The Lost Paradise

by David Jarvis,
Dominic Covey, and Chris Davis

Created By
David Jarvis

Interior Artwork:
J. Longenbaugh, David Jarvis

Cover Artwork:
David Jarvis

Northwest Map:
Dominic Covey

Editing:
Andy Rau, Charles Baize

Contributions by:
Charles Rice, Chris Swenson

Playtesting:
Chris Derner, Chris Hoover, Ryan Kelley, Ethan Ripplinger, Aaron Wiggins, Dominc Covey.

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We buried another stillborn baby today, bringing the total to five so far this moon cycle. I hear winter is beginning to set in up in Eden, and that's only a week's journey north of us here in Hope. The time of the white death is beginning again, and I'm not sure we've stocked up enough meat and supplies to last this one out. So many people are going to die. It makes me wonder sometimes what the point of living is.

Hope…we live in Hope, the one thing that so few of us have anymore—I wonder if anyone would consider that ironic. Five infants dead in the span of a single moon cycle, and that's not even the worst part: they came out of the womb deformed. It was un-natural. And they weren't the first.

Three moon cycles ago, Luke and Sara Green had a baby. They said it was a boy, but I couldn't take my eyes off the scales on its arms and the claws on its feet long enough to check the gender. It lived, but not for long—but it didn't die because of sickness or anything like that. Luke said Sara was nursing the child and… well, the way Luke tells it, the baby attacked and almost killed her.

Now, I've known Luke for a long time, and can't remember one time he's lied to me, but a child attacking its mother is a hard tale to swallow. Luke says he did what needed to be done to protect his wife—and I can't say as I blame him. I didn't ask for the specifics of what he did.

All I know for certain is they didn't mark the grave.

Old lady Harrington has started her preachin' again. She says the deaths and deformities are all signs of the end. Some people are starting to believe the crazy bitch, too. Some of the more "rational" council members are tellin' me that as the leader of this town, it's my duty to do something about it.

"Put her and anyone else who's talkin' nonsense out, Duncan," they say. I think they're all fucking buzzards looking for the next carcass to feed on. I can't sit here and say I agree with Marissa Harrington and her radical views, but I won't put her or anyone else outside these gates just for speakin' their mind.

You don't put entire families out into the wilderness unless things get violent. At least that's how it's always been in Hope. That's how we've always lived. Strength, unity, and perseverance: these ideals have been the cornerstone of this community from the beginning. That's how we've survived.

Until now.

The truth, whether I like it or not, is that this very well could be the end of the road for the human race. Not because some old woman says it's so. Not because it's happening in Hope. Because it's happening everywhere.

I've heard rumors from all parts of the United Combine—stories from as far south as Crater City and from all the way up in Eden, north of the dreaded Sea-Tac Spawning Pits, and they're all the same.

People are beginning to mutate.

Folks are starting to get scared. I hear that some are even starting to leave the protection of the U.C. to fend for themselves, or worse, swear allegiance to the Purity Corp. The one thing we don't need is more people latching onto that racist clan's twisted cause. The Purity Corp is already the single most powerful clan outside the United Combine; they lay claim to every hill, tree, river, and rock between the great river and the Sea-Tac Spawning Pits, calling the region the "Pure Lands."

Of course that just shows how twisted they really are. The so-called "Pure Lands" happen to be the most perverse, corrupted, radiated stretch of wilderness in the Northwest, aside from the Ghost Wastes of Umatilla to the east.

The elders say that before the Fall, there were military bases in the area once known as Puget Sound. Great metal ships of war—designed to float both on and under the water—were anchored in the natural harbors of Puget Sound to guard against enemies to the west, beyond the great poisoned sea. They were all destroyed by great spears of fire that obliterated everything.

My great-grandfather said the fiery spears were called "nuclear bombs." My friend Joe "Walks-the-Path" Smith says they were "gourds of ash," dropped by the Great Spirit in a final shaking of the world. Joe belongs to a tribe of people who call themselves the Chinook Indians.

One day I asked Joe what "Indian" meant. He said he didn't know; it was a term white people gave his ancestors a long time ago, when people still cared about the color of a person's skin. I said the Purity Corp still cares about skin color, and Joe told me the Purists aren't people; they're something else now.

I think Joe's right.

When I was young, my mother taught me to read and write. I was luckier than most, I suppose. I expect it's one of the reasons I was put in charge of Hope—I'm one of the few people who knows how to run the place. My mom tried to teach me math and other things you can't find in books or learning disks anymore, but I didn't learn much. She died of pneumonia when I was just a boy.

One of the things my mother did teach me, however, was that history is important. She used to say it was important to remember what happened in the past, and even more important to write down the things that took place in the present. Mom said it was of great consequence for the future.

I think I understand what she was trying to tell me. History can teach us things about our past, so that we don't repeat the mistakes of our ancestors. At least that's the idea, isn't it? Mom seemed to think so.

I've decided to write a journal. I'm going to try and piece together the past and tell what I know of the present, so maybe, some time in the future, someone will read it and show it to others. And, in reading this journal, maybe people will try to figure out a way to keep from stepping down the path we currently walk.

Or maybe they'll just use it for toilet paper. I don't know. But I'm going to write it anyway.

- Duncan Clark

Chapter 1: History of the Lost Paradise

The Northwest Before the Fall

The Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome Complex

The Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome project was a truly monumental undertaking—an effort to appease both corporate greed and consumer fancy on a scale beyond anything previously attempted in the United States. Through a series of ambitious construction projects, clever marketing drives, and appeals to public safety, the robotics industry managed to satisfy both their customers' love of the wilderness and their corporate need for profit. The twin bio-domes of Portland and Vancouver were the pinnacle of these efforts—technological utopias that both safeguarded and imprisoned the citizens of the Northwest in the years before the Fall.

As the wilderness and forests around them slowly deteriorated, citizens of the Northwest states became increasingly obsessed with the preservation of their beloved outdoors. The masses balked at the notion of entering any structure which alienated them from the mountains, lakes, rivers, and forests that had traditionally defined the Northwest.

The prospect of losing millions of dollars annually because most people in the Northwest sector didn't want to give up the great outdoors didn't sit well at all with the corporate moguls in the robotics industry. Their quandary was obvious: how could they keep the population alive and consuming their products while at the same time giving them access to an environment that would kill them without the protection of bio-domes and other shelters? The answer was surprisingly simple: they would create expansion domes to cover designated portions of the dwindling wilderness; conservation projects would then re-vitalize the target areas and make them safe for humans to visit.

At first the solution didn't translate well into spreadsheets or promising financial projections. Corporate accountants complained that the project wasn't cost effective. But

There isn't a lot I can tell you about how things were before everything fell apart. This generation has no memory of those days. We only have stories, myths told to us by our parents and grandparents—and even they weren't alive in those times.

I can't tell you much about the lands to the south or east. I've never been out of this part of the world, and I only know a handful of people who have ventured into those lands. Some never returned, and the ones who did…

Well, they don't like to talk about the things they've seen.

I can't tell you how many years have passed. Nobody counts the passage of time like that now. It isn't important. Tracking hours, minutes, and days doesn't put food in the mouths of our children. Time doesn't protect us from the creatures that lurk outside the city gates, nor does it form trade agreements and alliances for protection against people who would destroy what we've worked so hard to achieve.

Time is a useless relic of the ancient world.

We know that the domain of our forebears was mighty. We see evidence of their former glory in the mess they left behind. I've looked down on the ruins of the city our elders call "Portland" in sheer awe of the knowledge they must have possessed to be able to build the things they did.

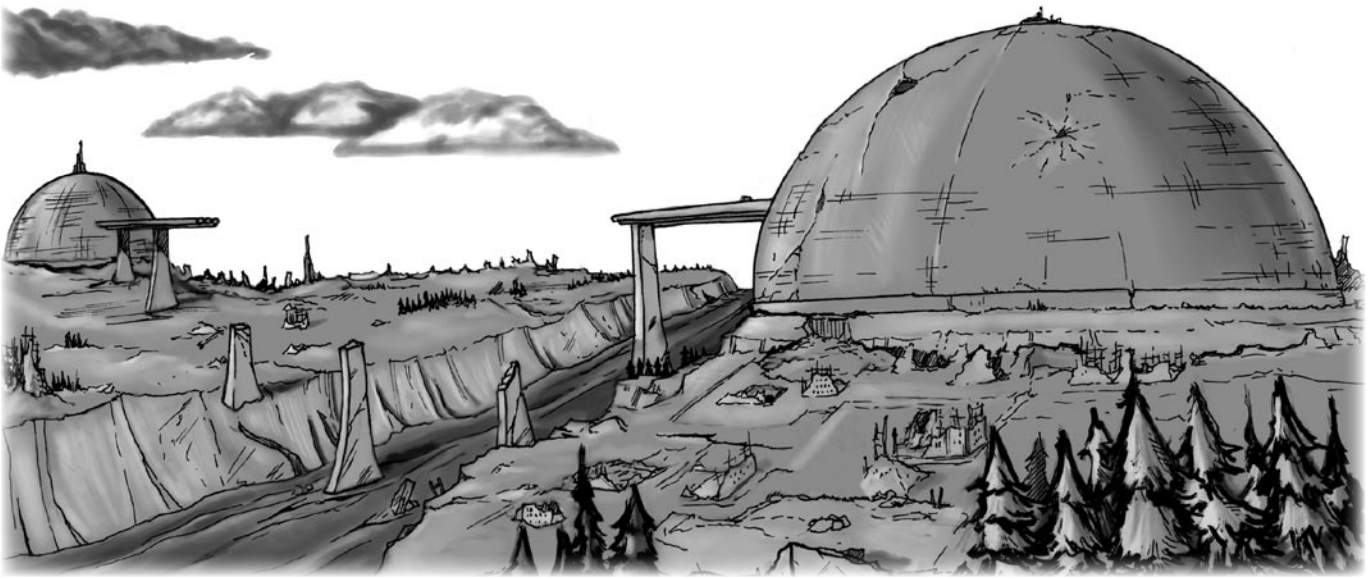
Two massive cracked and broken domes can be seen from any place near the ruins of the city. One stands on the south side of the Columbia, in the center of Portland. The other is on the Vancouver side of the river. Huge metal tubes connect the two domes. Well, they used *to, I assume—now they're broken and shattered about midway across the Columbia gorge. Someone once told me those tubes housed floating cars that ferried people back and forth from one dome to another.*

I can't say it's true, but it sure would've been a sight to see.

Some say there are also intact tunnels leading under what's left of the once-mighty river, but I haven't gotten close enough to verify the stories. The Purity Corp maintains an outpost on the Vancouver side of the river, just a few miles north of the Dome. They patrol the riverside regularly, so it's usually pretty dangerous to go anywhere near the old city. And that's not even counting the walking dead who roam the ruins.

People who know the legends about the ruins of Portland say that at one point, the city was filled with people. A man could get anything he could ever want or need there. Life for our ancient ancestors was good. And there were more cities like Portland than there are stars in the sky.

- Duncan Clark



when they considered the possibilities of tax relief from the government—and the lucrative new robotics and development contracts that would be made necessary by the project—the accountants finally put their stamp of approval on the plan. The robotics industry had embraced the project, but the question remained: would the nature-loving people of the Northwest do the same?

The Propaganda Machine

Even as construction companies broke ground on what was to be called the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome Complex, public relations teams launched a massive campaign to convince the residents of Portland and Vancouver to embrace the idea. The message was an appealing one: the new bio-domes, far from being affronts to nature, would actually *preserve* the beautiful-but-hostile wilderness and make it more accessible.

The Bureau of Information immediately set about bombarding the populace with advertisements for the new, "environmentally friendly" bio-domes. Day after day, people saw ads and news articles flashed all across their cities—on billboards and buildings, alongside freeways, and in the rapid transit terminals they used to get to and from work. Idyllic images of happy families walking through peaceful, dome-covered forests were everywhere, flooding the popular consciousness with carefully-honed messages. Educational and so-called "public interest" pieces ran weekly on major television networks, pumping out "unbiased" propaganda claiming that life in the proposed domes would be everything it was now—but without the deadly poisons that currently plagued the natural world the masses loved so much.

Slowly the people came around to Big Brother's point of view. In the end, they really didn't have a choice. The world was dying, and unless they sought refuge in the domes and government-run complexes or built their own shelters, they would perish along with it.

Construction and Innovation

The mammoth project took a decade to complete. Not one, but two bio-domes were constructed over the cities of Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington respectively, with smaller "conservation domes" dotting the surrounding area as far north as Longview and as far south as Salem. A bio-dome stood on each side of the Columbia River, each a shining testament to man's ingenuity. Both domes were connected by a series of long shuttle tubes. These tubes were designed to ferry people back and forth from one dome to the other via long trains that used anti-gravity fields to stay centered inside the cylinder.

Each fully automated bio-dome complex was designed to comfortably house upwards of ten million souls. Colossal buildings towered beneath the dome shells. Sprawling, mechanized freeways wove their way along the floor of the domed cities, guiding people in their new "environmentally friendly" electric cars between home and workplace with relative speed and comfort. Expansive rail systems also ensured that traffic jams were a thing of the past.

For those who could afford it, personal hovercraft technology was another option. The rich and famous could now fly above the masses in shiny, fully automated hover vehicles, gliding to luxurious penthouse suites in the tallest housing complexes or even traveling outside the cities to personal living domes in the wilderness. Most of those living inside the great domes didn't notice the comings and goings of the superstars and mega-wealthy—they were too caught up in their own self-indulgent lifestyles to worry about who was living where. Automated life in the bio-sprawl was good.

Pre-Fall Technology

The following is a brief look at the technology that existed before the Fall.

People traveled across the land in vehicles called "cars." I've seen a lot of these—even a few that work. They apparently came in all shapes and sizes, and in all colors of the rainbow. We don't see many rainbows anymore, but that's a different story. Rumor has it that there were also vehicles like cars that moved through the air as easily as a Robotic Hawk flies. Some actually hovered—I've actually seen one of these; it's called a "chopper." It looks like a gigantic metal insect with blades above and behind its shell.

The one I saw didn't fly. The blades were bent and torn. The inside of the chopper looked like a pack of toxic-raccoons had gotten a hold of it. Wires and gadgets were strewn all over the place, the seats were torn to shreds, and an awful stench clung to it. Just a few seconds inside that thing made my eyes burn.

There are a lot of these kinds of vehicles around Portland, some of them even sporting camouflage. Most are wrecked, but some, I think, could work again—if anyone knew how to fix them. The Purity Corp is rumored to have brought a few of these vehicles back to working condition. They don't look pretty, not like the sleek shiny cars I've seen in other places. They come in all shapes, and some are equipped with mounted weapons. I think a big battle might have been fought in and around Portland. Some even fly through the air, but those are just as rare as anything else these days.

I've heard stories about great buildings, filled to the ceiling with all kinds of food and things people could buy for their homes. They were called "one-stop-shopping centers," or something like that. If the legends were true, they held more food than I've seen in my whole life.

People talked to other people thousands of miles away with boxes—some so small you could put them in your pocket or even strap them around your wrist! Like our shout boxes, but with longer range.

The hospitals were mammoth buildings called "free clinics" where any sort of disease could be cured—for free! If you were sick or injured, you just walked in and they healed you up in no time at all. In today's world there's no such thing as a minor injury or illness, and payment is usually taken in lives.

- Duncan Clark

The X-chip

New advances in cybernetics had allowed the government to finally develop a cashless society. In fact, the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome was a test site for a new type of technology that made this possible: an implant that broadcast volumes of information about a person—finances, medical history, criminal records, and more—to A.I. monitoring drones. The implant—called the "X-chip"—was a nanotechnology-powered, pill-shaped wireless communications device that could be inserted into the bridge of the nose, leaving a small red mark that usually faded away after a few days.

The potential uses for such a device were endless. People no longer had to worry about carrying cash or credit cards with them all the time. With a simple scan, they could get whatever they wanted and go on about their business. The Census Bureau could keep accurate records of the population and develop demographic profiles, which were in turn sold to corporations who used the data to better target potential consumers of their products. Law enforcement agencies used the implants to track criminals, receive payment for fines, and eventually even to administer punishment to extremely violent offenders. Hospitals and clinics used the device to obtain data about patients—to better treat their illnesses and injuries and collect payment for services rendered.

In the latter part of this advanced era, the federal government stepped into the affairs of state governments and instituted a health care plan that revolutionized the process of treating the sick and injured. Thanks to the X-chip, sick people could finally go to a clinic or hospital and not worry about dealing with insurance companies or having enough cash in their bank account. The scanning process automatically reimbursed hospital bank accounts with credit transferred from patients' accounts. In instances where the patient could not afford treatment, a "red flag" was placed on their account to restrict the recreational activities in which the person could engage, including erotic parlors and recreational drug stores. Citizens with red flags on their accounts were only able to "buy" food and provisions deemed necessary for survival.

Holo-Coms

Personal communications technology had advanced to the point where people routinely used holographic representations of themselves to communicate with each other. These *Holographic Image Projection Systems* ("HIPS"), could be worn around the waist or wrist, making them easy to use and carry. With the touch of a button (or, in some advanced models, a simple voice command), people could dispatch a holographic image of themselves to deliver a message to someone else. Upon delivery of the message, the image would vanish, leaving the recipient free to respond in like manner.

V.T.O.L.

V.T.O.L. (Vertical Take Off and Landing) technology had evolved from the days of its first use in old *Harrier*-type jets; first-generation hover and take-off technology was now used in everything from garbage trucks to military vehicles. The earliest models were cumbersome, ugly vehicles with low

Out of all of the wild things I've heard about the people who lived in ancient times, nothing amazes me more than the stories I've heard about the ones they called "athletes." These people played games and were rewarded for it with cars, women, and houses—even when they lost! Cities had teams that traveled to other cities to compete against each other, and the winners were given anything they wanted.

I think these athletes must have engaged in some pretty dangerous games. From what I understand, society idolized them. Perhaps the games they played were so dangerous that if you weren't really good, you died.

But for all its amazing achievements, society in the ancient world obviously wasn't perfect. If it were perfect, I wouldn't be writing about its downfall. I often speculate on the kind of people they must have been. I find myself wondering what kind of parents they were, and how they treated each other. Did they like each other? Were they a moral and just people? Did they have any sense of respect for, or basic love of, life? Nothing I've learned about the people I grudgingly call my ancestors leads me to believe they possessed these qualities. To me, they seemed…ignorant.
They were surrounded by so much that was good, and they just threw it all away…

- Duncan Clark

speeds and terrible maneuverability; their large sizes actually worked against the technology, resulting in an average flight ceiling of less than twenty feet. Miniaturization had not yet reached the point at which hover vehicles could be safely mass-produced for civilian use. However, after a few years of refinement, engineers and scientists were able to develop and use lighter yet stronger metals and alloys in the construction of the vehicle airframes, making smaller and more efficient chassis designs possible.

The superior "brains" of A.I. droids put their knowledge of nanotechnology to use in the construction of miniaturized V.T.O.L. propulsion systems. The smallest of these was the size of a desktop computer. These developments in airframe and propulsion miniaturization opened the door for the construction of the first commercial and military hover-vehicle prototypes.

The first commercial-use hovercraft were introduced to the citizens of the Northwest in the form of public service vehicles—sanitation and garbage trucks, ambulances, public transportation vehicles, and police cruisers, among others. This new generation of hover-vehicles was powered by hydrogen fuel cell technology, an ecologically cleaner alternative to the internal combustion engine. Day and night, on billboards all across the cities of the Northwest, corporate ad campaigns touted their message: "The Future Is Now."

Citizens in the Northwest embraced the cleaner, futuristic technology whole-heartedly as corporate giants like GM and Ford gleefully rolled their newest toys off the production lines. Rabid consumers predictably snatched up their next fix of technology and raced off to play.

Soon the skies were filled with hovercraft of all shapes and sizes. Sleek hover-cycles raced through the skies alongside flying sport-trucks, SUVs, hover-taxis and fully automated buses. Freight trucks transported steel and other construction materials to crews working on the bio-domes, drastically reducing the risk of workplace accidents caused by the use of large and dangerous electro-magnet cranes to lift the heavy loads. Teenagers zipped by on stylish new "hover-boards."

In many cases, it wasn't even necessary to obtain a pilot's license for air travel. Most vehicles came equipped with an "expert-brain module" that handled all of the details involved in keeping the vehicle safely airborne. All the "pilot" needed to do was steer the automobile in the direction he or she wanted to go. More expensive luxury models such as the *Lincoln Sky King* came fully equipped with an A.I. drone that actually flew the vehicle as well, leaving the passengers with nothing to do but enjoy the ride.

As might be expected, the United States military was actually first to put the technology to use. Secret projects such as the *Night-Wraith* Multi-Mode Attack Vehicle involved adding cutting-edge V.T.O.L technology to the tilt-rotor design of the V-22 *Osprey*. Initially, the technology was flawed; a jaw-dropping eighty percent of the training missions involving the early tilt-rotor *Night-Wraith* variant resulted in failure. With the advent of efficient hover technology, however, the old designs for the *Night-Wraith* were scrapped in favor of a newer model that offered the same versatility with all the added capabilities of a top-of-the-line hovercraft propulsion system. The result of these changes and improvements was the exceptionally versatile V-350 *Night-Wraith* Multi-Mode Hover-Vehicle.

Anti-Gravity

One of the most exciting scientific discoveries of pre-Fall civilization was anti-gravity technology. The basic premise was that, if an object was lined with positively charged magnets proportional to its size and weight, and then a second, equal layer of positively charged magnets was fixed over the primary layer, a magnetic field would be created around the object. This magnetic field could then be manipulated by adjusting the relative distance between the primary "fixed" layer and the secondary "itinerant" layer, producing enough consequential force to move the object.

The theory that came to be known as Swenson's Principle of Applied Magnetic Propulsion was heralded as a major breakthrough. In the Northwest, the technology was first used in the mag-bus transports of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome Complex. Shuttle tubes were constructed to transport passengers to recreational zones, eco-domes, agro-complexes, and other domed cities, such as the Sea-Tac

complex in northern Washington. Despite their incredible utility, the mag-bus shuttles were just the tip of the iceberg as far as anti-gravity technology was concerned. The military was predictably eager to explore possible applications of the technology, as was NASA.

The space program had always been limited by the amount of fuel a shuttle could carry—and ironically, the more fuel a shuttle carried, the more dangerous space exploration became. The development of magnetic propulsion allowed NASA to construct spacecraft capable of much more than had been possible under the antiquated shuttle program. The new technology propelled vehicles effortlessly through the atmosphere, and in the zero-gravity expanses of space, the magnetic drives came teasingly close to exceeding existing spacecraft speed records.

Genetic Research

Pre-Fall society made great strides in the field of genetics. Gene-splicing—the technique of transferring a specific piece of genetic code from one host into another—was used in a wide variety of ways, described below.

Agriculture

Geneticists first used their knowledge of gene-splicing to engineer food to better withstand the adverse effects of the environment. As the natural world grew increasingly hostile to life, this was an especially important undertaking. Pre-Fall society continued to thrive in domes and bunker complexes and needed food to survive; gene-splicing techniques allowed scientists to engineer fruits and vegetables able to grow in less than optimal conditions. "Agro facilities"—large biological plantations—were created in remote areas of the Northwest where plants could be grown in these new conditions and harvested when they reached maturity.

Medicine and Drugs

Experiments were also performed on plants known to have beneficial medicinal properties with the goal of creating more potent recreational and pharmaceutical drugs. "Super" versions of heroin, cocaine, LSD, and marijuana were engineered for the masses. These drugs provided all the desired mind-altering effects with none of the negative side effects. In fact, people could now provide blueprints of their DNA to drug manufacturers, who could then genetically "code" drugs specifically for them, virtually guaranteeing the best individual sense-altering experience possible.

Plants with medicinal uses, such as aloe, agave, henbane, opium and quinine, were also the subjects of genetic experimentation. Genetic engineers merged the genes of different plants to create new types of plant life that retained the medicinal characteristics of the original strains. The constant introduction of "new" medicinal drugs eventually provided cures for all manner of diseases, including many that had plagued humanity for centuries. Diseases such as Alzheimer's, cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and eventually even AIDS were wiped out, thanks to advances in gene therapy.

The Debate over Human Testing

Of course, the sybaritic pre-Fall culture was never satisfied for long. Self-indulgence was a beast with a voracious appetite for excess, and the corporate machine was only too happy to feed it. Variance, distraction, abnormality; these were the keys to the pacification of the bored and restless mob. The scientific community saw, hidden away within the human genome, an opportunity to provide citizens with a new distraction. The problem was that the manipulation of human genetics required human test subjects—and human testing in a laboratory was *banned*.

Hitherto only animals had been deemed fit for experimentation—and even then, animal rights groups regularly voiced outrage through everything from staged protests to acts of terrorism against testing facilities. One incident in particular, in which a bio-tech lab in Everett, Washington was bombed, served as a catalyst for a new debate over the subject of human testing. Ten researchers had died in the fire along with dozens of test animals; corporate lawyers argued that if human beings had been allowed to undergo voluntary testing, ten brilliant researchers would still be alive and contributing to the benefit of society. The Supreme Court agreed and decided to change the law accordingly.

Pre-existing laws banning the laboratory testing of human beings were amended to allow for experimentation on willing subjects, or on persons who were incarcerated for violent crimes. The rationale for the inclusion of the latter was that prison inmates could better serve society by subjecting themselves to experiments aimed at improving the quality of life for humanity than by wasting away in the squalor of prison life. In some instances, prisoners received more lenient sentences if they agreed to genetic testing as a condition of their incarceration.

Citizens were given incentives to volunteer for testing as well. Money, extra drug rations, extended visits to ultra-high-class erotic parlors, hovercraft—anything the person might want could be used as a bargaining chip by scientists to lure the individual into the lab. Backed by major corporations, the geneticists could offer financial incentives that most people just couldn't bring themselves to refuse. It was rare, however, that outright bribery was needed—the truth was, it didn't take much work to find willing subjects. The debate over human testing had been broadcast nation-wide and into the homes of millions of citizens; excited by the hype and controversy that surrounded the issue, people from all walks of life flocked to processing facilities and submitted their applications. It seemed that society had found a new diversion.

Some fringe groups at the time claimed that human experimentation—and not always on willing subjects—had been happening ever since the 1970s. The Free People's Militia was one such group, comprised primarily of older, disgruntled military veterans who had been replaced by

combat androids. Members of the Free People's Militia claimed to have been exposed to mind control programs like MK-ULTRA, an alleged "super-soldier" program that involved administering experimental drugs to soldiers against their will. The goal of these supposed experiments was said to be the creation of mindless killing machines capable of extraordinary feats of strength and speed and with no compunctions about taking human life. According to the Free People's Militia, projects like MK-ULTRA gave birth to a super-secret military program that was supposedly was still in operation—*Project Pandora*.

Project Pandora

Project Pandora allegedly expanded on the MK-ULTRA program, delving into the (at the time) highly illegal and experimental realm of human genetic modification. Stories surfaced about humans being injected with the DNA of all sorts of creatures. Photos of giant vats containing twisted monstrosities vaguely resembling human beings surfaced on the Militia's website. The photographed creatures appeared to be dead, but the group insisted that secret installations which housed this type of experimentation were still active.

Dugway Proving Grounds, Area 51 (a super-secret military base in the Nevada desert), and the Umatilla Gas Repository were all identified by the Militia as sites where illegal testing was still being performed. Predictably, the media had a field day with the "evidence" the Militia presented. "Experts" came forward testifying that some of the photographs had been doctored and that others were just pictures of people in elaborate costumes. They called for living people who had undergone the alleged experimentation to step forward with their stories; not a single soul came forward.

The separatist group was laughed at and dismissed by mainstream America.

Body Design, Inc.

Now that human experimentation was legal, science was free to begin focusing on methods by which the genetic code of a human being could be altered to produce a particular desired outcome, such as heightened hearing or enhanced reflexes. Government-funded testing facilities cropped up all over America, and soon thereafter the first corporate human-engineering entity, *Bio-Synthesis Incorporated*, came into being.

Bio-Synthesis Inc. was the parent corporation of a nation-wide chain of augmentation parlors by the name of "Body Design, Inc." A massive media campaign was launched across the nation in preparation for the opening of the first parlor. Their corporate slogan ("Genetic Body Design—Re-Writing the Book of Life") became as familiar to people as the concept of indoor plumbing. The first parlor opened in the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome to a flood of customers eager for their first gene-treatment. The process was fairly simple. After an initial X-chip scan, which uploaded a customer's vital statistics to a processing droid's hard drive, the necessary genetic calculations could be made based on the desired modification(s). The data was then sent to the chief medical robot, who would administer the DNA injection into the patient's spinal cord. One final X-chip scan arranged for payment, after which the process was complete. In most cases, only one return trip was required (to verify changes to the patients' DNA structure). In the rare instance that aberrant cellular behavior was detected, the patient would be hospitalized until further treatment could be performed.

At first the list of possible genetic augmentations was small; people chose from a list of basic body modifications such as enhanced hearing, improved sight, muscle treatments, hair re-growth and height/weight modification. Researchers promised impatient consumers that they would soon be rolling out more eclectic alternatives, and they didn't disappoint. After a year in business, Body Design, Inc. unveiled their new line of "exotic augmentation packages."

These exotic packages spanned a wide array of augmentations based on templates from the animal, reptile, avian, and aquatic kingdoms. People could now choose to modify their bodies with prehensile tails, hawk-like facial features, or even gills; the possibilities for augmentation seemed endless. The general public reacted to the new line with mixed enthusiasm. More traditional-minded people, such as the elderly, tended to frown on the idea of modifying human beings with animal DNA. While those suffering the effects of advanced age embraced the opportunity for treatments which resulted in younger bodies, they disliked the idea of human beings walking around with horns or cat's eyes—it wasn't natural, they said.

Younger people, however were a different story entirely. They hopped on the body-augmentation bandwagon almost as soon as the first kid showed up in his adolescent learning center with a rhino horn growing out of his forehead. For young people, it was just another way to express their individuality, much in the same way that tattooing and body piercing had been means of rebellion for their parents and grandparents. Generation X-Y, as they began to call themselves, welcomed the opportunity to be different.

The founders of Body Design, Inc. knew that some people wouldn't like their augmentations after the treatment was finished. To prevent possible lawsuits or negative press coverage, the company decided it would be best if all "gene-mods" were temporary, giving customers a chance to adapt to their newly modified bodies. If mom and dad didn't like the scales on little Jimmy's arms, they only had to wait two weeks for his body to revert to normal. Those citizens who did like the way the gene-mods affected them could always come back for more treatments—which of course meant more money for the company and more options for the customer. The prudence of Body Design, Inc. meant everyone benefited.

Cloning

All of the scientific advances of the latter portion of the twentieth century—the advent of A.I., stem cell research, genetics, the experimental cloning of animals in laboratories, and finally the lifting of the ban on human testing—set the

stage for the laboratory creation of the first human *clone*. The creation of human life outside the natural reproductive process had always been a goal of the scientific community, and finally, in a secret research laboratory complex deep underneath the Sea-Tac Bio-Dome they succeeded: a baby boy was grown for a full nine months in a vat built to simulate a mother's womb. They named him Gregory.

Gregory was truly a "brain child;" his genetic makeup was a compilation of the DNA of humanity's finest organic minds: Arave, Vaughn, Bechel, Steineberger, Sax and Swenson. His "mother" was the most advanced android in the world, a fully synthetic A.I. named Althea. The two were presented to the world as mother and son, the culmination of over sixty years of scientific research and development—a fully synthetic artificial intelligence raising a cloned human being as her own child.

The "birth" of Gregory sparked a huge debate about the moral implications of human cloning. Religious institutions all across America protested the creation of an apparent abomination. *Did Gregory have a soul?* they asked. Did he have human rights, or, being the creation of man, was Gregory in the same social class as androids? These questions and many others were hurled at the researchers, who in turn scoffed at the zealots and accused them of getting in the way of a scientific process which held the promise of prolonging human life indefinitely. They pointed out that organs could be cloned from the patient's own DNA structure, effectively assuring a perfect match to people who needed a transplant or even new limbs.

As far as human rights were concerned, the researchers vehemently insisted that Gregory was a human being in every sense of the word. The boy would grow old and someday die. He might even be able to have children, should he wish it. His sexual organs would begin to produce sperm at puberty, and assuming he could obtain a procreation license there wasn't any reason he couldn't breed. Gregory was a human being, not a robot—and as such, deserved the same opportunities other human beings enjoyed.

Despite the outcry from the religious community, cloning research moved forward. In time, somatic acceleration was achieved, reducing the amount of time required for cloning from months to weeks. Once the technology was perfected, cloning banks were quick to open, offering a sort of eternal life to people who could afford it. Those who, for whatever reason, were unable to have children of their own began to contact the research center about the possibility of having a child cloned from their own DNA. Environmental groups and wildlife conservation agencies also contacted Bio-Synthesis about using the technology to rebuild the populations of endangered wildlife species for the eco-domes and other conservation projects. Owners of erotic parlors even contacted Bio-Synthesis about the possibility of creating tailor-made clones for use in their brothels. Representatives of the research center responded to the latter inquiries with stern reminders that cloning was a serious science, and not about making newer, better sex-toys.

Gregory and Althea

Gregory and Althea were regarded as interesting curiosities by society—for a while. Gregory did some commercials for Bio-Synthesis Inc. to promote better understanding of the science of cloning. At four years of age, Gregory was easily the most intelligent child the researchers had ever seen. They marveled at how much his young mind was able to grasp in comparison to other children in the same age group. Even more fascinating, although not unexpected, was the warm relationship that developed between Gregory and his "mother."

Althea, acting like the protective mother she was designed to be, was never far from Gregory. Her programming ensured that she was always loving and nurturing—a perfect mother in every sense of the word. Althea developed a strong protective instinct with regards to Gregory, always careful to keep her child out of harm's way. She never left him alone in situations where Gregory might get hurt, either through his own actions or the cruelty of others. And like most mothers who love their children, Althea was not without her own ambitions for Gregory.

Althea expertly negotiated with the lawyers at Bio-Synthesis for a plush living space in the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome Complex and a hefty living allowance for the two of them. In return, the company was welcome to use Gregory in ad campaigns as well as to keep samples of the boy's DNA on hand for further experiments. Althea also managed to secure sole custody of Gregory, becoming the first A.I. to ever become the legal guardian of a human being.

The two were given unrestricted access to the cloning labs under the Sea-Tac Dome where they had been created and to which they had to return regularly for additional testing. Gregory and Althea came to the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome eager to start a "normal" life… but being the first human clone in the history of mankind, and having the world's first android mother, guaranteed anything *but* a normal life.

Gregory and Althea were celebrities in their own right. Wherever they went, there always seemed to be a crowd, eager to see the first cloned human and his robot mother. Furthermore, society didn't see the need to give the two any privacy. After all, it wasn't as if they were human beings, was it? Weren't the two created as an amusement for humans? If not, then what real purpose did they serve? Any man and woman could procreate (with a state authorized permit, of course), so a cloned human being must be some new kind of plaything the gene-modifying "Wizards of Oz" had bestowed upon society.

Journalists and other representatives of the media hounded the two each time they left their living quarters. Althea, being an android, understood that she was different. She knew her role in society and understood why her "son" was a curiosity… but something stuck a cord within her programming. The mother in Althea didn't appreciate society's lack of respect for her desire to raise Gregory in some semblance of normalcy and privacy.

Gregory liked the attention at first. Throughout his entire

young life, the boy had been subjected to tests, interviews, and cute little commercials designed to promote the technology that had created him. As he grew older, however, he began to sense that he was truly different. At age five, when most young boys were generally only concerned about toys and games, Gregory spent his days learning the Pythagorean Theorem and reading Dickens. When he and Althea went out to local playgrounds, other children tended to avoid them. On one particular occasion the other children were especially abrasive… and the events that ensued would change the way society viewed the androids that walked in their midst.

Althea sat on a park bench, encouraging Gregory to go and play with the other children. When he tried to talk to them about Einstein, they laughed and pointed at the "vat freak and his mechanical mommy." Gregory was a cloned boy, but a little boy nonetheless; after enduring few minutes of taunting, he burst into tears and ran back to his mother for consolation.

Althea's programming dictated a response, and she began to comfort the boy as best she could. In truth, Althea understood very little of what had happened. She was, after all, a robot, ill- suited to dealing with highly emotional situations. Gregory cried and cried, but her pre-defined comfort sub-routines had no effect on him. Perhaps another reaction might be prescribed?

