

Warped Adventures



INFECTION

***An Adventure for WaRP System Games
Written by Roger Burton West***

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SETTING

This adventure is set in the current year or thereabouts, in and around the town of Ajo [AH-hoh] in Pima County, Arizona — a settlement of some 3,700 people, less than 50 miles from the Mexican border.

Ajo has fallen on hard times. Once upon a time it was a center for copper mining, but the last mine — the New Cornelia — closed in 1983. Since then most of the people who've moved in have been retirees, Border Patrol agents, and the very occasional young family. There are still businesses in town, but people who want work generally drive the two hours to Phoenix and often don't come back.

The player characters are members of the Ridgenose Militia, a ten-strong group that patrols the badlands between Ajo and the

Mexican border keeping a lookout for illegal immigrants. When they find them, they usually give them a beating and send them "home." In their own minds, they're America's last line of defense against a tidal wave of foreign immigrants. To everyone else, they're somewhere on the spectrum from "useful backup" to "gun nuts playing soldier." Players are free to tone down their character's more extreme viewpoints as they like.

Ajo is a real place, although all of the characters and situations presented in this adventure are fiction. You can find street maps, geological survey maps, and other potentially useful handouts online — Google Earth, for example, is an excellent scaleable resource.

THE VIRUS

The virus is a near-forgotten military project from the 1980s, when prion-based diseases were a new and exciting field of study. Project Clear Field, set up secretly in the Arizona desert, was shut down and (mostly) cleaned out when the Cold War ended. Some remaining samples have been mutating in their concrete bunker, until an unlucky illegal immigrant found it while searching for a place to hide from the Border Patrol.

The virus spreads by direct contact of a host's body fluids to a new victim's — most typically by bite or stinger, though sexual transmission is also possible, and even droplet-borne transmission may work (e.g. by coughing) if the new victim is sufficiently careless about personal hygiene. The new victim is contagious an hour after infection and asymptomatic for the first twelve hours, then starts to weaken fast, develops a high fever, and dies of central nervous system shutdown around 24 hours after infection. 10-30 minutes later (for a human, proportional to body mass for other animals) the virus has finished exploring its neural system and it rises again. Killing a victim before CNS shutdown will delay the rise by a few hours, but not prevent it. Only destroying the body will do that.

An animal of less than about half a pound in weight will still be killed by the virus, but will be unable to incubate a critical mass for resurrection. It is dangerous only as a source of infection.

The primary behavior of a victim is to spread the virus, by biting or otherwise attacking any uninfected animals it can find (most certainly including humans); it hunts by sensing vibration/sound. If it cannot immediately find any prey, it will move towards loud noise. Lacking this

stimulus, it will stay where it is, conserving energy.

A victim has no intelligence, feels no pain, and has no vital organs; its "brain" is its virus-infested nervous system, distributed all over its body. It will keep fighting until it is blown into pieces or, since it lacks a functioning digestive system, starves to death (this taking about four days). It moves at a little over normal walking pace, less than a run, but doesn't tire.

There is no cure apart from a massive dose of antivirals in the first few hours after infection, which has at least a 50% chance of killing the victim anyway.

Viral Victim

Typical Infected Human

Attack: 3 dice, X2

Defense: 4 dice

Hit Points: 28

Traits

Ridiculously Tough, 4 dice — Can survive almost anything short of incineration or dismemberment. (Minor, bloodless wounds all over body)

Bitey, 3 dice — Will always bite non-victims if there's any opportunity; X2 damage. (Grimy and bloodstained teeth)

Contagious, 3 dice — Any hit-point damage dealt to an enemy gives a chance of infection; roll vs a toughness-type trait. (Pus oozing from eyes, nose, and mouth)

Stupid — Always moves towards sound. (Head swivels back and forth until something makes a noise)

BEFORE THE BEGINNING

Here's a summary of the events leading up to the start of the adventure.

