

NUCLEAR SUNSET

THE SOUTHWEST



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OVERVIEW

His family had been on the road west for a couple of weeks, following their guides. Supposedly there was good land to be had out on the frontier, places untouched by the blight. Clarke couldn't remember laughing so much. Being out of the compound and in the open air was such a relief. He and his brothers had played cards and pretended to be gamblers, the hard-drinking kind, who were quick with a knife if someone accused them of cheating, the kind they'd read about in their dime novels.

His mother's screams woke him.

Someone had thrown an old canvas blanket on top of him and through a small hole Clarke could catch glimpses of the horror, as raiders attacked the family camp, looting, pillaging and raping. He instinctively knew he would join his family in rape and death if he moved and so Clarke stayed as still as death, fear and glimpses of things he would forever wish he could forget his only companions.

Then he heard the gunshots. One of the raiders went down. Then a second. There was confusion and fear on their faces as they looked around, desperately searching for the source of the gunfire. A few fired off shots in random directions as single, precise shots rained down on them, each one cutting a raider down.

Finally the last three ran for their motorbikes. Only one made it, the other two cut down by quick shots like the others. Clarke stayed still, watching as the lone man searched the camp. It wasn't until he caught a glimpse of the gold Marshall's star pinned to the man's shirt that he moved, throwing the blanket off.

The Marshall whirled around, lever-action rifle at the ready but the moment he saw the boy his rock hard expression melted into sadness.

"Come here boy, help me. Tend to your sisters while I bury the dead."

It wasn't until he saw that two of his sisters had lived that Clarke allowed himself to cry. The three of them held each other, sobbing, too numb to even be frightened as the occasional shot rang out. The Marshall had told them at the time he was scaring off coyotes and mastiffs that smelled the death of the camp.

It wasn't until Clarke was much older that he learned one of those shots had been for his father, whose mind had broken during the attack.

When they reached the walled town of Tristan, Marshall Keller had found a family to take them in. Clarke didn't know what came over him but he ran up to the man as he mounted his enormous brown horse.

"Where you headed now?"

Keller had smiled slightly as he looked down at the boy, "Heading after that raider I let get away on his motorbike. He'll lead me to the rest."

Clarke had assumed the lone raider had just gotten away, the realization that the Marshall was not finished, that there were more responsible for the attack on his family stirred something inside him he'd never felt before.

"You- there was others?"

The Marshall nodded, looking off into the distance as though he could see them from here.

"Your family hired some 'guides' back east, right? They've been leading groups to these raiders for months."

The Marshall urged his horse forward, ignoring Clarke as he caught at his boot, "Take me with you! I want to help you get 'em!"

The Marshall kept riding and Clarke kept holding on. It wasn't until he slipped and fell, ripping his hand open on the Marshall's spur that he stopped and got off his horse. He knelt down and bandaged the boy's hand, still looming over him.

After several seconds of silence, he spoke, "It's not going to be easy. And I don't know when I'll be back



in a town. We might be on the trail for a few weeks, maybe months. We don't stop until we track down these guides ambushing settlers. All of them."

Clarke had sniffed, looking at the red stain on the cloth around his hand. He could feel the eyes of his sisters on his back and he knew if he looked back at them his resolve would crumble. So he didn't look back.

"Good. That's what I want. All of 'em. Dead."

Clarke thought the Marshall had smiled a bit but he stood tall, looking back at the family, "I'll need one of those ponies from the pen."



The Southwest of the former United States has returned to its roots in the chaotic and violent days since the Great War cast society into ruins. Like it was in the days of the Old American West, this region is once again home to outlaws, transients, rustlers and murderers.

There is no unifying government in this region, unless you count the Marshals, who exert little influence over local affairs, concentrating instead on bringing the lawless to justice. Besides the Marshals and the usual struggles to survive, this region is ground zero for alien visitations and interference. Apparently these incursions predate the apocalypse but were concealed by the old federal government, which was engaged in some clandestine war against the alien visitors.

Now that the region has descended into chaos, the aliens face less resistance and have become bolder, attempting to retrieve all their captured comrades and technology, while also occasionally abducting locals for experimentation. At least, these are their motives as interpreted by the local residents.

From the south, the newly ascendant Lord of the Sun, ruler of New Aztekia, has also been raiding the Southwest, seeking slaves to slake the bloodlust of his horrible mutant gods. Perhaps 1000 have

been abducted in the last year alone, dragged to Teotihuacan, from which no foreigner returns.

Finally there are the threats posed by the Transhumans of California and the 88th, based out of Springtown. Despite incursions by all these groups, the Southwest has largely been free of concerted attempts at control by any of the major power groups. The region is simply too wild, too remote and too sparsely populated to be considered important enough for major attempts at unification.

And that's just how the residents like it.

SETTLEMENTS, CITIES AND RUINS

SETTLEMENTS

BIG ROOM (PRE-WAR NAME:

CARLSBAD CAVERNS; POPULATION: 5,000+)

Major Economic Activity: Trade

Local Infrastructure: Good (local roads, sporadically maintained)

Local Government: Oligarchy (council of Rangers and town elders, some elected, some appointed)

