to stand against such a show of force for long. Though the Spilunk thinkers scramble to get the Great Weapon ready for when the Wastelords arrive for a final showdown, it will be cutting it close.

Your party will be mounted on the spare horses the messengers have brought, and rushed to Dry Fort to meet the combined armies of Bazaar, Spilunk, and the 'Fort for what can only be the decisive battle of the war.

This encounter occurs when the PCs come up the trail from Bazaar. They will stumble upon a desperate scene at one of the Trade Route's navigational markers: "Shiny House".

The shelter of Shiny House glitters for miles in every direction, a beacon of safety from the sandstorms of the valley. As you draw close you see how this place got its name: Shiny House





reveals itself as the remains of an ancient camping trailer, gutted and looted, yet structurally intact. A haunting place, one can see their reflection in the silvery metal from a considerable distance.

But all is not well at Shiny House. The dunes echo with the sound of gunfire, and a dark smudge of oily smoke rises from the ruins of a crashed Wastelords' scout car. A ring of wagons has been set up around Shiny House, in its shadow, as defenders from Bazaar blaze away at a force of Wastelords who apparently have them under siege. As you appear, the warriors behind the makeshift stockade cheer, praying that you will be their much-anticipated relief.

BATTLE INFORMATION

Only a few hours ago a convoy of reinforcements from Bazaar, making its way to Dry Fort, came under attack by Wastelord scouts packed in their roaring, gas-guzzling vehicle. Having spied the launch ramp outside of Dry Fort and having radioed its location in, they were returning to the main body of the Wastelord army when they came across an opportunity to deal the Alliance a costly blow.

Camping out near Shiny House just long enough to water their horses before moving on, the Bazaar soldiers were taken totally by surprise. Though several were cut down in the ambush, a lucky shot by one of the defenders destroyed the Wastelord vehicle, somewhat evening the odds.

The current situation is a stalemate. The warriors from Bazaar are pinned down behind a makeshift barricade formed by their wagons, in a rough circle with Shiny House in the center. The Wastelords, now dismounted, are scattered in a broader circle outside of this, keeping the defenders pinned down with sporadic gunfire.

When the PCs arrive, they come from a southeasterly direction. Assuming you are using miniatures, use a small box or other rectangular object (such as a box of playing cards) to represent the trailer that is Shiny House. Place three six-sided dice stacked end to end (or playing cards) around this to represent the four wagons of the Bazaar caravan. The defenders set up behind this cover (which counts as three-fourths cover).

Outside of this the attackers set up no closer than 40 feet, with at least 20 feet between each raider. The PCs enter from the southeast side of the "battlefield".

ALLIANCE FORCES

The Alliance forces consist of four surviving defenders inside the improvised perimeter. They are in various states of injury, with low ammo supplies – and will be glad to see the PCs!

● **Warriors of Bazaar, Guardian1 (4):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+2; hp 5 (x2), 4, and 1; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather armor); Atk Police baton +2 melee 1d4+1, or *sport rifle* +4 ranged 1d12; SQ Defender; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +3. Feel for Weapon (heirloom sport rifle), Quick Draw.

Possessions: Heirloom sport rifle (10 rounds), police baton, studded leather armor, bullet bandoleer, bedroll, blanket, signal whistle, sling bag, *sungoggles*, one dose of *oil of remedy*.

Mutations and Defects: Accumulated Resistance (disease), Independent Cerebral Control, Sensitive Sight, Spontaneous Electric Charge Generation, Superior Kidney Development. Adrenaline Deficiency, Alopecia, Brachydactyly, Photosensitivity.

OPPOSITION FORCES

The Wastelords have greater numbers, but are totally exposed out in the open. They must make a Spot check (against the PCs' Hide) to notice the characters approaching from behind. If they fail, they will be taken totally off guard when the PCs attack.

● **Veteran Wastelords, Raider2 (3):** CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 2d10+2; hp 12 and 10 (x2); Init +6 (Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +1 chains and chaps, +4 chain shirt); Atk Dagger +4 melee 1d4+2, or *automatic rifle* +4/+4 ranged 1d12; SQ Chains and chaps (+1); AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Speak Ancient, Speak Unislang, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3. Improved Initiative, Room Broom.

Possessions: Automatic rifle (15 shots), chain shirt, dagger, web belt.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight. Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Immune System Abnormality.

● **Wastelords, Raider1 (6):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+1; hp 6 (x4), 3 (x2), and 2; Init +6 (Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +1 chains and chaps, +3 studded leather armor); Atk Dagger +3 melee 1d4+2, or *automatic rifle* +3/+3 ranged 1d12; SQ Chains and chaps (+1); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Speak Ancient, Speak Unislang, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3. Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Automatic rifle (30 shots), studded leather armor, dagger, web belt.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight, Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Immune System Abnormality.

AFTERMATH

Once the battle is over, read the following:

With the deaths of the last raiders, the defenders behind the wall of wagons rise (despite being bloody and exhausted) to celebrate your victory. You have saved them from certain death at the hands of the Wastelords, who had ambushed them only an hour or so before you showed up. As you approach they run to embrace you, and to give solemn thanks for your timely arrival.

One of the men doesn't seem as happy as the others, however. Nursing his arm, bleeding from a bullet wound, he walks up to inform you of what can only be bad news.

"I fear the enemy were already able to radio what they knew, even before we destroyed their vehicle...they came from the direction of Dry Fort. They must have seen the Great Weapon there. Now the entire Wastelord force will be converging on the citadel there for a final battle."