THURSDAY LATE NIGHT

The five members of the other Ridgenose group catch a Mexican immigrant — he's in poor shape and doesn't put up any fight. They rough him up, becoming infected without realizing it, then hand him over to the Border Patrol.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON

The captured Mexican is taken to the local clinic for first aid and because he's developed a high fever overnight. He dies. Dr Carol Johnson notices his symptoms, opens the red FEMA envelope, and calls in Case Black. (The governor of Arizona is kept in the loop, just enough to make it all legal.)

FRIDAY NIGHT

The local cops pick up the GMC Ridgenose group, who are sufficiently ill not to put up a serious fight.

FEMA starts arriving in town, lead by Deputy Administrator Harvey Pryor. The Disaster Medical Assistance Team consists of 35 doctors, nurses, and orderlies, some of whom are armed.

START OF THE ADVENTURE

The opening scene sees the PC group on patrol in Waghorn's SUV in the badlands, searching with night-vision gear for illegal immigrants. They know the other Ridgenose group caught someone sneaking north last night, and roughed him up a bit before handing him over to the Border Patrol, but this half of the militia has had a dry month. They're working through the scrubby desert, looking for people hiding in dry river beds, when off to the north is a sound of helicopters, big ones. Two black-painted Chinooks, running without lights, are crossing the desert and heading for the town.

Whether the PCs decide to finish their patrol or head back straight away, they'll end up back at Ajo. (There are no illegals for them to find tonight.)

UNFOLDING EVENTS

This is the rough schedule of what will happen without PC involvement. The PCs have a number of pulls to keep them in town: it's where their friends and houses are, it's a hard two-hour drive to Phoenix or Tucson, the nearest city of any size, and while their primary militia mission has been the watch for illegal aliens several of them harbor deep suspicions of the Federal Government and will want to find out more about what's going on.

INCUBATION

Back in town, HMMWV ambulances with loudspeakers are blaring out the same message that's on all the radio stations: "There has been an infectious disease outbreak in town. We're here to help keep it under control. Stay in your homes, avoid contact with others, and do not eat any food that has not been thoroughly cooked. Wash your hands after handling pets. If you experience fever or weakness, report to the Health Center immediately." Long distance phone service has been cut off; so has Internet access.

Asking other townspeople what's going on will reveal that the FEMA guys, assisted by the local cops, have already taken several people into "isolation," claiming they've got a new infectious disease — so new it doesn't even have a name yet. But nobody's seen anybody with obvious symptoms, and there's a strong feeling that it's probably a cover for something else — though nobody can guess what it might be.

Quite a few of the "isolated" people are known malcontents and troublemakers — in fact, many of them are people that the PCs know! (Because they're all known contacts of the other militia group.) Clearly, the govern-

ment is trying to silence its enemies under the guise of disease control.

The PCs' homes have been visited, and are under surveillance by the Pima County police (Ajo is too small to have its own force); they have left one officer in a cruiser outside each house, and these may well be people the PCs know and can talk round. Their orders are to bring all the militia people in to the Health Center with minimal contact, and absolutely to avoid any hand-to-hand violence. They don't regard these Federal busybodies with any warmth, but have been obeying orders so far. The FEMA guys wanted more of a search for the missing PCs, but it's only a small department and it doesn't have people to spare.

The county police have set up road-blocks on State Road 85, the only road through town that goes any distance, and are patrolling the desert with a helicopter to prevent anyone breaking quarantine. It's possible to get round these by being sufficiently sneaky, and a small number of townspeople manage it, but without convincing false identities any escapees will eventually be tracked down by the Feds.

OUTBREAK

At some point, the GMC Ridgenose group — now dead, and resurrected by the virus — gets loose. (This may well be as a result of PC action; if they don't break into the Health Center to rescue their buddies, it'll happen anyway around noon.) Dr Pryor panics and calls in the Army (specifically the 11th Armored Cavalry out of Fort Irwin, CA, the nearest mobile force), who take about six hours to start arriving.