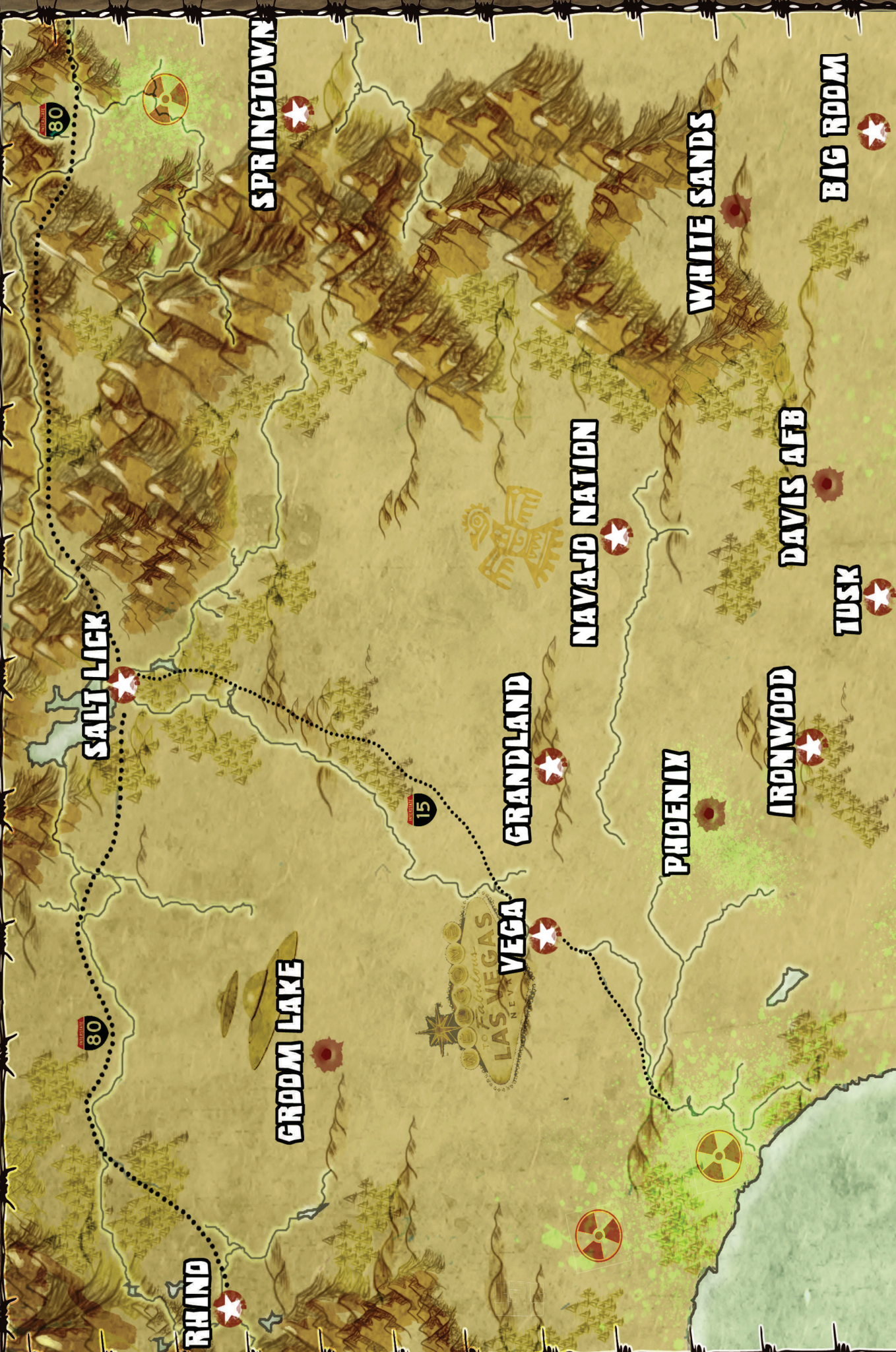
Racial Diversity: Mutant Human (60%), Mutant Animal (25%), Pure Human (10%), Others (5%)

Carlsbad Caverns were tested by the military as early into the nuclear age as the 1940's for suitability as an emergency fallout shelter. Even though the site was deemed suitable for such a purpose (bomb tests didn't even cause ripples in pools in the cave), no formal shelter was ever constructed on the site.

However, as with Grandlands, park rangers began to take in displaced refugees and pro-



THE SOUTHWEST



SALT LICK

SPRINGTOWN

WHITE SANDS

BIG ROOM

NAVAJO NATION

DAVIS AFB

TUSK

IRONWOOD

PHOENIX

GRANDLAND

VEGA

GROOM LAKE

RHIND

vide them shelter within the caves in the chaotic days leading up to the end of civilization.

In the early days of the town's history, the huge bat population was an important source of food. However today, the bat guano is considered so valuable that eating the bats is forbidden.

Guano is the town's most important trade good. It makes excellent fertilizer and can also be used as an ingredient in gunpowder.

Big Room has a large militia known as the Rangers, descended from the original park rangers who protected the caves in its earliest days. The Rangers have become a quasi-ruling class, which causes tensions among other cavers, who resent their life of toil collecting guano, while the Rangers (in peacetime anyway), seem to do little.

Worse, membership in the Rangers has become hereditary, concentrating most of the power in the settlement in a small group of Pure Humans. Still, the Rangers do a good enough job of maintaining law, order and security that the residents put up with this situation.

Big Room's population is growing at a significant rate and the population has expanded in several nearby caves (there are over 100 in the immediate area). Of particular interest is the Rattler Cave, which is occupied by a group of mutated snakes. This cave contains the largest water source in the area, as well as a huge bird population for food.

In the past, the serpentfolk (who are mutated animals and are included in the population of Big Room) have been shunned by the humanoid residents of Big Room but now the two groups are interacting more, trading water and food from the Rattler Caves for the guano from Big Room. The serpentfolk have attempted to leverage this new "partnership" into a voice in the government of Big Room, but for now, tensions between the two groups are rising.

In particular many of the Rangers feel they should evict the serpentfolk by force and take over the Rattler Cave.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Expedition To Slaughter Canyon

A hive of Ant Horrors has infested Slaughter Canyon, one of the main areas controlled by Big Room. These horrors venture out of the canyons at dawn searching for food, which includes the local residents. Worse, it is feared the creatures are serving a queen, meaning if the infestation is not removed soon the entire region could be overrun.

The town is offering a substantial reward to remove the infestation and a large bonus for proof of the queen's death (her egg sack would do). There are perhaps a dozen of the horrors in the canyon, along with a queen, who has maximum hit points but is otherwise identical to the standard Ant Horror.

Spelunkers

The territory surrounding Big Room contains over 115 caves, which have only been sporadically explored over the years. Adventuresome souls could make a pretty penny mapping unexplored caves, or mapping deeper sections of already inhabited caves. Bonuses will be paid for any dangerous creatures killed, or valuable minerals discovered.

Faction Relations

- **Hell's Heart: *Hostile*:** members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The 88th: *Hostile*:** members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The Cartel: *Neutral***
- **The Marshalls: *Tense*:** members are welcome for a short time but prices are 25% higher. After 2-12 days in town, members of this faction will be "encouraged" to move on, which will result in escalating violence after 24 days in town.



IRONWOOD (PRE-WAR NAME: IRONWOOD FOREST NATIONAL MONUMENT; POPULATION 1,000)

Major Economic Activity: Crafts (leatherworking)

Local Infrastructure: Poor (Desert trails)

Local Government: Village headman (hereditary)

Racial Diversity: Mutant Human (75%), Mutant Plant (25%)

In the shelter of this ancient Ironwood Forest lives a small collection of hunter-gatherers who eke a living from the surrounding Sonoran Desert. They feed and clothe themselves from the great Giant Gecko, which are found in large numbers in the Sonoran.

In addition to the meat provided by this animal, the folk of the Ironwood are master leatherworkers and make all sorts of garments, backpacks, tents and other items from the creature's hide. These items are so sought after that merchants occasionally make the trip through the desert to trade for them, usually trading bullets and alcohol, which the hunters always desire, for the natives' wares.

The forest is also home to a sizeable population of mutated plants, who coexist with the natives in harmony. The slaughtering of the great gecko nourishes the soil and in return for a ban on lumbering, the plant folk band together to provide shelter to the tribe's tents during desert sandstorms.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Gecko Exodus

Once every 3-4 years the Great Gecko Exodus begins, a mass gathering of the geckos, during which the creatures return to their spawning grounds to mate. During this amazing time males shed their mottled green skin in favor of brilliant reds, greens and even purples.

These hides are used to make the Coats of Many Colors, which are highly prized and sell for exorbitant amounts, especially if it has been 2 or more years since the last exodus. As a result, the residents of Ironwood venture into the desert to stalk these

gecko gatherings, allowing the males to mate to perpetuate the gecko and then killing them for their valuable hides.