You take a moment to assure the brave warrior that you already knew this, and that he and his men did not fail the Alliance. Soothed by this assurance, he asks for your help in getting the wagons hitched.

"If we hurry we can make it to Dry Fort before the rest of the raiders do!"

FINAL BATTLE AT DRY FORT (EL 14)

With the defeat of the enemy at Big Rock, and the cutting off of their escape route via the Dry River, the Wastelords finally realize that they have lost control over the people of the Trade Lands. Fearing the rebellion of the Three Towns has the potential to overwhelm them, they have coalesced into one large force, and are making for Dry Fort at top speed for a final confrontation.

The noise of horse hooves echoes across the desert landscape, as more than a dozen riders from Dry Fort arrange themselves along the nearest dusty rise. Elsewhere the sands are pockmarked with countless men and boys from Bazaar, clad in their untarnished white armor and grasping rifles, while behind this human crescent can be seen your allies from Spilunk, their own albino faces formed into grim countenances of determined resistance.

Dry Fort looms in the background, its mud ramparts looking for the entire world like the insurmountable barriers of some Ancient-era citadel. Steel shutters raised, you can see stern-faced men and womenfolk staring out with bows in hand, ready to lay down punishing fire to protect their bastion.

A flag is slowly raised over the fort, combining the colors of all three communities in the Alliance.

The sun is bright and brilliant. It is high noon. The wind is beginning to pick up and the horizon echoes with another form of thunder altogether.

The men, only moments ago squatting to rest, stand up to get a better look. Even you have to shield your eyes from the sun to see out to the great distance of the approaching force.

There, stretching in a line at least three hundred yards wide is a truly massive force of raiders, perhaps 100 or stronger. Mounted on vehicles or marching on foot, these are your mortal enemy. The Wastelords!

Though you catch yourselves shivering, you stand ready.

It is time to free the people of the Trade Lands once and for all!

This, then, is the decisive moment that will decide the fate of the Trade Lands. Will the towns, bastions of free trade and civilization, fall to the savage onslaught of the powerful raiders - or will the characters prevail and lead the settlements to a great victory?

When they join ranks with the army forming in the shadow of Dry Fort prior to the battle, the characters are permitted to share in the defenders' resources of meds. They may use up to twelve doses of juju salve and eight stimshot As to heal themselves before the coming engagement.

BATTLE INFORMATION

In this battle, no quarter will be asked nor given. The allies of the Three Towns see this as the opportunity to end the raider threat once and for all that they have been waiting for their entire lives. The Wastelords, for their part, are desperate to reclaim the Great Weapon (for their own reasons; see the alternate endings at the end of this module for details).

The PCs will be engaged in only a small part of the large scale conflict whirling around Dry Fort. Still, their success (or failure) will dictate how the rest of the battle fares for the Alliance. As such, their participation is crucial in deciding the difference between victory and total defeat.

The battlefield should be prepared ahead of time by the GM, who should roll a number of d6s on the playing surface (depending on your playing area, this could be a tabletop or a floor), leaving the dice where they lie to represent boulders strewn about the desert





landscape near Dry Fort.

The number on the each die will show the size (and cover given) of each boulder, should anyone seek cover. Consult the following chart to determine the cover:

Roll	Cover
1	No appreciable cover
2	One-quarter
3	One-half
4	Three-quarters
5	Nine-tenths
6	Total

ALLIANCE FORCES

The Alliance forces in the immediate area of the PCs consist of six warriors from Bazaar, four warriors from Dry Fort, two warriors from Spilunk, and any survivors from the *Shootout At Shiny House*. In addition, if the PCs managed to convince the terminals of the Dry Forest to join the Alliance, they will have sent six warriors and a gront for this final engagement against the Wastelords, all of which will be under the PCs' command.

☛ **Warriors of Bazaar, Guardian1 (6):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+2; hp 6 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather armor); Atk Police baton +2 melee 1d4+1, or *sport rifle* +4 ranged 1d12; SQ Defender; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +3. Feel for Weapon (heirloom sport rifle), Quickdraw.

Possessions: *Heirloom sport rifle* (30 rounds), police baton, studded leather armor, bullet bandoleer, bedroll, blanket, signal whistle, sling bag, *sungoggles*, two doses of *juju salve*, one dose of *oil of remedy*.

Mutations and Defects: Accumulated Resistance (disease), Independent Cerebral Control, Sensitive Sight, Spontaneous Electric Charge Generation, Superior Kidney Development. Adrenaline Deficiency, Alopecia, Brachydactyly, Photosensitivity.

☛ **Warriors of Dry Fort, Guardian1 (4):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+2; hp 8 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 25 ft; AC 18 (+1 Dex, +5 beast chitin, +2 large steel shield); Atk Battleaxe +4 melee 1d8+2; SQ Defender; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.



Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +3, Listen +2, Ride +5, Spot +2. Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).

Possessions: Battle axe, beast chitin armor, large steel shield, backpack, bedroll, blanket, three doses of *juju salve*, light horse with trappings.

Mutations and Defects: Aberrant Endoskeletal Encasing, Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Extreme Resilience, Sensitive Sight. Cystic Fibrosis, Hunchback, Mongoloid, Under-Developed Organ (nose).

• **Light Horses (4):** CR 1; Large Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 60 ft; AC 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Atk 2 hooves +2 melee 1d4+1; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +6.