Until that happens, there are infected killers on the loose in the town; the loudspeaker HMMWVs are pulled back to the Health Center. Pryor has gone into self-preservation mode; he's more interested in getting his own skin, and his own people, out intact than in wasting them in a probably-futile attempt to save lives. As the streets go quiet, people start to come out to see what's happening. When they meet the infected, there's general panic, looting, and an attempt to flee the town. Everything quickly falls apart in the face of multi-car pile-ups on the approaches to the roadblocks, and the survivors (at least those without off-road vehicles) return to their homes to be picked off one by one. Any unattended vehicle that runs, including the contents of Waghorn's car lot and even the PCs' own SUV if they don't keep a guard on it, is taken by panicking citizens and probably abandoned at the edge of town.

The county police roadblocks and helicopter patrols are reinforced by the state police (Arizona Department of Public Safety); they know there's a major disease outbreak going on, and they're distinctly unwilling to get close to people who might be infected, so they're more prone than before to shoot first and ask questions later.

THERAPY

(0 + 6 HOURS)

The first wave of the relief force is HMMWV gun-trucks brought in slung under Chinooks, which drop them off at the sports field. Unfortunately the infected population has been growing by 50% per hour. By the time the Army does turn up, the town is basically uninhabitable, with a few survivors holed up in the strongest of houses but 95% or more of the population converted.

There may or may not be a FEMA contingent holding out at the Health Center — if so, the Army makes evacuating them a first priority. Other civilians such as the PCs are brought out only if they are *clearly* uninfected, so they're asked to strip naked on the spot — any sort of

agitation or argumentative talk, as seems inevitable, causes the already-scared soldiers to drive on, or even open fire.

A little later, C-17s with APCs on board start to come in to the airport. The runway is only just long enough for them, and not in great shape for such heavy aircraft; after the fourth landing, the pilots reckon the runway is broken up enough that they don't want to risk further landings. Only eight APCs and their crews are available.

The 11th Armored is an OPFOR training regiment, one that plays the "bad guys" to help other Army units develop their tactics, and their APCs (actually M901 ITVs, a variant on the venerable M113) have been modified to look like Soviet equipment. Inexperienced people may well think they're actual former-Soviet hardware — maybe the Mexicans are invading!

RELAPSE

(0 + 8 HOURS)

Colonel Ziolkowski takes a look at the losses his HMMWV force has taken and makes some calls. This is way above his pay grade, and he knows it. Lacking direction, he decides to make an APC sweep through the town, trying to drive the infected into the old copper mine.

Unfortunately, while his men are competent combat troops, they're still accustomed to an enemy that stops trying to kill you when you blow off an arm or a leg. Or a head. The APCs are indeed proof against the clawing and biting attacks of the infected, but that doesn't help when it's time to clear the enemy out of buildings. The sweep bogs down in the urban environment.

RETRENCHMENT

(0 + 12 HOURS)

After heavy losses among the dismounted troops, the men are withdrawn to form a cordon round the town in a very loose twenty-mile circle. More helicopters are brought in as reinforcements.

If the PCs are far enough north to see it, some uninfected townsfolk make it to the airport and take off in a Beechcraft Bonanza... only to be shot down by an Army Apache. Getting through the lines is not too difficult — the terrain is quite rough, and there aren't enough soldiers to form anything like a solid perimeter — but infra-red scans from helicopters are likely to pick up fugitives or their vehicles, and soldiers are sent towards them. The soldiers have had a bad fright and lost friends, and are likely to shoot anyone who startles them.

STERILIZATION (0 + 14 HOURS)

With the failure of the military sweep, there's only one option left. Sealed envelopes are opened, someone finally remembers the Clear Field project, the President is woken, and the Army gets authorization for special weapons deployment.

The special weapons convoy arrives on a pair of Blackhawk helicopters, with a guard of Apaches around them and a fighter escort enforcing a wider no-fly zone (and only occasionally visible from the ground). The Apaches make 30mm hash of anything moving on the ground in the sports arena, and the two Blackhawks land; one shuts down, its crew dismounting rapidly and moving to the other helicopter, which has kept its rotors spinning and takes off.

Investigating the abandoned Blackhawk reveals a metal casing hastily welded to the frame. It contains a B61 tactical nuclear weapon, which is set to go off with a yield of 150kt an hour after the convoy leaves.