Unfortunately, it is not just the residents of the Ironwood who attend the gathering of the gecko. Predators of all kinds, including the human variety, stalk the gathering as well, seeking food or just to steal from the hunters. And so, every 3-4 years the hunters of Ironwood put out a call for guards.

Every hunter is needed to stalk and harvest the gecko hides, leaving none to protect them while they do their valuable work. Guards are paid per day, plus bonuses for the heads of particularly dangerous creatures they slay while patrolling the outskirts of the exodus grounds.

Trouble With The Trees

The bee population of the Ironwood has been wiped out by a hot wind (a surge of radioactivity). This prevents the mutant plant population from reproducing and their presence is vital to the town's survival during the vicious sandstorms that sweep across the Sonoran on a regular basis. The town is offering a large reward for anyone who can find and transplant a new bee colony to the forest.

Burning Heart

The founder of Hell's Heart was found wandering the desert almost a century ago, having run out of fuel during a raid in the deep desert, he was left to die by disloyal members of his own gang. The kind people of Ironwood took him in and nursed him back to health. Upon returning to his faction and extracting vengeance, a passage was added to the Holy Charter granting permanent protection to Ironwood and the two groups have enjoyed good relations ever since.

Since that time, members of Hell's Heart have used Ironwood as a place of refuge and trade. And once a year, they ride into the desert for the Burning Heart, a place for chapters from across the southwest to meet, party and negotiate territorial boundaries for the coming year.





Needless to say, such a gathering requires a lot of planning. An ambassador of Hell's Heart has arrived to make arrangements for this year's festival and requires alcohol- lots of alcohol. Unfortunately, the shipment he was guarding was waylaid by dangerous mutant monster out in the desert. If the ambassador can't arrange something as simple as a rotgut delivery on his own, he's not long for this world.

Needless to say, he doesn't want word of his failure reaching other members of his faction either. So some outside aid, in the form of hired adventurers, are needed to secure the alcohol from the mutant monster and deliver it to Ironwood before the rest of the chapters begin arriving.

Faction Relations

- **Hell's Heart: Good:** this faction is welcome and members receive a 10% discount on goods.
- **The 88th: Hostile:** members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The Cartel: Neutral**
- **The Marshalls: Friendly:** this faction is welcome and members receive a 25% discount on goods. They can also find free lodging for 2-12 days per month.

GRANDLAND (PRE-WAR NAME: GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK; POPULATION: 3,000)

Major Economic Activity: Farming

Local Infrastructure: Primitive (dirt tracks on the canyon floor; mule trails between terrace farms and the surface; goat tracks that locals can navigate on foot elsewhere)

Local Government: Clan/family

Racial Diversity: Mutant Human (60%), Mutant Plant (25%), Pure Human (10%), Others (5%)

This settlement is completely post war and did not exist prior to the end of civilization.

Immediately after the war, the Southwest experienced an immense water shortage, as bombing shattered aqueducts, and power went out to pumping stations and water treatment plants. For decades the population had exceeded the carrying capacity of the semi-arid southwest and the enormous Oasis on which Phoenix had been built was now a radioactive ruin.

It was in these days that visitors to the Grand Canyon found themselves trapped. At first they thought this would be temporary but as the full magnitude of the disaster began to sink in, they realized they had at least one thing that was currently in short supply: water.

At first water was brought up to the survivors but within a year, many were living at the canyon floor. One of the survivors was a botanist and he soon devised a terrace farming technique that allowed, over time, for the settlement to commence agriculture.

Not only is Grandland growing but the citizens produce a food surplus, which they sell to passing merchants.

There is also a large goatherd population as well.

For defensive reasons, there is no quick and easy way up and down the canyon walls, though the citizens could certainly design one. Instead, pack mule is the preferred means of ascent and descent, since a foreign invader is unfamiliar with it and any attacker would suffer significant losses in a descent down the canyon.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

River Monster

A great creature has taken up residence in the mighty river that serves as Grandland's lifeblood. They are offering a significant bounty for the head of this dangerous predator. Unfortunately, they aren't even sure what it is. But the residents are sure that a group of big, tough, veteran adventurers can handle it.



The River Raiders

One of the few ongoing local disputes in Grandland is their tension with the Lake Mead tribes. These tribes live on the shores of a vast lake formed by Hoover Dam. Lately they have been raiding upstream, engaging in small attacks on Grandland settlers, stealing crops and herd animals.

A peaceful people, the Grandlanders would prefer to settle this dispute amicably. They are willing to sell their goods, even donate them in times of hardship. They seek adventurers willing to find out why the Lake Dwellers have begun attacking and what can be done to end the attacks.

Unfortunately, the adventurers aren't going to be able to simply negotiate a treaty and walk away with clean hands. It seems a Hell's Heart chapter has taken up residence and, in addition to extorting the lake folk they have been raiding upriver, thanks to some pre-war hovering watercraft they can use to quickly strike and slip away.

The lake folk are peaceful and would love to be rid of their "guests", but the adventurers won't be able to negotiate them away with anything less subtle than a shotgun.

Race To Vulcan

Once a year Grandland hosts a large harvest festival. The highlight of the festival is the race to the top of Vulcan's Throne, a nearby volcanic mountain. The race begins at the bottom of the canyon, meaning there are two ascents involved, to the top of the canyon and then, once the mountain is reached, the race to the top.

The journey isn't an easy one, running through difficult terrain loaded with dangerous predators. However, this year the Grandlanders have offered a prize likely to catch the interest of adventurers: a pre-war weapon in near mint condition.

Faction Relations

- **Hell's Heart: *Hostile*:** members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The 88th: *Tense*:** members are welcome for a short time but prices are 25% higher. After 2-12 days in town, members of this faction will be "encouraged" to move on, which will result in escalating violence after 24 days in town.
- **The Cartel: *Neutral***
- **The Marshalls: *Friendly*:** this faction is welcome and members receive a 25% discount on goods. They can also find free lodging for 2-12 days per month.

GREATER NAVAJO NATION (PRE-WAR NAME: NAVAJO NATION; POPULATION: 15,000+)

Major Economic Activities: Textiles, mining, livestock, trade

Local Infrastructure: Good (pre-war roads actively maintained)

Local Government: Democratic (President and Congress elected by tribal citizens)

Racial Diversity: Mutant Human (50%), Mutant Animal (30%), Mutant Plant (15%), Other (5%)

Prior to the Great War, the Navajo Nation was a self-governing entity with its own president, legislature and judiciary. The nation had its own police force, schools and power stations, and a thriving economy based on cattle and sheep herding, mining, and textile production.

In short, when the world fell apart in a war that had nothing to do with the Navajo, they were fully prepared to support themselves and that's exactly what they did. While the radiation filling the air devastated the population, they maintained all the cultural traditions and industries they had before the war and as the land has healed, the population of this region has exploded and it is now one of the largest and prosperous regions in the Southwest.