• **Warriors of Spilunk, Guardian1 (2):** CR 2; Medium-size Humanoid (3rd Generation Mutant Resentfuls); HD 1d10; hp 4 each; Init +4 (Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 10; Atk Fist +0 melee 1d3-1; SQ Defender; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 3.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +0, Listen +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +6. Fertile/Potent, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: None.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Independent Cerebral Control, Neural Domination, Neural Fear, Neural Life-Force Destruction Field, Neural Shield, Sensitive Sight, Super-Sensitive Sight. Albinism, Atrophied Cerebellum, Neuro-Fibromatosis, Non-Malignant Tumors, Pituitary Deformation.

• **Terminals (6):** CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8-2; hp 7 each; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 9 (-1 Dex); Atk 2 claws +3 melee 1d4+3, javelin -1 ranged 1d6+3 (smeared with *small centipede poison*); AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -2; Str 16, Dex 8, Con 8, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Move Silently +0, Spot +0.

• **Gront (1):** CR 4; Large Beast; HD 4d10+28; hp 35; Init +4 (Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (-1 size, +7 natural); Atk Bite +10 melee 1d8+10; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 25, Dex 11, Con 25, Int 2, Wis 2, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +1, Climb +1, Jump +1, Move Silently +2. Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

• **Covering Fire (3):** In addition to those forces above, the Allied forces receive covering fire of arrows from the defenders in the fort. At the start of each round the players may make three free missile attacks, each at +2, doing 1d6 damage (short bows); keep in mind that these attacks are done without the benefit of any special feats (such as Precise Shot), and thus should not be used without some thought.

OPPOSITION FORCES

Cut off from their supplies and reinforcements, on their last tanks of gasoline, and desperate to reclaim the Great Weapon, the Wastelords are here at Dry Fort in force. Though the enemy lines are extensive, the PCs face the primary thrust of the attacking army.

Army group commander “Kyren”, a force of twenty-four Wastelords - and the “Slaughterwagon” personally command the enemy that engages the PCs’ sector of the front lines.

Note that the Slaughterwagon has a crew of four Wastelord warriors, one of which drives the vehicle, one who crews the ring-mounted *machinegun*, and two that fight from within.

• **Kyren, Raider6 (1):** CR 9; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrector); HD 6d10+6; hp 60; Init +6 (Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 19 (+1 Dex, +1 chains and chaps, +7 plastic plate armor); Atk Dagger +8/+3 melee 1d4+2, or *automatic pistol* +8/+3 ranged 1d10+4 (1d10+6 with *glazer* rounds); SQ Boarding party, chains and chaps (+1); AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +7, Listen +2, Speak Ancient, Speak Unislang, Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +2. Improved Initiative, Rip A Clip, Room Broom, Track.

Possessions: Plastic plate armor, hi-powered *automatic pistol* +4, 10 *glazer* pistol cartridges, 20 regular pistol cartridges, four *ready syringes* of *stimshot B*.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight. Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Immune System Abnormality.

• **Veteran Wastelords, Raider2 (4):** CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 2d10+2; hp 12 each; Init +6 (Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +1 chains and chaps, +4 chain shirt); Atk Dagger +4 melee 1d4+2, or *automatic rifle* +4/+4 ranged 1d12; SQ Chains and chaps (+1); AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Speak Ancient, Speak Unislang, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3. Improved Initiative, Room Broom.

Possessions: *Automatic rifle* (30 shots), chain shirt, *tear gas grenade*, dagger, backpack, bedroll, blanket, web belt.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight. Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Immune System Abnormality.





• **Wastelords, Raider1 (20):** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (2nd Generation Mutant Resurrectors); HD 1d10+1; hp 6 each; Init +6 (Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +1 chains and chaps, +3 studded leather armor); Atk Dagger +3 melee 1d4+2, or *automatic rifle* +3/+3 ranged 1d12; SQ Chains and chaps (+1); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Speak Ancient, Speak Unislang, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3. Improved Initiative.

Possessions: *Automatic rifle* (60 shots), studded leather armor, two *concussion grenades*, dagger, backpack, bedroll, blanket, web belt.

Mutations and Defects: Abnormal Joint Flexibility, Accelerated White Blood Cell Activity, Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Sensitive Sight. Bilirubin Imbalance, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Immune System Abnormality.

• **Slaughterwagon (Medium Car):** Huge vehicle; AC 18; hardness 5; 70 hp; Spd 50 ft. The 'wagon is modified with a mounted weapon (a *machinegun*, with 500 rounds of ammunition). Since this a feature of the vehicle, if the 'wagon is destroyed the weapon and ammunition will also be destroyed.

AFTERMATH

Once the final battle for Dry Fort seems won, read the following to the players:

The battle rages all around you, and though there are dead Wastelords everywhere, there seems to be an equal amount of slain defenders strewn about the field of battle.

Having stopped the Wastelord advance in your area, you use the moment's respite to withdraw back to the launch site of the Great Weapon, where the last remaining thinkers from Spilunk can be seen struggling to activate it.

As you run up to offer your assistance, lending your great strength to move the Great Weapon into position, one of the thinkers takes up a bullhorn and shouts over the din of battle.

"Wastelord scum! The Great Weapon is ours! And you thought you could use it to terrorize us! We have turned it to face the lands from which *you* come! Surrender now or we will use it to destroy *your* people!!!"

Depending on whether or not you plan to play this adventure as part of the intended two-part series, precede with either Ending A or its alternate, Ending B.

Ending A provides a link from this vital climax to the beginning of the great adventure in party two of the series, *The New World Order*.

Use **Ending B** if you have been playing *Against The Wastelords* as a stand-alone adventure. Ending

B wraps up the epic conflict with heroic closure, with details of final rewards for the brave PCs.