Disarming it is possible — certainly Benjamin Fiske knows how — but is it the right thing to do? Letting it go off *will* end the plague, after all, even if it will also kill the few remaining uninfected townspeople. Perhaps it would be better to wait it out in Jason's bunker, which is *probably* far enough away to survive the blast. Maybe.

Anyone in town when the bomb goes off is killed. Anyone in the open within a few miles, such as someone fleeing across the desert on foot, suffers third degree burns and dies shortly after-

ward. Jason's bunker, even though it's quite close to town, survives with only minor cracking — but staying inside for a week or so while the fallout washes out of the air would probably be a good idea.

AFTERMATH

If the nuclear weapon has detonated, the only potential source of infection is the PCs — and the bunker where the Mexican picked it up in the first place, and that's getting its own cleanup mission. If any PC has taken damage from the infected, they may themselves be infected, and follow the course described under The Virus (qv); they may well get to a major population center before they start to feel symptoms, in which case the world is probably doomed. On the other hand, they're the only witnesses to what's happened who aren't government employees, and they may well want to get the word out.

If the nuclear weapon is disarmed, there's a town full of victims still to be dealt with, and the PCs are probably the only uninfected people left there. Once there are no new victims to be chased, the infected mostly stand around, though some of them start wandering out into the desert and try to get through the Army perimeter. (They don't show up as well on infra-red as a living human would.) Meanwhile, the Army sends people back in to find out what happened to its bomb, though they're very reluctant to leave their armored vehicles.

If anyone calms down enough to think of it, helicopters hovering low over the town could be used to lead the infected into the old copper mine, where they might be dealt with more easily.

If government forces do catch up with the PCs at any point and our heroes manage to avoid the temptation to go out in a blaze of glory, they are firmly restrained, then screened for signs of infection. Anyone contaminated is treated (though this may be fatal); anyone else undergoes an extensive debriefing, including detailed examination of their militia record, by Feds who are embarrassed by their laxity and would really like a scapegoat.

THE TOWN

The built-up area of Ajo is about a mile square. Significant locations include:

TOWN CENTER

Desert Senita Community Health Center

This is the closest thing Ajo has to a hospital. It's not equipped for trauma care; it's a walk-in center for physician visits.

The building is in a rough E shape, with a porch/reception area on the top bar and courtyard in the central area. At the left side of the E is the main access road, with a pull-in for ambulances. The building is otherwise surrounded by a parking lot. There's a wide overhanging roof to keep the sun off the big windows.

During the initial phase this building is FEMA headquarters — the HMMWV ambulances return to the parking lot every so often, the cops occasionally bring in someone who might be a victim, and therapy rooms have been taken over as offices and laboratories. The biggest room has been made into a basic hospital ward which holds the first wave of infected, the PCs' militia buddies and their contacts. They're lying on examination couches that have been pressed into service, zip-tied by the arms and legs (there weren't enough handcuffs to do the job properly), and the dead ones are immobile until a sound is made. (Depending on when the PCs arrive, some of the victims may still be alive.) They're on glucose drips, but no monitors. Any FEMA personnel who go in here do so in white NBC suits (1 point of armor), via the polythene-sheeting decontami-

nation airlock that's been set up in the central corridor; more suits are available. There's usually one guard inside the room.

If the PCs make any sort of noise, or let their buddies loose, they find themselves under attack by a room full of slaving monsters. They're pursued as long as they're making noise.

Another thing that can be found in this building is a red envelope, discarded in a corner, and the document that was in it. The outside of the envelope has a FEMA logo and lists symptoms (fever, rapid pulse, antibiotics make no difference, patient declines rapidly); the document inside is also FEMA-stamped, and requires the attending physician to contact FEMA, declare "Case Black," and follow any instructions given.

Once the victims escape, the FEMA crew attempt to barricade themselves into the building until help arrives. It's not a very defensible building, with many entrances and windows, but they'll do their best. **They're armed with Medium Handguns (X4 damage) but are not combat troops.**

Once the FEMA crew is eaten, or gets away, the building remains deserted.