The only potential danger on the horizon for these hardy survivalists stems from the ambition of Springtown and the 88th, who rightfully see the Navajo as a threat to their goal of controlling the entire region. The nation has responded by forming an army of its own, the first in its long history, now numbering over 3,000 strong. They have used their wealth to purchase many pre-war weapons and are actively financing explorations of local ruins in search of more.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Scouting Party

The adventurers are hired by the Navajo Congress to undertake an exploration of the dangerous ruins of Fort Bliss. They are willing to pay top dollar for pre-war military artifacts to put the nation on equal footing with the 88th. Perhaps even more valuable than money, adventurers who substantially aid the nation could count them as allies and seek shelter in their numerous walled towns between adventures.

Water Caravans

The only thing the Navajo Nation needs from outsiders to survive is water. However, their caravans importing the precious liquid have been getting waylaid more and more of late. They are looking for adventurers to help protect these caravans but more importantly, to discover and the source and put a stop to the raids.

Expedition To The Dark Heart

The Navajo Congress believes war with Springtown is inevitable. To ascertain the true strength of the enemy, they are looking to hire a brave band of adventurers to enter the region and scout Springtown, especially their army and its weaponry.

Faction Relations

- **Hell's Heart: *Hostile*:** members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The 88th: *Hostile*:** members of this faction will be shot on sight.

- **The Cartel: *Good*:** this faction is welcome and members receive a 10% discount on goods.
- **The Marshalls: *Friendly*:** this faction is welcome and members receive a 25% discount on goods. They can also find free lodging for 2-12 days per month.

**RHINO (PRE-WAR NAME: RENO;
POPULATION: 10,000+)**

Major Economic Activities: Trade, industrial production (selling machined parts from scavenged machinery such as slot machines), metalwork/plasticwork (again using salvaged materials).

Local Infrastructure: Excellent (pre-war roads; pre-war rail lines actively maintained; sits on the Old 80)

Local Government: Oligarchy (some elected, some appointed)

Racial Diversity: Mutant Human (60%), Mutant Animal (20%), Mutant Plant (15%), Other (5%)

Rhino is an important trading post on the Old 80 and provides a vital link between Salt Lick and Sacred Mount in the east-west trade route along the ancient road. In addition to sitting right on the main artery of trade, Rhino has all the advantages of its sister city Vega: lots of pre-war gambling machines to harvest for machined parts, and a huge cache of plastic chips that can be recycled into a host of valuable products.

Rhino is also home to the headquarters of the Marshalls and is the few places where the enforcers of law gather on a regular basis. In addition to housing a complete list of bona fide Marshalls and serving as the sole place where they are disciplined, this imposing structure also serves as a vast repository of wanted posters and "petitions for justice", a documented plea from a private individual or town for a Marshall's assistance.





Since the Marshalls can't be everywhere, this has also led to Rhino becoming the home to bounty hunters and vigilantes for hire from all over the Southwest.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Marshall Law

A Marshall has been accused of abusing his position for personal gain and a tribunal is being held. Three Marshalls have been summoned to serve as a jury. They are looking for a disinterested party to investigate the allegations and witness statements and have hired the adventurers for this task. Their investigations could take them all over the Southwest as they attempt to determine the Marshall's guilt or innocence.

Poison In The Well

A group of Marshalls have decided the threat of Springtown must be ended now, before they become stronger. Their solution is radical and will result in war now, rather than a possible war later: they have decided to destroy the vats where the replicants who have ruled Springtown for centuries are grown. The adventurers might be hired to carry out this dangerous mission, or they might be tasked with stopping some reckless Marshalls from plunging the entire region into war.

Rustlers

Cattle raids from the New Aztec Empire to the south have become so common they threaten the food supply for the entire region. The Marshalls can't cover the huge border by themselves and are looking for hired help to kill and rustlers and return the cattle to their rightful owner.

Actually, they don't care *who* specifically owns the cattle, as long as the Aztecs don't have them. They make this clear to everyone they hire so they can pay a pittance and let their hired help make a killing selling their "rescued" cattle. Of course, to the cattle barons of the region, this makes the adventurers the rustlers and they might find some hired guns coming after *them* as a result of this assignment.

Faction Relations

- **Hell's Heart: *Hostile*:** members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The 88th: *Hostile*:** members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The Cartel: *Tense*:** members are welcome for a short time but prices are 25% higher. After 2-12 days in town, members of this faction will be "encouraged" to move on, which will result in escalating violence after 24 days in town.
- **The Marshalls: *Friendly*:** this faction is welcome and members receive a 25% discount on goods. They can also find free lodging for 2-12 days per month.

SALT LICK (PRE-WAR NAME: SALT LAKE CITY; POPULATION: 5,000+)

Major Economic Activities: trade, mining, salt exports

Local Infrastructure: Excellent (pre-war roads; pre-war rail lines that have been actively maintained; sits on the Old 80)

Local Government: Semi-democratic Town council appointed by an elected mayor

Racial Diversity: Mutant Human (65%), Mutant Animal (20%), Mutant Plant (10%), Other (5%)

Salt Lick sits on a very valuable commodity: salt. With refrigeration a thing of the past, salt is a necessary preservative for foods of all types.

Salt Lick also is centrally located in the region, making it a common stop for caravans moving through the Southwest. Also, the numerous railroads in the area have once again become useful transportation arteries, through the use of manually operated (ie human powered) rail vehicles.

Finally, the rocky terrain sports numerous pre-war mines. While these had been considered unimportant and abandoned in the days before the war, they have regained importance, with miners able



to use the enormous pre-war mines to find new (though small) supplies of important raw materials like iron.

In an effort to gain an edge over its chief trading rival in the region, the town of Rhino, Salt Lick has made a conscious effort to maintain neutrality among all the major factions in the region. This has also given the town a role as the site of mediator in disputes between the factions.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Envoy

Hell's Heart and the 88th have made a tentative agreement to avoid interfering in each other's affairs. They have scheduled a meeting with one of Salt Lick's famed mediators to put the deal in writing. If a deal is made, it could have a major impact on the entire region. The adventurers might be hired to provide security, or to sabotage the deal.

Mineshaft

A deep mining expedition has come across an ancient fallout shelter of a rich industrialist that was secretly dug in the weeks before the bombs fell. This state of the art facility came complete with a troop of robot guards programmed to kill anyone who wasn't the billionaire and his immediate family.

Unfortunately, the carbon dioxide filters were crushed during a cave in caused by shifting earth during the massive explosions, killing the billionaire and his destroying his plan to survive the war. However, now that miners have broken through and discovered the shelter, anyone entering the mine

has come under attack by the robot guardians, who were unaffected by the carbon dioxide poisoning that killed their charges.

Now the town elders are looking for someone to engage in "pest control", killing the robots so they can get at the rich trove of pre-war artifacts. They offer no payment up front, just a share of the bounty for the surviving "exterminators".