ENDING A

As if bending under the mighty threat of the Great Weapon, in moments the last vestiges of the raider army slowly retreat, then break into a rout. Within five minutes all that remains is a swirling dust storm in their wake – and a long period for friendly forces to count the dead.

The raiders have been defeated. But as they retreat over the dunes and out of sight, there is a loud BANG from the Great Weapon, as the entire contraption – roped together with bundles of wire – falls apart in a pile of junk.

One of the surviving warriors from Spilunk turns and grins, as if finally able to let you in on his community's private joke.

"The warhead was a dud all along. We found that out after we brought it here. We tried to fix it but...but it saved the Alliance nonetheless."

The bluff – an unbelievable stroke of bravado – seems to have worked.

As you search the area following the Wastelords' retreat, a loud buzzing sound alerts you. Following the noise, you soon come to the wreckage of an armored vehicle. Sitting there you see a knobby metal box with dials and wires sticking out of it, sitting on the seat next to the dead driver. The buzzing appears to be coming from the small round screen in the face of the artifact. Soon, the buzzing gives way to a crackling, and then a voice booms out, "Yup, heard ya. We're coming."

Looking to one another, you listen further, as another voice continues, "Yeah, passed through the riverbed a while ago. Mopped up some pathetic resistance. We're almost there. We'll be there in about five minutes...There's about a hundred of us...(pause)...You hear me?...(pause)...Dammit! Answer me, scumbag!...(pause)..."

"Ahhh, I see. Well, well, well. I guess *you* savages won. If you are listening...there's no escape."

Staring at one another in wide-eyed disbelief, you realize that the raiders had called for reinforcements, a force far larger than the Alliance ever imagined. Those reinforcements have broken the bottleneck at the dry riverbed and are almost upon you.

You quickly gather your gear, but the condition of the alliance armies (though victorious) forces you to realize that you don't have a chance of surviving another wave of attackers.

The huge dust cloud soon reveals a large group of raiders, many more than you just defeated. The Wastelords form a crescent that slowly encircles the whole of Dry Fort, as they close around you. So far no one has fired, and your surviving allies

slowly lower their weapons, hoping for mercy in the face of this huge force. The fact that the raiders have not yet engaged you seems to indicate they have something else in mind...

The Wastelords approach alert and heavily armed. The new reinforcements are in possession of a number of armored vehicles, including four motorcycle-sidecar combinations, three sedans, and a minibus. All are heavily modified with armor plate, mesh window armor, spikes, and ramplates. Two of the sedans have open roofs and a ring mount equipped with a flamethrower. Wary looking Wastelords point these heavy weapons at you, the group nearest their lines.

As they come to an unexpected stop, one of the raiders gets off the last sedan's hood and walks towards you. He raises his hand, and the other raiders seem to relax - a little. It seems this one wants to talk. Looking at the unrealistic odds, you decide to hear what he has to say.

"Well, well, well. What a bunch of bronze. Kinda ruined my little operation here, didn't you? No problem," he says, taking a long, slow breath from a wrapped up, stinking weed in his mouth. "Guess you guys are good."

Looking at him, it is obvious this well-armed and armored individual is sizing you up. "Damn! I gotta give it to you guys. How the hell did you kill Kyren?"

"What about Big Bert?" says one of the raiders, casually holding a pump-gun.

"Hell yeah. Big Bert too." Says the *true* Wastelord leader. Then he looks over to the remains of the Great Weapon, crumbled and broken.

"Looks like you ruined our one big chance..."

"Here it is. Seems we got the same problems, you and us. Can't say sorry or anything about being a raider, you know how it is. Anyways, you guys have earned my respect. You're lucky I don't just kill you; you're in no shape to fight back.

"So I got a prop for ya. Since you destroyed *our* weapon, you gotta solve *our* problem... 'manually'. Not only will we let ya live, we may even *pay* you when you're done. Whaddya say?"

With that, a number of the raiders cock their weapons and level them at you. The sight of more raiders flanking the settlement of Dry Fort makes the sheer futility of resistance sink home.

Still in shock, one of you speaks up. "What about the Great Weapon? If not for destroying us... what was it for?"

"Handling our 'little problem'. What, you chuckleheads thought we went through all of this to conquer your puny tribes? Ha! Not a chance. There are a hundred villages like yours on the other side of the mountains that we could prey on. No. We've got *bigger* fish to fry..."

The leader won't explain anything until he has been given a decision. The characters now have a choice to make. If they refuse, they face a force equal to the original wave, but armed with automatic rifles, shotguns, and at least two *flamethrowers* in the sedans. For the time being use the statistics for Kyren to represent the true "Wastelord". Fighting would now be foolish, and would probably spell the end of the Three Towns.

If they accept the Wastelords' offer, they will (for the time being) save the Three Towns from destruction, and spare their own lives. They are now ready to continue with part two of this adventure series, which picks up after a fragile alliance is forged with the Wastelords to fight...*The New World Order*.

ENDING B

As if bending under the mighty threat of the Great Weapon, in moments the last vestiges of the raider army slowly retreat, then break into a rout. Within five minutes all that remains is a swirling dust storm in their wake - and a long period for friendly forces to count the dead.

The raiders have been defeated. But as they retreat over the dunes and out of sight, there is a loud BANG from the Great Weapon, as the entire contraption - roped together with bundles of wire - falls apart in a pile of junk.

One of the surviving warriors from Spilunk turns and grins, as if finally able to let you in on his community's private joke.