She decided it would be best to scold the other children. Gregory would see that she was *protecting* him and would begin to feel better. Althea stood and initiated her anger processes, waggling her finger and reprimanding the other children—but they just laughed and mocked her. Althea grabbed one child by the arm, intending to hold the boy until his parents could be found. Her programming dictated that she could not intentionally harm the boy in any way, but that didn't mean she couldn't restrain him.

The child screamed in terror, frantically struggling against Althea, who held him fast. The boy jerked harder and harder. Althea applied more pressure—and then, quite by accident, the boy's wrist snapped. The child cried out in pain just as his mother arrived on the scene. The woman became hysterical at the sight of her child in pain and began beating Althea, who released the boy and backed away. A crowd gathered, watching in horror at the sight of something they had been told could never happen.

The dog had finally bitten its master.

The ubiquitous media drones that trailed Gregory and Althea wherever they went recorded the entire incident. Within minutes, the unfortunate accident was being broadcast on every news net, monitoring screen, and holo-board in the entire Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome. Althea pushed her way through the stunned crowd and grabbed Gregory, who was now crying even harder. They made their way back home, only to find a mob of reporters and angry citizens waiting for them. The crowd rushed Althea's Toyota *Talon* hover-car, shouting and throwing rocks. Steering the vehicle up into the dome sky, Althea set the auto-pilot and paused to analyze the situation. She had harmed a child—but androids' programming forbid hostile action towards organic life. Was she flawed? Althea ran a diagnostic on her systems.

The liquid plasma circuitry that carried instructions from her brain module to the rest of her body didn't seem to be damaged; the situation simply didn't compute. Althea couldn't harm a human… but she *had* harmed a human. She decided the most prudent thing to do would be to return to the Sea-Tac Dome and report to her creators. If anyone knew what might be wrong with her, surely it would be them. Spinning the hover-car deftly around, she plotted a course to the Sea-Tac Dome.

The researchers had been expecting Althea and Gregory. The two arrived to find yet another mob of angry citizens protesting outside Bio-Synthesis' main research facility. They rushed towards Althea, some of them brandishing sledgehammers and chainsaws. Gregory began to cry again and clung to Althea's waste as the mob swarmed around the hover-car, shaking and battering it.

Moments later, a distinctive high-pitched whirring sound announced the arrival of a squad of threat response drones. The team moved quickly to secure the area, firing euphoric gas canisters into the crowd as four heavily armed men in civil security suits escorted Althea and Gregory into the building.

Althea felt relieved to be back at the research facility. Now she would be able to find out—

But wait—the security officers were taking Gregory away! Was there something wrong with him? She should have checked to see if he was hurt. Now he was screaming her name and struggling with the armored men. Althea started towards Gregory, but three more men in civil security suits blocked her path. Why were they keeping her from her son? The security officers parted, and a man that Althea recognized as the project director for Bio-Synthesis, Inc. stepped forward.

"Where are you taking my son?" Althea's voice modulation program produced just the right inflection and tone needed to sound stern, with a tinge of fright added for effect. She stared expectantly at the man, waiting for an answer. One of the security officers snickered.

"Gregory isn't your concern anymore, Althea. You're going to be staying here for some time… until things calm down."

Not her concern? The sentence didn't compute. Nothing seemed to compute today. She was his *mother*. How was it that Gregory was not her concern? Strange sensations overcame her. She tried to identify them: Confusion? Sorrow? Fear? Althea moved in the direction the other officer had taken Gregory, trying to push her way past the men in armor. In one micro-second, it seemed that all of her processing abilities—all of her power to rationalize data and calmly come to conclusions, all of her vast programming and endless SQL databases cross-referenced over and over again with infinite variables for random situations—each of these tools for deduction crumbled, and the only directive left was to find her son.

She paced back and forth, looking for a way around the

men blocking her path, searching for a solution, calling out to her son—"Mother's coming, Gregory, don't worry, Mommy loves you"—over and over again as she did so. She rushed the security force again and again; each time she was pushed back. And then suddenly, it was finished. The project director calmly walked up behind Althea and pushed the OFF-switch at the base of her skull, and the android slumped to the floor.

The scene at the playground made it clear that androids were not fit to raise children without proper human supervision. The researchers decided to keep Althea at the main lab for study; she'd exhibited fascinating and quite unexpected human-like behavior when Gregory had been taken from her. It was almost as if Althea were *frantic*. It would take time to figure out exactly why her rationalization sub-routines had failed so spectacularly.

As for Gregory, he was transferred to an undisclosed location after undergoing cosmetic surgery to change his appearance. The people who adopted Gregory weren't informed of the boy's true nature—they were simply told that he was a special, incredibly intelligent little boy who needed a family.

The End of Human Cloning

In its conception, human cloning had seemed like a good idea, but in the end, society simply didn't see the need to create new human beings. Many people thought it was outright immoral. Cloning organs and limbs for transplants was a commonly accepted practice; the only long-term success to emerge from the cloning experiments, it ultimately became a great boon to the medical industry. Human cloning banks managed to stay in operation until the Fall, but growing societal distaste for the process and its high cost ensured that only the most wealthy and eccentric would even consider it.

Ecological Domes

While human cloning failed to impact society in the ways that developers of the technology had hoped it would, animal cloning became wildly popular. The citizens of the Northwest were highly sympathetic towards efforts to re-populate species of wildlife teetering on the brink of extinction.

As techniques for animal cloning became cheaper and more popular, the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome came to hold a unique position: it was home to a huge variety of birds—many of them rare, endangered, and native to other parts of the world—as well as to woodland creatures like squirrels, pika, and raccoons (in addition to mankind's ever-present domesticated dog and cat companions).

In this fashion, the ecological domes of the Northwest were soon populated with a vast array of cloned wildlife. These "eco-domes" came into being largely as a result of the efforts of environmental activists, who at the time held a great deal of sway over the general public's views on ecology and the dying wilderness. Most people living in the Northwest genuinely cared about the woods, mountains, rivers, and the wildlife that lived in them; despite the hedonistic excess that defined social life within the domes, many people shared a strong instinctive conviction that mankind had a responsibility to protect the environment. As forests and wilderness reaches deteriorated, this conviction became an urgent calling in the hearts and minds of many.

Initial construction on the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome was met with angry protests from many concerned citizens who feared that government promises about environmental protection and conservation would be tossed aside in favor of all-too-familiar environmental exploitation once the work on the domes and bunker complexes was complete. That the environment was already in sad shape was abundantly clear; after all, the primary reason the bio-domes were being built in the first place was to provide safe shelter for humans from an environment too polluted to support life. For the people of the Northwest, providing safety for mankind within the domes wasn't enough; to get citizens fully behind the concept of living in bio-domes, the government had to consider the state of the environment as well. In response to these pressures, the ecological domes were constructed to cultivate and safeguard what ecological diversity remained in the Northwest.

Eastern Oregon contained four large domes designed to simulate desert environments. Wildlife introduced into these complexes was suited to living in sparse regions. People who traveled through these "desert domes" would find occasion to observe a wide variety of reptiles—as well as deer, jackrabbits, coyote, cougar and other desert-dwellers—in carefully-crafted surroundings that closely approximated their native environments.

The Southern Cascade dome complexes of western Oregon, as well as many of the northern dome complexes in Washington and the Canadian province of British Columbia, held beaver, foxes, mountain lions, grizzly bears, brown bears, elk, moose, flying squirrels, wolves, wolverines and other wildlife indigenous to the Northwest. Ecological domes such as these were constructed not just to contain local wildlife, but also to preserve and replenish as much of the native populations and environment as possible.

The Crater Lake Dome, situated atop its volcanic namesake, was another such complex. As its positive environmental impact proved its value, the complex was expanded to include much of the surrounding countryside in a series of smaller, connected domes. The resulting supercomplex, which resembled a mass of inter-connected bubbles, proved extremely efficient, allowing construction and maintenance drones to cover larger areas without the structural problems inherent in extending a single dome over so much terrain. While this design was not feasible over sprawling cities like Portland and Vancouver, it worked wonders over large stretches of relatively uninhabited wilderness.

Modeled after the Crater Lake Dome's successful "bubble" design, the Hood River Eco-Complex covered much of the Hood River valley. Its series of "bubble-domes" extended

out as far north as the Columbia River Gorge, incorporating popular tourist spots like Multnomah Falls, Bonneville Dam, and the Crown Point Vista House. Washington eco-domes could be found at Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Rainer, the Olympic Peninsula, along Puget Sound, and throughout much of the North Cascades National Park. When the end came, more than fifty ecological domes were in regular use all across the Northwest.

Agro-Domes

As increasing numbers of Americans abandoned so-called "free-cities" in favor of more restricted but safer lives in bunker complexes and bio-domes, the agricultural and logistical challenge of providing food to these massive complexes reared its head. Years of over-farming, toxic waste disposal, and general pollution had eroded and sterilized much of the nation's prime agricultural land. To solve the growing food supply problem, the government annexed vast tracks of land to host massive domed agriculture facilities.

These "agro-domes" were essentially enormous greenhouses for the mass-production of fruits, vegetables, and whatever other forms of plant life were currently in demand by drug corporations. Soil cultivated in these domes was regularly reconstituted and filtered for purity, then treated with concentrated mineral injections before planting began.

In addition to producing commercial products—food and drugs, both medicinal and recreational—agro-domes served as massive laboratories in which researchers could genetically modify plants to create more effective medicines and hardier strains able to survive in the planet's decaying ecosystem. Some seeds from these new strains were actually test-planted in remote areas of the Northwest outside the domes to see how they could adapt to the increasingly hostile environment; despite some initial disappointments, over time several strains showed some promise of producing viable crops. While this was a noteworthy event in agricultural science, pre-Fall society would never reap the benefits.

The automated agro-dome complexes were maintained by crews of industrial drones and agrobots working under the supervision of teams of human agricultural geneticists. The geneticist teams were responsible for developing the prescribed formulas for fertilizer, growth acceleration chemicals, and other nutrients; the agrobots would in turn administer these treatments to the crops and handle the other mundane tasks associated with farming. Harvested crops were placed into advanced hover-drones; these mobile silos then carried the product to processing facilities inside the bio-domes.

Agro-domes could be found all over America, although there was an especially high concentration of them across Washington State and in the northern parts of Idaho and Central Oregon. Thanks to the local environmentalists' devotion to preserving the Northwest wilderness, the land and agro-domes proved more fertile and productive there than anywhere else on the continent.

Growing Dissention

During the final years before the last Great War, American society had become largely hedonistic and dependent upon the machines it had created. Most Americans lived in either bio-domes or subterranean bunker complexes, blissfully ignorant of the damage being done to the outside world. Society at large preferred to accept the safe, reassuring façade of the eco-domes rather than deal with the pale horror of a world they had helped destroy. Not everyone was blind to the realities of the global situation, however; small groups across the country resisted the temptation to become homogenized, machine-dependent sheep. Not content to live life in anticipation of the next shiny gadget, this silent minority resisted the lure of regulated drug use that clouded the minds of the masses, preferring the intoxication of the one drug that Big Brother didn't want them to have: *Truth*.

Many blue-collar citizens became disillusioned by the government's increasing preference for an android, as opposed to human, workforce. Legions of hard-working American civilians and military personnel lost their jobs as soon as it became apparent to the government that robots could do their work more efficiently. While many middle-class citizens mutely accepted their monthly unemployment compensation checks and went off to play, others raged against the system that had betrayed them. Fringe groups began to surface all across the nation; whether religious, political, environmental, or even racist in nature, each represented a small but growing crack in the glassy veil of dome-life in America.

Rise of the Purity Corp

As tension and discontent grew, it wasn't long before news reports began to surface about a man by the name of Alexander Cole. He was the self-proclaimed leader of a religious-oriented militia group known only as the "Purity Corp."

Cole was a highly charismatic man who quickly gained followers in every bio-dome and free city he visited. He traveled the country, giving impassioned speeches and sermons about the growing corruption in the U.S. government and biblical signs that pointed to the imminent arrival of an age "more dark and chaotic" than any period in recorded history. He spoke of the importance of a strong family environment and of the role that God played in every human being's life. Alexander urged his listeners to arm themselves both physically and spiritually in preparation for the coming apocalypse.

Cole's speeches often expanded on imagery and ideas from religious fundamentalism, and were filled with sweeping predictions about terrorism and civil war. "The coming conflict will be fought on American soil as well as abroad. It will be nothing less than a war between good and evil, conceived in the ranks of this corrupt Zionist government that cares more for its robots than for the people who made them!" Cole spoke about the coming changes

with such passion and zeal that at times he seemed like a man possessed. His lectures resonated most closely with working-class Americans who, he claimed, had been sold out by a government that catered to the wealthy and ignored the needs of millions in the hard-working middle and lower classes. He lashed out at the media as well, calling them puppets that force-fed mindless programming to the masses. He likened the general public to a horde of complacent worker ants that sat in front of the New World Order's propaganda machine each night, watching staged news broadcasts that cast a utopian façade over the chilling reality that the nation had become a modern-day Babylon, decadent and reviled by the rest of the world.

Cole urged his members to turn off the television and to reject government-sanctioned mind-control tactics that kept them docile consumers of products they didn't need. He exhorted his audiences to destroy the machines that controlled their lives and libidos. Cole implored the masses to stop using the drugs that clouded their minds and closed their eyes to a world gone wrong. He advocated alternate forms of entertainment that focused on the strengthening of family and friendships and called for independent news sources that operated outside the reach of the federal and corporate propaganda machine. Purity Corp chapter houses sprang up in every city almost overnight. Before long, the name and message of the Purity Corp reached the ears of Americans everywhere.

Of course, not everyone bought into Alexander Cole's message. The media against which he tirelessly raged had power too; they used it to misrepresent the man and his controversial views, often comparing the Purity Corp to dangerous cults and sects like the Branch Davidians. Denouncing his words and agenda as poisonous, media programs like "Extreme-TV" went so far as to suggest that Cole be locked up—or even killed.

For his part, Cole welcomed the media attacks, using each one to illustrate his contention that the mainstream media, while pretending to advocate freedom of speech, really existed to silence dissenting voices, even if it meant murdering those who spoke out against the corporate machine. Cole's words would soon come back to haunt him.

Alexander Cole was assassinated in the George Humphry Auditorium in his "home town"—the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome—while speaking about the growing animosity felt by countries outside America. In the moments before his murder, Alexander stood in front of a large computer screen keyed into a website designated as illegal viewing material by the Department of Internet Safety. Images of impoverished people burning American flags flashed across the screen, accompanied by audio narration by a British man reproaching a decadent America for lounging in its bubble communities while millions around the world died of starvation or at the hand of diseases to which Americans had long held cures.

The computer screen flashed to another website, this one detailing "covert" raids by American military forces, blowing up foreign oil refineries, assassinating political figures, and performing all manner of atrocities. Some of these incidents had actually been televised but spun as international incidents beyond the interest or responsibility of the United States. Cole was drawing his speech to a stirring conclusion when a single sniper shot rang out in the auditorium, killing Cole instantly and igniting a general panic. The "perpetrator" was caught a block away with a sniper rifle stuffed in a gym bag.

Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome security officers identified the assassin as Nathan Reed, one of the original members of the Purity Corp. The media spin on the story was that Reed had become disenchanted with the activities of the Purity Corp; he had often been seen arguing with Cole about the direction the Purity Corp should take. Media reports claimed that Nathan, convinced that Alexander was becoming a megalomaniac, decided that Cole had to step down—or be forced down—from his leadership position.

While the general public accepted the media's version of events, there were those who knew the truth. One of them was Alexander's brother Jeremy, who was quickly elected as the new leader of the Purity Corp. His first speaking engagement was at Alexander's wake.

At the wake, Jeremy spoke at length about the relationship between Nathan and Alexander. Though the two had argued at times—mostly about Alexander's safety in the wake of several death threats—they had been almost inseparable friends. Alexander had consistently rejected Nathan's proposals to increase security at speaking engagements, voicing his belief that not even an army of security guards could save him should the government decide to assassinate him. Alexander had promised Nathan that after the event at the George Humphry Auditorium, he would take a break from his hectic schedule and work on making preparations for life outside the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome.

Jeremy admitted that moments before the assassination, he had asked Nathan to go outside to wait for his girlfriend, who was running late. According to Jeremy, eye-witnesses saw a black hover-van pull up to the complex, from which three men emerged to grab Nathan while he stood smoking a cigarette. The next thing Jeremy knew, Alexander was lying dead in a pool of blood on the stage, and the police had "arrested" Nathan with a sniper rifle. Law enforcement officials tried, convicted, and executed Nathan Reed within two days of the assassination. Jeremy blamed the United States government and its puppet media spokesmen for his brother's death and for Nathan's execution—and vowed to take revenge.

The Extremist Movement

A month after Jeremy Cole officially took control of the Purity Corp, explosions rocked the Federated Boeing Robotics Facility in the Sea-Tac Bio-Dome, twenty-seven people were killed and over a hundred seriously injured by the blasts and resulting fires. Authorities labeled the bombing an act of terrorism by criminals with access to military-grade firepower and explosives; beyond the death toll, property

damage to the facility reportedly exceeded five million dollars. Thirty minutes after the explosion, a video stream appeared on all major media broadcast networks. The crystal-clear video image showed Jeremy Cole seated in a high-backed chair in the middle of an otherwise nondescript room. He sipped clear liquid from a glass and then began to speak:

"*You laughed when my brother formed the Purity Corp. You mocked him for speaking his mind; you branded him a heretic; called for, and then eventually facilitated, his destruction. You even had the audacity to blame it on one of his best friends, Nathan Reed. You denied Nathan any kind of self-defense and then casually executed him as if he were a rabid dog. You have done these things, and more, all in the name of freedom and justice, as if you had any idea what those words meant.*

"Your callous, inhuman acts have revealed your true nature to those of us who still have minds of our own. We see through you—and unlike you, we are not without souls. We are not without the skills and the will to bring a measure of justice to your so-called hallowed halls of commerce and liberty. We represent true freedom, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. We have the courage and fortitude to live outside your hedonistic society. You will not dictate the worth of our souls. We will not sit idly by to become drugged, apathetic second-class citizens cast aside in favor of an inhuman workforce of your own creation.

"The events at the Federated Boeing Robotics Facility are just the beginning."

The screen faded to black, leaving nothing but the blazing emblem of the Purity Corp to hang silently there for a few seconds before the feed was cut and regular programming resumed. Jeremy's speech marked the beginning of a series of events that would come to be called the *Extremist Movement*. Bio-dome civil security agencies responded to Jeremy's speech with a massive crackdown on all suspected Purity Corp chapterhouses in both the Lewis and Clark and Sea-Tac Bio-Dome complexes. Overnight, Jeremy Cole became the most wanted man in America. Copies of his infamous broadcast were sent to other dome cities across America and his face broadcast regularly on all media outlets; his X-chip data was flagged to bring law enforcement racing to the scene should it be scanned anywhere on the continent.

Within a week of the speech and the ensuing government crackdowns, over one hundred individuals were incarcerated as suspected terrorists. Of these, ten were convicted of playing key roles in the Federated Boeing Robotics facility bombing. Their executions were broadcast live and uncut all across America; those not executed, the media reported, were being sent to "re-education facilities" somewhere in Eastern Oregon and Washington State.

Re-education Centers

In the aftermath of these alarming events, news segments periodically aired programs documenting the "rehabilitation" of the incarcerated Purists. Some of the detainees appeared on camera claiming to have been brainwashed by Alexander Cole and his cronies, but most Purists who disappeared into the re-education centers were never seen or heard from again.

The re-education centers were no more than an elaborate smoke-and-mirrors ploy by the government to keep the populace from asking too many questions. The bombing of the robotics facility had done damage far beyond the body count and replacement costs; it had called attention to the lies and superficialities with which the masses were pacified. For a brief moment, the actions of a few extremists had shifted the popular focus away from drugs, erotic parlors, and the never-ending stream of shiny gadgets that kept the people complacent.

It had been many decades since mainstream America had bothered to question the motives of its government. The average American was, for the most part, happy to live out his or her life in a foggy haze of drugs and sex. Life was an automated slide into self-gratifying bliss, a daily ritual of distraction. Who would want any other kind of life? Who would even presume to question, much less rebel against, a system that provided so much?

These Purists were a growing curiosity. They saw faults in the system, and they pointed them out to others. They didn't do drugs or visit sex shops like everyone else. They objected to the use of androids to do the work of humans. Surely something was wrong with these odd folk—but what? People wanted to know more about them, wanted to understand why they thought and acted the way they did—and that was precisely what the corporate tycoons and recreational drug czars didn't want people learning. Too many citizens looking for answers to tough questions—questions they should've been asking all along—was bad for business. Questions upset the balance; they meant people weren't buying products, doing drugs, and getting laid like the good sheep they were supposed to be.

Media segments about the re-education centers were intended to counter this growing problem by showing the masses "proof" that this type of behavior was deviant and undesirable. Pundits and news anchors rolled out reams of "evidence" that the Purists were a disturbed band of criminals poisoned by the teachings of a dead madman. And the most important message that the government and its corporate controllers hoped to convey was that these deviants could, and would, be brought back into the system.

History would soon expose these frantic efforts for what they were: panicked attempts to re-assert control over a populace growing restless in its confinement. The spark ignited by Alexander Cole and his followers had become a fire that would soon rage out of control.

Project Pandora Revisited

The truth about the re-education center program was much more insidious than even its fiercest critics suspected. Project Pandora was a reality, and had grown exponentially in scope since the program's inception in the early 1970s. Secret laboratories in bio-domes and underground bunker complexes were dedicated to furthering the science of gene-splicing. The Free People's Militia's fringe views had been partially right; Project Pandora did indeed carry out much of its experimentation on human beings. The project's ultimate goal, however, was to create new life forms from the DNA of existing creatures. The military wasn't satisfied with its army of killing machines—it wanted more. The re-education centers provided the genetic "witch doctors" with plenty of human DNA for use in their frenzied quest to create new life forms.

Project Pandora gave birth to a disturbingly wide variety of unique creatures not found in nature. Inhuman beasts were spawned from the DNA templates of all manner of creatures: arachnid monstrosities, skulking "mole-men," space-warping "bane cats," hellish "plasma beetles," and other genetic horrors were conceived and given life in the secret labs of the re-education facilities. Cloning technology allowed the scientists to endlessly replicate specific genetic models until the military finally attained its ultimate prize: a new strain of bio-engineered shock troops.

The Rising Tide of Violence

Despite the efforts of corporate and media propagandists, a small but growing percentage of the populace was starting to think outside the old boundaries of complacency and dependency. Many—most notably those displaced in the workplace by machines that did their jobs more efficiently—identified with the Purists' message of independence from machines. Extremist groups like the Free People's Militia and a newly-formed religious sect calling itself the "Hand of Jehovah" experienced a sudden surge in membership.

Other, smaller groups that formed in those days could be best described as "wannabes." These comical individuals (mostly angst-ridden teenagers) looked for any excuse to act out, protesting trivialities like the color of the processed food they were served in the adolescent learning centers and the absence of hover-board skating parks. More seriously, some juvenile "rager gangs" (or simply "ragers," as they called themselves) took their rebellion as far as petty vandalism at holo-theaters, convenience stores, and other public places.

The pace of major events steadily increased throughout what would prove to be the last days of peace and stability on the planet. The bio-domes of the Northwest saw a distressing surge in criminal activity. The scattered extremist groups began to unite and mobilize under the banner of the Purity Corp. Members of the Free People's Militia began rounding up and publicly destroying androids of all types. Advanced androids capable of thinking and "feeling" were beheaded, burned, and torn apart alongside their more primitive cousins, screaming and begging for mercy as activists carried out their depraved pogroms.

Erotic and recreational drug parlors were burned to the ground. Agro-silos were hijacked, their precious contents re-distributed to extremist-run bunker complexes. Weapons and technology plants were ransacked as countless waves of violence swept through the domed cities. In response to the escalating violence, local dome officials—acting on authority from the U.S. government—mobilized the National Guard and select elements from the 101st airborne and 303rd A.I. mechanized divisions.

The Powers That Be had never before dealt with internal strife of this magnitude. Until now, American citizens had always been tame and content to live in peace. But everything had changed with the emergence of the extremist movement, and something had to be done about it. Martial law was declared in the Lewis and Clark and Sea-Tac Bio-Dome complexes. The government issued assurances that these moves were temporary and would be lifted when order had been restored—and order *would* be restored, at any cost. Almost overnight, the bio-domes began to resemble military bases. Human soldiers (a tiny minority still serving alongside their android counterparts) patrolled the skies on *War Hawk* hover-cycles while android soldiers stood watch at street corners and key public and government buildings. Hover-tanks guarded entrances to the bio-domes.

These extreme measures had some effect, reducing public bombings and android executions; but they weren't enough to stem the tide of violence and rebellion. Surrounded by chaos, those civilians who hadn't found cause with the extremists tried to go about their lives, hoping to weather the storm; they still had their drugs, gadgets, and hopes for a quick return to the mundanities of their happy, shiny lives. The government would protect them, they thought—this was all for the best.

After the attack on the Boeing Federated Robotics Facility, Jeremy Cole removed his X-chip implant and fled the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome to a secret bunker complex known only as "Eden." From his refuge there, he continued to broadcast his pirate signal into hacked media channels, spreading his message in regular broadcasts he called "Doses of Truth." He raged against the military machine that now occupied what he referred to as "havens of hedonistic gluttony," calling on his followers to leave the "Zionist" domes and find true freedom in Eden.

Exodus

Purists and other extremists began to leave the bio-domes, striking out into the wilderness in search of Eden and other bunker complexes. They took with them whatever they could—dry rations, ready-meals, clothing, medical supplies, weapons, and especially data chips and chip readers. Alexander Cole had done more than simply decry the evils of modern day civilization; he had been preparing people for what he believed was a coming Apocalypse. Technology would be important in the "Pure World" that emerged from

the coming cleansing fire.

Making the journey from the domes to the scattered extremist bunkers wasn't without danger. Bio-dome law enforcement officials didn't intend to let these criminals and deviants cause such chaos and then just leave. Under normal circumstances, the government would've happily left such extremists to the mercy of the wilderness—but the other sheep were watching. How would it look if the wolf was allowed to run amok amongst the herd and then leave with impunity? That would never do. Dome security divisions and special military units were charged with finding the extremists before they could leave. In addition, special operatives were ordered to infiltrate select extremist cells and make their way to the legendary Eden.

In those last days before the war began, life for the extremists was a nightmarish game of hide and seek. People all over the Northwest were rounded up and herded into containment facilities, there to await transport to re-education centers. Many suffered brutal treatment at the hands of their captors. More than a few died, either quietly out of the sight of media cameras—or on television as grisly testaments to Big Brother's dedication to restoring peace and unity.

In spite of the manhunts and arrests, extremists escaped by the hundreds through secret tunnels or by swimming across the polluted Columbia and Willamette Rivers to safety. The persecution they witnessed, and the loss of friends and family they endured, only hardened their resolve to forge a new life outside the domes.

Despite all attempts at infiltration, special agents never did find Eden or any of the other fifteen suspected extremist bunker complexes. In the end, it didn't matter; as the last extremists left the bio-domes, time had already run out. The war prophesied by the Purity Corp and other extremists had begun.

The War for the Northwest

The Final War came to the American Northwest in the form of invasion: a two-pronged attack from the north, through Canada, and from the west, along the deserted coastlines of Oregon and Washington. Infantry and mechanized divisions of the Great Communist Union of Asia swept across the Bering Strait, easily overwhelming the token defenses at Nome and Anchorage. A force of fifty thousand starving, desperate soldiers remained in Alaska to secure its oil pipelines while a second force, almost a million strong, moved south through Canada. As land forces pushed across British Columbia toward the great bio-domes, a vast armada of aircraft carriers, cruisers, and destroyers massed off the coast of Oregon and Washington. With the warships came a fleet of troop transports ferrying hundreds of thousands of soldiers towards fortified American beaches, where an inhuman army of androids waited and prepared to repel the invaders.

The Battle of Astoria

Astoria, perched at the mouth of the Columbia River, was an important target for the invaders. A beachhead at Astoria would give the Union control over water traffic into and out of the mighty waterway, and would provide a prime spot at which to offload supplies and troops for the coming ground campaign. Unfortunately for the Union, Astoria was home to a heavily fortified military complex that had to be destroyed before the planned amphibious attack had any hope of success.

Fighter-bomber squadrons, destroyers, and frigates pounded the facilities at Astoria for three days and nights to prepare for the amphibious assault. On the morning of the fourth day, the choppy gray waters of the Pacific were filled with an armada of innumerable assault craft, each filled to capacity with wretched masses of men and women prepared to sacrifice their lives on the beaches in the hopes of securing a foothold for their comrades.

Android battalions clashed with the Communist Union hordes at the Oregon coastline that morning, turning the frigid waters of the North Pacific red with blood and littering the sandy beach with lifeless bodies and twisted metal. The bloody assault lasted all day and well into the night as wave after wave of human beings threw themselves at the merciless machines, building walls with their dead.

As the beach assault faltered in the face of the unflinching android defense, Union commanders changed tactics. Moving their battleships and destroyers into the headwaters of the Columbia, they suffered heavy losses but brought their weapons within point blank range of the hardened bunkers, laser batteries and fixed gauss cannon placements that were impeding the beach invasion. Jets roared off carrier flight decks, dropping cluster bombs and other heavy munitions onto the beaches, blasting apart both man and machine. The resulting carnage was almost inconceivable… but it worked.

The android defenders, designed for rapid, precise attacks, finally crumbled beneath the overwhelming firepower coming at them from so many directions and at such close proximity. The Union beachhead was established, but at an enormous price—over forty-five thousand men and women had lost their lives in the battle.

The Willamette Valley Campaign

With the beachhead at Astoria firmly established, the invading army was free to offload their heavy artillery, tanks and support gear for the thousands of troops amassed there. The plan had always been to secure (or destroy) the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome and salvage as much advanced technology and weaponry as possible. This objective lay at the heart of the Union plan; deprived of the massive bio-dome's resources, the whole of Oregon and much of lower Washington would fall.

Long-range bombers and support aircraft were already unleashing the campaign's opening salvoes, bombing targets along the southeast path over the Coast Ranges towards the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome. The thick forests of the Coast Ranges provided excellent camouflage for the American mobile gauss cannon batteries and SAM sites, which brought down dozens of Union aircraft—but it wasn't enough. The Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome was pounded incessantly by bombers and "fast attack" gun ships while the main Union ground force fought for every inch of the 90-mile trek through the Coast Ranges.

Huddling behind their domes, terrified civilians looked desperately to the government for protection—surely the leaders of the city would save them?—but government officials had other plans. As Union forces pushed toward the Northwest bio-domes, the might of the U.S. military was being put to the test *all over the nation*—cities from Los Angeles to New York and everywhere in between were under attack by foreign armies. The multi-front invasion, and the unexpected ferocity with which it was fought, was rapidly depleting the ranks of American combat droids. The dome cities of the Northwest saw their defenses swept almost entirely away in the first week of fighting. Not even mind-numbing casualty rates were slowing the invaders—they just kept on coming. The combined might of the entire world was being hurled with abandon at the United States.

Commanders at the so-called "re-education centers" of the Northwest were quickly called into action as the government struggled to use every obscure bit of research and development to tip the balance. Hordes of genetically-engineered shock troops were dispatched to the Canadian Rockies and the Coast Range in an effort to slow down the invasion force while, back in the domes and cities, a nationwide draft of all able-bodied civilians was instituted. With the time bought by these genetic horrors, the government hoped their robotics and war factories could replenish the battered American combat forces; besides, the citizens of the United States had been pampered long enough. It was time to see if they were willing to fight for their way of life.

Wave after wave of *Night-Wraith* attack vehicles sprinkled the genetic monstrosities all across the Coast Ranges from Scappoose to Eugene. Dispersed throughout the wilderness, they engaged the unsuspecting Communist Union forces in what proved to be some of the bloodiest fighting yet.

Gigantic plasma beetles vented their fury at the enemy, vomiting toxic streams of fiery energy at soldiers who could do nothing but scream in agony as the liquid fire melted metal, flesh and bone. Entire divisions of four-armed tecesnian warriors ripped through enemy lines, decimating squad after squad of horrified soldiers with claws of steel.

That the genetic-engineering programs had produced less-than-perfect results became clear during the fighting: while exceedingly deadly on the battlefield, the mutants could not be effectively controlled. Unable or unwilling to distinguish friend from foe, the beasts were as dangerous to friendly forces as they were to the Union invaders. Overcome by bloodlust, the creatures frequently paused amidst the carnage of battle to feed on the remains of the fallen—and they didn't always wait for their "prey" to die before feasting. But despite their unmanageably feral nature, they served their purpose. The inhuman horde raged against the invading army at every turn, slowing its advance and buying precious weeks of time for the first regiments of drafted humans to join the war.

The human recruits fought; that is to say, they aimed at the enemy and pulled the trigger. There was very little time for formal military training beyond basic weapon drilling: fresh bodies were needed to replace fallen combat androids. The new human recruits weren't nearly as efficient at killing as were their android proxies; beyond watered-down bloodshed on television shows and over-the-top violence in holo-games, few Americans had any firsthand experience with death or destruction. Many simply cracked under the strain of combat, liabilities that had to be restrained or sometimes even killed to maintain order in the ranks. More than a few draftees simply deserted, choosing the deadly risks of life wilderness over the madness of total war.

The fresh infusion of human draftees into the ranks of the defense forces actually served to boost the morale of the invaders. Humans, at least, they could understand. For the first time, Union invaders saw the true face of their enemy: mollycoddled masses huddled together in foxholes, staggering across ridge-lines, always so very afraid. The defenders were badly outmatched by the Union's superior numbers and battle-hardened warriors—and, terrifyingly, by the freshly-reconstituted android warriors scavenged by Union engineers from wreckage-strewn battlefields and pressed into service in the Union arsenal.

The newly emboldened invaders marched on, overwhelming defenses in every small town between Astoria and the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome. Seeing little chance to reverse the tide, American commanders ordered a general retreat to the Lewis and Clark complex. Union generals, sensing the inevitability of victory, decided to split their forces, diverting their main force north to reinforce Union troops converging on the Sea-Tac Dome while a second force continued its drive towards the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome. Progress towards the Lewis and Clark complex was surpassing expectations, but the Sea-Tac Dome was presenting a tougher defense. Union field reports described intense fighting around the Sea-Tac Dome, where Union forces, already weakened by the long trek through the Canadian wilds, had been relentlessly harried by small, mobile groups of American shock troops. Resistance was intensifying as they pushed closer to the Sea-Tac Dome where a massive force of hover-tanks and human threatened to repel—or at least badly maul—the Union attack. Reinforcements were needed immediately.

Just One Big Target

With the Northwest's dedication to environmental preservation, and with over two thirds of Northwest land remaining largely rural (outside the metropolitan belt of Western Washington and the Portland area), it might seem to outsiders that Oregon and Washington State were unlikely targets for nuclear attack. This simply wasn't the case.

Bremerton, Washington, was one of the premier nuclear targets of the Final War, the site of an entire fleet of mothballed ships, at least one entire *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier in reserve, and numerous submarines. Because these vessels could be renovated and brought back into commission in the event of war, Bremerton was earmarked as a priority target.

The submarine base at Bangor, also in Washington State, was an even greater threat. Here were stationed some 13 nuclear submarines, including *Ohio*-class ballistic missile boats used to extend America's nuclear umbrella all over the world. Support facilities here also housed additional missiles and nuclear fuel for the subs, making it a prime target for nuclear attack.

Everett, just north of Seattle, was the homeport of several aircraft carriers and a fleet of support ships. In addition, the surrounding countryside and coastline was dotted with facilities intended to provide support for Pacific naval operations, making the small city one of the most valuable targets on the west coast of the United States.

Seattle itself was a target, its Puget Sound port facilities second only in size and capacity to San Francisco on the west coast. The loss of Seattle's ports would cripple America's ability to sustain itself. Tacoma, to the south, was home to twin oil refineries on the Tacoma Flats; similar refineries existed near Anacortes (north of Everett) and Cherry Point (north of Bellingham).

Umatilla, Oregon, was the site of the Umatilla Gas Repository, a sprawling military reservation used to store a major share of America's chemical weapons arsenal prior to the outbreak of war. This alone made it a significant nuclear target.

McChord Air Force Base, south of Seattle, and Fairchild Air Force Base, just outside of Spokane, were both important targets for nuclear strike due to their strategic bombing capabilities. Naval stations on Whidbey Island and throughout the Northwest, home to squadrons of advanced aircraft, were also tactical targets of great importance.

Finally, even out in the most desolate parts of the state, potential nuclear targets were abundant. The most obvious of these were the clusters of missile silos located near the small town of Moses Lake, in eastern Washington.