Palo Verde II Neighborhood Park

Across the railroad tracks to the south-east, about two minutes' walk or thirty seconds' sprint from the Health Center, this park is attached to a large sports stadium. The two FEMA Chinooks land here, as does the first wave of Army reinforcements.

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

Three minutes' walk or one minute's sprint south from the Health Center. Notable for adventuring purposes mostly because it's one of the more solid and defensible buildings in town, the bulk of this whitewashed structure is two floors high with a large door at each end; windows are few and small against the desert heat. A central domed tower looks out over the flat roof, and rises two more floors. Some townsfolk flee in here, but since the priest was bitten while giving last rites to the Mexican "patient zero" there's no overall direction to the defense, nor much in the way of useful supplies.

**Pima County Sheriff's Department
Ajo District Office**

Law enforcement headquarters for the town and the surrounding district, one of five that make up Pima County, is about half a mile north of the sports stadium. A solid one-floor building, it is the operational base for nineteen officers, nine jailers, and seven administrative staff — and about twenty prisoners, mostly in for minor offenses. Once the Army arrives in town, the building is evacuated.

**ERIC MARCUS
MUNICIPAL AIRPORT**

This airfield, around five miles north of town with a ribbon development along the highway connecting the two, was a big air base during World War II, but hasn't seen much activity since. There are some light planes kept here, but two of the three runways have become cracked and unusable, and the taxiways are getting more perilous every year. There are no permanent staff.

The surviving runway is 3,800 feet long, just enough for C-17s to get in and out, but it's not really strong enough for such heavy aircraft.

This is where the Army command post is set up during the Therapy and Relapse phases.

NEW CORNELIA MINE

This copper mine, just south of the built-up part of town, has been abandoned for nearly thirty years. It's a huge open-cast pit, a mile and a half across at its widest point and more than a thousand feet deep in the center. A road spirals down to the bottom, making six full turns round the sides of the pit to get there.

It might well be a good place to contain the infected while someone tries to work out what to do with them.

SIGNIFICANT GMCS

The following GMCs are of some importance in the adventure.

THE RIDGENOSE MILITIA

The other half of the militia group consists of Andrew Spitzer (who founded it), Tom Dunstan, Brian Olsen, Henry McGoldrick, and Cliff Johnson. By the time the PCs meet them, their personalities have already been destroyed by the virus.

DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR HARVEY PRYOR

Pryor is a FEMA doctor who's been shunted into administration as he's got more senior. He got himself assigned to a response team because he wanted to get his hands dirty again with real patients. He has the same traits as other FEMA personnel.

COLONEL PATRICK ZIOLKOWSKI

Ziolkowski commands the first squadron of the 11th Armored Cavalry, based at Fort Irwin. He's had briefings on Case Black, but only as one of a huge number of briefings on emergency measures, none of which he ever expected to use. He's a career soldier, which these days means a politician as well as all the other things a soldier's expected to be.

DR CAROL JOHNSON

Carol, in her late fifties, is the chief physician at the Health Center. She's the one who

recognized the symptoms of the captured Mexican as something she'd been briefed about, and called in FEMA. Since then she's been thanked and marginalized, and may well be in a mood to talk to the PCs if they treat her with respect.

DAVID MCMICHAEL

Benjamin Fiske's pastor, a somewhat overweight man in his forties, leaves town as soon as the announcements start — and is one of the first to get caught at the road-block, and detained in the District Jail.

PATTY NEELY

Brendan Waghorn's ex-wife, Patty's building a career in real estate and trying to make her new relationship (with George Bernal, a long-distance truck driver) work. In normal times, she's downtown during the day (or out showing houses), and up in the Heights at night. She'll follow official evacuation instructions.

TRAVIS PARNELL

In his sixties and retired now, Sergeant Parnell was in the Army for as long as they'd have him, first as a grunt and later as a recruiting sergeant. He never saw action, but the training took, and he is a solid professional soldier. He won't panic when things start to fall apart, he has very little trust in announcements by officers, and he may well emerge as the leader of any group of refugees he finds himself in — though he doesn't get around too fast these days. He lives near the middle of town.