"The warhead was a dud all along. We found that out after we brought it here. We tried to fix it but...but it saved the Alliance nonetheless."

The bluff - an unbelievable stroke of bravado - seems to have worked.

A thorough search of the destroyed raider vehicles and the scores of their dead reveals a journal, kept by their leader. Flipping through it, you find that the "Wastelords" were in fact a splinter group of a larger raider group that is based far to the south, known as the "Ravagers". There seems to have been a falling-out almost a decade ago. The Wastelords fled before being killed, and ever since have moved across the wasteland striking in one region during the dry season, in another during the season of storms. Thanks to you, their threat to the Trade Lands - and the world as a whole - is finally ended.

There was much gained from your work; in addition to the bounty taken from the dead raiders and from the many foes you have defeated in your effort, you no doubt will be rewarded upon your return to Bazaar. Perhaps even more importantly, you have earned the respect of the three communities of the Trade Lands.

This, by itself, is a near priceless reward.



FINAL REWARDS

Upon returning to Bazaar, the characters will find that the merchants are grateful for their contributions to the war of liberation. They are given their 500 corium pieces, as promised, and celebrated as heroes. In addition, the characters are given the offer of what is known as “female access”. In exchange for forfeiting 250 corium from their reward, the characters will be allowed to “attempt to contribute to the gene pool” of the community and enjoy the attention of one of the town’s “furniture” for a night.

Ironically, any goods bought in Bazaar by the PCs from now on will have their prices raised by 20% - a barely concealed attempt by the merchants to get some of their currency back! Though appreciative of the sacrifices the PCs made for the people of the Trade Lands, it was a deal based on profit after all (for both sides), and when all is said and done, business is still business!

The same treatment will not be felt in Spilunk or Dry Fort, however, where the PCs’ selfless deeds is not so readily forgotten.

The delegate from Dry Fort, Captain Ulz, survived the war with minor injuries and a kill count rivaling that of the best PCs. Still serious in demeanor despite the baptism of fire they shared, not even a smile breaks his grim countenance when he finally meets up with the PCs in Bazaar or Dry Fort. He comes to express the sincere thanks of his people, and gives each of the characters two full waterskins (filled with pure uncontaminated water), and offers the group a number of *desert horses* (if any were caught while staying at Dry Fort, these will include any the PCs personally subdued), one for each character! A great reward indeed! The horses are, of course, handed over with all the necessary trappings.

Elder Vilic of Spilunk is also happy to see the triumph of the characters, and insists on buying them a round of fermented othyhol from the common-house in Bazaar. Only before leaving for Spilunk will he give the characters their reward: a pair of working *shock gloves* and a fully charged *power backpack* to go with it. If asked about the items, Elder Vilic will simply state that his people have no need for such “junk”; with the end of the Wastelords they have decided to give up the ways of war once and for all, and from now on will seek a peaceful lifestyle in a manner not unlike those mysterious folk who died at Monastery for the good of the Trade Lands.

This concludes the adventure, *Against the Wastelords*.

FROM HERE

If you’re playing *Against The Wastelords* as part of the planned two-part series, Ending A provides a relatively seamless introduction to part two, *The New World Order*.

If you’re playing *Against The Wastelords* as a stand-alone adventure, the ending can be an excellent springboard into other adventures. Assuming that this was the characters’ first adventure (considering the low level of *Against The Wastelords*, this is probably the case), leaving the Trade Lands for the outside world on a journey of discovery would make an excellent ending (or beginning, depending on how you choose to see it). Having done such heroic deeds for the people of Bazaar, Dry Fort, and Spilunk, they will always be able to call the Trade Lands home, even when they are far away in such places as Styx or the Far Desert.

If by some unfortunate circumstance the PCs **failed** to thwart the Wastelords in the final battle (a quite possible occurrence, considering their numbers and relative power), the ending might be very different. Captured by the raiders, their failure may become a realistic introduction to, say, *Death By Corium Light*, where the characters play the roles of slaves and prisoners sold to the corium miners of Lil’ Vegas. Whether or not they choose to escape and start their lives anew with their shame behind them, or escape from Lil’ Vegas and return with their experiences and treasures to finally defeat the Wastelords, *Against The Wastelords* can be an excellent introduction to adventures elsewhere.



SANDYVILLE

It is unlikely the PCs will ever go as far as visiting Sandyville, once they learn the village has been destroyed by the Wastelords in their search for one of the parts of the “Great Weapon”. If they do decide to visit, however, this section is meant to detail the ransacked remains of that unfortunate community. *This can be especially important if you feel the characters are lacking in experience, as the small encounter in Sandyville may be enough to give them the experience they need to reach 3rd level by the time they can train at Dry Fort (see later for details).*

Attacked in a surprise raid, the defenders of Sandyville were unable to do much more than annoy the determined Wastelords. The ruins of Sandyville are now quite desolate, the bodies of the recently massacred locals left to rot in the sun.

A pack of wild dogs from the desert have sensed the death and decay here and moved into the ruins for the time being, content on feeding off of the carrion for a week or so. When the PCs approach, these animals will make themselves known, and will fight to defend what they consider “theirs”.

KEY TO SANDYVILLE

1. Wrecked Compound

The ramshackle wooden walls that once protected the compound of Sandyville seems to have fallen in recent days. Collapsed or bulldozed in certain areas, it is obvious vehicle-mounted attackers simply plowed through the defenses to slaughter the innocent people hiding on the other side.

As you step cautiously through the broken wall into the compound, you are immediately assaulted by a nauseating stench of decayed flesh. A mass of humanoid bodies lay strewn about the area, rotting in the searing sun, their flesh recently picked at by scavenging animals.