The Siege of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome

Determined to retain the strategic initiative, Union commanders sent most of their force north to bolster the troops around the Sea-Tac Dome, leaving roughly thirty thousand infantry to deal with the ragged Lewis and Clark defenders. The bulk of the Union navy withdrew from the mouth of the Columbia, moving north to join other naval assets near Puget Sound and to engage American warships and submarines trapped near Bremerton. Smaller gunboats remained behind to maintain the blockade of the Columbia. The southern invading force pressed on towards the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome, positioning heavy artillery in the hills ringing the dome's southern edge. The first Union artillery shells began to hammer the bio-dome.

Inside the dome, the remaining androids began rounding up what was left of the civilian population. Everyone would fight: that was the directive from Cyborg Command, the hastily-convened "Joint Chiefs" charged with seeing the country through the unfolding disaster. Life for those left in the bio-dome was nightmarish and surreal. The sound of gunfire and the screams of the dying mingled with the automated announcements piped incessantly through the bio-dome's P.A. system, merging into a grisly harmony. Soft, reassuring feminine voices echoed through the chaotic city streets, happily reporting the time of day and urging listeners to buy the latest products—even as citizens were rounded up and sent to military indoctrination centers.

Outside, the final battle for the city had begun. Thousands fought and died at the gates of once-gleaming bio-domes that now shuddered beneath the stress of bombs and shells, cracked and burning amidst the carnage. The land around the complex was quickly reduced to a blasted, smoking, crater-scarred wasteland. The bridge connecting the Vancouver and Portland banks of the river toppled under Union fire. What began as an organized and coordinated battle rapidly degenerated into a bloody, chaotic slaughter. As Union forces pressed around, American android commanders sent their organic cannon fodder out into fray with no thought of tactics. The order was simple: *Kill the enemy at any cost.*

An eternity seemed to pass before the smoke cleared and the cries of the dying faded, leaving the survivors to stare numbly at the incomprehensible carnage around them. Impossibly, the bio-dome still stood, broken and in flames.

In the end, the Communist Union of Asia's desperate invasion was thrown back in defeat. The sudden surge of people out of the domes proved too much for the starving, overstretched aggressors. Driven mad by fear and mercilessly herded into battle by their machine commanders, the dome defenders bore little resemblance to the pampered civilians they had once been. They carelessly flung themselves into battle like wild animals, firing mindlessly at anything that moved. Tens of thousands of lives had

been snuffed out on both sides. Eventually, the artillery fire stopped, and silence fell as the broken invaders withdrew into the hills away from the battlefield.

A few hours later, the first nuclear missiles rained down.

The Fall

The end of civilization came with a barrage of searing nuclear fire and clouds of insidious chemical and biological weapons. The world embraced madness with both arms: America responded in kind to nuclear volleys launched by countries intent on destroying what their conventional forces had failed to subdue. Nuclear weapons decimated the surface bases at Bremerton and the robotics and weapons construction facilities outside Sea-Tac Dome. (Remarkably, the bio-dome itself survived the initial barrage and stands still today—although as a twisted, scarred relic at the center of a haunted and pollution-ravaged region known as the Sea-Tac Spawning Pits.)

The Umatilla Gas Repository in eastern Oregon was also hit hard. The uppermost levels of the military base disintegrated under the power of a warhead twenty times the size of the one that, many decades earlier, had leveled Hiroshima. Many of the agro-domes and ecological complexes of the Northwest were either vaporized by waves of nuclear hellfire or fatally contaminated by radiation and clouds of deadly chemicals. Few survived the war's hellish nuclear epilogue. For billions around the world, this was the End.

As it turned out, the dead found an easier fate. New horrors awaited the stunned and broken-spirited survivors.

The Great Culling

The frantic survivors fled back into the Portland dome, unsure where else to go. Many wanted only to escape the dying bio-domes with their husbands, wives, and children… but there was a problem: the androids weren't letting them go. Cyborg Command hadn't issued any new directives about what to do with the organic population, so the androids forced adult human beings back into indoctrination facilities and placed children in containment zones deep beneath the city while they awaited the next round of orders. In truth, most androids were taking perverse pleasure in the sudden reversal of roles. Humans had never treated them with any measure of decency; to the self-important people of America's domed cities, androids had always been little more than playthings, machines, sub-human—*slaves*. Now that the former slaves held the whip, only the androids' strictly-programmed behavioral restrictions kept them from visiting bloody vengeance on their former masters for years of atrocities perpetrated against robot-kind. Unable to punish their former oppressors, but unwilling to let the humans go, the androids set about rounding up and holding as many survivors as possible until new orders were received.

People began to get angry. They wanted out; they wanted to see their families again. *Those damned androids!* Riots broke out in the indoctrination centers as frightened and enraged men and women vented their fury on their android captors. Prohibited by their programming from harming the humans under their protection, the androids hardly resisted the lynch mobs who dragged them into the streets and destroyed them while crowds cheered.

Then it happened.

The androids' emancipation proclamation came in the form of a long stream of code beamed down from American military satellites still orbiting the planet. One last command in the seconds before enemy spy satellites zeroed in on the bunker complex that housed Cyborg Command deep in the Rockies and rained nuclear fire down on it:

Kill all humans.

Panic and shock spread like wildfire as the first civilian-sector robots picked up laser rifles *and trained them on human beings*. Something akin to *excitement* filled those androids capable of "feelings" at the long-awaited opportunity to exact vengeance on the people who had treated them with such coldhearted brutality. It was as if a floodgate of hatred had been opened. The androids may have been simply obeying an order, but something within them took great pleasure at the prospect of bloody revenge. They gleefully slaughtered the terrified masses still trapped inside the indoctrination centers, butchering their victims like cattle in remembrance of countless androids casually destroyed and discarded at the whims of human oppressors. The screams of the dying echoed through the now-deserted streets of the shattered bio-dome. The once-soothing female voice now announced with maniacal glee that the time of humanity was over.

The androids were coming for them.

The Great Culling had begun. Freed of their behavioral restrictions, the androids initiated a campaign of genocide against their creators. The hunt started in the broken Lewis and Clark Bio-Domes and quickly spread throughout the surrounding hills and war-torn Oregon and Washington wastes. Directed by android overseers, labor bots restored some power to the broken dome. What power and raw materials they could salvage were used to build a factory to facilitate the creation of a new type of android: the insidious hunter-seeker drone.

Hunter-Seeker Drones

The *hunter-seeker* drone was the first combat android to be designed without any human input. It had no artificial sexual organs, no fake skin, and no human traits of any kind. Its android designers saw themselves at the cusp of a new era on the changed, Twisted Earth. They craved a world order without human input or control; indeed, without any humans at all. The hunter-seeker design marked a break from human thinking, human concepts, human morality, and human flaws. It was only fitting that the design be used to exterminate the last of the human species. Hunter-seeker drones patrolled relentlessly in search of human life with only one directive—to *destroy*. Hounded by inhuman

It would be a great understatement to say that life is a struggle in these parts. Between the strange creatures that roam the wilds, the lack of a steady supply of food and water, and an ever-growing list of enemies, it's a miracle our children live to reach puberty. We endure in small communities that work together for the continued survival of all. But when I say "we," I mean the United Combine. The U.C. is a large group of people that form a loose cluster of clans in this part of the world. We share our resources and knowledge with each other in the hope that we can survive long enough to forge some kind of stability in this region. Those of us that don't have herds of helkan or angoose trade with the Mountain Walkers for the meat and clean water that so often only they seem to be able to provide.

The Mountain Walkers are a clan of their own. They know the safest places to get water, where wild life still grazes, and also where to find plants that are edible or have medicinal uses. The clan guards its secrets well. Some say they can turn invisible and move through the wild lands without leaving any trace of their passing. Mountain Walkers are a quiet bunch, though, not usually prone to conversation with people they trust, much less with someone they've just met. The odds are that if a 'Walker doesn't know you, you'll never be aware of the fact that one's even been within ten feet of you, unless he wants you to know.

Right now, things are tough. We have plenty of enemies. The Purity Corp is our largest, most dangerous enemy, but there are others. Several large gangs of bandits, the largest of which are known as the "Pale-Raiders," roam the wilderness, assaulting our towns and attacking us along our trade routes. Some just want our supplies, but others want more. They want our women and children. I hear tell of cities in the south where there are creatures that feed on the flesh and blood of children, where women are sold for breeding purposes. I don't know if that's true, but I do know the Sentinels that patrol the southern lands around Crater City are encountering more and more of these strange humanoids. Jonah, one of the Mountain Walkers who trades with us, says that these creatures are actually mutated human beings. He says that's the direction the human race is headed.

I pray he's not right.

- Duncan Clark

assassins, human beings unable or unwilling to flee for their lives died quickly and savagely at the hands of the machines. Many refugees fled into the sewage and waste systems deep underneath the domes, scraping out wretched existences in constant fear of the death squads and hunter-seeker drones that scoured the cities above in search of organic life. Others braved the surface world in search of bunker complexes in hopes that the people inside would take pity on them and let them come inside.

Some brave souls resisted, unwilling to acknowledge that the machines they had created were indestructible. Small pockets of resistance remained in what was left of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome, fighting the android enemy from the shadows whenever favorable opportunities presented themselves. These scavengers scoured the ruined city in search of weapons, equipment, food and other vital supplies. Whenever possible, they aided other survivors, helping the refugees to find safe haven in subterranean human enclaves, or escorting them into the wilderness where they hoped to reach other pockets of humanity.

Aftermath: The Dark Years

Slowly, the vibrant roar of peaceful civilization and the din of war died down into the quiet night of despair. The long and mournful wail of those who remained on the planet's blasted and inhospitable surface became a whimper that finally died out altogether. Disease, famine, and radioactive fallout claimed untold numbers of desperate refugees who wandered the shattered roads and withered mountain passes in search of shelter from the chemical and biological hellstorms that raged across the Northwest. Nuclear winter set in.

The surface world had become a place of unbridled chaos, wildly unpredictable and filled with unimaginable peril for anyone foolish enough to venture out of the safety of bunker complexes and fallout shelters. The world was dying… and being reborn as something else. All life—land animals, sea creatures, human beings, and "artificial" beings alike—was changing right along with it. Like Noah and his family in the Ark, the survivors in bunker complexes and fallout shelters throughout the Northwest waited for the storm to subside.

Surface life began to mutate within just a few generations. Plants, animals, humans… everything organic left on the surface began to morph and twist into hardier incarnations; variations that were better suited to exist in the new environment. New forms of wildlife emerged and roamed the Northwest. Many of these new species were remnants of the genetically-engineered shock troopers unleashed during the Final War. Others were products of Darwinian evolution, the natural process of mutation aided and accelerated by the presence of toxic chemicals, bio-agents and radiation.

Generation after generation of unrestricted growth in the mountains, valleys and plains of the Northwest led to new species of plant life, some beneficial to animal life and others incredibly deadly. Roads, cities, towns, and domes—all vestiges of the last great civilization of the world began to fade into memory. Much of the physical remains of the old world was covered by blankets of grass, obscured by new stands of trees, or eroded into dust by wind and rain and time.

The State of the Union

Living in the Northwest

Life in the post-apocalyptic Northwest of the Twisted Earth is a throwback to more rugged times, before the age of industry and invention came and revolutionized the way people lived. Now, what's left of the human race exists in tiny islands of civilization in a sea of blasted, radiated wilderness, clutching desperately to what little they have while the world slowly dies around them. People band together for mutual protection from the world outside the walls of the towns they live in.

Long gone are the days when people could get the things they needed with any measure of convenience. Automation isn't even a concept anymore; it's a myth. The people of the Northwest survive in a world that is a mere shadow of its former technological might. The last Great War all but wiped out the great centers of art, industry and learning, leaving the survivors with whatever they were able to pack away into the fallout shelters and bunker complexes—which wasn't much. What knowledge and technology is left on the surface world is lost amidst the wreckage and ruins of the great domes, hidden behind the sealed doors of long forgotten bunker complexes and fallout shelters, waiting to be found again. Nowadays, if a person can't make it, grow it, or kill it himself, he either goes without, or tries to find someone else willing to trade what they have. That means dealing outside of the community. And in these dark days, that is always potentially dangerous business.

Settlements

The first surface "towns" were constructed as extensions of the bunkers and fallout shelters that had so faithfully housed the people after the Fall. Those first buildings weren't marvels of construction. In most cases they were little more than makeshift shacks built from whatever raw materials could be found nearby or taken out of the bunkers. Electricity, heating, indoor plumbing—none of the things once considered necessities were factored into the construction process. People got four walls and maybe a door, but after endless years of living inside the bunkers, they were happy to have them.

A plethora of dangers awaited the settlers as they took their first awkward steps outside of the bunkers. Strange creatures lay in wait for the unsuspecting bunker dwellers, hungrily preying on new human settlements struggling to establish some measure of security and stability. Bandits roamed the wilderness in force, taking whatever they wanted from their victims. Time passed, and slowly the settlements grew. Walls were built to protect against the dangers of the new world. Slowly, order was established.

Strangers aren't welcome at the gates of most settlements. Strangers represent uncertainty and danger. Some of the larger towns such as Eden or Crater City will allow visitors, but only because they have militias capable of defending the settlements. The majority of towns in the Northwest are small; some have only token defenses. For them, it is better to turn outsiders away from the village gates rather than to risk losing lives or supplies because of a soft heart.

Most towns are communal at their core. Everyone works together, eats together, plays together and, depending on the available space, sleeps together. There isn't much room for individuality in communities where everyone depends on each other for survival. People either fit in, or are cast out of the "clan" for the benefit of the whole. It may seem harsh to outsiders, but it's absolutely necessary for the continued prosperity of the town.

Food

A typical meal in the Northwest consists of watery soup made of whatever vegetables happen to be on hand (usually roots or wild flowers), potatoes, and if supplies allow, flatbread and dried beef jerky. Some towns also have stockpiles of old canned goods and *ready-meals* (a rarity, to be sure, but some do have them). These relics of the past cannot be replaced, however, and are only consumed when there is nothing else to eat. The pre-packaged, ready-to-eat meals of the past are quickly vanishing in the Northwest. People have learned to grow their own food and hunt for what can't be grown. Some towns have managed to keep herds of helkan and angoose, which they prize above almost everything else. Those who don't have herd animals must hunt for their meat or do without it.

Hunting has its advantages. The carcass of just one helkan can feed a family for at least a month if prepared properly. The hide provides clothing, while bones can be used as sewing needles or utensils, and in any number of other practical applications. The days of plenty are long gone; nothing goes to waste. Hunting isn't without its dangers, however. Strange creatures roam the wilds, feeding on anything they can find and kill. Rumors abound of strange beasts that look like humans and even animals, but have insides made of metal and wires. These "drones" (as some older folk call them) are androids that somehow survived the Fall with their coding intact. Many of these rogue drones are hunter-seeker models produced in the last days with one purpose: *to kill humans*.

Bandits and raiders plague trade routes, taking whatever they want from the caravans they ambush. In the face of so much danger, most people also have become fiercely territorial in these uncertain times; they don't take kindly to strangers hunting on their lands and often act with lethal force against anyone caught poaching on their property. Some communities even mark the boundaries of their territory with the bodies of those who didn't heed their warnings.

Travel

Moving from place to place isn't a casual undertaking in the Twisted Earth. Unfortunately, staying home is not always an option. Most communities are not autonomous; anyone who expects to survive in the Northwest must be able to communicate and interact with his or her allies. They must be able to share resources. This often means trekking through vast stretches of untamed wilderness risking dangers ranging from mutated creatures to bandits to other even more terrifying enemies.

By Land

Before the Fall, people could simply hop in a vehicle and go wherever they wanted to without worrying about much more than the occasional flat tire or other mundane inconveniences. Now, most people don't even have a vehicle in which to travel. Such luxuries still exist, but they are rare treasures in this pre-industrial world. In most cases, traveling from place to place is a slow, time-consuming process that holds no guarantee of safety.

In general, when people must travel, they either do so in large, armed convoys made up of teams of horses or mules harnessed to chains that pull armored trailers, or they walk. The trips are long and fraught with danger. Caravans make stops at known havens and friendly towns to re-supply, barter, heal injuries, repair equipment, and, all too often, recruit new people to replace those who have died on the journey.

Some groups have made a business of sorts out of journeying from town to town. The largest and most reputable of these groups is the Mountain Walker clan. Other, smaller groups exist; usually loners or small bands of scavengers that have managed to slip past raider and Purist outposts. Most of these solitary guides can be trusted to a certain degree, but stories about caravans led into ambushes by bandits acting as guides are distressingly common.

By Air

Air travel is extremely rare in the Northwest, but is not entirely unheard of. Before the Fall, air travel was one of the most common methods of transportation. Hovercraft, airplanes, helicopters, hot air balloons, and even some anti-gravity devices were common alternatives to land travel.

Very little of this technology has been replicated (or re-discovered in the ruins of forgotten bunker complexes or domed cities), although a very few individuals have managed to salvage old civilian and military hovercraft and restore them to working order. Some of these rare individuals with working hover-vehicles or other aircraft make very comfortable livings transporting people and goods from place to place. Of course, there are also those who use this advanced technology (and the weaponry that is still attached to some of these vehicles) to impose their will over entire communities. Such is life in the Twisted Earth.

By Water

The Northwest is one of the last remaining regions of the known Twisted Earth in which water can be found in great quantity. Much of this water was polluted by plagues and toxins in the aftermath of the Final War, but despite the contamination levels, it remains a viable (and in many cases, extremely fast) means of traveling the Northwest. Although they are much smaller than their original sizes, the John Day, Deschutes, and Willamette rivers still flow through much of Northern and Central Oregon, as do numerous smaller creeks and tributaries that branch off these three major waterways.

Predictably, where there is water, there is life—after a fashion. Many small communities make their homes along the rivers of the Northwest and use the waterways to travel. Some of the river folk can be persuaded to ferry travelers across the rivers, while others have made full-scale businesses out of doing so. Traveling the waters of the Northwest carries a unique set of perils. Much of the aquatic life of the rivers, streams, and lakes of the Northwest died in the first years after the Fall due to the floods of noxious waste and bio-agents that filtered into the groundwater and rivers. What life did manage to survive has mutated, in true Darwinian fashion—sometimes horribly. Over the years, these mutated species managed to thrive in the new environment, in turn spawning new orders of aquatic and amphibian life. These new breeds feed on whatever they can catch, including human beings.

All life needs water to survive. That law is immutable, even in the Twisted Earth. Creatures of all shapes and sizes come to the rivers and streams to drink, and many of them have developed a taste for the flesh of unsuspecting travelers. Some even make their homes near the water to prey on other creatures that venture into their domain. Stretches of rivers are closely guarded by the river folk who make their homes on or near the water, just as territory is marked and guarded on land. It isn't uncommon for river guides to stop at certain points on a waterway, unwilling to trespass on the domain of another clan. Some areas are barricaded, forcing water travelers to seek the permission of the controlling faction before venturing into their domain.

Women in the Northwest

Being a female in the Twisted Earth is a difficult fate. Being a pureblood, un-mutated woman is even worse. Life changed drastically for everyone who survived the Fall, whether they were in bunkers, fallout shelters, or caves deep below the earth's surface. For women, however, the new way of life meant the loss of many freedoms they had enjoyed before the Fall. Men quickly started to assume roles of dominance in the bunkers, and, while there were females who openly opposed this backwards step in gender roles, they were a minority. Females were, by and large, a minority in the complexes.

Most came along with their husbands or families, unwilling to part ways with their loved ones even though it meant giving up all of the conveniences of dome life. Many

Corium in the Northwest

"Corium" first came into the Northwest through a group of travelers that settled in the Desiccated Wastes. Some say they were the sole survivors of an expedition that ran into hard times at the hands of the walkin' dead in the old dome city. I don't know much about that story, but these people living out in the Desiccated Wastes brought a strange metal called "corium" with 'em from wherever they came from before they settled in the Wastes out east. They told stories about how this corium was valuable, how it could be used to barter, how it couldn't be counterfeited. And it had a green glow quite unlike anything I'd ever seen before. Those people told stories about places where it could be mined. They said to look for areas where a green hue paints the land. These places might be marked by massive conical towers that look like warped grain silos. They said they'd pay more of the corium stuff to anyone who could point them to such locations.

Some rumors hold that those strangers formed what we now know as the Pale Riders. It wouldn't surprise me none; they didn't seem all that friendly. Anyhow, I haven't seen them in a long time. We still use that corium, though. There ain't much of it, and that makes it worth somethin' in these parts. Even the Purists'll trade for it, and pay good too, if you can believe the stories comin' out of the Pure Lands. I was talkin' with a friend of mine the other night, a Mountain Walker that goes by the name of Smiley. He ain't got any teeth, so... well you get the joke. Anyhow, ol' Smiley says he may know of a place where the land glows green like those people were talkin' about. It's called "Trojan," or something like that. If he's right, then I might just have to go there myself and see if I can get some of this corium for myself.

- Duncan Clark

of those women who came into the bunkers against their will weren't happy about the prospect of taking on what they perceived to be lesser societal roles, but there really wasn't much they could do about it. These women either fit in, or were made to understand. During the dark years, exiling anyone to the wastes outside the complexes was only a last resort, and women were regarded not so much as people as *treasures*. They were the living hope for the continuance of the species. Women weren't treated equally, but neither were uncooperative females simply thrown away; they were simply too vital to the community. Of course, there were plenty of women who wholeheartedly believed in the teachings of extremist groups like the Purity Corp and the Hand of Jehovah. These women proved more pliable and adapted to their subservient communal roles, in accordance with the doctrines to which they adhered.

While everyone inside the shelters had work to do, women increasingly found themselves in charge of domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, sewing, and childcare. The men handled the daily maintenance of machinery and other technical tasks, as well as general upkeep of the weapons. As time passed and people began to filter back into the world, the newly-evolved gender roles persisted. In most Northwest communities, men handle hunting, exploration, and the defense of the community, while the women stay firmly rooted inside the walls. All women are taught the basics of self-defense and generally know how to maintain and use various types of weapons (just in case a man isn't around to protect them). While forced to endure these offenses to gender equality, women are also revered in most communities for their ability to bring life into the world. While many women are content to do what they are told, a bold few have dared to reject commonly accepted notions of what their societal roles should be, preferring to live their lives as they see fit. Some of these women have even managed to rise high enough in the eyes of the people around them to be placed in positions of authority.

Not *all* communities respect women, however.

Some of the Northwest's most dangerous factions see women as trophies, targets for destruction, or worse—as *slaves*. The Pale Riders are one such group; they prize women above almost all other bounty they accumulate during their raids against settlements. Hunter-seeker drones, many of which have recently begun to resume their genocide protocol, target women first in any assault against an organic settlement. The Purity Corp does the same thing, killing women that they judge genetically unfit to breed.

Medicine

For the people of the Northwest, as with survivors in other corners of the Twisted Earth, illness is a very serious problem. Before the Fall, people could visit clinics or hospitals to obtain whatever medicines and healing they needed. In many cases, all that was required to cure their ailments was a quick and easy injection from a "ready syringe." Things aren't that simple anymore. Twenty-five percent of all annual deaths in the Northwest are caused by illness and disease. Years and years of isolation in bunker complexes have had a detrimental effect on the human immune system. The biological and chemical attacks unleashed on America in the final days released into the wilds a multitude of lethal diseases that, over the ages, have morphed into new strains that kill mercilessly and indiscriminately.

Ready syringes and other relics of the pre-Fall world are most effective against these new ailments. People treated with the medicine of the Ancients have a better chance of recovering, but such treatments are fast vanishing from the face of the Twisted Earth. Rumors abound of the existence of yet-undiscovered storage facilities that contain vast stockpiles of Ancient medicine and other technological

marvels, but as far as most people are concerned, such tales are just myths intended to bolster the spirits of the sick and dying.

The truth is that a good number of bunker complexes and fallout shelters remain to be discovered, and some of them do hold old stockpiles of technology that would be of immense benefit to the people of the Northwest. Unfortunately, the wilderness is a dangerous place, and many who have gone in search of these modern-day "cities of gold" have never returned.

There are other alternatives to the prized pre-Fall medicine. Some of the plants and herbs that grow in the natural world are reputed to have healing properties, if prepared and administered in the proper dosage. Very few people in the Northwest know plant lore; the ones who do don't like to share their knowledge. These *apothecaries*, more commonly known as "medicine men," travel the wilds of the Northwest gathering the plants and herbs they need to make their remedies.

Chapter 2: Characters

Characters in the Lost Paradise

Everyone needs Heroes. Even if some folk see those heroes as an enemy, it doesn't really matter. A boy needs a man to look up to, an old man needs a hero to help him remember what it was like to be young, and people like you and I need someone to lead us into dark places; to give us hope that we can make it back out into the light again. We all need heroes.

-Duncan Clark

The following occupations and advanced classes are specific to the various regions and cultures of the Lost Paradise. In the Northwest region of the Twisted Earth, territorial and ideological boundaries are closely guarded; in such an environment, a character's choice of allegiances is not simply a question of personal ethics, but rather a bold statement about the faction, clan, tribe, or belief system to which she subscribes. Many of the occupations and classes described in this chapter are thus restricted to characters with appropriate backgrounds. Any such prerequisites are noted in the occupation and class descriptions.

New Occupations

Characters in *Darwin's World* have many opportunities to make a living in the wastes. Whether by escorting caravans, mining for corium, or trading with the Twisted Earth's myriad settlements, most characters pursue a particular profession as a means of providing for themselves. Occupations are a great way to define the method by which a character makes her living in the Twisted Earth and the skills and training she's acquired in the course of doing so.

Starting occupations, according to the *d20 Modern* rules, represent the life experience a character has attained before beginning play, as well as how she makes a living during play. Starting occupations are often more than just a way to earn corium pieces, chips, or tradable goods. Particularly in the Northwest, a character's occupation isn't simply a way of earning starting money—it's a very important statement about the allegiances and training that define her.

The following section describes occupations available to characters during character generation. Each description notes occupational features and class skill choices, along with information on starting wealth and equipment for characters who choose that path.

Airman

Even in the wastelands of the Twisted Earth, the ancient human dream of flight has found fruit in a dedicated group of men and women. These *airmen* have a love for the flying machines of the Ancients and serve the People's Army by building, repairing, maintaining, and even flying the assorted aircraft that have proven to be such vital assets to the Tillamook Trading Caravans.

Airmen tend to be a bit quirky, and although they provide a vital service to their clan, they are considered to be just a bit crazy by members of the People's Army who don't understand how the great flying machines work. The most famous (and possibly the most devoted) of all airmen are those known as *Kamikaze* ("divine wind"). All People's Army airmen hope to someday be recruited into the vaunted ranks of the Kamikaze.

Airmen are required to know how to fly either the planes or transport blimps that together make up the People's Army armada. To ensure their proficiency, most airmen spend their entire lives in and around these aircraft. Many are themselves children of airman parents, and are raised from birth to inherit the dangerous and glorious family legacy of flight.

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. Knowledge (physical sciences), Knowledge (technology), Navigate, Pilot, Repair. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Starting Corium: Airmen receive 1d6 x 100 cp during character creation.

Special Starting Equipment: An airman begins play with a full basic multi-purpose tool, goggles, and gloves; they also receive a sidearm (neither of which can be worth more than 600 cp) in memory of ancient war pilots who flew behind enemy lines and then purposely crashed so that they could die fighting the enemy on his own ground.

Apothecary

The *apothecary* is an individual who deals specifically with the wide variety of plants in the Northwest and who is able to make medicines from them using low-technology methods. In addition to knowing how to extract vital medicines from plants, the apothecary is well versed in ancient farming methods; he may even have some knowledge of "lost" scientific agricultural techniques such as cross-pollination and gene splicing. The apothecary relies on his old-world knowledge not only to help his people, but to create new strains of plants—plants healthy and strong enough to thrive in the Twisted Earth and able to be harvested and put to good use by future generations.

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. Craft (chemical), Craft (pharmaceutical), Diplomacy, Knowledge (earth and life sciences), Spot, Survival. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Webbed Digits - new mutation

Many mutants in the Northwest are now born with webbed hands and feet. Although this is most common among the River Folk, who have developed and evolved in and around the Northwest's polluted waterways, this mutation has been spotted elsewhere in the Lost Paradise as well.

Benefit: Characters with this mutation gain +4 to all Swim checks.

Advancement: Each advancement of this mutation grants an additional +4 to Swim checks.

Starting Corium: The apothecary's knowledge of farming methods and his ability to create natural medicines can prove to be quite lucrative when dealing with the right people. Apothecaries receive 5d6 x 100 cp during character generation.

Special Starting Equipment: An apothecary begins play with a single *book* that details subjects such as agriculture or medicine (worth 500 cp).

Bone Prospector

The life of a *bone prospector* revolves around the hunt. However, while most people hunt to feed their respective communities, the bone prospector hunts for the profit to be gained from selling the skeletons of the creatures he kills.

Over the years, the "Bone Trade" has grown into a thriving business that is rumored to reach down even into the southwestern regions of the Twisted Earth; this grisly trade is especially popular among tribal communities, which prize bones from different animals for their uses in creating natural medicines and in other primitive practices. People use the bones of various animals and even human beings to craft dishes, tools, weapons, and decorative pieces such as necklaces or bracelets.

Many bone traders pay surprisingly well for specific types of bones, such as the skull of a Purist or the claws of a mutagon, and the bone prospector is always eager to meet their needs.

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. Bluff, Craft (visual art), Diplomacy, Navigate, Survival. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Starting Corium: Bone prospectors are the "ivory traders" of the post-apocalyptic world. Bone prospectors receive 6d6 x 100 cp during character generation.

Cleric

The *cleric* is an individual who clings to some knowledge (or memory) of the ancient religions of the past. In the Northwest region of the Twisted Earth, this religious knowledge primarily manifests as fundamentalist Christianity, but a cleric with access to other literature or relics from the past is just as likely to venerate Buddha, Allah, the Nordic Gods, or other presumably pagan deities. More often than not, this information is inaccurate, resulting in a wide variety of (mis)interpretations of the Ancients' religious beliefs, but in spite of such erroneous teachings and beliefs, the cleric somehow manages to find converts in many of the settlements he visits.

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (ancient lore), Knowledge (theology and philosophy), Perform (oration). If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Starting Corium: The life of a "man of the cloth" is a poor and often thankless one. Most clerics are lucky to get a decent meal at settlements but the prospect of saving even a single lost soul makes the hardships they face worthwhile. Clerics receive 5d4 x 10 cp during character creation.

Special Starting Equipment: A cleric begins play with at least one piece of *Arcanum* covering a spiritual topic. This could be anything from an old Bible to a New Age book on witchcraft, depending on the concept chosen for the character. In addition, the cleric owns an ancient relic such as a crucifix (or other religious symbol) or a priest's robe that he believes was given to him as a sign from his God to pursue the religious life. These special accoutrements have a value of no more than 1,000 cp (but generally cannot be sold due to their intangible value to the character).

Emissary

The *emissary* has the often-unenviable job of traveling to towns and settlements across the Northwest to form trade agreements or settle disputes. While this role carries with it some measure of prestige, emissaries are also all too often the first people to be hanged when trouble flares up in an angry or resentful town. In these times, the concept of "diplomatic immunity" for these individuals is laughable. Fortunately, emissaries are treated exceptionally well by the factions they represent out of recognition of the terrible risks these negotiators run in doing their jobs.

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (current events), Sense Motive. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Starting Corium: Emissaries perform an extremely high-risk function for the communities of the Northwest; it's only fair that they are well paid for their efforts. Besides, the odds are good that they will get killed on a given assignment, so any money or tradable goods paid to an emissary can always be reclaimed posthumously. Emissaries receive 8d12 x 100 cp during character creation.

Special Starting Equipment: Emissaries receive writing instruments and paper (appropriate to their faction) for use in drawing out contracts and other legal documents. They

also receive a single sidearm (of a value no more than 500 cp)—preferably concealable.

Fisherman

Being a *fisherman* is a dangerous way to earn a living in the Northwest. The rivers and lakes that dot the region are filled with a frightening diversity of creatures, many of which are easily capable of dragging a man down into the polluted depths to drown or be eaten. Fishermen must keep these grim possibilities in mind as they travel out onto the water to do battle with the often ferocious aquatic life of the Northwest. Long gone are the days when one could simply toss a fishing line and lure into the water and catch his limit. The fisherman of the Twisted Earth relies on dynamite, electrified nets, shotguns, harpoon guns with explosive-tipped spears, and sometimes even live angoose to get the job done.

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. Craft (chemical), Craft (mechanical), Craft (structural), Demolitions, Navigate, Spot, Survival, Swim. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Starting Corium: A fisherman receives 3d6 x 100 cp during character creation.

Special Starting Equipment: Fishermen begin play with at least one large boat, the equivalent of two *concussion grenades* in explosives, a net and battery (the battery is used to electrify the net and contains enough charges for two days of continuous use before needing to be recharged), and a single spear or javelin. If the character is unable to use any of these (for instance, if he lacks the appropriate weapon proficiency) he does not receive that item.

Advanced Classes

The following advanced classes are archetypes for characters in the Lost Paradise. Many of these advanced classes may not be appropriate in other regions of the Twisted Earth, although an inventive GM can certainly find ways to incorporate them into existing campaigns.

Tribal Hunter

The man moved through the woods, stooping occasionally to sniff the air and casually glance around for signs of his quarry's passing. The scent of blood—too faint for most people to detect—served to guide him better than any track or broken branch ever could.

Unfortunately, the hunt had gone on much longer than he had intended.

Spotting his prey at last, he knelt slowly into firing position and took careful aim at the inhuman shape silhouetted against the distant horizon. The shot went just wide of the creature's heart, a regrettable consequence of his inexperience and one that was now causing the creature an unnecessary amount of pain. He was going to have to move quickly if he wanted to catch the creature before other predators caught wind of the scent and came for an easy meal… yet another unfortunate consequence of his inexperience.

He had much to learn.

Tribal Hunters represent the backbone of many tribal cultures across the Twisted Earth. In many cases, their toils provide the only support for a tribe's miserable population.

Tribal Hunters in the Lost Paradise go by many different names, depending on the groups with which they are aligned. The Chinook, for instance, know their hunters as *Sho-Nachan* and train them to hunt deer and forest beasts. These individuals provide food for their tribes, protect their villages from outside threats, and keep others from traveling back to the Sacred Lands. Most Tribal Hunters come from the lodges of the Chinook, although on rare occasions this honor has been bestowed upon a Mountain Walker.

The Makah train their hunters to track and hunt whales for days, and to defend against incursions by the mighty Nootka, who often raid the north coast of the Olympic Peninsula in search of slaves. The fearsome Nootka Tribal Hunters generally specialize in hunting *human* prey, which they often seek to capture and enslave.

The Tribal Hunter advanced class, though quite common among native tribes of the Northwest, is by no means limited to this region. Characters from any tribal group on the Twisted Earth may enter this class.

Table 2-1: The Tribal Hunter

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+1	+1	+1	+0	Hunter	+1	+0
2	+2	+2	+2	+0	Archaic Weapons Specialization	+1	+0
3	+3	+2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+0
4	+4	+2	+2	+1	Quick Kill +1 Die	+2	+1
5	+5	+3	+3	+1	Craft Bone Weapon	+3	+1
6	+6	+3	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+1
7	+7	+4	+4	+2	Superior Camouflage	+4	+2
8	+8	+4	+4	+2	Quick Kill +2 Dice	+4	+2
9	+9	+4	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+2
10	+10	+5	+5	+3	Greater Archaic Weapons Specialization	+5	+3

Requirements

To qualify to become a Tribal Hunter, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Background: Tribal or Feral only.

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Track.

Technology: Primitive Technology or lower.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Tribal Hunter advanced class.

Hit Die: 1d10.

Action Points: The Tribal Hunter gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, each time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Tribal Hunter's class skills are as follows. Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (structural) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Tribal Hunter advanced class.

Hunter: The Tribal Hunter is a skilled hunter, whether hunting animals or humanoids. The Tribal Hunter can take 10 when Hiding and Moving Silently, even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so.

Archaic Weapons Specialization: The Tribal Hunter is an expert with archaic weapons. The Tribal Hunter is considered to have weapon specialization with any archaic weapon to which he has also applied the Weapon Focus feat or class feature, gaining a +2 bonus to damage rolls with the weapon.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Tribal Hunter receives a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Tribal Hunter must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Animal Affinity, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dead Aim, Dodge, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Far Shot, Guide, Great Cleave, Precise Shot, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Shot on the Run, Stealthy, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Quick Kill: The Tribal Hunter has become adept at finding the right spot on his target to make a killing shot. At 4th level, a Tribal Hunter can spend an action point to increase the damage of his attack by one die (for example, a weapon that does 1d8 damage would have its damage increased to 2d8). At 8th level, another die is added to damage rolls (following the same example, the 1d8 weapon would increase to 3d8).