MARY WHITNEY

Jason's wife divorced him twenty years back. He doesn't remember this; he's convinced himself he murdered her. She's quite happy to have nothing to do with him. She lives north of town, out towards the airport.

FEMA PERSONNEL

These 35 doctors and nurses have no special combat skills; the five orderlies who are armed carry M1911 pistols — Medium Handgun, X4 damage. They have Medic (4 dice) and 14 hit points.

ARMY PERSONNEL

They are armed with M-16s — Light Rifle, X6 damage, capable of automatic fire. They have Military Training (4 dice) and 14 or occasionally 21 hit points. A HMMWV is a soft-skinned vehicle, adding 1 point of armor against attacks into it; the APCs are effectively invulnerable, unless a commander pokes his head out of the hatch to see what's going on, in which case he still gets a bonus defense die for cover.

GLOSSARY

Apache Attack helicopter.

Blackhawk Transport helicopter.

Chinook Large dual-rotor transport helicopter.

FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency.

HMMWV High-Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicle AKA Humvee.

**PLAYER
CHARACTERS**

Character sheets for the five player characters in this adventure are provided over the next few pages.

All player characters have desert camouflage fatigues and web-gear, and a variety of night-vision equipment. Any equipment readily available on the civilian market (flashlights, canteens, ration packs, etc.) should be allowed.

KAREN IVETT

You grew up on a farm at the other end of the state, in country not too different from this, just you and your father. Then a word in the wrong ear saw Daddy locked up in prison, you taken into foster care, and the farm sold. The system said it was “protecting” you from him, but all the bad things happened after it got involved.

Unfortunately you didn’t end up with a lot of marketable skills. You hung around on the fringes of the LA gangs for a while, but that seemed like a fast ticket to nowhere; then you moved out here because it was cheap, not too far from Daddy if they ever let you visit him, and because people didn’t know about your background and look at you funny when you went past. You’ve been waitressing and styling hair just to get by for now, and talking with customers who also didn’t like government interference in their lives brought you into contact with the militia — and Walter Costin, who’s not so bad when you get to know him.

Walter Costin is nice enough, though unimaginative. He seems to be doing all right, and has enough money for his hobbies, but he’s more about the militia than about personal relationships. You’ve been sleeping with him for a while, but it’s looking like time to move on.

Benjamin Fiske claims to be on some kind of purity kick. Maybe he’s a religious fanatic.

Brendan Waghorn is kind of old for you, but he’s got a decent-sized house and that used-car lot brings in the dough... could be a good provider if you ever decide to settle down.

Jason Whitney is scary. He’s seen too much, and seems to be looking all the way into your heart.

TRAITS

Farmer, 3 dice — You don’t like to talk about it, but you learned a lot from Daddy about running a farm in country like this. You can tell good meat and produce from bad, have an eye for the weather, and given a bit of land you could keep people fed and healthy. (Talks a lot about the weather, avoids junk food.)

Manipulator, 4 dice — You can get what you want out of people, usually without their knowing they’ve been had. (Winning smile.)

Self-Defense, 3 dice — You’re not an expert fighter but you can look after yourself in a pinch. (Stand on the balls of your feet, always ready to move.)

Daddy Issues — You tend to attach yourself to the most competent or successful man around. (Pathetic face when you don’t get what you want.)

Motivation: Have a good time and let the future worry about itself.

Secret: Abusive childhood.

Important Person: Daddy. Who’s still in prison in Phoenix. Nobody else can ever really measure up.

Hit Points: 21

You still have the chromed TEC-9 you picked up in LA. Medium SMG, X4 damage, full-auto only.

WALTER COSTIN

They wouldn't let you into the Army — some crap about "self-control" — but while you found work in a local tax firm you've always known you were born to be a warrior. The civilian government's getting too soft these days — they just don't understand the threats they're up against. If the military were in charge they'd be a bit more practical. As it is, you just patrol your own part of the border, hoping and praying there'll be other patriots doing their own part.