The bodies of more than a dozen men are scattered all about this place, taken off guard when the Wastelords attacked. Only a handful were able to make it to the redoubt (**area 2**); the rest were cut down in the panic.

A search of the bodies uncovers nothing; apparently the Wastelords were quite thorough in taking everything of use for their army. All that remains is a grisly monument to their savagery.

2. Redoubt

Whatever this was, one can only guess. A low stone building, much of the brickwork has cracked and blackened, no doubt due to some explosion or fire.

The defenders used this low stone building as a last-ditch “bunker”, in which they could keep their women and children and fight off attackers. Sadly, due to the surprise nature of the Wastelords’ attack, few made it to the shelter of the redoubt. Those who did attempted to fire back with the muskets kept within, until one of the Wastelords threw a *Molotov cocktail* through one of the firing positions. Flailing about, the poor defender caused the black powder kept inside the bunker to ignite, killing everyone inside.

Entering the redoubt, one finds only the charred remains of humanoid bodies, and a few broken and burned weapons.

Treasure: A Search check (DC 15) uncovers one *black powder rifle*, still operable despite a thick coating of ash.

3. Water Shed

This building appears to have been a storage shed for the locals’ water supply.

The corrugated metal door barring entrance to this precious cache was torn off its hinges, the lock blown away by rifle fire. Inside, broken shelves that once held plastic containers, metal jerry cans, and clay jugs of water were stolen. Not a single drop of water remains.

4. Burned-Out Buildings

Whatever this building was once used for, it is no longer clear. Burned black, the roof having caved in on itself, the interior is merely a collection of unrecognizable cinders.

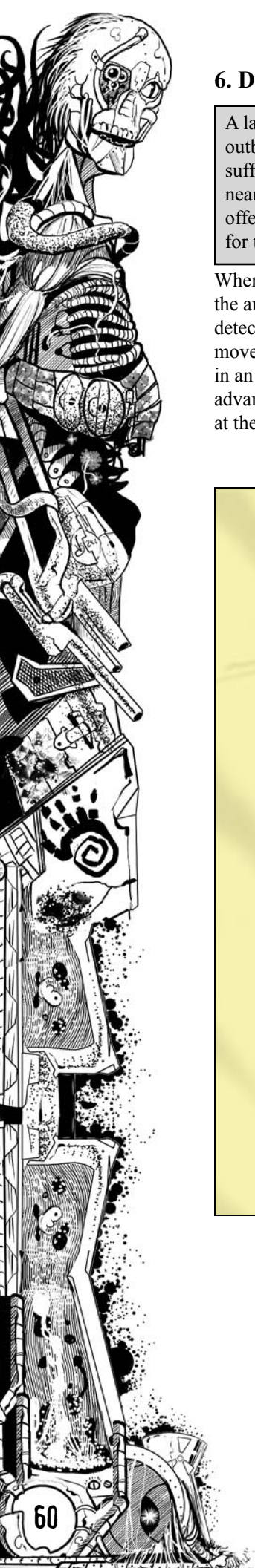
It is apparent that these buildings burned down during the attack (a *tear grenade* was thrown through the windows of each, and the buildings soon caught fire). Nothing of interest is found within either.

5. Gas Station

The main building seems to have been abandoned long ago, due to extensive damage, even before the attack that massacred the inhabitants of Sandyville. Bits of stone fall from the cracked and leaning roof, suggesting that it might even topple in the next sand storm.

The locals, for fear of its collapse, left this building empty. Over the years they risked venturing in to scavenge what they could; as such, nothing of interest remains inside.