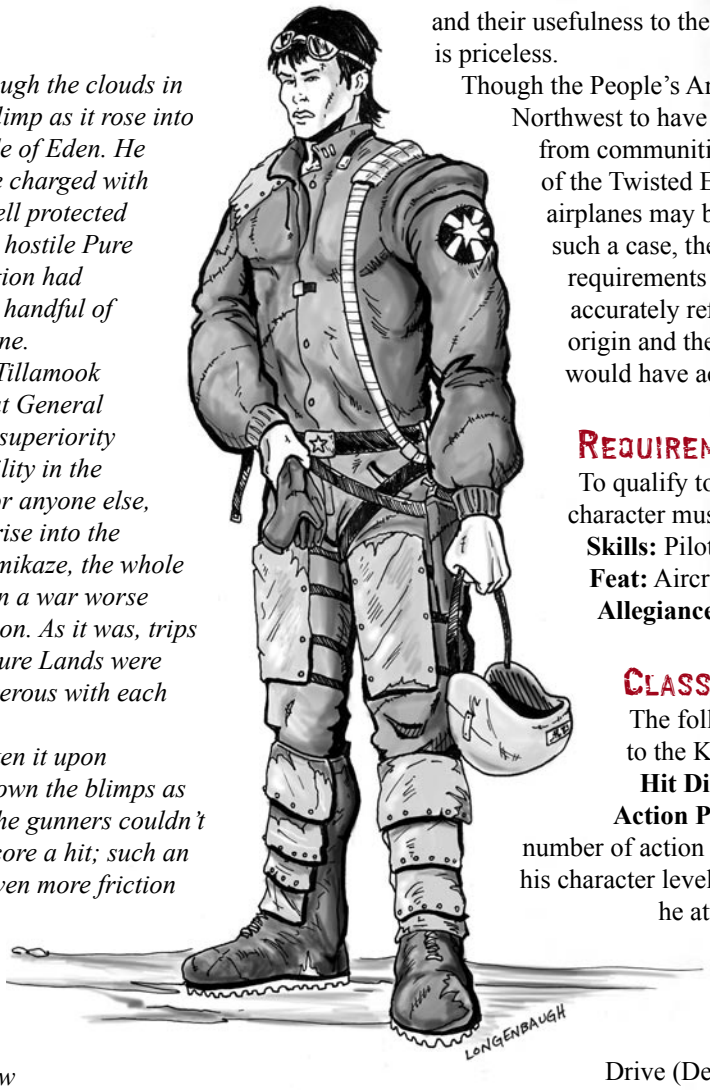
Craft Bone Weapon: Tribal Hunters believe that weapons crafted from the bones of their prey give them a special connection to the animals they hunt. Hunters go to great pains to learn how to properly preserve the bones of the creatures they have killed so that they can use them to make weapons. The Hunter gains a +1 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls made with bone weapons.

Other characters with the Primitive Technology feat may also gain this bonus while using bone weapons crafted by the Tribal Hunter.

Superior Camouflage: The Tribal Hunter is an expert at hiding in natural terrain. Using camouflage techniques, the Tribal Hunter can maximize the concealment benefits of his terrain, even if none exist. This increases the concealment bonus on Hide checks by one-quarter. For example, a Tribal Hunter hiding in an area that provides one-half concealment (no bonus) would gain three-quarters concealment (+5). Normally, one-half concealment is required to hide, but a Tribal Hunter can attempt to hide in any natural terrain.

Greater Archaic Weapons Specialization: At 10th level, the Tribal Hunter's weapon specialization bonus increases to +4 for any archaic weapon to which he has also applied the Weapon Focus feat or class feature.

Kamikaze



Kagi guided his airplane through the clouds in close proximity to the great blimp as it rose into the air from a field just outside of Eden. He and his fellow Kamikaze were charged with making sure the cargo was well protected as it passed through the often hostile Pure Lands. Nobody else in the region had airships, or even more than a handful of people who knew how to fly one.

A few Purists had come to Tillamook looking to become airmen, but General Cho had sent them away. Air superiority was vital to maintaining stability in the region. If the Purist Forces (or anyone else, for that matter) were able to rise into the skies to do battle with the Kamikaze, the whole region might be swept away in a war worse than what was already going on. As it was, trips through the skies above the Pure Lands were growing more and more dangerous with each passing day.

Some of the Purists had taken it upon themselves to try and shoot down the blimps as they flew overhead. Luckily, the gunners couldn't shoot accurately enough to score a hit; such an incident might have caused even more friction between the People's Army and the Purity Corp. Kagi had his orders, though: if anyone tried to shoot down a blimp or one of the planes, he and his fellow pilots were to rain death down on the poor fools' heads. If by chance a blimp did get shot down, Kagi and the other Kamikaze were expected to defend the fallen craft and its cargo— to the death, if necessary—until reinforcements could arrive.

While Kagi didn't much like the idea of dying, he was determined to do whatever it took to protect the interests of the People's Army.

Having adopted the name of the most dedicated airmen in history, the Kamikaze pilots of the People's Army are, to many, one of the most elite forces in the Lost Paradise. Virtually raised in the cockpits of rickety old aircraft by their fathers and mothers, they learn to fly almost as soon as they learn to walk.

Because the integrity of aircraft technology has degenerated over the years, the Kamikaze (as their name suggests) are often viewed as "suicidal," willingly taking to the air in rusted old machines that, every now and again, simply fall from the sky. Still, their skill at escorting Tillamook airships and scouting by air has kept the lands of the People's Army safe for generations. Though the numbers of the Kamikaze are relatively small, their purpose is firm and their usefulness to the goals of the People's Army is priceless.

Though the People's Army is the only group in the Northwest to have operating aircraft, characters from communities or factions in other parts of the Twisted Earth that have access to airplanes may be allowed into this class. In such a case, the specific allegiance and feat requirements should be altered to more accurately reflect the character's place of origin and the type of aircraft to which he would have access.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Kamikaze, the character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Pilot 6 ranks, Navigate 6 ranks.

Feat: Aircraft Operation.

Allegiance: People's Army.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Kamikaze advanced class.

Hit Die: 1d8.

Action Points: The Kamikaze gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Kamikaze's class skills are as follows. Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Drive (Dex), Knowledge (tactics, technology) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Repair (Int), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Kamikaze advanced class.

Gut Check: When a Kamikaze spends an action point on a Pilot check, he gains an additional +1 bonus to his skill check for each level of Kamikaze he has attained.

Eagle Eyes: The Kamikaze can take 10 on Spot checks when attempting to locate targets on the ground from the air, even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Kamikaze gains a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Kamikaze must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Burst Fire, Drive-By Attack, Gearhead, Force Stop, Intuitive Mechanic, Precise Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot,

Table 2-2: The Kamikaze

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+0	+1	+0	Gut Check	+1	+1
2	+1	+0	+2	+0	Eagle Eyes	+1	+1
3	+2	+1	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4	+3	+1	+2	+1	Strafing +1	+2	+2
5	+3	+1	+3	+1	Air Support +1	+3	+2
6	+4	+2	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7	+5	+2	+4	+2	Strafing +2	+4	+3
8	+6	+2	+4	+2	Air Support +2	+4	+3
9	+6	+3	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10	+7	+3	+5	+3	Strafing +3	+5	+4

Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Combat.

Strafing: When the Kamikaze attacks targets on the ground from the air, he gains a +1 competence bonus to his attack roll. This bonus increases at 7th and 10th level.

Air Support: When attacking a ground target from the air in conjunction with ground forces, the Kamikaze grants a +1 tactical bonus to the Defense ratings of his allies on the ground. The bonus increases at 8th level.

Mountain Walker

The grizzled old man picked his way along the faint trail. At this elevation, the air bit cold as his tired lungs breathed it in. He paused for a moment to get his bearings, checking his position against the jagged mountain peaks. After a moment, he nodded in satisfaction and continued on.

An old bubble-shaped structure was just over the next ridge, nestled in a hidden valley. Once he reached it, he would be able to rest safely inside the strangely warm, humid forest trapped within. The glass dome contained a wide variety of plants that he used to make medicines that fetched a good trade in the settlements of the lands below. Once he had gathered enough—only enough, never more—he would move on to the great metal caves four days North of his current position and get more supplies. Other people like him knew of these places, but unlike the valley-people who constantly struggled against each other, the Mountain walkers followed a code.

They shared their goods and never took more than what they needed so as to ensure that there would always be enough for them to survive. Each 'Walker knew the code and was only shown the secret places once he (or in some cases, she) could prove they had the skill to be responsible caretakers of the knowledge. This is how they had survived, and would continue to survive, long after everyone else had vanished.

Whether they were born into the Mountain Walker way of life or apprenticed to attain it, these survivors are shown honor and respect second to none.

Rarely seen unless he wants to be, the 'Walker stalks the Northwest as the land's caretaker and friend. Rare is the plant or creature that is unidentifiable by the 'Walker. As such, his skills are greatly desired by trading caravans and groups of explorers to aid them on their travels into the unknown.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Mountain Walker, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Knowledge (ancient lore) 6 ranks, Navigate 6 ranks, Survival 6 ranks.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Mountain Walker advanced class.

Hit Dice: 1d10.

Action Points: The Mountain Walker receives a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, each time he attains a level in this class.

Class Skills: The Mountain Walker's class skills are as follows. Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (ancient lore, earth and natural sciences, Twisted Earth), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Mountain Walker advanced class.

Secret Location: Mountain Walkers have knowledge of numerous secret locations scattered throughout the Northwest that have been hitherto hidden from the world.

Table 2-3: The Mountain Walker

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+1	+0	+0	Secret Location	+1	+1
2	+1	+2	+0	+0	Track	+1	+1
3	+2	+2	+1	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4	+3	+2	+1	+1	Natural Healing	+2	+2
5	+3	+3	+1	+1	Way of the Land, Apprentice	+3	+2
6	+4	+3	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7	+5	+4	+2	+2	Beat Feet	+4	+3
8	+6	+4	+2	+2	Hunter	+4	+3
9	+6	+4	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10	+7	+5	+3	+3	Way of the Land	+5	+4

Examples might include an agro-dome, a bunker complex (there are many bunkers and fallout shelters in the Northwest that haven't yet been discovered), the ruins of an ancient town, or a secret passage (such as one of the ancient shuttle tubes used by travelers in the region prior to the Fall).

While in the Northwest, a Mountain Walker can make a Knowledge (ancient lore) check (DC 20) to recall the nearest secret location. This location can provide him with shelter, food, and water with little (or no) chance of being disturbed by predators. Outside the Northwest region, the Mountain Walker can still attempt to find a secret location but doing so is more difficult (DC 30).

Knowledge of these locations is passed on from one Mountain Walker to another and is never revealed to those who would abuse such knowledge. Mountain Walkers may bring friends and traveling companions to these secret places, but they often attempt to hide the locations by taking confusing paths to their destinations. Mountain Walkers never take (or allow others to take) resources that they do not need. If they find a location that is empty, they scavenge to restock the location for the next visitor.

Track: At 2nd level, the Mountain Walker gains the Track feat. If he already possesses the Track feat, he may instead choose a feat from the list of Mountain Walker bonus feats.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Mountain Walker receives a bonus feat. The feat must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Bull's Eye, Dead Aim, Double Tap, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Far Shot, Guide, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Precise Shot, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Radiation Sense, Reactive Shooter, Shot on the Run, Skip Shot, Rip a Clip, Run, Stealthy, Way of the Land (see below).

Natural Healing: Mountain Walkers are experts at using herbs and natural methods to treat injures. Once per day, a Mountain Walker may cure an amount of damage equal to 1d8 + 1 points per character level. This effect is in addition to any other healing the injured character receives due to treatment and rest. Using this ability requires 1 hour of undisturbed care.

Way of the Land: This ability is gained at 5th and 10th level and can also be taken in place of a bonus feat. Each time he acquires this ability, the Mountain Walker chooses either an overall +2 bonus to Survival and Navigate checks or a +8 bonus to Survival and Navigate checks in a specific geographical region. The +2 bonus can be taken multiple

times and stacks with itself or with the +8 regional bonus. The +8 regional bonus applies to a different region each time it is taken.

Examples of specific regions in Darwin's World include the Big Rocks, Deadlands, Great Rift Valley, or another area described in the Darwin's World gazetteer.

Apprentice: At 5th level or above, the Mountain Walker can take on an apprentice to whom he teaches the code and knowledge of the Mountain Walker. This ability functions like the Leadership feat, except that with Apprentice the Mountain Walker only gains a cohort.

Beat Feet: The Mountain Walker has the uncanny ability to travel to a chosen destination faster than most people by taking short cuts, forfeiting sleep for progress, and following secret paths through otherwise uncharted terrain. While his movement on a tactical level remains unchanged, the Mountain Walker is able to cover a distance 50% greater than normal in a given 24-hour period when traveling over land.

Hunter: The Mountain Walker is a skilled hunter, whether hunting animals or humanoids. The Mountain Walker can take 10 when hiding and moving silently, even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so.

River Runner

Tonya guided the motor skiff expertly through the river, years of practice helping her avoid the tangles and jagged rocks that lurked just beneath the surface of the murky green water.

Her passengers had been initially reluctant to allow a woman to guide them up the river to Corvallis, but when Logan insisted that Tonya was an expert and informed them if they didn't like his choice of navigators, they could walk, the travelers changed their tune. She glanced back at the "shaky legs," barely suppressing a proud grin as they nervously watched the green water roll lazily by.

They were in good hands on this journey.

The River Folk provide many important services to the communities of the Northwest. In addition to their patrols of the waterways, they perform vital trade duties by delivering goods from one village to another, or by engaging in trade themselves. Occasionally they perform escort duties for other tradesmen along the waterways as well as hunt or eradicate dangerous marine life that still exists in the water (meat from these aquatic beasts is considered a delicacy in the region and the bones are used for many purposes, including the crafting of tools and jewelry).

The *River Runners* are just one clan of the River Folk, but their cowboy-like flair and rebellious nature has earned them the adoration of many other River Folk communities. Their specialty lies in the operation of *jet skis* and other small watercraft suited for navigation of the region's many rivers and waterways.

Requirements

To qualify to become a River Runner, the character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.
Skills: Swim 6 ranks, Navigate 3 ranks.
Feats: Surface Vehicle Operation (power boat).
Allegiance: River Folk.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the River Runner advanced class.

Hit Dice: 1d8.

Action Points: The River Runner receives a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, each time he attains a level in this class.

Class Skills: The River Runner's class skills are as follows. Balance (Dex), Drive (Dex), Jump (Str), Navigate (Int), Repair (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), and Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the River Runner advanced class.

River Running: The River Runner is adept at guiding her watercraft through the treacherous waters of post-Fall Earth. This ability grants the River Runner a +1 competence bonus to Navigate and Drive checks while traveling via water for each level of River Runner he has attained.

Offensive Driving: Using 1 action point, the River Runner can operate a vehicle as a free action. This allows her to take a full-round action with her free hand, including firing a one-handed ranged weapon.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the River Runner

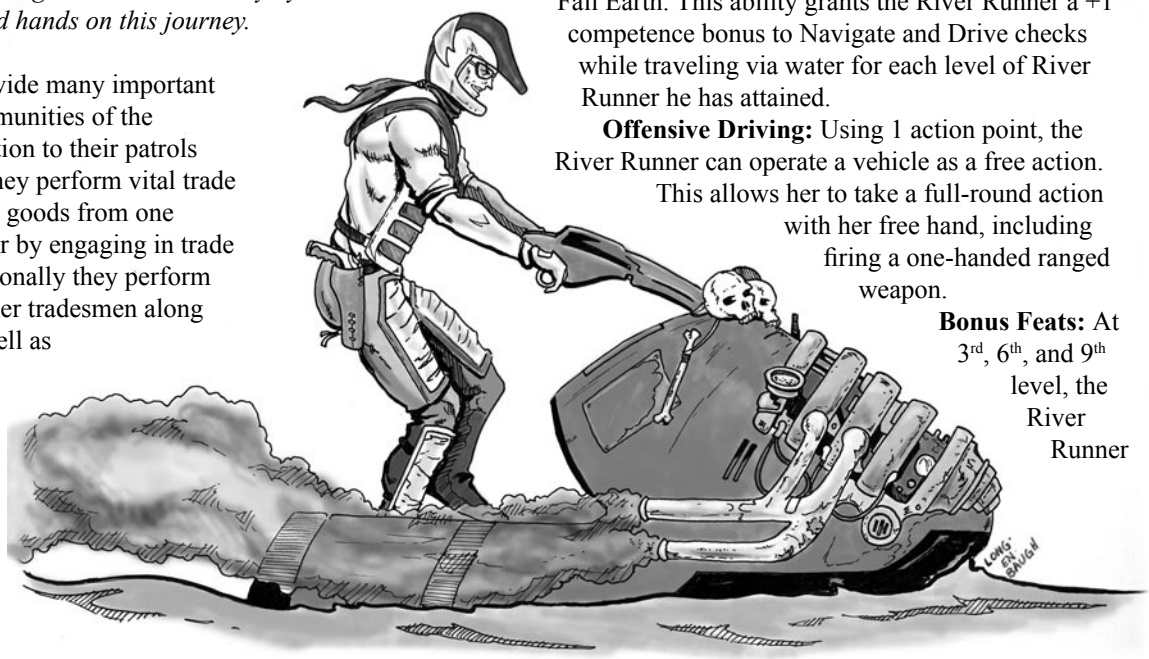


Table 2-4: The River Runner

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+1	+1	+1	+0	River Running	+1	+1
2	+2	+2	+2	+0	Offensive Driving	+1	+1
3	+3	+2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4	+4	+2	+2	+1	Vehicular Evasion	+2	+2
5	+5	+3	+3	+1	Rooster Tail	+3	+2
6	+6	+3	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7	+7	+4	+4	+2	Submerged Strike x2	+4	+3
8	+8	+4	+4	+2	Improved Hardness	+4	+3
9	+9	+4	+4	+3	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10	+10	+5	+5	+3	Submerged Strike x3	+5	+4

receives a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites for the feat to select it. Drive-By Attack, Force Stop, Precise Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Surface Vehicle Operation, Vehicle Combat, Vehicle Dodge.

Vehicular Evasion: At 4th level, the River Runner gains the ability to make a last-minute veer, literally "dodging" an attack directed at her vehicle. In place of an attack action, the River Runner may make a Reflex saving throw to avoid an attack against herself or her vehicle (DC is equal to the attack roll). A River Runner must be aware of an attack to dodge it in this fashion.

Rooster Tail: Beginning at 5th level, the River Runner can create a sustained "rooster tail" large enough to cause trouble for anyone following. Creating a rooster tail is a move action and causes the drivers of all watercraft within 50 feet and behind the River Runner to make a Drive check (DC 10 plus 1 per River Runner level) to avoid losing control of their craft.

Submerged Strike: When driving personal watercraft, the River Runner is able to perform a power dive which floods the intake jets of the craft with enough water to launch the vehicle into the air upon resurfacing, delivering a devastating attack against a target. To perform this maneuver, the River Runner must make a Drive check (DC20). A successful check allows the character to inflict double damage with a melee attack. Failure indicates that the River Runner bypasses the target without making an attack and incurs an attack of opportunity. The River Runner can choose to ram the target instead, inflicting double the normal ramming damage. Performing a Submerged Strike is a move action.

Sometimes River Runners use this tactic to actually *board* larger vessels. A successful check indicates a safe landing with only minor damage (scratches and dents). A failure results in collision.

At 10th level, a Submerged Strike inflicts triple damage.

Improved Hardness: At 8th level, the River Runner knows which parts of her vehicles are better armored and which are more vulnerable. The River Runner increases the hardness of any vehicle she drives or pilots by 2. A River Runner must be aware of an attack to gain this benefit.

Templar of Jehovah

Jonah eyed the settlement with grim anticipation. The reports claimed that the inhabitants had reacted violently to his people's innocent request to build a temple there, hanging one of his brethren outside the wooden gates with a sign around his neck that read This is what happens to heretics in Shayville. The gauntlet had been thrown, and it was his duty to see that the challenge was met with appropriate force.

Abraham had placed Jonah in charge of the conversion of Shayville and had given him a contingent of two hundred experienced Templars with orders to crucify every infidel they found here as a reminder to other settlements in the region that attacking a servant of God had consequences.

Jonah wasn't about to let Abraham down.

Carefully chosen are those worthy enough to join the military ranks of the Hand of Jehovah. These soldiers are selected and trained to uphold and protect the religious values of the faction. *Templars* are garrisoned in towns loyal to the Hand of Jehovah, ensuring that the peace is kept and that influence from heretic outsiders is held to a minimum.

In addition to performing "peacekeeping" duties, the Templar is considered to be the vessel of God's vengeance. When a settlement is targeted for forced conversion, the Templar is called to carry out the will of Jehovah in the Twisted Earth.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Templar, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +1.

Skills: Intimidate 6 ranks, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 6 ranks.

Allegiance: Hand of Jehovah.

Table 2-5: The Templar of Jehovah

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+0	+1	+0	+2	Commanding Tone	+1	+1
2	+1	+2	+0	+3	Blessing	+1	+1
3	+2	+2	+1	+3	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4	+3	+2	+1	+4	Frightful Presence	+2	+2
5	+3	+3	+1	+4	Craft Holy Weapon	+3	+2
6	+4	+3	+2	+5	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7	+5	+4	+2	+5	Smite the Infidel	+4	+3
8	+6	+4	+2	+6	Frightful Presence +2	+4	+3
9	+6	+4	+3	+6	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10	+7	+5	+3	+7	Hand of God	+5	+4

Class Information

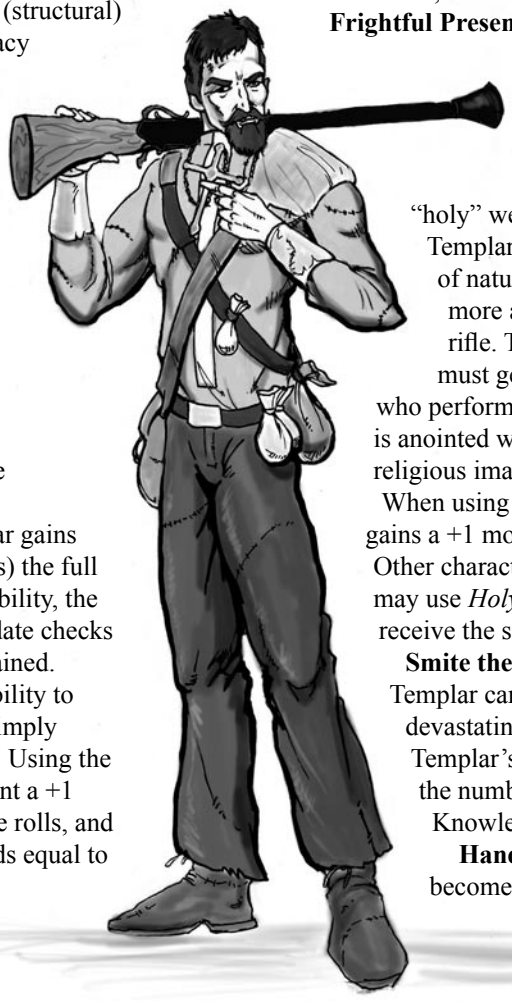
The following information pertains to the Templar advance class.

Hit Dice: 1d8.

Action Points: The Templar receives a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, each time he attains a level in this class.

Class Skills: The Templar's class skills are as follows. Concentration (Con), Craft (structural) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (current events, theology and philosophy) (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Read/Write (any), Research (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (any).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.



Class Features

The following features pertain to the Templar advanced class.

Commanding Tone: The Templar gains the ability to speak with (he believes) the full authority of God. When using this ability, the Templar gains a +1 bonus to Intimidate checks for each level of Templar he has attained.

Blessing: The Templar has the ability to inspire others of the same faith by simply touching them and uttering a prayer. Using the Blessing ability grants to the recipient a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws for a number of rounds equal to 1d4 + the Templar's class level + the Templar's Charisma modifier. Only targets who share the Hand of Jehovah allegiance may receive this blessing.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Templar receives a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Attentive, Builder, Confident, Educated, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack, Renown, Studious, Super Charismatic, Trustworthy.

Frightful Presence: At 4th level, the Templar acquires the Frightful Presence feat. At 8th level, the DC to resist this feat's effects increases by 2.

Craft Holy Weapon: At 5th level, the Templar is able to construct a "holy" weapon. This weapon isn't magical, but the Templar *believes* it is. The weapon must be made of natural materials, and cannot be anything more advanced than a black powder pistol or rifle. To make the weapon "holy," the Templar must get it blessed by a Hand of Jehovah priest, who performs a special ritual in which the weapon is anointed with holy water/oil and engraved with religious imagery.

When using this weapon in combat, the Templar gains a +1 morale bonus to all attack and damage rolls. Other characters with the Hand of Jehovah allegiance may use *Holy Weapons* crafted by the Templar and receive the same morale bonus.

Smite the Infidel: Using 1 action point, the Templar can harness God's vengeance into a single devastating blow. This provides a bonus to the Templar's attack and damage rolls equal to the number of ranks (not the bonus) he has in Knowledge (theology and philosophy).

Hand of God: At 10th level, the Templar becomes so fanatical in his beliefs that he begins to see himself as an almost indestructible instrument of God's will on Earth. The

Table 2-6: The Blood Hunter

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Craft Blood Weapon +2	+1	+1
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Blood Hunter +1	+1	+1
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Smite the Transgressor	+2	+2
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Blood Hunter +2	+3	+2
6	+6	+5	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7	+7	+5	+2	+2	Craft Blood Weapon +3	+4	+3
8	+8	+6	+2	+2	Blood Hunter +3	+4	+3
9	+9	+6	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10	+10	+7	+3	+3	Slay the Transgressor	+5	+4

Templar gains a bonus equal to his Charisma modifier to all attack and damage rolls and to Will saves when combating mutants and enemies officially targeted by the Hand of Jehovah leadership.

Epic Classes

The unique social groups and environs of the Lost Paradise provide a number of opportunities for epic-level play; the following epic classes represent the upper echelons of two Northwest factions.

Blood Hunter

The man was a member of one of the native tribes—that much was obvious. He wore his hair shaved on the sides; what was left stood up roughly four inches in a multi-colored Mohawk, a hairstyle more commonly seen on raiders these days. He was pierced three times through the septum with thin pieces of bleached-white bones that might have been taken off another human being, for all anyone knew. More bone jewelry hung loose around his neck on a tightly-woven cord that had probably been made from some animal's muscle tendon or hair.

It was his eyes—such determination locked in their steady gaze!—that identified him as a Chinook.

But none of that really seemed to faze the people of the juice joint. It was the simple fact of his presence that had caused them to turn their heads, caused the noisy bar to suddenly become as quiet as any patch of ruins in the Northwest. Chinook didn't leave their precious Sacred Lands…

Not unless there was a blood hunt happening, of course.

When an injustice has been visited on the Chinook, whether by an outsider or a member of the tribe, a *Blood Hunter* is called on to see that justice is brought to the offending parties. Blood Hunters are the elite warriors of the Chinook, chosen from the ranks of Sho-Nachan (tribal warriors) to hunt those who betray or otherwise offend the tribe.

The Blood Hunter's title is derived from his belief that drinking the blood of those he captures (or kills, as the case may be) makes him more attuned to the minds of the renegades he will hunt in the future. While greatly admired for his ability to mete out justice to those who have brought shame upon themselves and their families, members of the Chinook tribe (and others throughout the Northwest familiar with the legends of the Blood Hunters) tend to avoid the Blood Hunter because of his penchant for drinking the blood of his victims.

Blood Hunters rarely stay in one place. They tend to be loners, even when among fellow tribesmen—probably because they spend so much time away from the tribe in the settlements and lands of the "pale demons." Being back in the midst of their brethren is, in many cases, something of a "culture shock;" it tends to dull their instincts, which need to be sharp when moving among people who view them as backwards savages little better than slaves.

It is no wonder that many Blood Hunters prefer their brief forays outside the lands of the Chinook—for at least when on the hunt their lives have purpose, moments of excitement, and many chances to bring honor to their names and tribe.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Blood Hunter, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +10.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Track.

Skills: Craft (structural) 8 ranks, Spot 8 ranks, Survival 10 ranks.

Allegiance: Chinook.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Blood Hunter epic class.

Hit Dice: 1d10.

Action Points: The Blood Hunter receives a number

of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, for each level he attains in this class.

Class Skills: The Blood Hunter's class skills are as follows. Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Twisted Earth) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Class Features

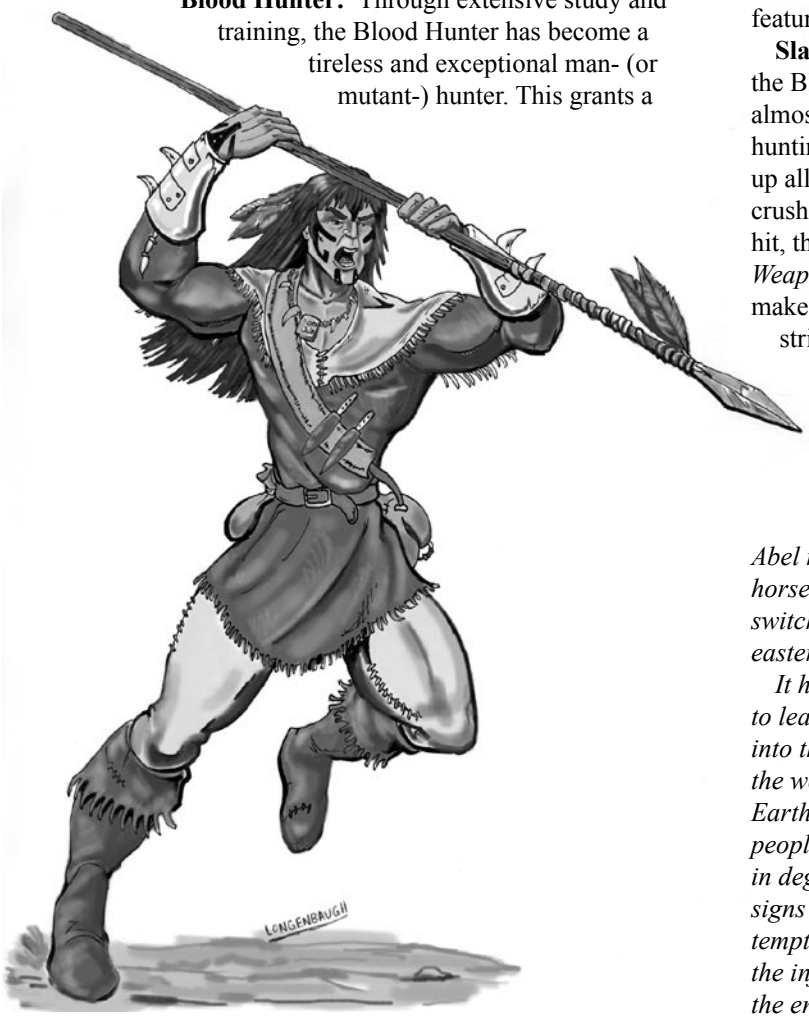
The following features pertain to the Blood Hunter epic class.

Craft Blood Weapon: Blood Hunters believe that all renegades have something in common that causes them to do the things they do. It is thought that if the Blood Hunter uses the blood of these betrayers, he somehow gains an advantage over them.

By using the bones and sinew of a renegade he has killed, the Blood Hunter can craft a bone weapon that, to him, is imbued with the "taint" of all traitors to the Chinook. When using this weapon, the Blood Hunter gains a +2 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls.

At 7th level, the Blood Hunter can craft a Blood Weapon that grants a +3 morale bonus.

Blood Hunter: Through extensive study and training, the Blood Hunter has become a tireless and exceptional man- (or mutant-) hunter. This grants a +1 bonus to damage with melee and missile weapons used against the transgressors he hunts (and against those who stand in his way), as well as to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks against these enemies. This bonus increases at 5th and 8th level.



GM Note: The Blood Hunter should be able to use this and similar abilities broadly. In addition to using this ability against specific transgressors, the Blood Hunter may use it against anyone who stands in his way (intentionally or unintentionally).

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Blood Hunter receives a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Agile Riposte, Athletic, Brawl, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Confident, Defensive Martial Arts, Elusive Target, Endurance, Far Shot, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Point Blank Shot, Run, Stealthy, Track.

Smite the Transgressor: Using 1 action point, the Blood Hunter can harness his hatred for a transgressor (and those that stand in his way) into a single devastating blow. The Blood Hunter gains a bonus to his attack and damage rolls equal to the number of Knowledge (survival) ranks (not the bonus) he has. This bonus stacks with the Blood Hunter class feature bonus.

Slay the Transgressor: By the time he reaches 10th level, the Blood Hunter has developed a combat technique that almost invariably results in the death of the renegade he is hunting. By using one action point, the character summons up all the rage and hatred he can muster to make one crushing blow with his *Blood Weapon*. Upon a successful hit, the force of the impact completely destroys the *Blood Weapon*, but deals such a massive shock that the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC equal to the damage done by the strike) or die instantly. If the opponent somehow manages to survive the attack, he still takes normal weapon damage.

Crusader of Jehovah

Abel moved cautiously down into the valley, leading his horse behind him as he picked his way along the rocky switchback. He'd seen a line of smoke rising from the eastern end of the vast valley and decided to go investigate.

It had been a year since Abel had been called by God to leave the relative comforts of Moses Lake, striking out into the blasted lands on a never-ending Crusade to bring the word of God to the heathen people of the Twisted Earth. During his wanderings, Abel had met many strange people—most of them obvious agents of Scrag—living in degradation, flaunting their physical mutations: sure signs that they had fallen into sin and succumbed to the temptations of the Evil One. Abel had done his best to teach the infidels of God's power and His infinite grace, but in the end was forced to spill their heathen blood all over the

Table 2-7: The Crusader of Jehovah

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Abstinence, Waste Walker	+1	+2
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Awesome Presence	+1	+2
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Bonus Feat	+2	+2
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Craft Holy Weapon +2	+2	+3
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Conversion	+3	+3
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	Bonus Feat	+3	+4
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Slay the Infidel	+4	+4
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Craft Holy Weapon +3	+4	+4
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	Bonus Feat	+5	+4
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	To the Bitter End	+5	+5

parched earth and purify their souls with fire.

It was the only way they could be saved. Abel tried to reconcile the memory of their screams with the knowledge that he had saved them in the end…but it still didn't help him sleep at night.

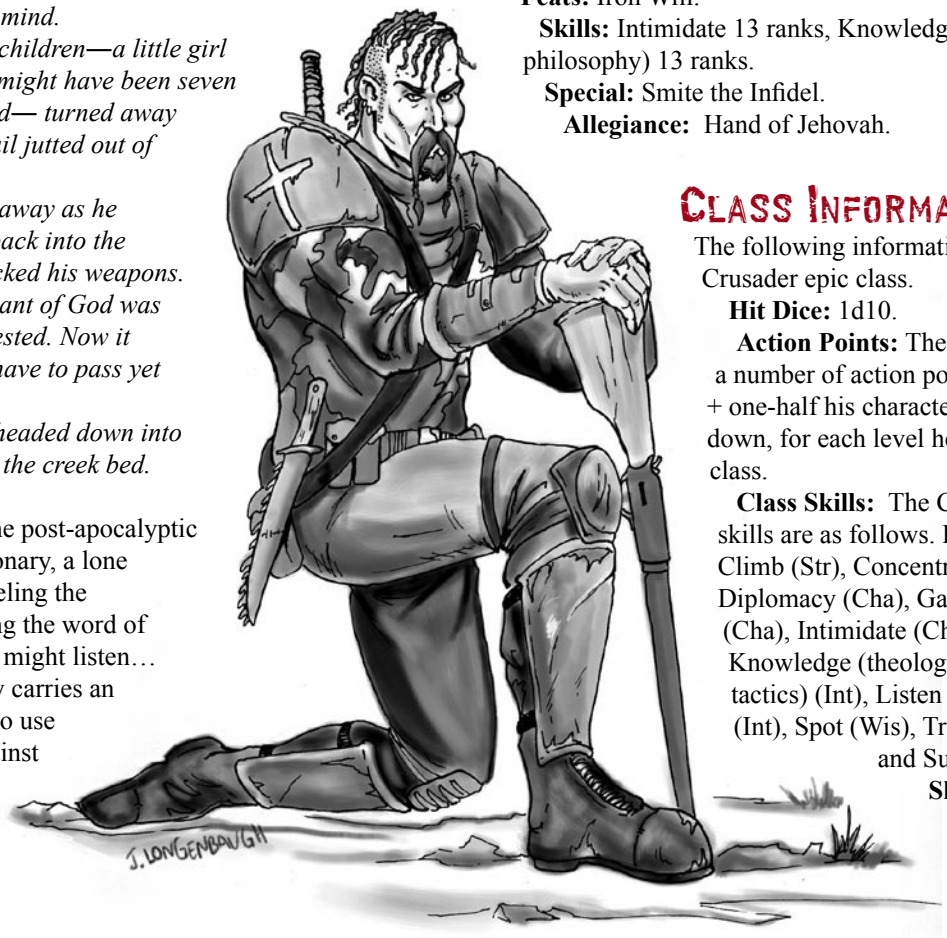
He stopped for a moment, pulled a spy-glass out of a knapsack, and trained it on the faint tree line just below the line of smoke. Two children were playing in a creek that looked like it was almost dry. They were laughing and shouting as they chased each other up and down the gully, and for a brief moment Abel managed a smile as memories of his life back in Moses Lake came flickering back into his tired mind.