Benjamin Fiske is kind of weird and reads too much, but his heart's in the right place. And he's the guy with real military training — even if it was only the Air Force.

Karen Ivett doesn't seem too committed to the militia, but she's tougher than she looks, and looking cute doesn't hurt. But she's also kind of clingy, and you're probably going to ask her to move out of your place soon...

Brendan Waghorn is just the sort of soft civilian you're stepping up to defend... but he's heard what's going on and he wants to help. That's a good man, a real man, right there.

Jason Whitney is pretty strange but he knows a lot about living off the land.

TRAITS

Home-Made Warrior, 4 dice — Self-taught in bare-handed and armed fighting, first aid, and keeping cool under fire. (Large smoke-blackened knife worn on belt.)

Sneaky, 3 dice — Good at moving around and following people while not being seen or heard. (Light on your feet, tend to appear out of nowhere.)

Tough, 3 dice — Know how far you can push your body before it gives up. (Registration bands from Ironman Arizona.)

Impulsive and Overconfident — Know you're the best of the best, and are likely to jump into a situation without checking out the details. (Cheerful grin.)

Motivation: Prove that the civilian government is holding the Army back from doing its job and saving the country.

Secret: A worry that you're not really up to the task, that there's some bit of military training you haven't been able to replicate for yourself.

Important Person: Travis Parnell, the recruiting sergeant who persuaded you to sign up, full of dreams of glory. A true hero, even if he'd never seen action.

Hit Points: 28

You are armed with an Arctic Warfare sniping rifle — Heavy Rifle, X7 damage, double standard ranges if you take a round to aim with the sights — and a .50-cal Desert Eagle pistol — Large Handgun, X5 damage. Not compensating for anything, honest.

JASON WHITNEY

You've always been prepared for the end. First it was going to be nuclear war with the Russians. Then it was Y2K. Now it's Arab terrorists. The old bunker's looking more than a little threadbare, but it can still support ten people for long enough for the fallout to settle. Now, if only you knew nine other people who were worth saving... but for now, you guide tourists out in the desert and take casual construction and home repair jobs to make ends meet.

Walter Costin is one of those wannabe military types, but they had more sense than to let him in. So now he dresses up and plays soldier. It's probably harmless.

Benjamin Fiske is one of those evangelical types, but he seems to have learned better than to preach at you.

Karen Ivett is a pretty little thing but she'd break in half if she ever had to do any real work. Still, once the world goes to hell, you'll need women — and she can surely be taught.

Brendan Waghorn has a proper sense of how bad things are, but he's looking in the wrong direction — why worry about Mexicans, when any kid with an internet connection can knock together a GPS-guided cruise missile and a biological warhead to go on it?

TRAITS

Survivalist, 4 dice — Know how to live off the land — including hunting — and how to keep a bunker hidden and safe from bandits and the government. (Never without a day's supply of food — usually a roadkill sandwich — and water, and \$500 in cash.)

Seen It All Before, 3 dice — Don't get frightened by *anything*. (Wear an antique "Duck and Cover" button.)

Tough as Old Boots, 3 dice — Too mean to give up and die. (Suntanned, leathery skin, and a stare that goes right through people.)

Paranoid — They are up to something. They changed your medication, but you were smarter than that — you don't take it any more. (Shifty eyes, tendency to talk about *Them* as though everyone will know whom you mean.)

Motivation: Survive! Whatever it takes.

Secret: You're actually clinically paranoid, and hear voices sometimes.

Important Person: Your wife Mary, who left you to go to the big city, back when you started building the bunker. And isn't buried under the foundations, honest. And doesn't talk to you in your dreams.

Hit Points: 21

Armed with a Marlin M444 — Heavy Rifle, X7 damage — and an M1911 pistol — Medium Handgun, X4 damage.

BRENDAN WAGHORN

You bought the car lot because it was for sale cheap, and a few years later you're learning why. Oh, it brings in a bit of money, but you're right up here by the border, and who knows when the Mexicans are going to get bored with sending their guys over in ones and twos, and mount a full-scale invasion? It was on the radio just the other day. Who knows what they're *really* making in those maquiladoras?