6. Den

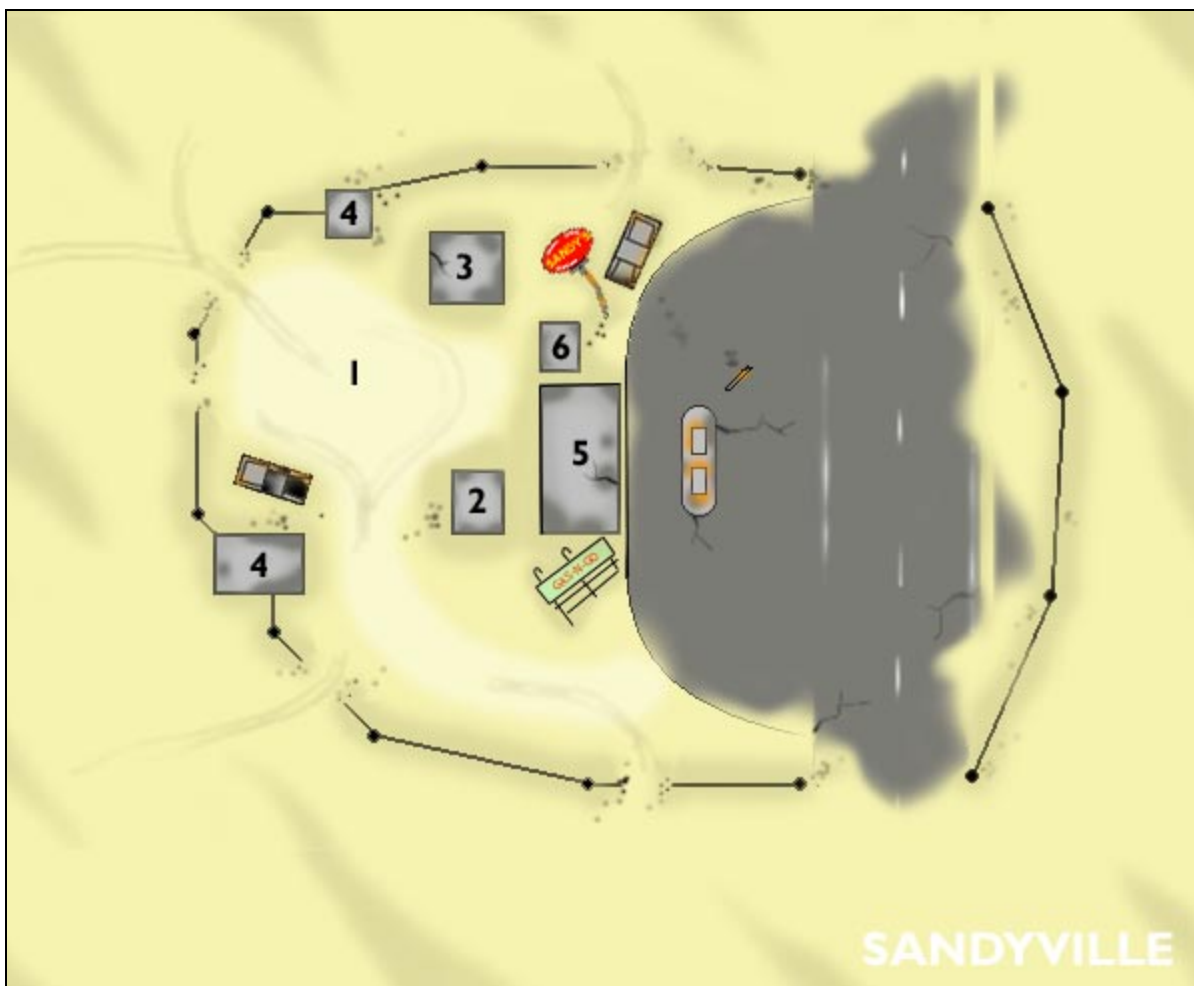
A large hole in one side of this nondescript outbuilding is all the damage it seems to have suffered over the years. A pack of wild dogs sits near this entrance, making good use of the shade offered by the building while keeping an eye out for trespassers on their territory.

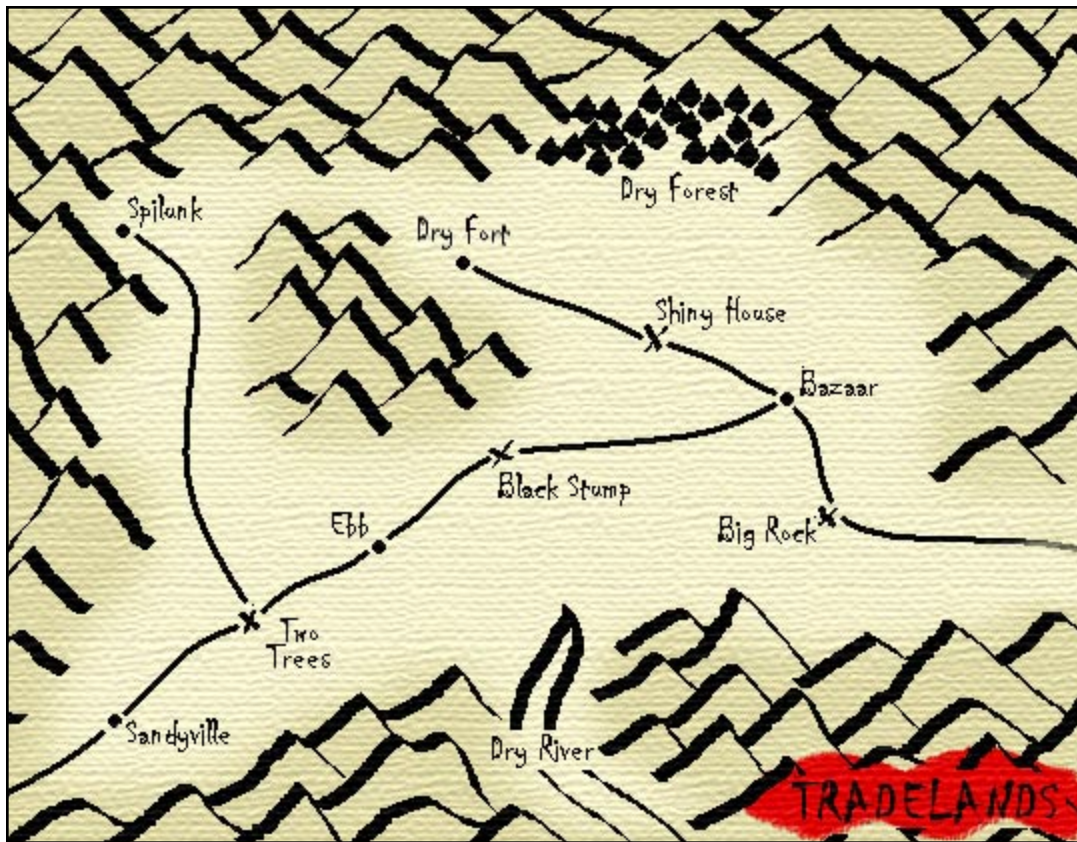
When the PCs approach the ruins of the compound, the animals here will attempt to Spot them. If they detect the party's intrusion, the entire pack will move to **area 1** as a group, barking and growling in an effort to scare them PCs off. If they persist in advancing, the animals will fight defend the carrion at the site.