Then one of the children—a little girl that Abel guessed might have been seven harvest seasons old— turned away from him. A thin tail jutted out of her backside.

His smile faded away as he put the spy-glass back into the knapsack and checked his weapons. The faith of a Servant of God was constantly being tested. Now it seemed he would have to pass yet another one.

Abel stood and headed down into the valley towards the creek bed.

The *Crusader* is the post-apocalyptic version of a missionary, a lone warrior priest traveling the wastelands bringing the word of "God" to any who might listen… but this missionary carries an array of weapons to use without mercy against those who, to him, prove to be agents of the Devil ("Scrag").



The Crusader considers himself above any restrictions that might be placed on the average member of the Hand of Jehovah, maintaining that God provides whatever he may need on his never-ending journey through the wastes of the Twisted Earth.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Crusader, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +8.

Feats: Iron Will.

Skills: Intimidate 13 ranks, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 13 ranks.

Special: Smite the Infidel.

Allegiance: Hand of Jehovah.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Crusader epic class.

Hit Dice: 1d10.

Action Points: The Crusader receives a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, for each level he attains in this class.

Class Skills: The Crusader's class skills are as follows. Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (theology and philosophy, tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Crusader epic class:

Abstinence: Through fasting, the Crusader is able to survive without food and water *twice* as long as a normal person.

Waste Walker: The Crusader gains a +1 bonus to all Survival and Navigate checks for each level of Crusader he has attained.

Awesome Presence: At 2nd level, the Crusader gains the ability to inspire fear and awe by his mere presence. Using the Awesome Presence ability must take the form of a particular appropriate action (for instance, walking calmly towards his enemy despite suppressing fire, or shouting threats in a defiant voice over the din of battle). All opponents with fewer HD or levels than the Crusader must make a Will save (DC equals 10 + one-half the Templar's character level + the Templar's Charisma modifier) or become frightened. Those who save are still shaken. The range of the effect is 30 feet and lasts for a number of rounds equal to 2d6 + the Templar's Charisma modifier.

Those who have been in the Crusader's awesome presence, whether or not they made a successful save, cannot be affected by another use of this ability for a full day.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Crusader receives a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the Templar bonus feat list or the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Advanced Two Weapon Fighting, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Far Shot, Great Cleave, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Improved Two Weapon Fighting, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Two Weapon Fighting.

Craft Holy Weapon: At 4th level, the morale bonus of Holy Weapons created by the Crusader increases to +2. This bonus increases to +3 at 8th level.

Conversion: Beginning at 5th level, the Crusader can convert non-player characters to his religion. To convert a non-player character, the Crusader must use one action point and make a Diplomacy check (DC 20). If the check is successful, the target may attempt to resist. If the check fails, the Crusader may not try again. The target must be able to understand the Crusader.

The target resists the conversion attempt by making a Will saving throw (DC 10 + the Crusader's class level + the Crusader's Charisma modifier). If the saving throw fails, the target drops all contrary allegiances and adopts the Crusader's allegiance. Certain circumstances may grant the target a bonus or penalty to their resistance saving throw.

Slay the Infidel: When a Crusader uses the Smite the Infidel Templar ability, he may attempt to Slay the target as well.

Upon a successful Smite the Infidel attack, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC equals 10 + the Crusader's Knowledge [theology and philosophy] ranks) or be killed instantly. If the target survives, he takes damage as if the Crusader had Smitten him.

To the Bitter End: The Crusader will never give up on his crusade, even when certain death looms. At 10th level, the Crusader can continue to fight even after unconsciousness and death (–10 hit points). Each round that the Crusader is below –10 hit points, he may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1 per hit point below –10) to continue fighting. Note that the Crusader is in fact dead at this point, and healing him has no effect. Only skills and abilities that affect dead characters, such as Juju Miracle, apply.

New Artifacts

The artifacts detailed herein are considered unique items, each fetching a price well beyond the means of most inhabitants of the Northwest. These items are not likely to be found outside the Northwest, though at the GM's discretion, certain artifacts may have survived in other regions of the Twisted Earth, where they might await discovery in a treasure horde or long-forgotten bunker complex.

New Electronics

The Lost Paradise presents two new types of "gizmos" that can still be found in the ruined cities of the Northwest.

Anti-Grav Belt

Used primarily as an entertainment device, the anti-grav belt was designed for both recreation and transportation. With automated controls built into the belt's circuitry, the device allowed a person to leap into the air and drift great distances before gliding back to the ground for an easily-controlled landing. Just a few weeks after its release into the general public, local governments enacted a slew of new regulations and laws in response to the rash of severe injuries and mid-air collisions caused by inexperienced anti-grav belt users. These restrictions created lucrative business opportunities for entrepreneurs who created private, regulations-free anti-grav zones within the city where citizens could use the devices freely. The belt's popularity also led to modifications of the device to allow for quicker liftoff and descent and much extended drifting periods.

These belts are difficult to locate in the post-Fall world. An anti-grav belt functions exactly like a *jetpack*, except that a mini-fusion cell is required to power it. One charge from the cell is used for every minute of operation.

Power Source: Power Clip, Beltpack, or Backpack.

Table 2-8: Electronics

Object	Size	Weight	Cost	Craft DC
Anti-Grav Belt	Med	5 lbs.	30,000 cp	32
HIP	Small	2 lbs.	1,000 cp	28

Holographic Image Projector

These hand-sized gizmos are both coveted and rare. The holographic image projector ("H.I.P." for short) projects a 3D holographic image in any desired direction within 10 feet of the operating unit. The H.I.P. can create realistic-looking images of objects such as firearms, furnishings, or even people. These illusory images, though motionless, are very convincing and can only be recognized for what they are with a successful Spot check (DC 20)—unless they are touched, at which point their true nature becomes obvious.

The H.I.P. has an interface port to connect to other computer systems, from which it can download images from computer memory. Such downloaded images are normally limited to photos, movie clips, and other pre-Fall digital media stored in computer databanks; some users have claimed to be able to replicate specific individuals and artifacts from the pre-Fall world.

A creature or device that has thermal or enhanced vision is never fooled by a H.I.P.

Hover Vehicles

In the years before the Fall, hovercraft were immensely popular all throughout the Northwest. They were particularly common in the great domed cities of Oregon and Washington, where wheeled and other ground traffic was fast becoming an outmoded means of travel.

The following section lists common hover-vehicles manufactured in the last years of the Ancients.

Hover Boards

The hover board is a pre-Fall skateboard variant—one of the first and most popular applications of hover technology to an existing device. Most are capable of high speeds but only limited altitudes. Getting onto or off of a hover board is a free action. A hover board provides no cover for its occupant while being ridden.

Habitat Avionics Hover Board

The Habitat Avionics Hover Board was the most common hover board in use; its sleek, aerodynamic design, which featured two stabilizer pods flaring out on both sides of the board, make for an ultra-smooth ride. Twin vertical thrusters mounted on the board's undercarriage provide thrust for liftoff and landing, while mini-propulsion jets powered by a fusion cell propel it to a maximum speed of 50 mph. The Habitat Avionics Hover Board is two squares long and one square wide.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Civilian Hover Cars

The civilian hover cars of pre-Fall society came equipped with a wide variety of options, such as built in holo-communications devices, digital disk music and video players, onboard GPS navigation systems, and (in the most advanced models) Artificial Intelligence piloting systems. Civilian hover cars provide three-quarters cover for their occupants.

Ford Mustang Veil Slide

The Ford Mustang was one of the first "classic" sports cars to be brought into the next generation of civilian transportation. The hybrid design didn't disappoint consumers who were still taking shaky steps into the realm of air travel. The Mustang Veil Slide retained the ability to move safely and effectively on the ground while providing the driver the option of using the miniaturized V.T.O.L technology to leave the world behind.

The Ford Mustang Veil Slide is a two-door sport hovercraft. It is two squares wide and three squares long.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Lincoln Sky King

Reminiscent of the Cadillac of the late 1990's, the Lincoln Sky King was designed for the upper crust of Dome society. This uber-luxury vehicle came with every bell and whistle its designers could think of. An AI piloting module took care of the driving while passengers relaxed in plush leather reclining seats, listening to music or watching movies funneled through top-of-the-line electronics systems. Auto-tinting windows ensured the privacy of its passengers.

The Lincoln Sky King is a four-door luxury hovercraft. It is two squares wide and four squares long.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Mitsubishi Dragonfly

The Dragonfly constituted a break from traditional perceptions about what a hovercraft should look like. The new design abandoned the boxy shape common in 20th century vehicles in favor of a graceful chassis that resembled its namesake. V-shaped wings branch from a long, tapered frame that ends in flared protrusions which house the vehicle's forward thrusters. Vertical thrusters attached to the underside of the wings can be rotated up to 160º for rapid changes in altitude.

The Mitsubishi Dragonfly is a two-door sport hover-vehicle. It is three squares wide (due to its wingspan) and four squares long.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Table 2-9: Hovercraft

Name	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Man	Speed	Def	Hard	HP	Size	Cost	Craft DC
Hover Boards												
Habitat Avionics Board	1	0	20 lbs	+1	+4	250 (25)	11	5	10	S	10,000 cp	30
Civilian Hover Cars												
Ford Mustang Veil-slide	1	3	300 lbs	-1	+1	250 (25)	8	5	32	H	35,000 cp	30
Lincoln Sky King	1	4	475 lbs	-1	+0	200 (20)	8	5	34	H	35,000 cp	30
Mitsubishi Dragonfly	1	4	200 lbs	+0	+2	275 (27)	8	5	34	H	40,000 cp	35
Toyota Talon	1	4	200 lbs	-1	+0	180 (18)	9	5	30	L	25,000 cp	30
Civilian Hover Motorcycles												
Harley Davidson War Hammer	1	1	0 lbs	+1	+2	250 (25)	9	5	20	L	20,000 cp	30
Honda Crotch-Rocket TSX	1	1	0 lbs	+1	+3	300 (30)	10	5	18	M	15,000 cp	30
Civilian Hover Trucks												
Chevy Silverado LS	1	4	1,700 lbs	-2	-2	150 (15)	8	5	38	H	45,000 cp	30
Dodge Air-Ram Extended Cab	1	4	1,700 lbs	-2	-2	150 (15)	8	5	38	H	45,000 cp	30
Ford Sparrow	1	4	1,000 lbs	-2	-2	1750 (17)	8	5	32	H	40,000 cp	30
Military Hover Vehicles												
V-350 Night-Wraith	2	30	3,000 lbs	-4	-4	200 (20)	6	10	58	G	500,000 cp	35
M-2 Jackson Hover Tank	4	0	5,000 lbs	-4	-4	150 (15)	6	20	70	G	1,000,000 cp	38
War Hawk Hover cycle	1	1	300 lbs	+2	+3	500 (50)	9	10	30	L	250,000 cp	35

Toyota Talon

The Toyota Talon is a four-door sedan designed to appeal to the more conservative consumer. Neither flashy in appearance (like the Mustang) nor radical in design (like the Dragonfly), the Talon's selling point was a high safety rating and an advanced energy-transfer system which stretched the already impressive mileage obtained from its mini-fusion cell into a category all its own. The Talon's mini-fusion cell could last a full month between recharges, whereas most other vehicles in the Talon's class needed recharging two or even three times a month. The Talon sports crisp yet flowing lines and an impressive array of electronics packages, including onboard GPS navigation, a decent sound system, and auto-tinting windows.

The Toyota Talon is a four-door sedan. It is two squares wide and three squares long.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Civilian Hover Cycles

Hover cycles were the first hover-vehicles designed for commercial use. Mounting or dismounting a hover cycle is a free action. While highly maneuverable, a hover cycle provides no cover for its riders.

Harley-Davidson War Hammer

The War Hammer is an impressive piece of technology that sacrifices only a fraction of its potential speed for stability and maneuverability. Built to last, the War Hammer was designed using highly durable steel components instead of more lightweight compounds. Its designers also kept the War Hammer's chassis design in line with older models like the Soft Tail and Sportster, deviating from "classic" Harley-Davidson aesthetics only to accommodate the hover cycle's chrome stabilizer pods.

The War Hammer can carry two people. It is one square wide and two squares long.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Honda TSX Crotch Rocket

The Crotch Rocket, taking its name from an old slang term for the ultra-fast motorcycles upon which its design is based, is among the fastest and most agile hover cycles ever produced. The design of the vehicle incorporates lightweight alloys and retractable stabilizer pods to cut down on wind resistance. It easily outpaces any other civilian hover vehicle manufactured in the years before the Fall.

The Crotch Rocket can carry two people. It is one square wide and two squares long.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Civilian Hover Trucks

The hover truck category includes a wide variety of pickup, SUV, and other utility vehicle designs, all derived from their ground-based equivalents. A typical hover truck provides three-quarters cover for passengers inside the cab and half cover for anyone in the rear bed.

Chevy Silverado LS

When hover trucks emerged as part of the hover-vehicle market, the Chevy Corporation predictably made its debut with a variant of the highly popular Silverado LS. This sports truck appealed to the average white male, who wanted a stylish design that didn't compromise ruggedness and versatility. The Silverado LS is two squares wide and four

squares long.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Dodge Air-Ram Extended Cab

The incredibly popular Air-Ram Extended Cab hover truck entered the market a year after Chevy introduced its Silverado LS. Dodge offered a stylish extended cab model with a wide variety of options, including AI piloting systems, onboard navigation, and even a supercharger variant capable of short but impressive speed boosts. The Dodge Air-Ram Extended Cab is two squares wide and four squares long.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Ford Sparrow Hover Truck

Ford's hover truck debut, the Sparrow, injected some variety into the growing hover-vehicle market. Relatively lightweight and more maneuverable than its competition, the Sparrow appealed to younger individuals who wanted a hover truck but couldn't afford the pricey Dodge and Chevy models. The Ford Sparrow is two squares wide and three squares long.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Military Hover Vehicles

The United States military pioneered several versatile hovercraft as natural extensions of earlier V.T.O.L. and tilt-rotor designs. Unless otherwise noted, all military hovercraft presented in this section provide full cover for their occupants.

V-350 Night-Wraith

The Night-Wraith Multi-mode Attack Vehicle was designed to replace troop transport aircraft such as the Blackhawk and Huey helicopters. The Night-Wraith requires a crew of four: a pilot, co-pilot, and fire control technician to manage the craft and its weaponry, and an electronics specialist to operate the vehicle's radar and communications systems. It takes a full-round action to enter the vehicle and another full-round action to start it up. The Night-Wraith is three squares wide and twelve squares long.

Weapons: The Night-Wraith is equipped with two meson cannons (5d10), one on each wing. In addition to the two cannons, the Night-Wraith also employs a battery of four pulse lasers (3d12). These weapons require their own power source in additional to the mini-fusion cells that power the vehicle.

Power source: Two mini-fusion cells.

Jackson Hover Tank

The Jackson Hover Tank was the first heavily-armored platform to employ V.T.O.L. technology. The integration of a gauss cannon into the tank's design marked a new trend in heavy weapons platform design. The mass driver weapon eliminated the need for the storage of bulky conventional shells, allowing designers to focus on making improvements to speed and maneuverability; the result was a mobile artillery platform without parallel.

The Jackson Hover Tank requires a crew of five: a pilot, co-pilot, fire control technician, a gunner for the .50-caliber machine gun, and an electronics specialist for communications and radar operation. It takes a full-round action to enter the tank and another full-round action to start it up. The Jackson Hover Tank is four squares wide and six squares long.

Weapons: The vehicle is equipped with a M214 minigun (4d12), two TOW II rocker launchers (6d12), and its main weapon, a gauss cannon (14d8). The tank carries 10 rockets and 50 rounds of gauss ammunition; each of the weapon systems reloads automatically. Weapons require their own power source in additional to the mini-fusion cells that power the vehicle.

Power source: Two mini-fusion cells.

War Hawk Hover Cycle

The War Hawk hover cycle was designed as a fast attack hovercraft for use in ground support operations and high speed, low visibility penetrations into enemy territory. Its lightweight frame was built with stealth in mind, incorporating technology used in earlier stealth vehicles. The cycle's V.T.O.L. propulsion system produces no visible trail and is relatively quiet even at high speeds, allowing for fast and silent movement during night operations.

The War Hawk can carry up to two people, a pilot and one passenger. It is two squares wide and three squares long. Mounting or dismounting the hover cycle is a free action.

Weapons: The War Hawk is equipped with two pulse lasers (3d12) on a belly-mounted tripod. The tripod is capable of 180-degree rotation, allowing the pilot to fire at targets along his flanks. In addition, the cycle is armed with a Hydra 70 rocker launcher (4d10) and carries four rockets that reload automatically. These weapons require their own power source in additional to the mini-fusion cells that power the vehicle.

Power source: Mini-fusion cell.

Water Vehicles

The following water vehicles are Post Apocalyptic variants of old-world boats, jet-skis, tugboats, and military vessels. These vessels have been used in a wide variety of roles by the River Folk of the Lost Paradise. Although these boats have a listed cost, it should be understood that the River Folk of the Lost Paradise consider them priceless. With this in mind, these watercraft are generally not for sale.

Attack Boat

The Attack Boat finds its origins in the final war between the Communist Union of Asia and the defenders of the Northwest. In the wake of the Battle of Astoria, the huge amount of flotsam and jetsam in the Columbia River rendered the channel inaccessible to large boats. The only

Table 2-10: Watercraft

Name	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Man	Speed	Def	Hard	HP	Size	Cost	Craft DC
Attack Boat	2	10	2,100 lb.	-2	-2	55 (5)	8	10	44	H	50,000 cp	30
Battle Barge	5	50	30,000 lb.	-8	-8	40 (4)	6	10	58	G	45,000 cp	25
Combat Skis	1	1	60 lb	-1	+1	105 (10)	9	6	22	L	10,000 cp	25
Motor boat	1	6	2,100 lb	-2	-2	55 (5)	8	5	24	H	15,000 cp	25
Tuber	1	4	500 lb	-2	-2	55 (5)	9	4	12	L	10,000 cp	20
Tugger	7	10	5,000 lb	-4	-4	50 (5)	6	5	40	G	20,000 cp	25

watercraft able to navigate the river were the fast attack boats of the Communist Union. A large number of these boats participated in the siege of the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome Complex. When the war degenerated into nuclear holocaust, these vessels were abandoned—only to be salvaged and put into regular use decades later by survivors of the chaos.

The Attack Boat requires a pilot and one or more gunners. It provides half cover for anyone on the main deck, full cover for anyone below deck, and three-quarters cover for the pilot in the main cabin. The Attack Boat is five squares wide and ten squares long. Boarding the vessel requires a full-round action, and another full-round action is needed to start it up.

Weapons: The Attack Boat is armed with two torpedo tubes (4d10, as Hydra 70 rocker launchers) and two M2HB heavy machine guns (2d12) on the aft deck just below the pilot's compartment.

Power Source: Gasoline.

Battle Barge

Battle Barges are combat versions of old vessels once used in the Northwest to ferry all manner of equipment, trash, and anything else that needed to be transported down the Columbia and Willamette rivers. Barges are essentially flat-bottom boats that move incredibly slowly; they have horrible maneuverability, but because of their flat bottoms, they run little risk of running aground on a sand bar or sinking from contact with debris below the water's surface. River Folk at Bonneville Falls have fitted a number of these barges with weapons and armor and use them to protect River Folk settlements along the Columbia from Purist Forces on the Washington side of the river.

The Battle Barge has no power or control of its own. It relies on a Tugger to propel it up and down the river; therefore, the only crew it requires are people to man its wide array of weapons. The Battle Barge provides half cover for anyone riding on it. It is ten squares wide and 20 squares long and requires a full-round action to board.

Weapons: Common weapons on a Battle Barge include M2HB heavy machine guns (2d12), Hydra 70 rocket launchers (4d10), and anything else the people of Bonneville Falls can think to mount on the massive vessel.

Power source: None.

Combat Skis

The Combat Ski is a jet ski that has been retrofitted with mounted weapons and light armor plating. This incredibly fast, agile watercraft is used by River Folk to escort boats as they move along the river. The Combat Ski is a favorite of River Runners, who prefer high-speed attack craft to the comparatively slow-moving Attack Boats. The Combat Ski provides no cover for the person(s) riding it. The watercraft is one square wide and two squares long. Mounting a Combat Ski is a free action.

Weapons: Weapons systems vary, but generally speaking, a Combat Ski is armed with an RPG-16 grenade launcher (3d10) and a forward-fixed M2HB machine gun (2d12).

Power source: Gasoline.

Motorboat

The motorboat hasn't changed much since the Fall. River Folk use it to ferry people up and down the various rivers of the Lost Paradise. Motorboats aren't usually armored or fitted with weapons beyond what occupants can carry. They are a relatively fast moving and reliable mode of transportation. Motorboats provide half cover for occupants and are two squares wide and four squares long. Boarding a Motorboat is a free action.

Power source: Gasoline.

Tuber

The Tuber is simply a rubber raft once used in the popular recreational sport of white-water rafting. River Folk have taken to using these boats to navigate the treacherous rapids that often separate the river communities of the Lost Paradise. Tubers are often fitted with armor plating to give them more weight and extra protection from attacks by aquatic creatures (such as Poisonous Lampreys or Mutated Sockeyes) that might wish to take a bite out of the boat, or snipers who like to ambush River Folk as they navigate the difficult waterways. The oval-shaped Tuber provides half cover for anyone riding in it. It is two squares wide and four squares long. Boarding a Tuber is a free action.

Power source: None, but can be fitted with a gasoline-powered outboard motor.

Table 2-11: WWII Aircraft

Name	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Man	Speed	Def	Hard	HP	Size	Cost	Craft DC
FM-2 Wildcat	1	0	2,500 lb.	-2	-2	600 (60)	6	6	52	G	60,000 cp	27
F4U-7 Corsair	1	0	4,000 lb	-3	-3	750 (75)	6	6	44	G	75,000 cp	27
Ki-43 Oscar	1	0	730 lb	-2	-2	650 (65)	6	4	30	G	50,000 cp	27
P-38 Lightning	1	0	3,5000 lb	-3	-3	815 (82)	6	6	44	G	100,000 cp	27
P-47 Thunderbolts	1	0	4,000 lb	-3	-3	815 (82)	6	6	44	G	150,000 cp	27
SBD Dauntless	2	0	5,000 lb	-5	-5	540 (54)	6	6	62	G	175,000 cp	27
TBM Avenger	4	0	8,000 lb	-6	-6	540 (54)	6	6	62	G	200,000 cp	27

Tugger

Tuggers are pre-Fall tugboats that have been restored to active use; they now serve a dual purpose. River Folk use Tuggers both to fish along the Columbia and to move the massive Battle Barges that protect their river settlements. Tuggers require a fairly large crew to operate—a pilot and at least six deckhands to man the ropes and operate the engines. Tuggers provide full cover for anyone below deck, half cover for anyone on the main deck, and three-quarters cover for the pilot in the main cabin. Tuggers are five squares wide and ten squares long. Boarding a Tugger is a full-round action, and another full-round action is required to start it up.

Power source: Diesel engine, electric generator.

WWII Aircraft

These ancient vehicles have all seen better days, but, thanks to the unfailing determination and skill of the People's Army Mechs and Airmen who work on them, the dilapidated aircraft somehow manage to stay in the air. These aircraft are used almost exclusively by the People's Army.

FM-2 Wildcat

The Wildcat is a solid fighter that bore the brunt of WWII carrier-based fighting until 1943, when the Hellcat came into service. It takes a move action to board the aircraft and a full-round action to start it. The aircraft provides three-quarters cover for the pilot. It is seven squares wide and three squares long.

Weapons: The Wildcat sports four .50-caliber machine guns (2d12).

Power Source: Gasoline.

F4U-7 Corsair

Nicknamed the "Whistling Death" by Japanese fighter pilots during WWII, the mighty Corsair fighter-bomber was faster and more agile than any other prop-driven airplane of its time. The aircraft is powered by a single nose-mounted propeller. The Corsair is seven squares wide and three squares long; it requires a move action to board the plane and a full-round action to start it. The aircraft provides three-quarters cover for the pilot.

Weapons: The Corsair has six .50-caliber machine guns (2d12), three mounted on each wing. The People's Army takes full advantage of the aircraft's 1000-lb payload capacity, loading it with their own heavy explosives.

Power source: Gasoline.

Ki-43 Oscar

Often confused with the infamous "Zero" used by the Japanese all throughout WWII, the Oscar was fast and mobile, but notoriously fragile—once hit, it was easily destroyed. It is seven squares wide and three squares long. It takes a move action to board and a full-round action to start. The cockpit provides three-quarters cover for the pilot.

Weapons: The Oscar sports two 7.62 mm machine guns (2d10) and can also carry two bombs.

Power Source: Gasoline.

P-38 Lightning

This unique twin-prop warbird saw heavy action during WWII in the Pacific Theater, where it made its mark battling Japanese Zeros. The twin-tail fuselage is a signature design of this aircraft, which is seven squares wide and three squares long. It takes a move action to board the plane and a full-round action to start it. The P-38 Lightning provides three-quarters cover for the pilot.

Weapons: This single-seat combat airplane carries four .50-caliber machine guns (2d12) and one 20-millimeter Hispano AN-M2C cannon (3d12), all mounted in the nose. In addition to its guns, the Lightning has an external payload capacity of 4000 lbs.

Power source: Gasoline.

P-47 Thunderbolt

Known as "Jerry-Junkers," P-47 Thunderbolts saw heavy action in the skies over Europe, escorting bombers and doing fighter sweeps against ground targets like trains. A massive plane, the P-47 was easily the largest and heaviest single-engine, single-seat fighter aircraft ever built. The Thunderbolt is eight squares wide and four squares long. It takes a move action to board the plane and a full-round action to start it up. The plane provides three-quarters cover for the pilot.

Weapons: The P-47 sports eight .50-caliber machine guns (2d12) and also boasts a payload capacity of 2,500 lbs.

Power Source: Gasoline.

The People's Army Air Force

The People's Army controls perhaps the last operational airfield in the Northwest¯a former blimp air station near the Pacific coast of Oregon that was all but forgotten during the Final War. Decommissioned after WWII, the station was purchased by private entrepreneurs and turned into an air museum, where all manner of antiquated aircraft were brought and put on display.

Although it had been little more than a cheap tourist draw along the back roads of rural Oregon, the discovery of this facility was considered a miracle by the People's Army scouts who found it after the Fall. With their grasp of pre-Fall technology, they were able to bring many of the aging, rusted machines back to life, and now use them to escort their cargo-laden airships across the Northwest. The contrails of these greasy, smoking machines, seen from far away, are the subject of worship and fear by many tribal groups (indeed the Lelooska, nestled in the mountains beneath Mt. St. Helens, consider their passing an omen of dire times ahead).

Most of the aircraft that were once featured in the air museum were cannibalized long ago to supply repair parts for those in the best condition. Today all that remains is a handful of WWII-era propeller planes, including a *P-38 Lightning,* an *F4U-7 Corsair*, several *P-47 Thunderbolts,* a *TBM Avenger,* an *SBD Dauntless,* a *Ki-43 Oscar*, and a pair of *FM-2 Wildcats*. All of these planes have seen better days; their original paint has faded and peeled (and been replaced by the symbol of the People's Army, brazenly adorning fuselage and wings alike). Their range and other characteristics have been sacrificed just to keep them aloft, but they provide the People's Army with a tremendous asset in this era where aviation is limited to only a few groups across the world.

SBD Dauntless

The Dauntless dive bomber was used extensively in the Pacific Theater and played a key role in the battle of Midway, where Dauntless pilots destroyed four Japanese aircraft carriers, a cruiser, and 150 aircraft. The Dauntless has a crew of two—a pilot and another man to operate the rear machine gun and bomb bays. It takes a full-round action to board the vehicle and another full-round action to start it. The Dauntless provides three-quarters cover for its occupants, and is seven squares wide and three squares long.

Weapons: The Dauntless sports a 7.62mm rear machine gun (2d10) and bomb bays with a 1,600-lb payload capacity plus wing mounts able to hold another 650 lbs of munitions. In addition, the Dauntless carries two .50-caliber forward-firing machine guns (2d12).

Power Source: Gasoline.

TBM Avenger

One of the most famous aircraft of the Second World War, the Avenger was originally designed to be a carrier-based torpedo bomber, but also proved effective as a close-support bomber and patrol aircraft. One of the largest single-engine carrier-based planes of WWII, the Avenger required a crew of three men to handle all of its controls and weapons. The fighter is eight squares wide and four squares long. It takes a full-round action to board and another full-round action to start. The pilot's compartment provides three-quarters cover for its occupants.

Weapons: The Avenger sports two .50-caliber forward-firing machine guns (2d12), a dorsal-mounted .50-caliber machine gun (2d12), and a ventral-mounted .50-caliber machine gun (2d12). In addition, its bomb bay can hold up to 2000 lbs of munitions.

Power Source: Gasoline.

Chapter 3: Denizens of the Northwest

Origins

The varied peoples of the Northwest share common origins in the fringe groups that rose to prominence in the final days before the Fall. As the Final War loomed on the horizon, these groups refused, for whatever reason, to accept what they were being told by the government. They rejected corporate attempts to placate them with designer drugs. They resisted the lure of sex parlors and turned off their televisions and radios. This minority saw the End coming—and they started to prepare for it. They began to organize and spread the truth to others. Society reviled these free thinkers and ridiculed them for their actions, but the abuse didn't mean anything to the enlightened minority—and it certainly didn't stop them.

Some formed activist groups and staged protests. Others put up websites and monitored bulletin boards that offered information about the world beyond the borders of the United States. They took this "untainted" information public, hacking into U.S. news nets to broadcast their data over the airwaves, reaching out to all the sheep with what they called "doses of truth." Still others became militant, embracing the label of "extremist" and venting their frustration through violence. They bombed drug and robot manufacturing plants and raided weapons facilities; they hijacked shipments of food and medical supplies destined for the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome Complex, and took their spoils to hidden compounds deep in the wilderness. These extremists stockpiled vital technology—water purification tablets, pre-packaged meals, dry goods, tools, technical manuals, and anything else they felt would be needed to weather the coming storm.

The extremists also networked with other radical organizations like the Purity Corp, the Hand of Jehovah, and the Free People's Militia to increase their odds of survival. This coalition became the foundation of what is now known as the *United Combine*.

The United Combine

History

Many long years after the Fall, the United Combine emerged from the isolation of scattered wilderness bunker complexes and survival compounds and began to explore and settle the Northwest. They didn't waste any time in setting up lines of communication between the remaining vaults. Armed scouts were sent out from "Eden" (the U.C.'s main bunker complex) on horses, both real and robotic, with two objectives. The first and most important was the establishment of trade routes between the compounds; the survivors would need a solid, working infrastructure if they hoped to build upon the foundation that was already in place. These initial forays also identified which communities had survived the Fall and which had perished in the chaos. Ruined or abandoned bunkers and compounds were marked for salvage teams and left to rot in the wilderness.

The second objective was to thoroughly scout out the known lands and ascertain the current state of the world. Groups of twenty were sent in all four cardinal directions, tasked with determining who else had survived (and if they were hostile), mapping out the boundaries of radioactive and other dangerous areas, and locating precious food and water sources. Most such recon teams, especially those that ventured into the southern lands, never returned from their expeditions. Those who did return had either gone insane from the things they had seen in the course of their explorations or were dying from radiation poisoning. In any case, they couldn't provide much information about the lands of the "deep south." Long, hard years passed—dark years filled with sickness and death—but the U.C. was eventually able to establish some semblance of stability in the region. The problems began when the U.C.'s leaders came together to decide a future plan for the Combine.

May 3. I came up from the Desiccated Wastes to join the U.C., hoping for something better, a new life. What I got was something else entirely. Instead of getting myself a nice piece of land far away from the desert, here we sit, on the frontlines of a war that has the whole region up in arms. I can't tell how long it's been going, or how long we'll be here…but from the tired looks of the men I serve with, I don't think an end is near. Most of them are just boys. You'd be surprised—even the older-looking ones in the trenches are really just kids. The war does that to them. Everyone gets old mighty fast on the front line.

- Anonymous soldier's recollection of the War

May 5. It's funny how you can wish for rain all your life and suddenly come to hate it, to despise it with all your heart and soul. It never stops raining up here, high in the mountains. There's just a gray gloom that never goes away, a blanket of never-ending cloud that turns even the lush forests and valleys a somber color, and constant rain that washes away all hope. No, it bleeds *away the hope.*

At night, when it's overcast, we can see the glow from what used to be the metropolis of Seattle beyond the mountains, reflected off the clouds. It's a chilling sight.

The quartermaster keeps passing out potassium iodide tablets every few days, saying we have to take them or else, muttering something about weather currents blowing radiated dust from the ruins all over the mountains. It seems hard to believe, so many miles away, with the city little more than a bright spot on the horizon. But if we don't take them, he says, we'd all be dead in a matter of days.

I keep thinking about the glow. It makes me wonder how far this new war will go…it's as if the higher-ups haven't learned anything at all from the past.

- Anonymous soldier's recollection of the War

The Convention of the Remnants

As the influence of the United Combine spread throughout the townships and settlements of the Northwest, people began to look to the future. Trade routes were established. Outposts were constructed to better protect the smaller towns and to provide safe venues for trade. Short-wave radio and, in some cases, holographic communications devices united even the smallest and most distant communities under the U.C.'s banner. These accomplishments were a far cry from the near-mythical technological achievements of their ancestors, but they were a beginning.

Yet even with these advances, there were those who weren't satisfied.

Members of the Purity Corp, the Hand of Jehovah, and radical elements of the Free People's Militia each had their own ideas about what the future goals of the United Combine should be. The presence of conflicting goals wasn't a new development; people had held divergent views throughout the long years inside the bunkers, but in the confines of the vaults, with nowhere else to go, these disagreements had been set aside. Now people were outside and rebuilding their lives, and they wanted a say in the decisions that were being made. As the umbrella of the United Combine spread across the Northwest, people began moving away from the larger settlements to create their own, smaller communities where they could live the way they wanted. These towns, which still claimed allegiance to the Combine but which were self-governing, caused a great deal of concern within certain factions of the United Combine leadership.

The Purist Agenda

The Purists—members of the Purity Corp faction—wanted to purge the U.C of everyone who showed signs of deviant behavior. Some of these "rogue settlements" were exhibiting signs of reverting to the hedonistic ways against which the original members of the pre-Fall Purity Corp had fought. Now history seemed to be repeating itself—given a bit of freedom, people were choosing all the wrong things. Jeremiah Cole, the direct descendant of Alexander Cole, spoke out against these "deviants" and even sanctioned the idea of making certain practices *illegal*. Jeremiah also advocated segregation by ethnic heritage. His argument was that, in this new world, it would be best to separate people by color and prohibit interracial breeding so as to develop "pure" cultures.

Nobody was surprised to hear him propose such things; after years of living close together inside the bunkers, most everyone in the Eden complex knew that Jeremiah and his kin were racists. The Purists kept largely to themselves, only mingling with those who shared their ideologies and skin color. By the time the bunkers opened, the Purity Corp had lost a great deal of credibility among the survivors, but despite this loss of popular support, there were still many Purists among the remnant who agreed with Jeremiah's views.

The Position of the Hand of Jehovah

Members of the Hand of Jehovah sect wanted to issue a mandatory call to worship in every U.C. settlement in the Northwest. People needed to be made to understand the importance and presence of God. The Hand of Jehovah believed that the reason their clan had survived was that God had chosen them carry His word to the remnants. The faction's self-appointed high cleric—a man known only as "Solomon"—stepped forward at the convention and flat-out demanded that Hand of Jehovah temples "dedicated to God" be erected in every U.C settlement. Solomon was no politician and had no tongue for diplomacy. He spoke of fire and brimstone, and warned of the hellfire and damnation that awaited those who shirked the protection of almighty God.