Faction Relations

- Hell's Heart: Neutral
- The 88th: Neutral
- The Cartel: Neutral
- The Marshalls: Neutral

SPRINGTOWN (PRE-WAR NAME COLORADO SPRINGS; POPULATION 15,000+)

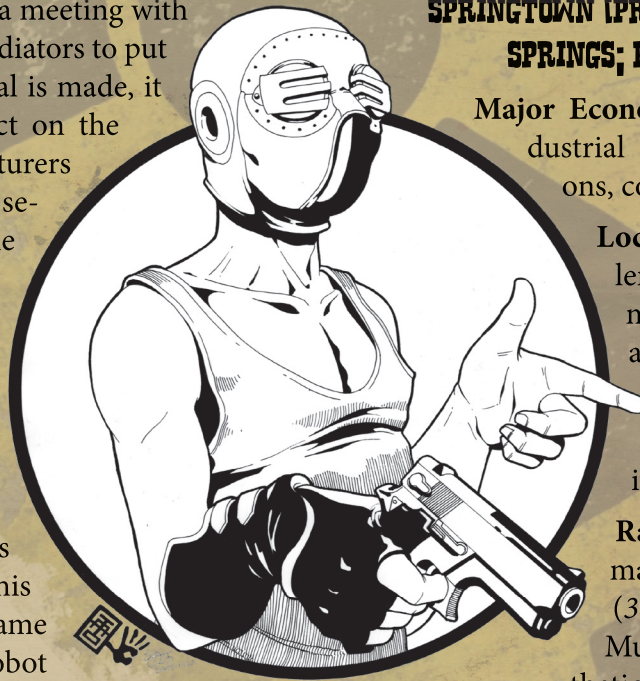
Major Economic Activities: Trade, industrial production (metals, weapons, computer parts)

Local Infrastructure: Excellent (pre-war roads actively maintained; two pre-war airstrips that have been restored in recent years)

Local Government: Military dictatorship (The 88th)

Racial Diversity: Pure Human (25%), Basic Android (30%), Mutant Human (10%), Mutant Animal (10%), Synthetic (15%), Replicant (10%)

Springtown remained strangely empty for decades following the Great War. Despite sitting in a sheltered location with adequate rain and snowfall for a large, stable farming population, the site remained empty. Even the presence of a large trove of pre-war artifacts, including small arms, missiles, aircraft and computers failed to draw a significant presence to the location.



The reason was the large robot population, which cleansed the site of any “infestation”. Then, 20 years ago, a large population of pure humans emerged from an underground shelter and joined the robotic guardians of their little slice of heaven.

These cruel, despotic men and women call themselves the 88th and claim to be the direct descendants of the rightful rulers of old America. They have taken a large slave labor force of local mutants that they use to do their farming and manual labor, treating these poor souls with far less care and affection than their androids and synthetics.

Worst of all are the Replicants, the dark heart that beats at the center of Springtown’s racism and sadistic cruelty. These synthetic humans have led their followers since the time of the Great War. When their bodies wear out, their minds and memories are downloaded and placed in a new body.

Their leadership is unquestioned and it is widely believed that their “genius” will soon see the 88th reclaim its rightful place as rulers of America, if not the entire continent.

Outsiders to this region will first notice how focused on war and conquest it seems to be. The 88th is enormous, almost 10,000 strong, composed of Springtown’s entire population of basic androids, synthetics, replicants and all male pure humans over the age of 15 (the smallest group, numbering perhaps 1,500).

Of course, how those outsiders are treated will vary considerably: Pure humans will be invited to join the settlement, provided they swear allegiance to the 88th, otherwise they are killed; mutants of any kind will be captured and enslaved, forced to farm and mine; androids will either be deactivated so they can be reprogrammed, or destroyed and used for spare parts; synthetics and replicants receive the worst reception of all and are always killed as soon as they are detected.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Replicant Runner

One of the town’s “founding fathers” has gone missing. The elders of Springtown consider this a major security risk and want their missing brother found as soon as possible. When they realize he wasn’t kidnapped and *chose* to leave, they decide he and everyone he might have shared information about Springtown with need to be eliminated.

Faction Relations

- **Hell’s Heart: *Hostile*:** Members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The 88th: *Friendly*:** This faction is welcome and members receive a 25% discount on goods. They can also find free lodging for 2-12 days per month.
- **The Cartel: *Tense*:** Members are welcome for a short time but prices are 25% higher. After 2-12 days in town, members of this faction will be “encouraged” to move on, which will result in escalating violence after 24 days in town.
- **The Marshalls: *Tense*:** members are welcome for a short time but prices are 25% higher. After 2-12 days in town, members of this faction will be “encouraged” to move on, which will result in escalating violence after 24 days in town.

**TUSK (PRE-WAR NAME: TUSCON;
POPULATION: 2,500+)**

Major Economic Activities: Industrial production (selling pre-war scavenged Optics materials)

Local Infrastructure: Adequate (pre-war roads, some of which have been maintained)

Local Government: Ad Hoc (leaders are elected or appointed in emergencies)



Racial Diversity: Mutant Human (60%), Mutant Animal (35%), Other (5%)

Tusk is too close for comfort (and health) to Phoenix, which was nuked in the war. Despite being only 120 miles away from ground zero, a small, sickly population has stubbornly clung to this location.

The reason people live in Tusk is threefold: **First**, the city has 5 mountain ranges nearby, which helped shield it from some of the damage and radiation from the Phoenix ruins.

Second, the city sits on a valuable trove of pre-war artifacts, especially optics lenses, used for highly coveted scopes on weapons, or just telescopes to get the lay of the land.

Third, the city sits on a sizable river, making it one of the best sources of fresh water in the vicinity.

Despite these advantages, the population is small and grows slowly, thanks to the occasional influx of radiation brought in by powerful storms from the north.

There are a few outfitters in town who make a healthy living selling supplies to the brave (or foolhardy) individuals who wish to explore the nearby Davis-Monthan airbase ruins.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Mother Lode

A group of explorers recently emerged from the nearby Davis-Monthan ruins with an earth-shattering discovery: an ancient combat aircraft from the before the war. Despite the fact that it has no fuel and was towed out by a team of draft animals, the craft is in such good condition the lucky scavengers have decided to hold an auction in Tusk to maximize their profit from this once in a lifetime find.

The PCs might be guards hired by the scavengers, or they could be hired to secure the aircraft for a third party. The first option would be to win the auction, and PCs sent after the aircraft would be given a maximum amount their buyer could bid for the aircraft. Of course, if they lose the auction, this interested buyer will task them with stealing it, something easier said than done for something so big, heavy and recognizable.

Alternatively, should the 88th win the auction, may of the region's most powerful groups, especially the leaders of the Great Navajo Nation, would rather see the fabulous artifact destroyed than to fall into such evil hands.



Faction Relations

- **Hell's Heart: *Hostile*:** Members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The 88th: *Hostile*:** Members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The Cartel: *Neutral*:**
- **The Marshalls: *Friendly*:** This faction is welcome and members receive a 25% discount on goods. They can also find free lodging for 2-12 days per month.