🐾 **Dogs (9):** CR 1/3; Small Animal; HD 1d8+2; hp 6 each; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft; AC 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk Bite +2 melee 1d4+1; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

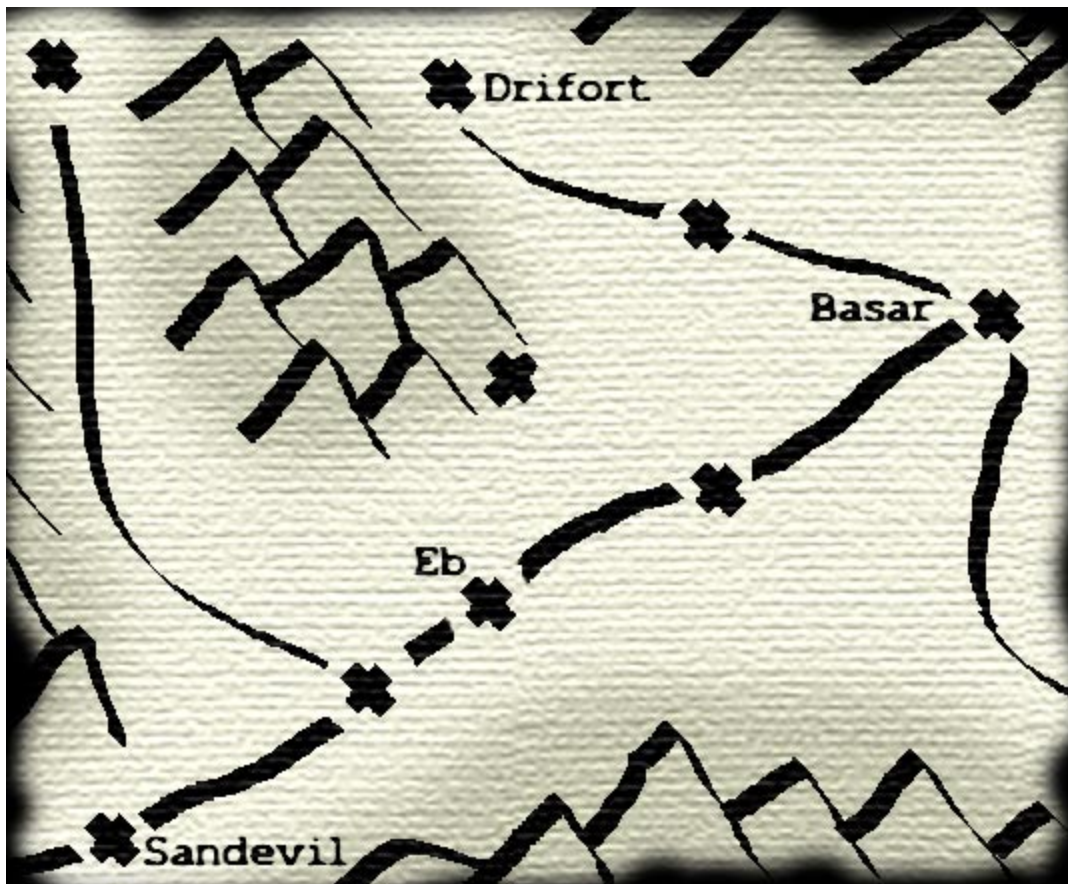
Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +5, Wilderness Lore +1*.

Treasure: Inside the den, a few of the younger pups have dragged a corpse to playfully nip at. This corpse still wears a stainless steel *wrist watch* (the *power cell* has about a year left on it).





Player Map



Scav Map





OPEN GAME LICENSE

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc (“Wizards”). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) “Contributors” means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) “Derivative Material” means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) “Distribute” means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) “Open Game Content” means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) “Product Identity” means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) “Trademark” means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) “Use”, “Used” or “Using” means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) “You” or “Your” means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder’s name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15 COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0 Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Rules Document Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson

Darwin’s World Copyright 2002, RPGObjects; Authors Dominic Covey and Chris Davis.

Metal Gods Copyright 2002, RPGObjects; Authors Dominic Covey and Chris Davis.

Against the Wastelords Copyright 2003, RPGObjects; Author Dominic Covey

OPEN GAMING CONTENT

Designation of Product Identity: The following terms are designated as product identity as outline in section 1(a) of the Open Gaming License: Darwin’s Word, Twisted Earth, Denizens of the Twisted Earth, Terrors of the Twisted Earth, Artifacts of the Ancients, Cave of Life, Ferals, Primitives, Ritual Preservationist, the Ancients, Resentful, Degenerates, Ressurectors, Visionary Reinventors, Hedonists, Advanced, Good juju, Benders, Brethren, Brotherhood of Radiation, Cartel, Children of the Metal Gods, Clean Water Clans, Far Traders, Enthropist, Foundationist, the Movement, Paradise Believers, Ravagers, Savants, Doomriders, Brethren Follower, Brotherhood Force Master, Cartel Trademaster, Foundationist Paladin, Juju Doctor, Sister of the Desert, Death Sentinel, Doom Harvester, Ethereal Flyer, Fraxx Steed, Gront, Heliogryphs, Mutagon, Othydont, Plague Zombie, Purple Angler, Slime Mole, Shadow People, Utran.

Designation of Open Gaming Content: The following sections of Against the Wastelords are designated as open gaming content expect for terms define as product identity above. All illustrations, pictures, and diagrams are Product identity and property of RPGObjects™.

All monster, npc, and trap statistics blocks are open content. All other content is closed.