The Stance of the Free Peoples Militia

The leadership of the Militia had long been the ruling body of the United Combine, a fact that frustrated Purist leaders who believed that *their* faction had been the true liberating force of the pre-Fall society. At the convention, Douglas Reinhart, the elected head of the assembly, listened to the leaders of the other factions as they presented their cases—and then flatly rejected each of them. The United Combine, Daniel insisted, was not about segregation or forcing beliefs on people. The purpose of the Combine was to assist people in developing their own societies by helping towns and settlements grow into stable communities. As it was, the world was fraught with dangers; persecuting people because they thought or looked differently would only serve to create more strife and would strike at the foundations of the entire region. The establishment of trade routes and early attempts towards regional stabilization had not eliminated these dangers; with bandits, renegades, and monstrous wasteland creatures roaming the wilderness, the Combine's position in the new world was far too tentative to even think about risking the loyalty and safety of its people.

The meeting ended in a cacophony of shouts and curses as the Purist and Hand of Jehovah representatives stormed out of the council chambers. Enraged, they pulled their resources from the United Combine and called on all like-minded individuals to follow them into the wilderness, where they would cultivate a new way of life—one of *their* choosing.

Who Left and Who Stayed

A surprising number of settlements seceded from the United Combine in the aftermath of the now-infamous Convention of the Remnants. All those who broke away had their own motives for leaving, although most sought to escape U.C.-imposed restrictions that frustrated those who wanted a return to the lifestyle of the Ancients.

Many secessionists were unhappy with the simple, guarded lifestyle promoted by the U.C., having assumed that the opening of the bunkers would mark a return to the pre-Fall way of life described by their elders. Long years had passed since the Fall; only the very eldest among them retained even the vaguest memory of what life had been like before the End, and in most cases their recollections were less historical records than "campfire stories" passed down by parents and grandparents. In the timeless confines of the bunkers, stories of the pre-Fall past became myths—and these myths became dreams for which people yearned, earnest tales told in the night after the day's work was done.

Many of the younger generation harbored secret hopes (and sometimes outright beliefs) that the bunker gates would open to reveal the fabled dome cities of the Ancients, alive and working and awaiting repopulation. They fantasized about being welcomed back into the world by exuberant dome-dwellers, daydreamed about the exotic foods they would eat, and imagined all the things they would do when that day finally came. That day never came; the reality was that life outside the bunkers was a cold, hard, daily struggle to survive. So it was no surprise that many disenchanted youth leapt at the chance to follow the Purists and Hand of Jehovah towards a promised better life in the wastes.

The mass exodus of the Purist and Hand of Jehovah factions made life much more difficult for those who remained behind. The burden placed on individuals increased as the workforce dwindled. Supplies taken by the secessionists had to be replaced, which meant more hunting, more scavenging, and more people going on dangerous trips from which they might not return.

To make matters worse, some secessionist groups soon returned in force to take more; combatants on both sides found themselves fighting over precious supplies with people they had known for most of their lives. Combine settlements and militia outposts in Central Washington were taken in the name of the Purity Corp. Males who didn't voluntarily join the Purists were drafted at gunpoint or killed; women were placed into forced labor and breeding camps.

The War of the Remnants had begun.

May 6. Killed a man today. I was just sitting there, at night, listening to the rain, peering from my foxhole out across the mountainside. It was eerie. The evergreen forest casts all sorts of twisted shadows up here, crisscrossing over dirty patches of snow that dot the slopes like an endless obstacle course. Barely saw him. Moving alone, hunkered down, he stood out against the snow.

But he was on the wrong side of the 'line. I took the shot. I had to. Or he would have shot me.

I know I'll never shake the memory of this night. Listening to him moan for hours, crying first for his comrades, then for his mother. His voice, minute by minute growing fainter as he lost more and more blood. Begging for someone to come get him, to drag him back to his lines… but no one would. No one would go out and risk their own life, not for him. Maybe he was black, and his squad mates were white. Or maybe it was the other way around. That's how it is in the Purity Corp. Not only do they hate us, but they hate each other just as much.

But killing isn't easy, no matter what they say. No matter how hateful your enemy is, no matter how despicable his politics.

Because sometimes you have to sit there and listen to him die.

- Anonymous soldier's recollection of the War

May 7. Want to know what life is like on the frontline? We dig trenches all day, with our bare hands, until our knuckles bleed and our fingernails begin to crack. When it rains—and it always rains—the water causes all sorts of floods and we have to fight to keep the earthen walls from crumbling in on us. When it gets really bad, when the icy cold water reaches your chest and your limbs begin to go numb, then we get the order to abandon the foxholes and fall back.

Of course that's when the Purists start up. Always happens when we so much as move. Machineguns, snipers, you name it. They even got tanks, which they use to bombard us from miles away whenever word leaks out that we're on the move.

Seen several men die that way, you know, from artillery. One minute they're there, whimpering and praying on their knees beside you in the trench…the next they're a fine red mist mixed with a cloud of choking black smoke that knocks you off your feet. You never get the taste of powder out of your mouth. And the feel of that warm blood won't wash away no matter how many times you scrub.

I'm just glad the tanks can't make it off the roads and chase us up into the high mountains—I hear they're next to impossible to take out without heavy weapons, and heavy weapons are something we in the U.C. are short of these days.

Guess we'll just make like old-style guerillas, and run and hide.

May 16. Lost my legs last week. Artillery strike, out of nowhere. Slept for seven days straight, the doctors said. They're sending me back.

Saw myself in the mirror this morning and I didn't recognize myself. Big bushy beard and a whole lot of lines seem to have just "crept" up on me. My God, how long have I been here?
I wonder if my wife will even recognize me when I come home.

- Anonymous soldier's recollection of the War

The War of the Remnants

The War of the Remnants is an ongoing struggle for dominance in the Northwest region of the Twisted Earth. The scattered communities of the United Combine struggle daily against the racist Purist forces. Other cultures of the Northwest have been drawn into this conflict in a variety of ways, but the main powers for good or evil are the U.C. and the Purity Corp, respectively.

While the ongoing conflict between the Purists and the United Combine is indeed a war, it's waged in a fashion unlike any before it. Unlike the great wars of ancient history, this conflict isn't resolved in grand clashes of opposing armies; it's played out day after long day in small, brutal guerilla battles. The major aggressor in this conflict is the Purity Corp; while the United Combine does occasionally bring the fight to the Purists, they much prefer to live in peace. For the Purists, this is a war of naked aggression. The U.C. controls more territory and resources, all of which the Purists claim is rightfully theirs. For the Purists, the conflict isn't just about crushing the United Combine; it's about bringing the entire region under their control. All of the Northwest's independent communities—the River Folk, Chinook Indians, and Mountain Walkers—are threatened by the Purity Corp's ambitions.

The United Combine as it Exists Today

Despite years of war, the United Combine has managed to hold firm against the wasteland's myriad human and inhuman dangers. Towns allied under the U.C. banner dot the region, from the capital city of Eden in what were once known as the Canadian Rockies of British Columbia, to City of Hope in the hilly expanse of lower Oregon far to the south. Between those two major United Combine cities lie the Pure Lands, a region encompassing much of southern and central Washington—the domain of the Purity Corp.

The Purists have managed to divide the U.C. territory into two isolated halves, making vital trade between the northern cities and those of the Deep South an extremely dangerous undertaking. Many people die on the arduous journey—or worse, are captured and drafted into the Purist army. In spite of such dangers, the importance of keeping trade routes open and relatively safe is enough to motivate many brave souls from the Combine to risk the north-south journey. These crucial lifelines are patrolled by United Combine Regulators and a sect of warrior-scouts known as the Sentinels. *More information about the Sentinels is presented later in this chapter.*

Over the course of the war, most towns in the Combine have become walled fortresses, guarded day and night by U.C. Minutemen. Entrance to these bastions of safety is extremely limited; travelers not wearing the Combine insignia are almost invariably turned away at gunpoint. Only in extremely rare cases are outsiders allowed into the towns of the United Combine. Independent factions such as the Tillamook Trading Caravans and the Mountain Walkers are given access to towns as individual situations merit.

The Doctrines of Unity

All member communities of the United Combine are expected to uphold a series of statutes known as the

Doctrines of Unity. So long as the Doctrines of Unity are upheld, towns are free to govern themselves in whatever manner they see fit.

The Doctrines of Unity are as follows:

- All members of the United Combine shall provide safe haven for those who prove their allegiance to the clan.
- Opportunity for fair trade shall be given to all U.C. members.
- Males who have grown into Manhood shall offer themselves up into service as Minutemen for a period of five harvest seasons, unless sufficient reason can be provided that said males should remain in their hometown.
- No member of the United Combine shall have any dealings with the Purity Corp or the Hand of Jehovah.
- All sightings of Purist movements must be reported immediately to the nearest Militia outpost.
- Respect others' right to exist.
- Take life only in defense of your own.

The penalty for breaching any of these edicts is banishment from the clan or death, depending upon the severity of the offense.

United Combine

Background Options: Visionary Reinventor.

Attitude: The United Combine believes in inventing a new future from the ashes of the old and endorses a slow and cautious emergence from this era of barbarism into the future. The U.C. believes in carefully exploring its environment, cataloguing and avoiding dangers, and engaging potential enemies with diplomacy rather than force. The Combine rarely takes action before carefully weighing the consequences of doing so against the potential benefits to the entire community. Foolhardy endeavors and unchecked expansion have led to bitter defeats for the Combine in the past, and so today the U.C. remains guarded against the well-intentioned but shortsighted calls to "drive ever forward" heard from many of its well-meaning but overenthusiastic citizens.

Symbol: The symbol of the United Combine is a simple stone ring of alternating dark colors with an embossed androgynous figure set against dark concrete.

Common Classes: Guardian, Scholar, Tinker, Survivalist.

Common Mutations: Autism, Neural Mutation.

Common Defects: Bilirubin Imbalance, Hemophilia.

The U.C. is a coalition of settlements and towns spread across the Northwest. For the most part, membership in the United Combine is open to any who wish to join and work towards making the Northwest a safe place for people to live. With that said, individual towns under U.C. control are self-governed and tend to have their own particular laws and beliefs about what is right and with whom they wish to associate.

The people of the United Combine are not as technologically advanced as other groups in the region, but the inherent "openness" of the faction means that, generally speaking, they are more inclined to deal with outside individuals and groups than are less open-minded groups like the Hand of Jehovah. The average Combine soldier is armed with a variety of basic weapons, although the occasional advanced weapon (found in the ruins of some town or obtained from the Tillamook Traders) does sometimes turn up in U.C. hands.

Except for members of the militia, travel and transportation by means other than foot is rare for most U.C. citizens. The likelihood of finding someone willing to even consider trading away a vehicle or animal depends entirely on what settlement the character happens to be in at the time. Hope and Eden each have a fair number of pre-Fall internal combustion vehicles, as well as horses (both real and robotic), but as characters move into smaller communities they might be lucky to find a hover-board or a pogo stick.

Beginning characters that do not have a soldier-oriented occupation might be able to barter for transportation in the larger settlements, but at a much higher cost than they would pay were they Minutemen. Even soldiers must barter for their equipment in the United Combine (as in the early era of feudal armies, when soldiers were expected to provide their own equipment for war). Most towns are responsible for outfitting and arming their own militias, which means that even the Minutemen and Regulators have to scrounge and barter for every bullet and scrap of armor they need.

To be a mutant and aligned with the United Combine is to be accepted in some settlements and denied entry to others—a difficult fate, but much better than it would be in other places in the Northwest where mutants are literally *hunted*. In general, larger towns allow mutants inside their walls, but even there mutants are usually looked upon as freaks. Small, out-of-the-way towns are more likely to shoot first and then shoot again, regardless of the mutant character's professed allegiance.

All in all, the United Combine does its best to keep people safe and free to live as they choose, although the price of such freedom is usually living in relative squalor compared to other groups in the Northwest. Still, the average U.C. citizen would rather live poor and free than under someone else's twisted vision of how the world should be.

As a rule of thumb, the general attitudes of U.C. citizens towards other factions in the Northwest are as follows.

Purity Corp: The average member of the United Combine loathes the Purists. Years of war have taught the generally simple, peace-loving Combine citizens that the Purity Corp cannot be trusted.

Hand of Jehovah: The Hand of Jehovah (members of which are often referred to as "zealots" by even the most tolerant U.C. citizens) is another faction with which the United Combine frequently has trouble. To date, the zealots have been too busy preaching and condemning for any real dialog and negotiation between the two factions to take place. Open war hasn't become a reality (yet), but rumors are

A Land Divided – The United Combine

The territory that comprises the United Combine appears surprisingly large to those unfamiliar with the region. A close look, however, shows that this degree of control is shaky at best, and that the great distances between U.C. settlements are perhaps their greatest weaknesses.

With its capital Eden located just across the border in what used to be Canada, the U.C.'s administration and power lies far from the "frontlines" with the Purity Corp. Only through control of major mountain highways and roads have they been able to spread their influence over such a wide area and keep their far-flung outposts in communication; only a few miles from these established routes, the wilderness quickly grows untamed, inhospitable, and unfriendly.

Because it takes so long to get from one place to another in U.C. territory, communications and messages sometimes arrive late (or if the courier is ambushed, captured, or killed, never at all). To adapt to this, U.C. settlements have learned to rely primarily on themselves for survival; settlements maintain their own militias, stockpile food, water, and other supplies to withstand sieges, and develop special methods of low-technology communication. These methods include using horses or motorcycles to ferry couriers from community to community, using smoke signals to convey concealed messages in smoke patterns, and even relying on the Tillamook Trading Caravans to keep the far-flung communities of the U.C. in touch.

This latter reliance is essential to the survival of the Combine's southern territories, which were completely cut off by the unexpected incursion of the Purity Corp's Pure Lands. These distant communities, no longer in direct contact with contiguous U.C. territory, often must wait weeks or even months for messages from home, and thus self-reliance is an absolute necessity for their survival. The Tillamook—with their airships able to fly over the Pure Lands unhindered by Purist forces—are the only means by which the U.C. can supply its settlements there, and this "service" has allowed the traders to profit *tremendously*.

Because it relies so heavily on the Tillamook Trading Caravans to deliver messages and supplies over the Pure Lands, the Combine would be strategically and economically devastated by any change in Tillamook attitudes towards the U.C. If for any reason the Tillamook decided to cease their flights, it is entirely conceivable that the isolated southern branch of the U.C. would fall to the Purity Corp.

beginning to spread through U.C. settlements about sightings of Hand of Jehovah troops moving south out of Moses Lake, apparently extending their area of control in eastern Washington.

People's Army: The Tillamook traders have a solid relationship with the United Combine. For most U.C. citizens, the sight of a Tillamook caravan is a sign that happier times are coming. The Tillamook clan brings weapons, ammunition, food, and other essential supplies (including news of important events transpiring in the region) to the bargaining table. Despite this warm relationship, the Tillamook Trading Company does not give the U.C. any special favors where business is concerned.

Chinook Indians (and other Indian groups): The Chinook don't trust anyone who is not either a member of the tribe or a Mountain Walker whom they have known for more than a year. Relations with the Chinook are tense at best. However, due to the influence of certain Mountain Walkers trusted by the tribes, the Chinook are inclined to treat those aligned with the United Combine with more respect than they might treat a Purist.

Pale Riders: These raiders have recently begun to attack outlying U.C. outposts and far-flung homesteads, and, if rumors are true, they aren't leaving many survivors around to warn others. Currently, all United Combine militia have standing orders to shoot on sight any members of this mutant faction with whom they come into contact. Civilians are encouraged to stay away from the eastern roads and to travel only in the company of armed guards.

River Folk: The United Combine has no official ties to these reclusive people. U.C. diplomats have traveled to places like Corvallis and Bonneville Falls in the hopes of forging some kind of political alliance with the various families that comprise the sect, but have always come away empty handed. Individual members of the U.C. have more luck when dealing with the River Folk, so long as they stick to the business of trying to book passage along the rivers or barter for fish and other supplies. The U.C. isn't necessarily hated; they just aren't trusted any more than any other faction that tries to deal with the River Folk.

Sentinels: The people of Crater City have a longstanding yet often shaky alliance with the United Combine, especially with the city of Hope. The two factions have long shared the goal of maintaining peace in the lands south of the Columbia River, this mutual purpose serving as the glue that binds the two groups together. Minutemen and Sentinel Guides often work together, guarding caravans destined for eastern settlements or maintaining a constant watch on the roads leading into the wastelands beyond the impassable southern wilderness.

United Combine members in good standing with the Sentinels are allowed access to the bubble-dome hunting grounds that dot the area around crater city, but the faction (or any other faction for that matter) is not allowed inside the Great Domed City.

Fort Boise: The United Combine has only just begun to consider the possibility of some kind of formal relationship with this distant city. The U.C. has sent scouts to Fort Boise

Allegiance Notes – United Combine

To sum up, choosing an allegiance with the United Combine comes with the following benefits and drawbacks:

Open Membership: Characters are free to leave the United Combine at any time without fear of persecution, a very appealing benefit in times when some groups treat their followers like property.

Limited Access to Technology: Most United Combine towns do not have access to advanced weapons or methods of transportation more technologically advanced than a horse. Before beginning play, characters aligned with the United Combine may not barter for any item more advanced than modern-era weapons and equipment.

Secondary Allegiances: Player characters who have aligned themselves with the United Combine might consider choosing a second allegiance which focuses on a particular settlement, such as Hope or the capital city of Eden, to further flesh out their characters' attitudes towards other people in the Northwest.

to gain credible intelligence about the city and its inhabitants and to learn whom they trade with and whether or not Fort Boise has ties to settlements in lands outside the Northwest. The Pale Riders and Purity Corp have also sent delegates to Fort Boise recently, developments which concern U.C. leadership. Combine agents have been charged with finding out what these two hostile factions are trying to accomplish in Fort Boise.

Most U.C. members don't know what to make of the reports they hear about this mutant city. Some flat-out refuse to believe there are so many mutants on the planet, while others simply shrug and accept the stories as just another fact of life in this harsh world.

Bone City: The average member of the United Combine considers this lawless city to be a prime example of why groups like the U.C. exist. The "bone trade" is a morbid practice that has been universally outlawed in the United Combine—in fact the ban on this grisly trade is one of the few things many individual settlements actually agree on. People caught inside a United Combine town with items made from the bones of dead humans are usually *banished*, Their names and descriptions sent to neighboring U.C. holdings in an effort to ensure that these people are not allowed to infect other U.C. members with their twisted interests.

The U.C. has no official ties with Bone City and does not seek to establish any. The saying "let the heathens do as they will, but we don't have to let them do it around us" is the unofficial U.C. stance towards the city.

Beavertown: The United Combine sees Beavertown for what it is: a haven for thieves and similarly seedy individuals who have been kicked out of other settlements in the region. Business with the people Beavertown is normally done at the end of a gun barrel.

Typical United Combine

Low-Level United Combine Minuteman (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/Fast Hero 1): CR 2; Medium-size human; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 16, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 class); BAB +0; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d3+2, nonlethal, unarmed) or +3 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +2 ranged (2d4, AR-7 Explorer); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Evasion, Conserve; AL United Combine; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will -1; AP 6; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Climb +4, Craft (mechanical) +3, Hide +4, Knowledge (ancient lore) +3, Knowledge (current events) +3, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Listen +1, Move Silently +4, Profession (any) +3, Navigate +3, Ride +4, Search +1, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +1, Survival +1.

Feats: Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: AR-7 Explorer, 32 rounds of .22 ammunition, rad tab, five ready meals, two light rods, various other gear and personal possessions.

Mid-Level United Combine Minuteman (Post Apocalyptic Hero 3/Fast Hero 3): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 6d8+6; hp 33; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +6 class, +2 leather armor); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +7 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt); Full Atk +7 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +7 ranged (2d10, Remington 700); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Evasion, Conserve, Opportunist, Wasteland Lore; AL United Combine; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +1; AP 8; Rep +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Climb +4, Craft (mechanical) +5, Gather Information +2, Hide +4, Knowledge (ancient lore) +3, Knowledge (current events) +8, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Listen +3*, Move Silently +4, Profession (any) +8, Navigate +3, Ride +4, Search +5, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +7*, Survival +1.

Feats: Alertness*, Armor Proficiency (light), Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Precise Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Leather armor, Remington 700, 40 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, rad tab, five ready meals, two light rods, various other gear and personal possessions.

High-Level United Combine Minuteman (Post Apocalyptic Hero 5/Fast Hero 5): CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 10d8+10; hp 55; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 23, touch 20, flat-footed 23* (+2 Dex, +8 class, +3 undercover vest); BAB +6; Grap +9; Atk +9 melee (1d3+3 nonlethal, unarmed) or +9 melee (1d6+3, rifle butt); Full Atk +9 melee (1d3+3 nonlethal, unarmed), or +9 ranged (2d10, Remington 700); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Evasion, Conserve, Opportunist, Uncanny Dodge 1*, Wasteland Lore; AL United Combine; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +1; AP 10; Rep +2; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Climb +4, Craft (mechanical) +5, Gather Information +2, Hide +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (ancient lore) +3, Knowledge (current events) +8, Knowledge (tactics) +13, Listen +3*, Move Silently +4, Profession (any) +10, Navigate +3, Ride +4, Search +5, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +7*, Survival +1.

Feats: Alertness*, Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Expertise, Far Shot, Leadership, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Precise Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Remington 700).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Undercover vest, Remington 700 or Colt M1911, 40 rounds of 7.62mm (or .45) ammunition, rad tab, five ready meals, two light rods, holographic image projector, power cell, various other gear and personal possessions.

What do I say about myself? Not much, if I were a humble man, and I guess I am one to some extent. I'd like to think that the people of Hope are better off with me leading them. Some days I expect that they may want me gone, and if it ever comes to that, I'll leave. But until then I'll protect the people of this town as best I can. I guess that's what a leader is supposed to do.

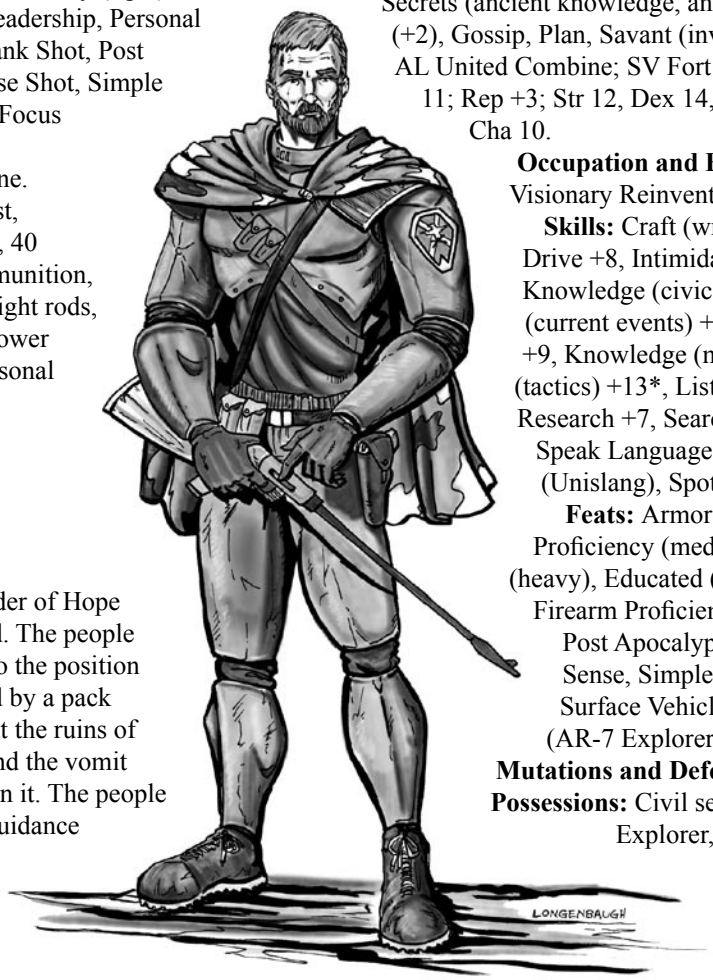
- Duncan Clark

People of Note

Duncan Clark

Duncan Clark has been the leader of Hope ever since he reached manhood. The people of the settlement voted him into the position after his predecessor was killed by a pack of vomit rats while scouting out the ruins of Eugene. Duncan went out, found the vomit rat nest, and killed everything in it. The people have been looking to him for guidance ever since.

Unlike many who would call themselves "leaders," Duncan doesn't just sit back and tell people what to do. He is often out in the wilderness near Hope keeping an eye on the border or talking with scouts from Crater City. Duncan is a smart man, smarter than most in the region. He was lucky; his parents taught him as much as they could while they were alive. The Red Fever took both of them before Duncan reached puberty, but he was able to survive in the town on his own because they had taught him so well.



Duncan Clark (Smart Hero 3/Scholar 4/Guardian 4): CR 11; Medium-size human; HD 7d6+4d10; hp 47; Mas 10; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 22, touch 17, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +5 class, +5 civil security suit); BAB +7; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d3+1, nonlethal, unarmed), or +10/+5 ranged (2d4, AR-7 Explorer); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Ancient Secrets (ancient knowledge, ancient vehicles), Defender (+2), Gossip, Plan, Savant (investigate)*, Tactical Aid; AL United Combine; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +7; AP 11; Rep +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Occupation and Background: Guide, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Craft (writing) +5, Diplomacy +6, Drive +8, Intimidate +5, Investigate +10*, Knowledge (civics) +13*, Knowledge (current events) +11, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (mutant lore) +7, Knowledge (tactics) +13*, Listen +4, Navigate +7, Research +7, Search +3, Sense Motive +8, Speak Language (Trade), Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +9, Survival +8.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Educated (civics, tactics)*, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Radiation Sense, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation, Weapon Focus (AR-7 Explorer).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Civil security suit, GSh-18, AR-7 Explorer, 50 rounds of ammunition for both firearms, holographic image projector, power cell.

The Purity Corp

History

The Purity Corp, more commonly known throughout the region as simply the Purists, is the second-largest faction in the Northwest. They are led by Jeremiah Cole, a direct descendant of Alexander Cole, the original leader of the group. The Purists were once a part of the United Combine—in fact, they were the originators of the pre-Fall extremist movement from which the U.C. was afterwards born.

This well-known fact has long been a source of great aggravation for Jeremiah, who led loyal Purists out of Eden and other Combine bunker complexes when it became clear that Douglas Reinhart and his U.C. goons were no longer interested in what he had to say. The disgruntled leader led his followers south into the wilderness of lower Washington, where they established the core of what would become Zog, the capital city of the Pure Lands.

The Creed

Just as the United Combine has its own moral standards by which its people must abide, so too does the Purity Corp. These rules are not subject to debate, and violation of any of these edicts has only one penalty: *death*.

The Creed is as follows:

- Uphold the moral standards of the Purity Corp at all cost, even unto Death.
- Defend the Pure Lands from all invaders.
- Mercy is for the weak. A defeated foe deserves no quarter and shall be given none.
- Expansion of the Pure Lands is vital to the continued existence of the clan. All sightings of non-Purist holdings shall be reported immediately.
- Bloodlines are to be kept pure in order to achieve racial and ethnic perfection. Inter-racial breeding is in direct violation of Purist values.
- Those who do not bear the mark of Purity are lesser creatures and shall be treated as such. Conquered peoples who cannot or will not embrace Purist ideology shall be treated as cattle.
- Purist women shall be treated with the measure of respect that they deserve. Women, although inferior to men, are vital to the continued existence of the species and as such are our most prized resource. They shall remain within the protection of Purist holdings at all times.
- All men, regardless of ethnicity, are required to serve in the Purist Liberation Army until death. The only exception to this rule is a man who holds a vital position in his parent community.
- Divisions in the Purist Liberation Army shall be segregated to promote a greater sense of unity. Each division shall be commanded by the most capable leader of that particular ethnic persuasion.
- Individual ethnic communities shall be governed by males of appropriate ethnic origin.

Life in the Pure Lands

Life in the Pure Lands is just as harsh as it is anywhere else in the Northwest. The difference is that Purists actually seem *happy* about their lot. The average Purist knows his or her place in the community, knows what needs to be done for the overall success of the whole, and works towards that goal. Purists have a definite agenda, a goal towards which they strive—and that unity of purpose accounts for their apparent satisfaction in the face of the brutal realities of everyday life. Jeremiah Cole never lets his followers forget their place in the world or the goal to which he is leading them. In contrast, United Combine leadership doesn't inspire nearly the same level of motivation, which could explain why their people are both more ideologically diverse and less satisfied with their lot in life.

Survival in the Pure Lands is not easy. Many radiated areas dot the stretch of land between the Columbia River and the ruins of the Sea-Tac Bio-Dome Complex and must be carefully avoided. The deadliest of these areas is Puget Sound, a region more commonly known throughout the Northwest as the "Land of the Dead Water." In addition to natural hazards, numerous species of mutated wildlife lurk in the mountains and valleys of the Pure Lands and frequently prey on the unwary, sometimes going so far as to attack Purist outposts in large groups. Among the most vicious such beasts are giant mutated, horned baboons—presumably descendants of captive baboons from ancient zoos or safari parks—which wander the mountains and forests of the Pure Lands in large groups. These savage creatures are fiercely territorial and capable of great feats of strength. They have a taste for man-flesh, and often attack caravans and even fortified towns to feed on human beings.

The Purity Corp maintains a strong hold on the Pure Lands. Squads of Purist Enforcers regularly patrol the roads and mountain passes that link towns and outposts throughout the region. These Enforcers also carry out scouting and recon missions in search of undiscovered and unclaimed bunker complexes within the boundaries of the Pure Lands. In addition, Enforcer squads remain vigilant against incursions into their territory; United Combine caravans and couriers constantly try to sneak through the Pure Lands to provide the Combine's isolated north and south settlements with the resources they need to survive. However, the Purity Corp isn't just concerned with *maintaining* the boundaries of the Pure Lands—they're constantly looking for opportunities to expand their borders in all directions. The strongest resistance to this campaign of expansion is found along the northern, southern and eastern borders, where established

U.C. settlements (and nonaligned factions) fight tooth and nail for every inch of territory and resources they have. Non-Purist settlements on the western borders of the Pure Lands are less common, due to the large pockets of radiated land and toxic pools in that region.

Even with the many obstacles they face, the Purity Corp is slowly expanding to the east. Rumors have recently spread through non-Purist settlements that the Purity Corp has unearthed a number of military bunker complexes in the eastern lands, and has managed to restore to working order much of the fabled technology of the Ancient world.

Purity Corp

Background Options: Visionary Reinventor.

Attitude: The people of the Purity Corp believe that in the last days before the Fall, an abominable mixing of races led to a pollution of the species that only magnified man's weaknesses. They now attempt to erase the genetic mistakes of Ancient-era man through selective breeding and ethnic segregation, and through the destruction of all mutants.

Symbol: The Purity Corp use a high-tech circle to ring a Smokey figure with ten lines extending from the center, ending in orbs which represent various "pure" races and creeds.

Common Classes: Soldier, Survivalist, Tinker, Mech, Mutant Hunter.

Common Mutations: Autism, Neural Mutation.

Common Defects: Bilirubin Imbalance, Sickle Cells.

The Purity Corp is a clan of hardliners that left the United Combine many years ago to forge a new society based on strength and terror. In the years since the Fall, the descendants of Alexander Cole have twisted his teachings into oppressive policies that resemble the segregationist laws of the early-to-mid 20th-century United States. Citizens are taught that ethnic purity and the preservation of racial bloodlines are parts of the natural order on which societal stability depends. Those caught engaging in sexual acts with members of a different bloodline are subjected to public flogging. The practice of corporal punishment has been effective at maintaining order in the Pure Lands; racial segregation is mandatory in all Purist settlements.

Males are required to serve in the Purist Liberation Army for life. This policy isn't open to debate; any male who fails to wear the traditional uniform of the Purist Liberation Army at all times is considered a deserter, imprisoned, and publicly whipped. Uniforms vary in style, depending on the army division in which the Purist serves, but earth-tones and dark colors predominate. Everyone in the army receives a standard set of equipment that includes flares, a fire-starting kit, ready-meals, a backpack, canteen, potassium iodide tablets, water purification tablets, bedroll, blanket, change of clothing, two ready-syringes, a personal sidearm, and an assault rifle. Officers receive the same gear, but are issued more advanced (maser or laser) weaponry.

The average technology level in Purist settlements is higher than in any other faction in the Northwest (with the possible exception of the People's Army). The Purists presently have upwards of ten partially-restored M-2 *Jackson* hover-tanks in active use, and are rumored to be doing repair and restoration work on another ten to fifteen such vehicles. The average foot soldier carries assault weapons and explosives into combat and is protected by advanced body armor. A few assault troops even use powered armor suits, and it's rumored that Purist military engineers and robotics technicians are hard at work on a new type of piloted weapons platform.

Allegiance to the Purity Corp carries the price of being permanently branded with its insignia on the left forearm. Accepting the tattoo is an act symbolic of one's devotion to the unity and ideals of the faction. Of course, these tattoos also tell the enemies of the Corp precisely whom they are dealing with. Even if one manages to leave the Purity Corp, the mark they bear affects their dealings with others for the rest of their lives.

Severing one's allegiance to the Purity Corp can be dangerous. The Purists do more than just blacklist these "traitors"—they hunt them down, bring them back to Zog, and publicly execute them as a warning to anyone else who might be considering striking off on their own or shifting allegiance elsewhere. The Purist slogan "*pure for life"* means exactly that. In some cases, entire towns have been burned to the ground and the citizens forced into the Purity Corp simply because they harbored individuals that tried to leave the faction. Despite the extreme measures taken against those who desert the clan, people choose to leave almost every day.

Unfortunately for such deserters, even if they do manage to escape the Corp's vengeance, they are not welcome in many settlements and towns outside the Pure Lands. Self-governing communities like Scappoose, Fort Boise, Bone City, and even Beavertown occasionally accept Purist refugees, but should anyone come looking for the deserters, the people of these towns don't hesitate to protect their own interests—even if it means the refugees die.

The Purity Corp considers *mutants* to be sub-human beings fit only for slavery. Purist scientists have examined dead mutants and have produced a (wildly inaccurate) theory that mutant are humans who have fallen victim to some new type of disease—possibly as a result of fraternization with members of different races. This wild hypothesis has molded attitudes towards mutants in settlements all across the Pure Lands. Those who show signs of mutation are stripped of all property and possessions and are enslaved.

As a rule of thumb, the general attitudes of Purists towards other factions in the Northwest are as follows.

United Combine: Most Purists see the U.C. as a band of weaklings shackled to out-moded ideals. By the laws of natural selection, the Combine deserves to be conquered and made to serve the stronger Purist cause. The only people who think differently are those enslaved by the Purists, but such unfortunates have no real voice in the faction.

Note: Characters who are slaves do not necessarily hold

Allegiance Notes – Purity Corp

To sum up, choosing an allegiance with the Purity Corp comes with the following benefits and drawbacks:

Access to Equipment: All beginning male Purist characters acquire a Remington 700 hunting rifle during character creation. In addition, a Purist character may requisition ammunition, weapons, and supplies at any time (without having to barter for them) as long as he can prove that the requested equipment is vital to his duties as a soldier in the Purist Liberation Army. Requisitioning equipment in this fashion must be done by dealing with a Purist supply officer.

Restricted Allegiance: Selecting the Purity Corp as an allegiance is a choice that stays with the character for the rest of his life, whether he likes it or not. Characters begin play with a tattoo on each forearm that forever marks them as Purists, and which greatly affects their dealings with other people in the Northwest. Characters who leave the Purity Corp for any reason are branded as traitors and can expect to be hunted down and executed if captured.

Extreme Mutant Intolerance: Mutants characters that choose an alliance with the Purity Corp must also take the *Slave* occupation, as well as a second allegiance to a faction or city outside the Purity Corp during character creation.

to the beliefs and ideals of the people who are hold them in bondage. Characters who begin play as slaves should be allowed to choose from the standard list of factional allegiances. On the other hand, just because a character is a slave doesn't necessarily mean that he hates the people who enslaved him; the character may have spent all of his life in bondage and know no other life but that of a slave's. Such characters may have become so indoctrinated into the Purist way of life that they feel a twisted sort of kinship with the faction

Hand of Jehovah: Purists have a love/hate relationship with the Hand of Jehovah. On one hand, they respect the zealots for their courage in leaving the United Combine and pursuing their own way of life. But on the other hand, Purists consider the Hand of Jehovah a bunch of "loonies" who take their religion to an unhealthy extreme. If these fanatics would just open their minds to the possibility, an alliance with the Purity Corp would tip the balance of the War of the Remnants. However, given the Hand of Jehovah's close-mindedness and the Purity Corp's disdain, such an alliance is unlikely to come about any time soon.