**VEGA (PRE-WAR NAME LAS VEGAS;
POPULATION 5,000+)**

Major Economic Activities: Industrial production (selling machined parts from scavenged machinery such as slot machines), metalwork/plasticwork (again using salvaged materials).

Local Infrastructure: Excellent (pre-war roads actively maintained)

Local Government: Oligarchy (a council of high-ranking guild leaders/craftsmen)

Racial Diversity: Mutant Human (40%), Mutant Animal (25%), Pure Human (15%), Mutant Plant (15%), Other (5%)

Vega was never nuked and has prospered since the war. The city is a gold mine of raw materials, both machines with small mechanical parts that can no longer be made (but are useful in kit-bashed equipment), and raw materials, especially plastics that can be melted and reused.

Indeed, the plastic chips that are found in great abundance are so valuable for use in plastic items that they are used as currency in the city.

Faction Relations

- **Hell's Heart: *Hostile*:** Members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The 88th: *Hostile*:** Members of this faction will be shot on sight.
- **The Cartel: *Friendly*:** this faction is welcome and members receive a 25% discount on goods. They can also find free lodging for 2-12 days per month.
- **The Marshalls: *Tense*:** Members are welcome for a short time but prices are 25% higher. After 2-12 days in town, members of this faction will be "encouraged" to move on, which will result in escalating violence after 24 days in town.

RUINS

DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE

Chance Of Finding A Hoard (Per 8 Man Hours Of Searching): 30%

Hoard Class (d%): VIII (01-50), IX (51-80), XIV (81-95), XXI (96-100)

Chance Of Random Encounter: 1-2 (on 1d6)

Time Between Random Encounter Checks: 1 turn

Hazards: Radiation

Once a combat air base, this ruin lies on the outskirts of Tusk, lying just to the southeast of the city. Although the presence of armed aircraft and small arms make this a tempting target, the many dangerous robot guardians that remain intact in this location discourage most casual exploration.

Still, several cautious, experienced scavengers have penetrated these ruins and a lucky few have come back with remarkable finds. Most of the explorers come back with only gizmos, but even these are enough, along with stories of the very lucky few, to tempt the desperate explorers of the wasteland to investigate this area.



FORT BLISS/WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE

Chance Of Finding A Hoard (Per 8 Man Hours Of Searching): 10%

Hoard Class (d%): VIII (01-50), IX (51-80), XIV (81-95), XXI (96-100)

Chance Of Random Encounter: 1-3 (on 1d6)

Time Between Random Encounter Checks: 2 turns

Hazards: Radiation

This huge desert area once housed the largest military installation in the entire United States consisting of a robot armored division, along with a huge desert area for maneuvers, including a missile and bomb range. Most of the armor was off base during the final, desperate struggles of the Great War but their enemies bombed the site anyway to prevent it from serving as a rally point for survivors.

As quiet settled over the world after that terrible war, the huge desert surrounding Fort Bliss reclaimed most of the military installation. Still, survivors have learned of its location in a desolate region of southern New Mexico, just north of the Texas border. Despite this remote location, teeming with dangerous wildlife and radiation from the ordinance of the terrible battle that destroyed the base, brave scavengers search through the desert for bits of ancient technology.

GROOM LAKE/ROSWELL/AREA 51

Chance Of Finding A Hoard (Per 8 Man Hours Of Searching): 15%

Hoard Class (d%): IX (01-50), XXI (51-100)

Chance Of Random Encounter: 1-2 (on 1d6)

Time Between Random Encounter Checks: 2 turns

Hazards: Radiation and Disease

Unknown to almost all the citizens of the time, the ancients were engaged in a clandestine war with an alien power. This war intensified in the months leading up to the Great War and several High Luminaries of UFOria have claimed the last, great war

was started between the Earth powers by their alien adversaries as a last ditch effort to win their war.

The headquarters of this war, at least the part of it being fought in the old United States, was in a mysterious location known as Area 51, which included the town of Roswell in New Mexico and the Groom Lake experimental aircraft testing range.

Here alien bodies were autopsied and alien spacecraft were reverse engineered into an elite force of ships that fought the alien invaders in Earth orbit and the nearby solar system. In the months immediately following the devastation of the Great War, the aliens conducted several vicious assaults on the base, leaving most of it a smoking husk.

Still, strange craft are seen visiting the ruins, for purposes unknown and the presence of these strange sky chariots has drawn interest to the region and caused scavengers to brave the horrors of this region. Once a few emerged with wondrous treasures, including energy weapons of a type never seen before, the location became a magnet for the brave and the foolhardy, seeking fame, fortune and power.

PHOENIX RISING

Chance Of Finding A Hoard (Per 8 Man Hours Of Searching): 40%

Hoard Class (d%): I (01-20), VI (21-40), VII (41-60), VIII (61-80), IX (81-90), XVI (91-100)

Chance Of Random Encounter: 1-2 (on 1d6)

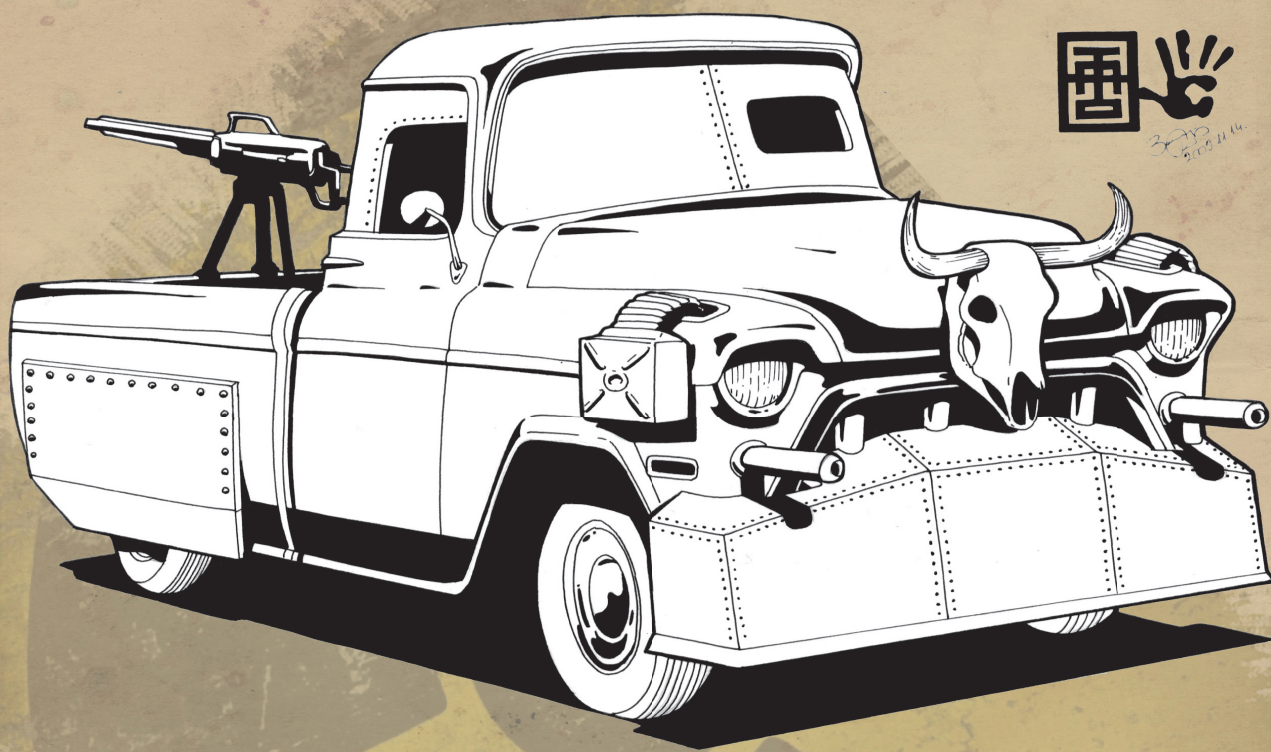
Time Between Random Encounter Checks: 2 turns
(base)