Walter Costin is a bit driven, but these are tough times and you need tough men.

Benjamin Fiske is always going on about that God stuff. It's easiest just to tune him out. Knows his way round a rifle, though.

Karen Ivett is cute, but kind of young, and your ex-wife would never let you hear the end of it.

Jason Whitney doesn't seem to have much time for anyone, but he's worth watching — he can blend into the landscape and come back an hour later with something that's actually edible.

TRAITS

Salesman, 4 dice — You can sell anything — a car, a house, an idea — to anybody. And you can tell when they're trying to sell *you* something. (Flashing smile, firm handshake.)

Mechanic, 3 dice — You can fix cars, trucks, air conditioners, any old machinery. (Broken nails, grease smears on face.)

Range Bunny, 3 dice — You're a decent shot with pistol and rifle, though you've never had a live target. (Empty 9mm cartridge case worn as neck pendant.)

Cowardice — You're afraid of physical confrontation — unless you're 100% sure you can win — and will avoid it if at all possible. (Turn pale and sweaty when danger threatens.)

Motivation: Get rich, get safe.

Secret: You have nothing but contempt for people who fall for your persuasive skills, which is most of the people you meet.

Important Person: Your ex-wife Patty. She never took you seriously, but you'll show her — you'll get back together one of these days, and that other guy is only a phase she's going through.

Hit Points: 14

Armed with an AR-15 carbine — Light Rifle, X6 damage, up to two shots per round — and an M1911 pistol — Medium Handgun, X4 damage.

BENJAMIN FISKE

You've always been too smart for your own good; you joined the Air Force as an armorer just to get somewhere in your life, started going to meetings, and soon enough you heard about the End Times that are coming soon and let Jesus into your heart. What you did before that just doesn't matter any more: your place in heaven is assured.

And what right did the Air Force have to discharge you? It was just the one little nuclear warhead you mislaid, and you found it again soon enough. Happens all the time. Still, they'll get theirs when the Rapture comes and they find themselves left behind. These days you're finding work as an explosives consultant for firms that do occasional blasting but don't want to keep someone on-staff full time.

Walter Costin is kind of strange, dressing up like a soldier with all that camo gear, but he seems receptive to your attempts to save his soul.

Karen Ivett is a scarlet whore, and keeping yourself Pure is one of your highest duties. You don't know — or, you're afraid, you do know — why the others put up with her.

Brendan Waghorn seems to listen to you more than most people. With just a few more sermons, perhaps he can be won for the Lord.

Jason Whitney is strangely uninterested in eternal life. Maybe the forces of the Antichrist have already got to him. He needs to be prayed for.

TRAITS

End Times Expert, 4 dice, narrow — When the end of the world begins, you'll recognize the signs — the UN taking over, the one-world government, the Mark of the Beast. The Antichrist won't catch you off-guard! You have an encyclopedic knowledge of news, current affairs, and Christian theology (albeit filtered through your personal bias), and you can be almost hypnotically persuasive when talking to other believers. (Listens to the news with a checklist.)

Air Force Armorer, 2 dice, technical — Working with everything that hangs under an airplane and goes bang. Not too bad at demolitions in general. (Air Force unit patch still worn on sleeve.)

Military Training, 3 dice — Basic weapons skills, mechanics, and first aid. (Dog-tags.)

Religious Fanatic — If someone dies without truly accepting Jesus, they'll burn in hell forever. You *must* help them! (Cross worn openly, WWJD bracelet.)

Motivation: Be ready for the Rapture. Try to win as many souls as possible.

Secret: Not completely sure you've truly accepted Jesus and got your ticket to heaven. You're first up at every altar call, just to be on the safe side.

Important Person: Your pastor, David McMichael, at the Ajo Calvary Baptist Church. He's the man to turn to if things go wrong.

Hit Points: 21

You are armed with an AR-15 carbine — Light Rifle, X6 damage, up to two shots per round — and an M1911 pistol — Medium Handgun, X4 damage.