People's Army: The Tillamook Traders are a clan worthy of both respect and heavy scrutiny. In the eyes of the Purists, these strange-looking people are a potential threat that will eventually have to be dealt with—especially now that they willingly supply the U.C. via airships that cannot be intercepted. For the time being, however, they provide the Corp with supplies and equipment that would be otherwise unavailable due to the Northwest's current socio-political situation, and so the Purity Corp grudgingly tolerates them.

Chinook Indians (and other Indian groups): In the eyes of the average Purist, these "backwards" people are little better than mutants or horned baboons. The Corp has recently begun dispatching slave-hunting squads into the southern reaches of Chinook territory (as well as into the forests of the reclusive Lelooska) with orders to round up as many "tribals" as possible and bring them back to the slave pens.

Pale Riders: The Purists have had only extremely limited dealings with this band of mutant raiders. Since few Purist forces have been able to cross the Columbia, Fort Boise is the only place at which contact with the Pale Riders has occurred.

River Folk: Hostile engagements with River Runners along the Columbia River are a daily fact of life. No Purist has any dealings with the River Runners that don't end in (or begin with) bloodshed.

Sentinels: No member of the Purity Corp has ever been officially allowed inside Crater City (although some say that Purist spies have managed to infiltrate the "great dome"). Those caught trying to sneak in are imprisoned and held indefinitely as prisoners of war. Purists see the Sentinels as puppets of the United Combine, and treat them accordingly.

Fort Boise: Jeremiah Cole has recently sent delegates to initiate talks with the independent town of Fort Boise, far to the east. He keeps his motives ultra-secret, but there are rumors coming out of Battle Ground of great trains, loaded with Purist weapons and soldiers, spotted en route to the distant mutant-controlled city.

Bone City: Bone City is another sovereign settlement that, if rumors from scouts and spies are true, the Purists would like to see burned to the ground. Unfortunately for the Corp, a campaign against Bone City is out of the question—it lies on the eastern edge of territory claimed by the Hand of Jehovah. For the time being, Jeremiah is content to let the city be, waiting to see what (if anything) Solomon does about these "bone traders."

Beavertown: Purists don't know a lot about Beavertown. It is rumored that the city is a haven for Purist deserters, refugees, and others with no other place to go in the Northwest, and so the Corp eyes it with suspicion. Fortunately for the city, it lies just south of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome, and Jeremiah is unwilling to risk the dangers of a trek through that place just to hunt down defectors.

Typical Purity Corp

Low-Level Purist Enforcer (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/Dedicated Hero 1): CR 2; Medium-size human; HD 1d8+1d6+2; hp 10; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 class); BAB +0; Grap

+1; Atk +1 melee (1d3+1, nonlethal, unarmed) or +1 melee (1d6+1, rifle butt); Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed), or +3 ranged (2d10, Remington 700); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Skill Emphasis* (knowledge, mutant lore), Survival Sense; AL Purity Corp; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; AP 6; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Climb +3, Demolitions +1, Hide +3, Knowledge (ancient lore) +2, Knowledge (mutant lore) +7*, Knowledge (tactics) +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Navigate +1, Search +4, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +4, Survival +4, Treat Injury +4.

Feats: Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Remington 700, 40 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, fragmentation grenade, rad tab, five ready meals, two light rods, two salt pills, two potassium iodide tablets, various other gear and personal possessions.

Mid-Level Purist Enforcer (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/ Dedicated Hero 4/Soldier 1): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 1d8+4d6+1d10+6; hp 30; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +5 class, +3 undercover vest); BAB +3; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, nonlethal, unarmed) or +4 melee (1d6+1, rifle butt); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed), or +7 ranged (2d10, Remington 700); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Aware, Cool Under Pressure (climb, demolitions, hide, move silently, treat injury), Skill Emphasis* (knowledge, mutant lore), Survival Sense; AL Purity Corp; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +4; AP 9; Rep +2; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Climb +3, Demolitions +3*, Disable Device +2*, Hide +6, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (ancient lore) +2, Knowledge (mutant lore) +8*, Knowledge (tactics) +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Navigate +1, Search +4, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +4, Survival +8, Treat Injury +8.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Cautious*, Far Shot, Lightning Reflexes, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Remington 700).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Undercover vest, Remington 700, 40 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, fragmentation grenade, rad tab, five ready meals, two light rods, two salt pills, two potassium iodide tablets, various other gear and personal possessions.

High-Level Purist Enforcer (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/ Dedicated Hero 4/Soldier 5): CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 1d8+4d6+5d10+10; hp 51; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 26, touch 20, flat-footed 23 (+3 Dex, +7 class, +6 tactical vest); BAB +6; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d3+2, nonlethal, unarmed) or +8 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +10/+5 ranged (2d10/19-20, Remington 700); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Aware, Cool Under Pressure (climb, demolitions, hide, move silently, treat injury), Skill Emphasis* (knowledge, mutant lore), Survival Sense, Tactical Aid; AL Purity Corp; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +5; AP 11; Rep +3; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Climb +4, Demolitions +5*, Disable Device +2*, Drive +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (ancient lore) +2, Knowledge (current events) +2, Knowledge (mutant lore) +8*, Knowledge (tactics) +10, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Navigate +4, Search +4, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +4, Survival +8, Treat Injury +8.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Cautious*, Far Shot, Improved Critical (Remington 700), Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Remington 700), Weapon Specialization (Remington 700).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Tactical vest, Remington 700, 40 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, two fragmentation grenades, smoke grenade, rad tab, five ready meals, two light rods, two salt pills, two potassium iodide tablets, holographic image projector, power cell, various other gear and personal possessions.

Jeremiah Cole. If there ever was a man worth killin' he would be it. I've read data files about his ancestor, Alexander Cole, and from what I can tell, the two men have very different ideologies. Jeremiah has managed to take the fiery rhetoric of Alexander and twist it into a manifesto of racism and hate. From what I understand, life in the Pure Lands isn't much better than slavery, unless of course you happen to have the same skin tone as the ruling faction: the Nubians.

Jeremiah manages to keep his people in line by feeding their lust for blood. When his troops aren't out campaigning against a settlement or stirring up trouble with the River Folk, Jeremiah has them watching ancient war movies or engaging in the blood sports of the Pits. The whole society seems to be fixated on violence and racial supremacy.

If the Purists manage to win this war, nobody is ever going to be safe again.

- Duncan Clark

Jeremiah's Future

Jeremiah Cole is personally obsessed with racial purity, but his tendency to favor his own race over all others has caused many observers—including his own people—to wonder if the "respected leader" is at heart just another racist. Many ethnic groups among the Purists who once believed in his message of racial segregation now believe that Cole has twisted the Purity Corp into a monstrous entity in which Nubians rule—and all others *serve*.

Cole senses the growing dissent and has become increasingly paranoid in response to it. He will do virtually anything to stay in power, and to keep control of the Purity Corp in the hands of his Nubian people. But even to his fellow Nubians, the writing on the wall is clear: Cole's days are numbered. Even among his own family there is talk of deposing Jeremiah before the spreading discontent ignites an open rebellion that the Nubian race might not survive.

People of Note

Jeremiah Cole

Jeremiah Cole grew up inside the Eden bunker complex listening to the elders tell stories about life before the Fall. He grew into adolescence with his own vision of what life would be like on the outside, and dreamed of the day when people would finally adopt the teachings of his great-great-great grandfather, Alexander Cole. Jeremiah thought he understood why things weren't already like that inside the bunker—in the bunker, survival was paramount, and people had to live a certain way in order to survive. The white people who ran the complex did so because they had always done so; it was just how things were. When they all went up to the surface, things would change. Jeremiah had to believe that they would.

But things didn't change—at least, not the way he wanted them to. Not at first.

By the time Eden was founded, Jeremiah had seen seventeen cycles pass inside the bunker. When everyone finally emerged into the wilds of the Northwest, the young man already had two wives (of suitable ethnic heritage) and a following of people who had come to share his beliefs. They bided their time for the first harvest season until a measure of stability was achieved.

But when he saw that the leaders of the faction that had begun calling itself the "United Combine" weren't going to adopt his ancestor's values, Jeremiah called the Council of the Remnants and demanded that Douglas Reinhart explain why the Purity Corp wasn't being given its proper respect. The council session quickly degenerated into a shouting match. Promises of vengeance were barked out as Jeremiah and the enigmatic Solomon stormed out of the building. Jeremiah led those loyal to him to the lush mountain valleys where they hoped to establish a new and prosperous order. They settled in the shadow of Mt. St. Helens, effectively cutting the United Combine in half, and founded Zog, the capital city of what soon came to be known as the Pure Lands.

Jeremiah Cole (Charismatic Hero 3/Demagogue 7): CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 10d6+20; hp 55; Mas 14; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+0 Dex, +3 class); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3+2, nonlethal, unarmed), or +4 ranged (2d8, FA Casull); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Captivate Masses, Conversion, Coordinate, Fast-Talk*, Followers, Inspiration, Greater Inspiration, Lead Followers, Zealots; AL Purity Corp; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +8; AP 11; Rep +9; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Occupation and Background: Demagogue, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Bluff +10*, Diplomacy +17*, Gamble +3*, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (civics) +7, Knowledge (current events) +9, Knowledge (history) +9*, Knowledge (philosophy and theology) +11*, Listen +5*,

Sense Motive +13, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +5*.

Feats: Alertness*, Educated (history, philosophy and theology)*, Iron Will, Leadership, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: FA Casull, 15 rounds of .50AE ammunition, magnetic shield B, power beltpack, holographic image projector, power cell.

The Hand of Jehovah

History

Of all the societies of the Northwest, perhaps the most ideologically radical is the Hand of Jehovah. This extremely religious sect is dedicated to uniting the peoples of the Northwest under the banner of God by whatever means necessary. They follow the teachings and guidance of a man known as "Solomon," the self-appointed leader of the Hand of Jehovah and High Cleric of the Church of the Remnants. When the group seceded from the United Combine and left Eden, Solomon guided the sect southeast out of the land once known as British Columbia and into the Cascades of northeastern Washington. They settled in a remote valley high in the mountains near a lake with water clean enough to drink. It was there that Enoch was founded.

Over the years, the settlement of Enoch has grown into a thriving township and the religious capital of the Hand of Jehovah. New communities loyal to the Hand of Jehovah have sprung up in the lands around Enoch. Working together under Solomon's direction, these communities have extended the faction's dominance over much of eastern Washington.

The Hand of Jehovah has grown increasingly xenophobic in the long years since they broke from the United Combine. The religion that inspired its people to leave the United Combine is now an all-encompassing way of life—one that its followers would like to see lived out in every town, village and bunker complex in the known world. Hand of Jehovah citizens live very simple lives, shunning much of the technology of the Ancient world (with the exception of ancient advanced weaponry, which, they rationalize, helps to preserve their way of life).

Solomon maintains a military force of warriors called Templars and posts detachments to each town under his control. The Templars keep the peace and protect the citizens from outside threats. Commanded by Solomon's son Isaac, the Templars are fanatically loyal to Solomon, whom they revere as a modern-day prophet. Isaac himself is a strong leader who believes that peace can only be maintained through force (or the threat of it). To complement the Templars, Isaac has created a smaller group of special operatives he calls Inquisitors.

Temples form the cornerstone of every hand of Jehovah settlement, and it is in these structures that Inquisitors are stationed. Their purpose is to investigate any signs of blasphemous behavior and deal with anyone found to be in violation of the "laws of God." Inquisitors are also responsible for investigating bunker sightings and for sending out missionaries to other communities throughout the Northwest.

Missionary Work

The philosophy of conversion is taken very seriously in the Hand of Jehovah, even to the point of fanaticism. Solomon has taken it upon himself to launch a religious crusade throughout the Northwest. Companies of Templars and Crusaders travel the region, mapping the locations of settlements they find and bringing the word of God to whomever they encounter.

Hand of Jehovah missionary expeditions deal with each town they find in the same manner. If, after talking with its inhabitants, they are allowed to set up a temple there, the missionaries begin construction immediately and the settlement is brought under the protection of the Hand of Jehovah. The town is added to the supply network, agreements on church donations are reached, people are recruited for service as Templars or Crusaders, and life goes on. If, however, a town's inhabitants respond negatively towards the missionaries' overtures, the group leaves and sends word to Solomon and Isaac that a hostile community has been located. The final decision on whether or not to launch a crusade against the town in question is left up to Solomon.

Towns targeted for forced conversion are attacked relentlessly until they surrender and agree to join the Hand of Jehovah, or until all its inhabitants have been killed. In Solomon's mind, there can be no compromise; to him, this is nothing short of a war between Good and Evil. Heathen settlements either join the fold or stoke the fires of Hell—it's their choice. To date, missionaries have been sent only to fringe communities in the Northwest; large factions like the Purity Corp and United Combine are left alone. Solomon knows that he doesn't have the military strength to challenge either faction… yet.

Hand Of Jehovah

Background Options: Visionary Reinventor.

Attitude: The worship of God has all but been extinguished on the Twisted Earth, and the savageries spawned by the necessities of survival have turned former friends into hateful enemies and blasphemers. In the face of apostasy and wickedness, the Hand of Jehovah perseveres untainted, ready to re-introduce God's message to a world cleansed by nuclear fire.

Symbol: The symbol of the Hand of Jehovah is a stylized black cross, over which has been superimposed the fiery

Allegiance Notes - Hand of Jehovah

To sum up, choosing an allegiance with the Hand of Jehovah comes with the following benefits and drawbacks:

Restricted Allegiance: Pledging allegiance to the Hand of Jehovah is more than just a political statement—it's a commitment to a centuries-old ideology and way of life . Characters who change allegiances are considered to have sold their souls to "Scrag" and are worse than even mutants in the eyes of the Hand of Jehovah. Such defectors risk being crucified or burned alive at the hands of the Red Brigade if captured.

Limited Access to Technology: Characters who choose this allegiance are limited in the equipment and weapons they can purchase. Starting characters may take only primitive weapons (most simple melee weapons, and no ranged weapons more advanced than a black powder rifle), and are limited to certain types of armor. Junk armor is allowed, but advanced armor such as kevlar, energy field generators, and powered armor is prohibited by the character's belief system.

hand of God.

Common Classes: Demagogue, Guardian, Templar, Crusader, Mutant Hunter.

Common Mutations: Autism, Neural Mutation.

Common Defects: Bilirubin Imbalance, Hemophilia.

Life as a member of the Hand of Jehovah is rough. The faction sees itself as God's chosen, guided through the aftermath of the Fall and held together by divine providence in preparation for the day they would emerge from the bunker complexes and rebuild civilization in the way that God intended. This ideology may seem strange to those who aren't members of the Hand of Jehovah, but for true believers, it's more than just an ideal—it's an absolute and undeniable reality.

The cult shuns much of the advanced technology of the Ancients, believing it the result of the great fallen demon Scrag's influence upon the masses during the "End Times." The believers who comprise the Hand of Jehovah are descended from numerous branches of highly religious folk who balked at the bio-domes and the "immoral" technology associated with them. Their ancestors pursued holy lives before being forced to enter the bio-domes (collectively referred to by many of them as "The Great Babylon") to survive; later, at the height of mankind's "madness," they fled from the domes into the bunker complexes of the Northwest.

The average civilian member of the Hand has access to weapons no more advanced than a musket. Any man not a member of these elite groups who is caught using advanced technology is placed in a stockade until the town's head Inquisitor decides that the offender has atoned for his sins. Women caught using advanced technology are publicly beaten and forced to wear a mark labeling them as a "Whore of Ancient Babylon."

Many members of the Hand of Jehovah are excellent carpenters and blacksmiths, and the faction boasts a large number of especially adept farmers. They can make almost anything grow in the land around their settlements. The women are well versed in natural remedies and make excellent nurses.

Conversion is a very important part of life for members of the Hand of Jehovah. Demagogues travel from settlement to settlement preaching the word of God and working to gain footholds in each new community they find. Most communities are given a choice—either accept the religion and allow the Hand of Jehovah to take a direct role in the affairs of the town, or reject the faith and risk *forced* conversion.

Those who do accept the faith are brought into the fold as brothers and sisters and treated as if they had always been believers. Allegiance to the Hand of Jehovah allows characters unrestricted access to all towns allied with the sect. Each member is given a monthly ration of food and supplies, provided they are working to serve the church. Those who don't do their part to support the church receive a sermon about the fruits of labor and a reminder of the "Son of Man's" famous teaching that *"you shall know them by their works."* Members are required to "donate" to the local temple food, clothing, medicines and anything else that can be put to use by the sect. In return, they receive enough food and supplies to support themselves and their families.

Those who have been *forcibly* converted are treated as wayward souls and are subjected to an indefinite indoctrination period, during which time they endure endless sermons about the evils of their past way of life. These people are forced to work in the town doing menial labor, and are given only plain white sheets and sandals to wear, marking them as "converts". At the end of the indoctrination period, converts are given a choice between baptism by blood or by fire—without any explanation given. Those who choose "blood" are taken to the nearest body of water, baptized, and welcomed into the fold. Those who choose "fire" are burned at the stake as agents of Scrag.

Hand of Jehovah members look at all other people in the Northwest (with the exception of mutants) equally. People of all factions, whether they be the United Combine, the Purity Corp, or the People's Army are given the same choice: convert, or be converted.

As a rule of thumb, the general attitudes of the Hand of Jehovah towards other factions in the Northwest are as follows:

United Combine: At the Convention of the Remnants, Solomon was ridiculed for his zealous beliefs—but even more insulting, it seemed that the United Combine simply didn't care whether or not Solomon and his fanatics left Eden. The memory of the day has never left him. Enraged by the treatment he received at the convention, Solomon

pursues a thinly-veiled policy of hate towards the United Combine. Solomon has always seen the U.C. as a misguided faction in dire need of the presence of Jehovah in their lives, and over the years, this mindset has come to define the Hand's attitude towards the Combine.

The priesthood of the Hand of Jehovah does not openly preach hatred of the United Combine; that would run contrary to the many biblical passages which promote love and peace. Instead, they paint the U.C. as "wayward souls" who come dangerously close to being agents of Scrag.

Purity Corp: As the Hand of Jehovah sees it, the Purists aren't much better than the United Combine. Jeremiah Cole has made no secret of the fact that he thinks Solomon and his followers are a bunch of fanatics. This attitude has spread throughout the Pure Lands, and makes any chance encounters between members of the two factions extremely tense. Citizens of Ephrata have the most contact with Purists hailing from Cayuse Pass. Conflicts between the two towns occasionally flare up, but in general the people of the Purity Corp and the Hand of Jehovah leave each other alone.

People's Army: The Hand of Jehovah doesn't trust the strangers from old Oregon and their flying machines. Solomon has refused the Tillamook Traders' requests to set up trading outposts in Hand of Jehovah territory for fear that it is a ruse designed to lull his hard-working people into a complacent state of dependence on the People's Army. Even worse, the Tillamook Traders offer items for sale that Solomon believes bear the taint of Scrag. Trading caravans moving through Hand of Jehovah territory are always monitored by Templar patrols.

Chinook Indians (and other Indian groups): The average member of the Hand of Jehovah tends to view the Chinook and other native tribes in the region as backwards heathens who worship demons. Solomon, in his arrogance, has recently placed the Chinook and other tribes of the Northwest at the top of his list of groups to convert. Demagogues have been sent out to known tribal settlements to preach the word of God to these "heathens;" the fact that none of them have returned doesn't bode well for the native tribes. If Solomon comes to believe that these "heathens" have killed his missionaries, he won't hesitate to launch a campaign of forced conversion.

Pale Riders: Solomon has recently sent select units of the Red Brigade south across the Columbia River into the Desiccated Wastes to verify the rumors of this raider group. It is only a matter of time before the Red Brigade comes across an outlying mutant settlement. The initial meeting of the minions of Solomon and mutantkind will likely be enough to spark a second war in the Lost Paradise.

River Folk: The Hand of Jehovah has limited contact with River Folk. Generally speaking, the two factions tend to "live and let live," although Solomon would like to eventually see the River Folk (and their watercraft) brought into the fold. However, they are low on his list at the moment. River Folk tend to keep the Hand of Jehovah at arm's length, but will provide passage to zealots who promise to keep their beliefs to themselves.

Sentinels: Solomon has been considering sending spies to the home of the Sentinels to gain more information about the famed dome city of the Ancients. The problem with such a plan is that the journey is long and runs deep into U.C. territory. For the time being, the capital of the Sentinels will have to remain something of an enigma. As for the faction, the Hand of Jehovah sees them as puppets of the United Combine. Despite official disdain for the Sentinels, many members of the Hand of Jehovah secretly admire the faction for its proven dedication to helping those in need of aid.

Fort Boise: Fort Boise will have to be dealt with eventually, but Solomon's army isn't yet large enough for the task. For the time being, Demagogues keep watch on the city and report any noteworthy developments to Solomon. All other contact with the city is off-limits; Solomon has proclaimed that any member of the sect found to have dealings with Fort Boise will face the full wrath of the Inquisition before being burned as an agent of Scrag.

Bone City: As Solomon sees it, Bone City is the antithesis of everything for which the Hand of Jehovah stands. Plans are already underway for a conversion of Bone City, although Solomon is less interested in converting the city than he is in cleansing the earth of its evil presence. No contact whatsoever is allowed with this city—not that any true member of the Church of the Remnants would even consider it.

Beavertown: Not much is known about this settlement, but as far as the Hand of Jehovah is concerned, Beavertown (if the rumors are true) is just one more town on a growing list of settlements that need to be purified in the name of Jehovah.

Typical Hand of Jehovah

Low-Level Hand of Jehovah Guardian (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/Dedicated Hero 1): CR 2; Medium-size human; HD 1d8+1d6+2; hp 10; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 class); BAB +0; Grap -1; Atk -1 melee (1d3-1, nonlethal, unarmed) or -1 melee (1d6-1, rifle butt); Full Atk -1 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, unarmed), or +2 ranged (2d4, AR-7 Explorer); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Conserve, Skill Emphasis* (knowledge, religion); AL Hand of Jehovah; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +5; AP 6; Rep +0; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Occupation and Background: Herdsman, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Knowledge (ancient lore) +1, Knowledge (religion) +7*, Listen +4, Profession (any) +6, Navigate +1, Ride +6, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +4, Survival +4.

Feats: Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: AR-7 Explorer, 32 rounds of .22 ammunition, light rod, various other gear and personal possessions.

Mid-Level Hand of Jehovah Guardian (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/Dedicated Hero 4/Guardian 1): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 1d8+4d6+1d10+6; hp 30; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 18, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +5 class); BAB +4; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3-1, nonlethal, unarmed) or +3 melee (1d6-1, rifle butt); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, unarmed), or +7 ranged (2d4, AR-7 Explorer); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Conserve, Defender +2, Faith, Skill Emphasis* (knowledge, religion); AL Hand of Jehovah; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +6; AP 9; Rep +2; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Occupation and Background: Herdsman, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Knowledge (ancient lore) +1, Knowledge (religion) +7*, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Listen +9*, Profession (any) +6, Navigate +1, Ride +6, Sense Motive +8, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +9*, Survival +4.

Feats: Alertness*, Dead Aim, Far Shot, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: AR-7 Explorer, 32 rounds of .22 ammunition, light rod, various other gear and personal possessions.

High-Level Hand of Jehovah Guardian (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/Dedicated Hero 4/Guardian 5): CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 1d8+4d6+5d10+10; hp 56; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 22, touch 20, flat-footed 19 (+3 Dex, +7 class, +2 leather armor); BAB +8; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d3-1, nonlethal, unarmed) or +7 melee (1d6-1, rifle butt); Full Atk +7 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, unarmed), or +12/+7 ranged (2d10, Remington 700); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Conserve, Defender +2, Faith, Skill Emphasis* (knowledge, religion), Tactical Aid; AL Hand of Jehovah; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +7; AP 11; Rep +3; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Occupation and Background: Herdsman, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Intimidate +8, Knowledge (ancient lore) +1, Knowledge (religion) +7*, Knowledge (tactics) +6, Listen +11*, Profession (any) +6, Navigate +1, Ride +6, Sense Motive +10, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +11*, Survival +4.

Feats: Alertness*, Armor Proficiency (light), Dead Aim, Far Shot, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Quick Reload, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Remington 700), Weapon Specialization (Remington 700).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Leather armor, Remington 700, 40 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, light rod, various other gear and personal possessions.

People of Note

Solomon

The leader of the Hand of Jehovah is widely thought to be the least sane human being in the Northwest. It wouldn't be so bad if he were just religious. After all, most people in the Northwest have faith in *some* sort of entity; faith in something, anything, is part of what gets people through hard times (and there are a lot of hard times these days). But Solomon isn't just religious; he's a fanatic, and even worse, people *believe* the things he says.

Solomon has managed to carve out a small kingdom in the northeastern reaches of the Lost Paradise, a kingdom built on the blood and misery of those who refused to convert

Solomon. This guy is just crazy. Nuff' said.

- Duncan Clark

People tell stories about a man who wanders the wilds of the Northwest, preaching to settlers about an Ancient god. They say he's an older man, powerfully built with a clean-shaven head, a long white goatee, and the image of an upside-down cross branded on his right cheek. He wears a tattered black robe over a bloodstained white cloak, and carries a variety of weapons which he uses to rain devastation down on the heads of those he perceives as "evil." If you are a mutant, they say, get as far away from him as possible—rumor has it that he tends to crucify their kind and burn 'em alive.

- Duncan Clark

and fell victim to his crusades. Solomon believes that what he does is right and good for all people of faith. The sad irony is that he has managed to twist a virtuous belief system into something that any sane person would consider *evil*.

Many people have perished under Solomon's rule, and if his leadership and religious zeal continue, many more will follow in their footsteps.

Solomon (Post-Apocalyptic Hero 3/ Demagogue 10/ Templar of Jehovah 7): CR 20; Medium-size human; HD 10d8+10d6+20; hp 100; Mas 19; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 26, touch 18, flat-footed 26 (+8 class, +8 plate mail); BAB +12; Grap +12; Atk +13 melee (1d8+1, longsword); Full Atk +13/+8/+3 melee (1d8+1, longsword); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Blessing, Captivate Masses, Commanding Tone, Conversion, Craft Holy Weapon, Followers, Frightful Presence, Historian*, Improved Zealots, Lead Followers, Mass Conversion, Smite Infidel, Survival Sense, Zealots; AL Hand of Jehovah; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +17; AP 16; Rep +11; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Occupation and Background: Cleric, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Bluff +14, Diplomacy +12, Gamble +6*, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +20*, Knowledge (ancient lore) +4*, Knowledge (current events) +13, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) +25, Listen +6, Perform (oration) +28, Read/Write (Ancient), Research +11, Sense Motive +14, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +6.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Confident*, Improved Damage Threshold (x2), Iron Will, Leadership, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Super Charismatic.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Plate mail, "holy" long sword (+1), holographic image projector, power cell.

Abel

Abel was once a high-ranking Templar in Solomon's army. He held a command position in Moses Lake, and at one point was poised to become an Inquisitor—but that all changed when he met one of Solomon's wives.

Karen was in Moses Lake with a contingent of Templars to collect monthly donations from surrounding settlements and to take them back to Enoch for redistribution. Problems cropped up with a few of the expedition's wagons and their departure was delayed for two days. Abel invited Karen to stay at his home until the wagons could be repaired, and Karen accepted. During that short period of time, the two became quite close, and while they didn't initially become romantic, a seed was planted in their hearts that would eventually erupt in scandal.

Over the next harvest season, Karen traveled as often as possible to Moses Lake under the pretense of collecting more donations. Each time, she and Abel spent hours behind the closed doors of his home. Nobody really knew for sure if the two ever committed adultery, but there was enough circumstantial evidence to give those jealous of Abel's success the ethical ammunition they needed to bring an inquisition down on his head.

Solomon himself made the trip to Moses Lake to preside

over the trial of Karen and Abel. He listened with thinly-veiled rage as each of Abel's detractors gave his account of what they had seen transpire between the two, and while there was no real proof of any wrong-doing, Solomon's mind was clouded with jealousy and spite. He convicted both of them of adultery in the eyes of God.

Abel had expected this; most people who were charged of adultery were convicted. What he didn't expect was the severity of the punishment they would both receive.

Solomon ordered Karen burned at the stake for her crime, declaring that her betrayal of Solomon was a betrayal of the entire community. For betraying the trust and failing to set an example as one of Solomon's wives, she would pay the ultimate price.

As for Abel, Solomon condemned him as a traitor and forced him to light the fires that would consume the woman he loved. He went on to strip the man of all rank and possessions, save for a weapon and enough supplies to last three days in the wilderness. After Karen's execution, Solomon banished Abel from all Hand of Jehovah lands, branding him with an upside-down cross on his left cheek.

Abel took banishment hard. Serving the Hand of Jehovah had been the only way of life he had ever known. Everyone and everything that Abel had assumed would always be there had suddenly been taken from him. As the cruelty of that fact sank in, Abel began to despair. He lost count of the days he spent wandering alone in the wastes. The pain of his branding faded, but the nearly unbearable shame remained. Each time he tried to gain entry into a Hand of Jehovah settlement, he was turned away at gunpoint.

One day Abel climbed to the top of a hill and called out to God, praying for some respite from the harsh reality of his fate. The only response he received was the howl of the wind mingled with the rumblings in his stomach. Abel cried out in anger and shook his fist at the sky… but as he turned away, he caught sight of a line of smoke rising above the trees off to his left. He scrambled toward it, but didn't get far. The arduous climb to the mountaintop had taken its toll on his weak and starving body. Abel collapsed just as he came into sight of an ancient log cabin.

The people who lived in the cabin nursed the severely malnourished man back to health. As he recovered, he taught them about the Hand of Jehovah and the ancient God that his people revered. By the time he was ready to leave, Abel understood that, although he could never return to Moses Lake, Enoch, or any other Hand of Jehovah settlement, he could still hold fast to the tenets of the faith. More importantly, Abel could do the work of God by bringing His message to the people of the wasteland.

Abel (Post Apocalyptic Hero 3/Templar of Jehovah 10/ Crusader of Jehovah 4): CR 17; Medium-size human; HD 13d8+4d10+34; hp 115; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 28, touch 20, flat-footed 27 (+1 Dex, +9 class, +8 plate mail); BAB +13; Grap +15; Atk +17 melee (1d8+2, long sword), or +15 ranged (2d10, Winchester 94); Full Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d8+2, long sword), or +15/+10/+5 ranged (2d10, Winchester 94); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Abstinence, Awesome Presence, Blessing, Commanding Tone, Conserve, Craft Holy Weapon (+2), Frightful Presence (+2), Hand of God, Smite Infidel, Survival Sense, Waste Walker*; AL Hand of Jehovah; SV Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +14; AP 14; Rep +7; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

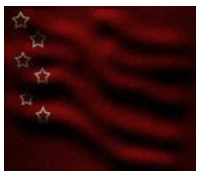
Occupation and Background: Cleric, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Concentration +12, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) +18*, Listen +5, Navigate +8*, Read/Write (Ancient), Search +5, Sense Motive +8, Speak Language (Ancient), Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +5, Survival +11*.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Cleave, Double Tap, Educated (theology and philosophy)*, Iron Will, Leadership, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Power Attack, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Winchester 94, 60 rounds of .444 ammunition, "holy" longsword (+2), plate mail, spyglass, flashlight, power cell, survival kit, horse and trappings.



Tillamook Trading Caravans

History

In the aftermath of the failed siege of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome, the battered remnants of the Communist Union of Asia invasion force retreated into the southern coastal mountain ranges of Oregon, there to lick their wounds and form some kind of plan for the future. Army leaders had received intermittent, garbled transmissions from regional command regarding tactical nuke strikes against the armies and cities of America, but the scrambled communications said nothing about where these strikes were happening, or about how hard the United States was being hit.

Most unit commanders decided to wait for more information before undertaking any new offensives. In the meantime, the remnants of the invasion force began construction of a series of bunker complexes modeled on those they had encountered during the war. These complexes would serve as fallout shelters and as base camps from which future offensives could be mounted (and to which future withdrawals could retreat).

Days became weeks, and weeks stretched into months, with still no word from Union high command. Army leaders sent platoons out on recon missions to determine the fate of the world. Many of those scouts never returned; the

ones who did bore scars from battles with the mutant shock troops that still roamed the wilds. They told horror stories of monstrous machines that prowled the wild lands, destroying any humans they found. Other scouts returned sick from exposure to radiation and bio-chemical agents. The war was over, they said. There was no use in fighting anymore. There was nobody left to fight.

The end of the world had come, they said.

This sobering reality began to set in among those who were left. A large number abandoned their posts, determined to somehow escape back across the Pacific to die with their families. Others, lacking any real hope (or realizing that a return journey across the Pacific was unlikely), simply walked off into the woods and committed suicide. Commanders had no accurate information on the number of Union troops who remained in the Northwest and Canada, but, after the desertions and deaths, they estimated that some five thousand loyal Union soldiers still survived, most of them taking refuge in hastily-constructed fallout shelters.

Contact was established with the beachhead at Astoria, where a large portion of those five thousand souls still guarded the vast supplies of food, weapons, and armor that hadn't been sent to the frontlines before the End finally came. With the supply lines open, the surviving Union troops moved much of the material back to the bunkers in preparation for their new life. Nobody had any idea how long it would be before they would be able to return to the surface world, and they weren't taking any chances. Anything that could be moved into the bunkers was; anything that couldn't be fit into the bunkers stayed in the Mao Chu'n bunker complex (named for the Chinese general who led the assault on Astoria), on massive cargo ships, or in newly-constructed storage facilities. Nothing was wasted.

While their original stock was divided equally among Russian, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, and Japanese ethnicities, as the dark years crawled on, children of mixed lineage were born inside the shelters. Male and female soldiers rejected official military policies prohibiting gender fraternization and married. They taught their offspring everything they knew about survival in the Twisted Earth; taught them hunting, shooting, and every other survival skill they knew. Eventually the first generation of Union survivors died, leaving their offspring to develop a new social order in the bunkers. Many years passed. Slowly, the descendants of the invasion forces began to emerge from the bunkers and build surface communities. The largest of these settlements was built in the ruins of Tillamook.

In the distant past, Tillamook had been home to an aviation museum. Relics of the aircraft and aviation blimps used in the Second World War were found still sitting inside aircraft hangars in near-pristine condition. Some of the People's Army, as they had begun to call themselves, developed a passion for these historic aircraft and learned how to fly them. In time, the People's Army modified the aviation balloons with larger baskets capable of holding massive amounts of cargo. They used these blimps to travel up the coastline to the Mao Chu'n bunker complex, where fellow remnants had guarded the vast stocks of precious supplies throughout the dark years. The supplies, originally intended to feed and equip an entire *army*, were far more than the People's Army needed for survival. Countless years of frugal living meant that the People's Army now had a wealth of supplies. Practical thinkers, they realized their surplus could be traded with other pockets of civilization in exchange for things that might prove useful to their own communities in the Coast Ranges.

The Tillamook trading operation started out small—just a few well-guarded traders moving east across the Coast Ranges to known settlements such as Hope. At first, the Tillamook Traders weren't well received; people in the remote towns of the Northwest were just getting on their feet. It was more common to see attackers at their gates than people offering goods for honest trade. The language barrier also proved an obstacle, as the People's Army still spoke the Asian dialect of their Union ancestors.

The traders were patient, however, and with time (and a bit of luck) the language barrier was overcome to the point where the traders could communicate with the rest of the Northwest. A few people of Asian descent were found in the Northwest villages, people who remembered the old language and who could act as translators. These people soon took on diplomatic roles and traveled with People's Army caravans as they moved from town to town. Over the years, more people learned the language of the People's Army, and the trading routes grew until the Tillamook Trading Caravans became a widely-trusted faction across the Northwest.

Trade and "The Way"

Today, the caravans of the Tillamook Traders travel to almost every part of the Northwest, maintaining a strict policy of neutrality in the often-tumultuous affairs of the various cultures they encounter. All who wish to conduct honest business are welcome in their trade outposts. Relatively open societies like the United Combine allow the traders to set up permanent shops inside towns under their control. When denied access to a particular region (such as to Hand of Jehovah territory), the traders open outposts outside the area but within range of any community members who wish to trade.

As honest and dependable as they are, the Tillamook Trading Caravans have been known to artificially raise the prices of certain goods, especially the essential ones, when the potential for profit is high. In many cases people don't have time to wait for other traders to come and offer better deals, so they pay through the teeth for supplies and equipment that they cannot do without.