Hazards: Radiation and Disease

This sprawling, ancient metropolis was subjected to several direct nuclear attacks during the Great War. As a result, it has only recently become even relatively safe for unprotected exploration and skilled explorers have learned to spot the areas where deadly levels of radiation still lurk.

Unfortunately, the hot winds left by the ancient weapons of death are far from the only danger lurk-





ing in this once fantastic city. A century of heavy radiation allowed numerous nightmare creatures to grow and flourish here. These are more than willing to feast on the small bands of explorers searching the vast ruins.

MAJOR TOPOGRAPHY

ARCHES

This vast region's most striking feature is the numerous natural stone arches and circles that dot the landscape. The Navajo, who send young men and women here alone for various rites of passage, while their wise elders come here to commune directly with the spirit world when they need guidance consider these magnificent stone formations holy ground.

CARLSBAD CAVERNS

This vast network of caverns, canyons and springs includes two major areas of habitation, Big Room and the adjacent Rattlesnake Springs. Containing

more than 100 caves in all, this region is one of the most promising in the Southwest for future population growth and development of a new civilization.

GRAND CANYON

Like Carlsbad Caverns, the Grand Canyon was spared direct action in the Great War. That, combined with an abundance of natural resources (especially fresh water) has led to this becoming another pocket of civilization and a likely site for future growth.

Besides the large settlement of Grandland, there are numerous smaller villages up and down the mighty river. In time, it is likely these settlements will join with Grandland, either being absorbed as that settlement expands, or actually picking up and moving to the thriving town to take advantage of trade opportunities.

OLD 80

Like most things in life, no one knows how or why the Old 80 came to occupy its current status as the "silk road" between east and west, keeping what

little of the United States survived the Great War connected.

Certainly a good bit of luck was involved. Through some stroke of chance, the majority of the ancient highway survived the war intact. But human intervention is the main reason the road remains in such good condition.

Almost as soon as the dust had settled, even in the days when the hot winds were really hot, people began emerging from the rubble into their ruined world. And almost immediately after that, humans being human, they began to trade with each other for the things they needed and wanted.

At first the Old 80 was used for short trips because wheeled vehicles could make such better time on the road, even littered with abandoned cars as it was. In the decades since, especially as towns began to spring up along the route of the Old 80, merchants have repaired damaged sections of the road, maintained existing sections and cleared stranded vehicles (which were mostly dismantled for valuable parts anyway), all to make the road wider, faster to use and more accessible for trade.

FACTIONS AND PERSONALITIES

HELL'S HEART

Symbol: Skull and Crossbones

Motto: TCB (taking care of business)

Requirements For Membership: Kill someone named by a senior gang member; be sponsored by a current member.

Benefits Of Membership: Mutual protection; steady work (looting caravans and villages, protection rackets, etc.)

Before the Great War, Hell's Heart was several disparate gangs, each operating more or less independently in the Southwest area. In the time immediately following the collapse of civilization, one merciless gang rose above the others, thriving on the chaos and fear, eliminating those gangs they did not absorb.

For a time the gangs maintained their separate identities, even though they followed one leader. In time however, they became a single large entity called Hell's Heart.

Even as the chaos began to subside, this group operates just as they did in the heady "golden age" immediately after the collapse: a few members will infiltrate a town under cover and determine if it has anything of value to the gang; if so, they will arrive in force from all directions.

The gang has learned the hard way not to stay in one place for too long. While their methods work well for loot and pillage operations, they are not a military power and are ill suited to occupy a town with a hostile population. Several times in its history the gang as attempted to take over a town and establish it as a permanent base of operations only to be driven off when the populace eventually rises up en masse.



NIGHTGLIDERS

Symbol: A raven sitting on a bluff, with a full moon in the background

Motto: Flight is freedom.

Requirements For Membership: Prospects must take "the leap of faith" from the Roan Plateau.

Benefits Of Membership: Access to gliding equipment.

Man has always been fascinated with flight and the collapse of civilization hasn't changed this basic element of human psychology. Some thirty years ago, explorers discovered the remains of Camp Echo high up on the Roan Plateau and the dream of flight began again for a new generation.

As the ground war and subsequent civil wars raged across the old United States, American special forces set up Camp Echo high on the Roan Plateau, using gliders to explore the surrounding area, watching for enemy movement and later, American rebel forces during the Second Civil War.

THE 88TH

Symbol: A metal fist

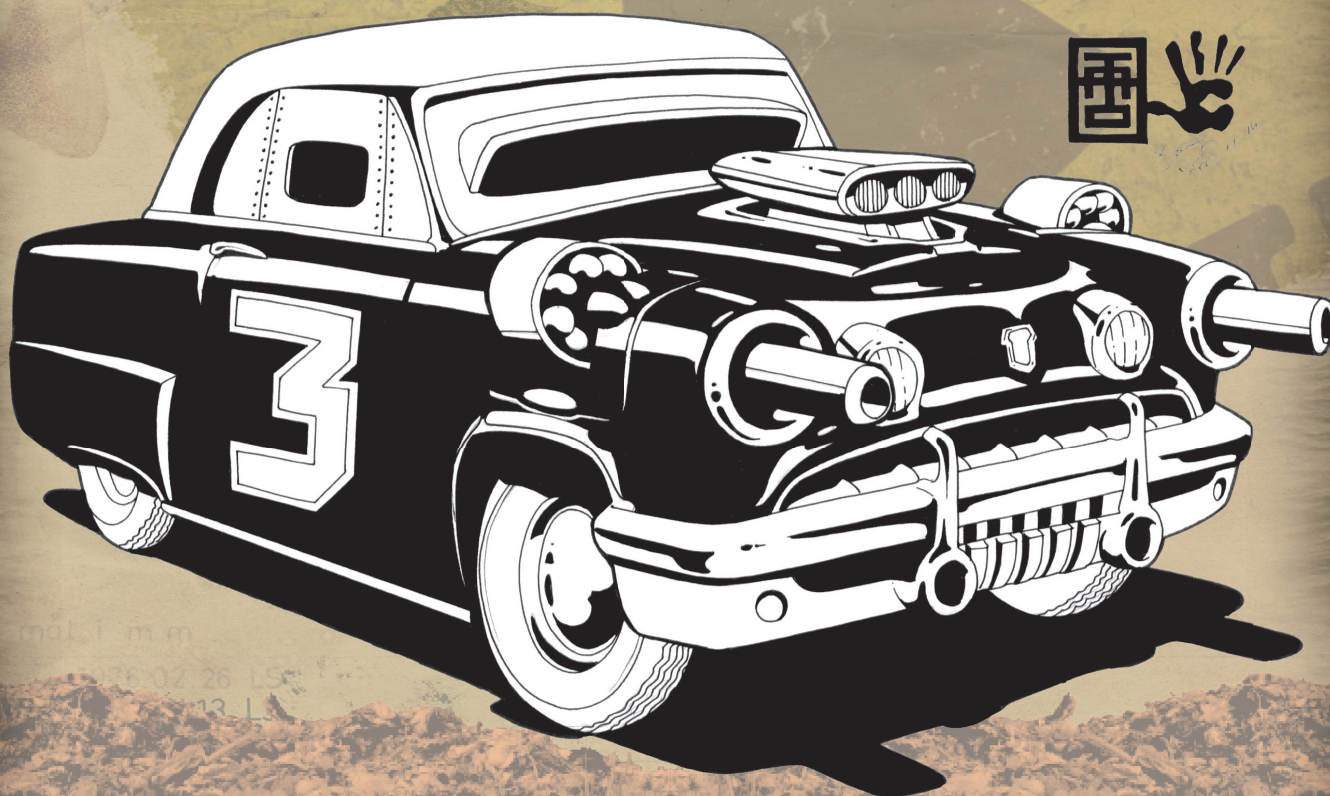
Motto: Rebuilding America, one town at a time.

Requirements For Membership: Perform a dangerous mission on behalf of Springtown against one of the other major towns or factions of the Southwest.

Benefits Of Membership: Mutual protection; steady work; occasional rewards of pre-war weaponry (almost always conventional firearms rather than advanced tech).

In the years leading up to the Great War android technology progressed by leaps and bounds. The military was keenly interested in this expanding field of research, seeing the great military potential of soldiers that could be rolled off assembly lines, who would have none of the psychological frailties of humans exposed to heavy combat.

The 88th Synthetic Division was formed as a test bed for a human/android fighting unit. In the last



days of the war they went rogue, ignoring orders and following a mission of their own. They seized Colorado Springs and sealed it off from the outside, then located its new, state of the art fallout shelter, sealing their biological commanders inside and leaving their robot guardians to watch and wait.

Now they have emerged and seek to reclaim a country they see as rightfully theirs, the heirs to Old America and everything she stood for. Unfortunately for the residents of the Southwest, their vision of Old America is twisted and tyrannical, crafted more to serve the ambition of the faction's leaders than any true representation of American idealism.

THE CARTEL

Symbol: Black hand, palm facing out

Motto: Everything has a price.

Requirements For Membership: Swear undying allegiance to the leader of the cartel, including the taking of a blood oath.

Benefits Of Membership: Black blade, a dagger with a jagged blade that inflicts 1d4+2 damage in melee combat. The wounds made this weapon are distinctive and mark the deceased as murdered by the Cartel.

In the days of the Great War, when society entered its death throes, a separate society, operating outside the normal laws of American society was able to flourish: organized crime. Used to using violence and fear as currency, this group, comprised of numerous smaller "families" was quickly able to seize control of crime, first in Vega and then throughout the entire Southwest.

Their businesses are as old as the group itself and pre-date the apocalypse by centuries: theft, protection rackets, prostitution, drugs and gambling. The Cartel parlays these basic human vices into wealth, influence and power, which they see as different words for the same thing.

THE MARSHALLS

Symbol: Gold star

Motto: Justice for all.

Requirements For Membership: Marshalls select their own deputies to assist them. When a Marshall thinks her deputy is ready, she can take him to Rhino to be evaluated for promotion to full Marshall.

Benefits Of Membership: Full Marshalls receive a 50% bonus on bounties from the town of Rhino.

The Marshalls grew out of the chaos of the Great War. These vigilantes were self-appointed, dispensing justice where and how they saw fit. Eventually Marshalls began to share information and chose the town the Rhino to meet and post bounties on known malefactors. The details of the organization's history are disputed and different Marshalls have different stories about the group's history.

Marshalls believe a loose organization is best and place very few restrictions on their members. So long as a Marshall is dispensing justice, her methods are left entirely up to her. Some Marshalls go their entire careers without killing anyone while others seem to delight in ridding the world of dangerous individuals in the bloodiest way possible.

There are four basic types of membership in the Marshalls: Senior Marshall, Marshall, Deputy and Sheriff. These are not hierarchical distinctions per se, owing to the organization's loose organization.

Senior Marshalls serve as judges for those individuals brought to justice in Rhino and determine the worthiness of Marshalls to wear the gold star.

Marshalls are the main arm of the organization and roam the land, pursuing fugitives and dispensing justice.

Deputies assist a specific Marshall in the performance of her duties. The Marshall can dismiss a deputy at any time, and likewise a deputy can leave the service of a Marshall, or transfer to the service of a new Marshall at will (provided the new Marshall

accepts her service). Some deputies wish to become Marshalls while for others, some eventually find a town they like and settle down, serving as a Sheriff, while for others assisting a Marshall is a calling all its own.

Sheriffs stay in one place and are supposedly selected by the towns they serve and the Senior Marshalls. In practice however, Marshalls appoint most Sheriffs and unless the town protests to the Senior Marshalls, confirmation is almost automatic.

UFORIA (PRONOUNCED "EUPHORIA")

Symbol: Flying disc

Motto: The truth is up there.

Requirements For Membership: Members are drawn to a secret location in the desert. Anyone at that location on a meeting day who hears "the voice" is a member of UFORia by default.

Benefits Of Membership: Occasional access to advanced technology

This strange group claims to have been contacted by alien life forms. While it is true (and rather widely known) that aliens visit the area, these individuals claim to hear a voice in their heads that summons them deep into the desert at random dates. Many members of this group travel from hundreds of miles away, following their strange summons.

Most consider these individuals strange, perhaps even crazy, but otherwise harmless, an object of ridicule at worst. Those towns that have had violent conflict with the strange alien visitors in the region however, see members of this group as collaborators. On rare occasions, violence has broken out. However, on those occasions, some members of the group were found to possess advanced weaponry, allowing them to more than hold their own.

While this makes attacking them a much more dangerous proposition, advanced technology provides a new motive for conflict with the group, as these items are valuable in the extreme.

One of the main targets for this group are the dreaded Cyborg Commandos, created for combat on alien worlds. It has been speculated the strange alien visitors in the Southwest were their original targets and so the visitors have recruited expendable followers to fight on their behalf.

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