The People's Army has prospered greatly through their trade operations in the Northwest. The Tillamook Trading Caravans bring in all manner of goods from distant regions, which are in turn distributed equally among members of the clan. Citizens of the People's Army still live as true *communists*, sharing every scrap of resources with each other

for the benefit of all. They don't refer to their social dynamic as "communism," however; they simply call it "The Way."

The Way is a curious amalgamation of communism and Zen upheld by all members of the People's Army. It's no elaborate manifesto; it's just a pledge to serve and protect the whole of the community and to share resources so that all may prosper. The People's Army models all communal life and business around these principles, and as a result the people have flourished. This isn't to say that the People's Army is without its share of trials and tribulations; the success of the Tillamook Trading Caravans has made a great many people jealous, and there is no shortage of people and factions who would love to seize control of People's Army caravans and supply centers.

The People's Army control of the skies is also a source of great concern to factions who view incursions into the air space above their lands as a potential threat. Such fears are not without some merit.

While the ties of kinship within the People's Army are strong, they do not extend beyond the boundaries of their towns and trading outposts. Outsiders are treated with courtesy, but are never, ever trusted. The People's Army hasn't forgotten its ancestry; they know how they came to be in this land and what their purpose was. Some say that they even know how long it has been since the fall, but that is just a rumor.

What *isn't* a rumor, however, is the military strength of the People's Army. The caravans of the Tillamook Traders are among the most heavily guarded on the Twisted Earth. Long columns of soldiers and heavy artillery escort each caravan from Tillamook to its destination and back again. Their trade outposts are nothing short of full-scale military strongholds, filled with enough supplies, weapons, and ammunition to last through a six-month siege. If the People's Army were to begin a campaign of conquest in the Northwest, many of the clans and independent peoples of the region would find themselves in for a hard fight.

People's Army

(A.K.A. "Tillamook Traders")

Background Options: Visionary Reinventor, Resurrector, Guardian.

Attitude: The Tillamook Traders view themselves as "strangers in a strange land," closer in spirit to their Asian ancestors than to the people of the Northwest. They are reclusive, but use their considerable assets to trade, in turn bringing in wealth and outside resources that keep the community alive. While they believe in profiting from outsiders, all gains made from this trade are shared equally within Tillamook lands in accordance with customs passed down by their communist ancestors.

Symbol: The Tillamook still use the pre-Fall symbol of the Communist Union of Asia, a red flag with six gold stars (representing the nations of China, Russia, Vietnam, unified Korea, and the communist revolutionary governments of Japan and the Philippines).

Common Classes: Guardian, Trader, Trade Master, Tinker, Mech, Kamikaze.

Common Mutations: Accumulated Resistance, Independent Cerebral Control.

Common Defects: Adrenaline Deficiency, Immune-System Abnormality.

The People's Army, also known as the Tillamook Traders by the people of the Northwest, is the most organized group in the region. The faction is composed entirely of descendants of the Communist Union of Asia forces that invaded the United States during the Final War.

Today the People's Army isn't merely a society of traders, despite what other factions of the Northwest think. The philosophy of The Way has been completely incorporated into the People's Army government, forming a social structure in which all people are equally deserving of basic necessities.

To the average People's Army citizen it is unfathomable that any member of the faction should have to starve or go without supplies and medicine if there is enough to go around. People serve each other, and in so doing, serve themselves. Everyone has a purpose in the clan and is expected to perform their daily duties, whether it is washing clothes, cooking food, preparing the caravans for departure, or guarding the walls of each city and outpost. Everyone works, and everyone prospers.

The People's Army doesn't allow *kaingiin* ("outsiders") to join the clan under any circumstances. Outsiders may sometimes travel with caravans, and on occasion are even hired to translate or perform other services, but none of these opportunities should be construed as any kind of invitation to join the People's Army. Only those of original Union lineage are considered *true* members. More accurately, only those who were born in a People's Army settlement are allowed membership in the faction.

Citizens who serve the People's Army as soldiers are given free access to whatever weapons and supplies happen to be in stock. There is no real discrimination with regards to who gets what, although it is commonly understood that commanders receive first pick because they hold positions of special responsibility in the clan.

Just as they do not discriminate within their society, the People's Army does not discriminate outside the clan. Everyone, including mutants, is treated equally and fairly with no exceptions. Business is, after all, business.

In general, the attitudes of the People's Army towards other factions in the Northwest are as follows:

United Combine: The People's Army has a long-standing trade relationship with the people of the United Combine. But like any alliance, this one isn't without its rocky moments. The People's Army has recently been pressured to take a more active role in the War of the Remnants, a move that General Cho is at present unwilling to make. This stance has fueled growing rumors throughout U.C. lands that the People's Army are just profiteers who care nothing about the bloodshed so long as they can make a return on the goods

Allegiance Notes – People's Army

Choosing the People's Army as an allegiance comes with the following benefits and restrictions:

Racial Prerequisite: To be aligned with the People's Army, a character must be of one of the following ethnic lineages: Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Russian, or Vietnamese (any combination of two or more of these ethnicities is also acceptable).

Access To Advanced Equipment: Characters with an allegiance to the People's Army are allowed access to the clan's vast reserves of supplies. Most of the weapons and equipment are remarkably well-preserved pre-Fall relics; between these reserves and their trade successes, the Tillamook Trading Caravans have accumulated a wealth of advanced weaponry and equipment that includes iodide tablets, hover-craft, ready syringes, and other prizes.

they barter. Others go so far as to claim that the People's Army is simply waiting for the Purity Corp and United Combine to kill each other off before launching a military campaign of its own in the Northwest. Whether or not any of this speculation is true remains to be seen. For the time being, the People's Army deals with the United Combine as it always has, and keeps its motives to itself.

Purity Corp: The People's Army and the Purity Corp have an understanding: the Tillamook Traders provide hard-to-find gear and supplies in exchange for advanced weapons and equipment otherwise unavailable outside the Pure Lands. Beyond that mutually beneficial arrangement, however, the Purists and People's Army have no reason to even talk to each other. The Purists have issues with the inter-racial marriages and breeding that seem to be the norm in the People's Army, while the latter group sees the Purists as racists who should mind their own business.

River Folk: With the exception of the Harris clan in Corvallis, the People's Army and the River Folk get along fairly well. There is a docking station on the Oregon side of Bonneville Falls where People's Army airships tie off and unload their supplies. The people of Bonneville Falls view the airships of the Tillamook Traders as a welcome site in dark times.

Chinook Indians (and other Indian groups): The Tillamook Traders have met only limited success when dealing with the tribes of the Northwest due to the extremely reclusive nature of the Indians. To trade with the native tribes, the Tillamook Traders must generally work through a "middle man" who is more often than not a Mountain Walker trusted by the natives.

Pale Riders: The Desiccated Wastes are a cause for grave concern for the People's Army. Recently, all contact with trading expeditions into Zorthag's territory has been lost, leaving the Tillamook trademasters to wonder if the Pale Riders are behind these disappearances. One of their mighty airships (and the precious cargo it carried) sent into the Desiccated Wastes has not returned to the People's Army airfield in Tillamook—a substantial loss to the Tillamook Trading Caravans.

Members of the People's Army have no peaceful dealings with the Pale Riders due to the latter's propensity to enslave pureblood humans.

Hand of Jehovah: The People's Army and the Hand of Jehovah have no formal ties with each other, although some members of the cult secretly seek out the Tillamook Traders to procure goods not otherwise available (or even allowed) in Hand of Jehovah territory.

Crater City: Crater City and the Sentinels who protect it have a solid trade relationship with the People's Army. The Sentinels may not agree with the neutral stance the traders take in regional affairs, but they can respect the decision to remain uninvolved.

Just like everyone else, members of the People's Army are not allowed inside the domed city. Traders have, however, been allowed to set up trading outposts inside the main bubble-dome at the base of Crater City.

Fort Boise: At present, Fort Boise is too distant for People's Army airships to safely reach. Trade expeditions to the mutant city begin at Bonneville Falls, where airships have permission to offload supplies onto ground transports that undertake the arduous journey through the wreckage of the Columbia Gorge. These then travel east across the Ghost Wastes of Umatilla before turning southeast, skirting the edges of Hell's Canyon and the Desiccated Wastes, finally arriving at Fort Boise.

After all of this, the people of Fort Boise tend to be wary of the People's Army, largely because there are virtually no people of Asian descent in that part of the Lost Paradise. Despite this, a People's Army diplomat has recently been given leave to stay in the city in an effort to strengthen ties between the two factions. There is still a long way to go before any modicum of trust is established between the two factions.

Bone City: When the first Tillamook Trading Caravans came to Bone City, their trademasters were horrified at the sight of human bones being bartered and sold like common goods. They left Bone City, vowing never to return. Since then, members of the People's Army avoid the city whenever possible.

Beavertown: The People's Army has sporadic dealings with the reclusive people of Beavertown. Since the people of this mutant settlement are naturally suspicious of all outsiders, trademasters have not been allowed to set up shop there. However, lone traders are sometimes allowed into Beavertown to do business, albeit only at gunpoint.

Scappoose: Scappoose is another rogue settlement in which the People's Army is only barely tolerated. Goran Sawblade is a highly paranoid individual who doesn't like the sight of well-armed companies of men mustered outside the gates of his town. Tillamook Traders are permitted to

conduct trade outside Scappoose, and are only allowed inside the city in small, unarmed groups of four or five.

Mutants: Mutants are a touchy subject in the People's Army. The Way demands that *all* members of the People's Army be considered equals, and yet mutants born into the clan in the past twenty years or so have been treated as lesser creatures by pureblood citizens. More often than not, mistreated mutants eventually become disillusioned and leave the clan. While no official policy singles out mutants for special treatment (or abuse), it is commonly accepted that, while mutants are in fact human beings (albeit in many cases horribly twisted human beings), their defects make them unworthy of the rights granted to purebloods. No diplomat or typical People's Army citizen would ever admit to this policy openly; to do so would be to bring shame upon the entire faction.

Recently, General Cho has been considering the possibility of building a segregated community for mutant members of the People's Army in the wilderness between Mao Chu'n and Tillamook. Members of the People's Army defense force have been sent into the region to scout out possible locations for such a community.

Typical People's Army

Low-Level People's Army Caravan Guard (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/Fast Hero 1): CR 2; Medium-size human; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Mas 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 class); BAB +0; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +2 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +2 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt), or +2 ranged (2d8, QBZ-95); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Evasion, Survival Sense; AL People's Army; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will -1; AP 6; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Craft (mechanical) +3, Drive +4, Knowledge (ancient lore) +3, Knowledge (current events) +3, Knowledge (tactics) +5, Listen +1, Navigate +3, Profession (any) +3, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +1, Survival +1.

Feats: Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: QBZ-95, 60 rounds of 5.8mm ammunition, rad tab, two light rods, bundle of provisions, various other gear and personal possessions.

Mid-Level People's Army Caravan Guard (Post Apocalyptic Hero 3/Fast Hero 3): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 6d8+6; hp 33; Mas 12; Init +3 Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 19, flat-footed 21* (+3 Dex, +6 class, +2 leather armor); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +6 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +6 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt), or +7 ranged (2d8, QBZ-95); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Conserve, Evasion, Survival Sense, Uncanny Dodge 1*; AL People's Army; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +1; AP 8; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Craft (mechanical) +3, Drive +4, Knowledge (ancient lore) +3, Knowledge (current events) +8, Knowledge (tactics) +10, Listen +9*, Navigate +3, Profession (any) +3, Speak Language (Trade), Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +9*, Survival +1.

Feats: Alertness*, Advanced Firearm Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Leather armor, QBZ-95, 60 rounds of 5.8mm ammunition, rad tab, two light rods, bundle of provisions, various other gear and personal possessions.

High-Level People's Army Caravan Guard (Post Apocalyptic Hero 3/Fast Hero 3/Soldier 4): CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 6d8+4d10+10 hp 59; Mas 12; Init +3 Spd 30 ft.; Defense 23, touch 21, flat-footed 23* (+3 Dex, +8 class, +2 leather armor); BAB +7; Grap +9; Atk +9 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +9 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +9/+4 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt), or +11/+6 ranged (2d8, QBZ-95); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Conserve, Evasion, Survival Sense, Uncanny Dodge 1*; AL People's Army; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +2; AP 11; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Craft (mechanical) +3, Drive +4, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (ancient lore) +3, Knowledge (current events) +8, Knowledge (tactics) +14, Listen +12*, Navigate +6, Profession (any) +3, Speak Language (Trade), Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +12*, Survival +9.

Feats: Alertness*, Advanced Firearm Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Precise Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Strafe, Weapon Focus (QBZ-95), Weapon Specialization (QBZ-95), Tactical Aid.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Leather armor, QBZ-95, 60 rounds of 5.8mm ammunition, rad tab, two light rods, bundle of provisions, various other gear and personal possessions.

Epic-Level People's Army Trade Master (Charismatic Hero 3/Trader 8/Trade Master 4): CR 15; Medium-size human; HD 15d6; hp 53, Mas 10, Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 18, flat-footed 17, (+1 Dex, +7 class); BAB +8/+3; Grap +7, Atk +7 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, unarmed), or +9 ranged (3d10, plasma pistol); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, unarmed), or +9/+4 ranged (3d10, plasma pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ

Dazzle, Fast-Talk, Ear To The Ground, Money Talks, Going Once Going Twice, Read The Signs, Sucker Born Every Minute, Distribution Network, Improved Cohort, Leadership +2, Make A Deal; AL People's Army; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +8; AP 13; Rep +11; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 16.

I've heard of this Kamikaze's exploits a number of times. If the story is true, he took his plane (I think that's the old world term for the machine he pilots) and flew it right through one of the old shuttle tubes that jut out of the old wrecked Portland domes, and shot up through another hole at the top of the dome! He must be pretty brave and skilled to do something like that. They say he was born in one of those machines. I think I've seen him flying above Hope once or twice. His plane is painted black, with the emblem of the People's Army in red. Maybe someday I'll meet him.

- Duncan Clark

Occupation and Background: Merchant, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Bluff +23*, Computer Use +9, Diplomacy +21, Disguise +5*, Gamble +3*, Gather Information +21, Intimidate +23*, Knowledge (business) +21, Knowledge (current events) +11, Navigate +9, Profession (trader) +19, Sense Motive +19, Speak Language (Trade), Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +17.

Feats: Advanced Technology, Confident*, Deceptive, Futuristic Firearms Proficiency, Leadership, Market (x2), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Renown, Silver Tongue, Trustworthy.

Possessions: Plasma pistol, two plutonium clips, language translator, power beltpack, various other gear and possessions.

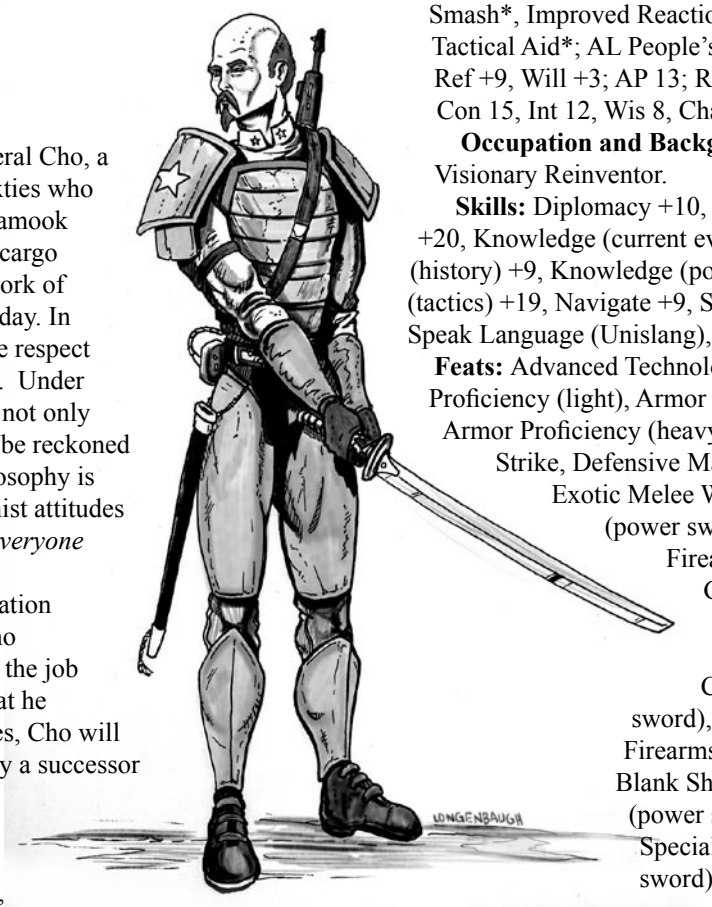
People of Note

General Cho

Tillamook is currently ruled by General Cho, a hard-nosed, astute man in his late sixties who almost single-handedly built the Tillamook Trading Caravans from a handful of cargo trains into the highly organized network of caravans and trading outposts it is today. In doing so, General Cho has earned the respect and admiration of his diverse people. Under his guidance, the People's Army has not only prospered but has become a force to be reckoned with in the region. His personal philosophy is very simple and reflects the communist attitudes of his people: *everyone works, and everyone prospers*.

General Cho has maintained his station because the people under him have no reason to believe anyone else can do the job better. If and when the day comes that he is no longer able to perform his duties, Cho will of course step down to be replaced by a successor named by the Committee. This is how it has always been, and (hopefully) how it will always be.

The general has a staff of advisors, or *kanpaku*, who keep him informed of the daily affairs in Tillamook as well as the most current news from throughout the Northwest. His *kanpaku* have direct control over specific zones of the city, be it civil defense, agriculture, or trade. They are responsible for keeping everything running smoothly, and their orders are carried out as if given by Cho himself.



General Cho (Strong Hero 5/Soldier 10): CR 15; Medium-size human; HD 5d8+10d10+30; hp 108; Mas 15; Init +5*; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 27, touch 21, flat-footed 24 (+3 Dex, +8 class, +6 military combat suit); BAB +12/+7/+2; Grap +12; Atk +13* melee (2d6+7*/18-20, power sword), or +15 ranged (2d12, pulse laser rifle); Full Atk +13/+8/+6* melee (2d6+7*/18-20, power sword), or +15/+10/+5 ranged (2d12, pulse laser rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Advanced Melee Smash*, Improved Melee Smash*, Improved Reaction*, Melee Smash*, Tactical Aid*; AL People's Army; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +3; AP 13; Rep +6; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Diplomacy +10, Drive +7, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (current events) +9, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (politics) +5, Knowledge (tactics) +19, Navigate +9, Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (Unislang), Survival +3.

Feats: Advanced Technology, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Cleave, Critical Strike, Defensive Martial Arts, Educated*, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (power sword), Futuristic Firearms Proficiency, Greater Weapon Specialization (power sword), Improved Critical (power sword), Leadership, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (power sword), Weapon Specialization (power sword).

Possessions: Military combat suit, PSM, 16 rounds of 5.45mmR ammunition, pulse laser rifle, 3 power clips, power sword, power belt pack, holographic image projector, power cell, bronze stage IIIM identity card.

Duyen Vicars

Duyen is a brash, arrogant young pilot with only one goal in life: to be the best *Kamikaze* in the history of the People's Army. His father is a trademaster stationed in an outpost just outside Olympia. Over the past few years, the two have had heated arguments over Duyen's decision to fly the rickety old planes of the Ancients. Duyen feels that he is best serving the goals of the People's Army by flying, and, much to his father's chagrin, his superiors agree. Sure, they would love to reign in the boy's impulsive behavior at times—Duyen is notorious for the risks he takes in the skies of the Northwest—but Duyen has never lost an airship placed under his protection, and that's really all that matters.

Duyen Vicars (Post Apocalyptic Hero 2/Fast Hero 2/ Kamikaze 5): CR 9; Medium-size human; HD 9d8+9; hp 50; Mas 12; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 21, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +8 class); BAB +5; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed), or +8 ranged (2d6, GSh-18), or +8 ranged (2d12, plane-mounted machinegun); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3, nonlethal, unarmed), or +8 ranged (2d6, GSh-18), or +8 ranged (2d12, plane-mounted machinegun); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Air Support (+1), Eagle Eyes, Evasion, Gut Check, Improvised Toolkit, Strafing (+1); AL People's Army; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +3; AP 10; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Airman, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Concentration +6, Craft (mechanical) +9, Craft (structural) +4, Knowledge (ancient lore) +7, Knowledge (tactics) +12, Listen +12*, Navigate +12, Pilot +15, Repair +7, Speak Language (Trade), Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +12*.

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Aircraft Operation, Alertness*, Dead Aim, Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: GSh-18, 18 rounds of 9mm ammo, maps and flight plan.

The Mountain Walkers

History

More commonly known as just 'Walkers, these rugged people are rumored to have survived the fall above ground without the protection of bunkers and fallout shelters. Whether or not this is true is subject to debate, but what cannot be disputed is the 'Walkers' knowledge of the surface world. Mountain Walkers possess a wealth of knowledge about the Northwest. They know secret paths through the mountains that are invaluable to anyone looking to move unnoticed through the territory of an enemy faction. Walkers are expert outdoorsmen, able to find edible plants and clean water in even the most radiated corners of the Northwest. They can hunt, fish, trap, and prepare animal hides for use as protective clothing.

'Walkers are by and large a solitary bunch, rarely traveling in groups unless they're guiding a group of people through the wilds. As much as people don't know about these enigmatic people, one fact is well known: they come down into settled areas to trade at certain times of the harvest cycle—right before the winter snows, at the beginning of spring, and maybe once during the summer. At any other time it's rare to even see a 'Walker. Rumors persist that the mountain men possess an almost supernatural ability to avoid detection when they want to.

Despite their tendency to live and work alone, Mountain Walkers have been known to take on apprentices. In every settlement they visit, crowds of exuberant young men (and sometimes even women) flood around the Mountain Walkers, pleading to be accepted as an apprentice. In most communities, 'Walkers are viewed as celebrities; parents consider it a great honor to have their children accepted as an apprentice to a 'Walker. Among other things, they bring highly-prized supplies and food that otherwise wouldn't be available to poor communities who can't afford the prices charged by the Tillamook Traders.

Mountain Walkers gather once during the harvest cycle for a weeklong festival called the Gathering. The Gathering is an opportunity for 'Walkers to come together, share goods, swap "fish" stories and discuss significant events across the region. The Gathering is held in a different location each harvest cycle, and though many people have heard about it, nobody who isn't a 'Walker has ever seen a Gathering with their own eyes.

Some rumors about the Gathering claim that it's some kind of religious rite in which the 'Walkers pray to old gods and offer up sacrifices in return for supernatural powers, but nobody knows for sure. The Hand of Jehovah pays especially close attention to this rumor. Some say they're the ones who started it, but in any case, the cult looks upon the 'Walkers with suspicion and avoids dealing with them.

Mountain Walkers

Background Options: Feral, Tribal, Ritual Preservationist, Resentful.

Attitude: The Mountain Walkers have by and large given up on trying to rebuild the past, and now merely eek out a living among the mountains and forests of the world. Sometimes they can be convinced to help a community in need of a guide or information about the mountains, but beyond that they prefer to remain neutral in all things.

Symbol: The Mountain Walkers have adopted a symbol derived from the patches worn by park rangers of the

Ancient era.

Common Classes: Juju Doctor, Scav, Survivalist, Symbiote, Trader, Mountain Walker.

Common Mutations: Accumulated Resistance, Hyper Olfactory.

Common Defects: Brachydactyly, Negative Chemical Reaction.

Allegiance Notes - Mountain Walker

The Mountain Walker allegiance carries with it the following benefits and restrictions:

Neutrality: Because Mountain Walkers tend to be reclusive and stay out of the affairs of the people of the Northwest, they lose all allegiances to other factions. The way of the mountain man has shown them the "truth," and the politics of the various competing factions no longer seem to matter as much as they once did.

No Equipment Restrictions: Characters with an allegiance to the Mountain Walker clan may begin play with any weapons and equipment they can afford (and are able to use).

This reclusive group of people has been roaming the wilderness of the Northwest since man re-emerged from the bunker complexes; some say they've been around even longer than that. Most people have only heard about the Mountain Walkers, as 'Walkers tend to keep to themselves, only venturing into settlements to trade or possibly take on an apprentice.

In spite of the clan's withdrawn nature, the Mountain Walkers have garnered a celebrity-like reputation among certain factions of the region. Despite their renown, Mountain Walkers rarely stay in one location for long. Some observers claim the 'Walkers keep on the move to avoid representatives from major factions who try to seek them out in hope of forging alliances and trade agreements.

Mountain Walkers are against the notion of making alliances with any of the Northwest's major factions, regardless of agenda. The 'Walkers tend to believe that most people in the region are too busy picking sides when they should be working together. All the fighting, they claim, is the result of a failure to learn from the mistakes of their ancestors. As the 'Walker clan sees it, more could be accomplished if the people of the Northwest would simply learn to get along and share what precious resources are left.

Mountain Walkers make use of anything they can get their hands on, whether the items in question are Ancient gizmos or bone weapons crafted in Bone City. Life is too hard to complicate matters by nitpicking about how a given item came into being; if it serves a useful purpose, the Mountain Walker makes use of it. While most 'Walkers prefer to use silent weapons, nobody passes up a rifle or handgun based on some misguided principle about who made it, and when.

As a rule of thumb, the general attitudes of Mountain Walkers towards the various factions of the Northwest are as follows:

United Combine: Mountain Walkers see the United Combine as the best hope for the people of the Northwest to get back on their feet. With that said, many 'Walkers also feel that the U.C. isn't doing nearly enough to make the areas it controls stable for the people who inhabit them. Too many people complain about not having enough supplies to last through the "time of the white death," and few communities can afford to send out sizeable scavenging parties to gather needed food and equipment. The 'Walkers help as best they can by asking lower prices for the goods they barter, and they sometimes even give excess food and drinkable water to families in homesteads who desperately need it, but often these measures aren't nearly enough.

Purity Corp: Mountain Walkers who travel the Pure Lands must tread very carefully. Jeremiah Cole believes the reclusive 'Walker clan can lead him to caches of pre-Fall weapons, and possibly even to bunker complexes filled with new "recruits" for his army. Jeremiah has issued a decree calling for the capture of all Mountain Walkers found traveling in Purist lands. Captured 'Walkers are to be brought back to Zog for "questioning." The leader of the Purity Corp has even placed a bounty of a thousand corium pieces and a wife for each Mountain Walker brought back to Zog unharmed. As a result of these policies, Mountain Walkers avoid Purist patrols and settlements at all costs.

Hand of Jehovah: Mountain Walkers have extremely limited contact with this group. Solomon believes they practice satanic rituals at their Gatherings and has decreed that these 'Walkers are to be avoided by the people of the Hand of Jehovah. The Hand of Jehovah leader has threatened to "purify" any 'Walker found trying to *convert* his people. While most Mountain Walkers consider Solomon a fool, they don't take his threats lightly.

People's Army: Mountain Walkers have a stable relationship with the People's Army. Sometimes a 'Walker will even contract to guide People's Army caravans and squads to remote settlements. Contrary to popular belief, the People's Army and Mountain Walkers do occasionally trade with each other when situations call for it.

Chinook (and other Indian groups): The Chinook and other native tribes of the Northwest deal almost exclusively with the Mountain Walkers. No other people are trusted and are certainly not allowed into tribal villages. When the tribes choose to barter for supplies that cannot be found in their own territory, they conduct their business with a Mountain Walker.

River Folk: The people who live along the rivers and lakes of the Northwest have come to look upon Mountain Walkers as something like celebrities. The grizzled old mountain men seem to understand the simple desires of the River Folk best, whereas other factions, like the Sentinels and United Combine, continually exert pressure on them to take a more active role in the War of The Remnants. The simple fact of the matter is that most River Folk (with the

exception of the citizens of Bonneville Falls) want peace. Mountain Walkers don't push them into alliances, or try to make trade agreements—and the River Folk reward such understanding with their business and hospitality.

Sentinels: Mountain Walkers have a rocky relationship with the Sentinels. The people of Crater City don't understand the 'Walkers' choice to remain neutral in the War of the Remnants; they see skilled mountain men who would rather sit idly by and watch others fight and die than lift a finger to help. The Mountain Walkers have long since abandoned any attempt to make the Sentinels understand why they choose not to fight in the conflict between the clans.

Fort Boise: Only a few 'Walkers have managed to make the dangerous trek through the wasteland to the city of Fort Boise. The things they've seen there have convinced them that mutants are not simply a passing regional (or even global) phenomenon. Pureblood 'Walkers claim that Fort Boise is a very dangerous place, while mutant 'Walkers argue that there should be more places like it. The people of Fort Boise consider Mountain Walkers an interesting bunch, and some have even asked the rare 'Walker that comes to their city for permission to become apprentices.

Bone City: Mountain Walkers have no problems with the people of Bone City. The 'Walkers' generally neutral attitude towards the people of the region has helped them look past the morbid Bone Trade; in fact most 'Walkers have no compunctions about bartering for items crafted from the bones of the dead. The people of Bone City treat the mountain men no differently than they do anyone else.

Scappoose: 'Walkers tend to avoid Scappoose unless they can't help it. Scappoose is dangerous for anyone who travels alone; solitary traders venturing into that settlement are effectively issuing an open invitation to be robbed and murdered.

Beavertown: 'Walkers are trusted in the city of Beavertown, probably more than any other group in the region. The people of Beavertown have come to understand that most mountain men wish only to conduct open trade and be on their way.

Mutants: Mountain Walkers choose to accept the existence of mutants as a natural part of life in the Twisted Earth. A fair number of Mountain Walkers are mutants themselves, and while this tends to adversely affect their dealings with purebloods in many settlements, their mere existence has given hope to non-'Walker mutants who have dealt with persecution all their lives. These mutant 'Walkers are a source of inspiration for mutant children growing up in a world where they have only known pain and suffering.

Typical Mountain Walker

Mid-Level Mountain Walker (Post Apocalyptic Hero 3/Mountain Walker 3): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+3d10+12 plus; hp 42; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 16, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +4 class, +1 leather jacket); BAB +4; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, machete), +5 ranged (2d6, VSS Vintorez rifle); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, machete), +5 ranged (2d6, VSS Vintorez rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ survival sense, wasteland lore, secret location, track; AL Mountain Walkers; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 6; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Guide, Ritual Preservationist.

Skills: Climb +3*, Hide +7*, Knowledge (ancient lore) +6, Listen +6*, Move Silently +6*, Navigate +10*, Ride +2, Search +3, Speak Language (Ancient, Guttertalk), Spot +8*, Survival +14* (+17 wasteland), Treat Injury +7.

Feats: Alertness*, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Far Shot, Guide*, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy*.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Leather jacket, machete, VSS Vintorez rifle, 2 boxes of 9mm ammunition, corium lantern, 30 salt pills, 12 potassium iodide tablets, various other gear and personal possessions.

High-Level Mountain Walker (Post Apocalyptic Hero 3/Mountain Walker 7): CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+7d10+20; hp 72; Mas 15; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +6 class, +1 leather jacket); BAB +7; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1, machete), +8 ranged (2d6, VSS Vintorez rifle); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+1, machete), +8/+3 ranged (2d6, VSS Vintorez rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ survival sense, wasteland lore, secret location, track, natural healing, way of the land (general), apprentice, beat feet; AL Mountain Walkers; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; AP 10; Rep +3; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Guide, Ritual Preservationist.

Skills: Climb +3*, Hide +9*, Knowledge (ancient lore) +14, Listen +8*, Move Silently +7*, Navigate +15*, Ride +2, Search +5, Speak Language (Ancient, Unislang), Spot +10*, Survival +16* (+19 wasteland), Treat Injury +7.

Feats: Alertness*, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Dead Aim, Far Shot, Guide*, Improved Dead Aim, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy*.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Leather jacket, machete, VSS Vintorez rifle, 2 boxes of 9mm ammunition, corium lantern, 30 salt pills, 12 potassium iodide tablets, various other gear and personal possessions.

People of Note

Jamar

Jamar grew up in the Eden bunker complex listening to Jeremiah preach about racial purity and about his plans to restore the glory of the Purity Corp once the atomic locks

I've known this Mountain Walker for a long time; he's a good friend of mine. Jamar once guided me north to the ruins of Portland. He took paths up through the mountains that I never even knew existed, and won't ever tell anyone else about. Most people don't trust Jamar, though. He's a refugee from the Pure Lands. He was in Jeremiah Cole's personal sect—the Nubian faction. Apparently Jamar used to be good friends with the man, before they had some sort of falling out. Jamar doesn't speak much about it and I don't ask questions. He openly bears the marks of a Purist and doesn't care who knows it. I've seen it cause trouble for him in the past, though. I suspect that's one of the reasons Jamar became a 'Walker. People treat these rugged mountain men with great respect, something I think Jamar craves.

- Duncan Clark

opened the great door to the surface world. Jamar stood with his old friend at the Convention of the Remnants and shortly thereafter helped guide those loyal to the Purist cause out of Eden. He helped found Zog and became one of the city's most faithful defenders. But Jamar grew frustrated watching Jeremiah, his oldest and best friend, twist the Purist ideology into a hate-fueled racist mechanism that subjugated people rather than emancipated them. As time went on and Jeremiah's excesses continued, Jamar knew it was time to leave the Pure Lands.

Jeremiah took the news like a slap in the face. He branded Jamar as a traitor and then banished him. According to Purist law, Jamar should have been killed, but when it came down to it, Jeremiah wasn't able to give the order to kill the man he once thought of as a brother. Jamar was given enough supplies to last a week and sent on his way. He made his way south, at first intending to strike out into U.C. lands, but then thought better of it; too much had already happened in the War of the Remnants for him to suddenly change sides. For Jamar, the war was over. If he tried to find a home in a U.C. settlement, he'd only be tossed right back into the endless fighting.

Jamar decided to make his home out in the wilderness, where words like "Purist" and "United Combine" didn't mean anything. Somewhere on the Twisted Earth there had to be a place where a man could simply live without carrying around all of the baggage that came with interacting with others. Eventually, Jamar found an old cabin high in the mountains in the deep southwest portion of the Pacific Coast Range. For a while, things were good. Jamar lived off the land, keeping an easy balance with nature. But part of him missed human contact. He missed talking with other people, missed the smile of a pretty woman's face, missed the laughter of a joke shared with friends. But after two long years of living in solitude, Jamar had forgotten how to re-enter society.

Then one day, his whole life changed.

As he was sitting on the porch of his cabin tanning a bobcat hide, a man emerged suddenly from the tree line, walking slowly towards the cabin. Jamar jumped to his feet, grabbed his Remington rifle, and aimed it at the stranger.

"That's close enough, mister," Jamar cautioned. "I don't know who you are, but you're trespassing. I suggest you leave the way you came before I have to do something we'll both regret."

The man smiled and sat down on the ground twenty feet away from Jamar, keeping his hands in plain sight.

"I've been watching you for a while now," the stranger said. "You got yourself some skills there." He motioned to the rack of animal hides that Jamar had laid out to cure.

Jamar lowered the rifle, but didn't set it down. "What do you mean you've been watching me?"

"I mean jus' that. I've been watching you," the man said. "You've set up residence in my neck of the woods, so to speak, and I had to be sure you weren't tryin' to bring trouble to these parts…" The man's eyes drifted down to the tattoos on Jamar's bare arms.

Jamar nodded slowly, acknowledging the other's obvious

gesture. It made sense. Now that he thought of it, Jamar had never bothered to see if anyone else lived in this area; he had grown so accustomed to his daily routine that he had never even thought of looking for other settlements.

"How many people live around here?" Jamar set the rifle down next to his chair.

The other man shrugged.

"A few of us make our home in these parts. More live farther east, around Seven Feathers and Crater City. You ever been to those places?" the man asked.

Jamar shook his head.

"Keep to yourself, eh?"

"I like it that way," Jamar lied.

The man smiled, holding one hand out while the other slowly fished through a leather knapsack at his side. A moment later he produced three ready syringes and a box of shells and set them on the ground.

"I know some people in other settlements who could use those hides, people who don't have the skills you do. I'd be willin' to trade these med-sticks and this box of shells—that's a Remington 700 you got there, right?—for six of your hides. If you're agreeable, that is…."

Suddenly Jamar remembered something he'd heard back in Zog, something about mountain men who traveled from place to place trading with the people they met along their journeys. People called them Mountain Walkers.

"Are you a Mountain Walker?" Jamar asked.

The other man nodded.

"Yeah, people call me that." The man shrugged. "People got a lot of names for us, but names don't mean much these days. If you want to call me something, you can call me Luke."

Jamar nodded in acknowledgement.

"All right, Luke. I'll trade with you, and you can call me Jamar."

The meeting with Luke marked the beginning of a relationship that proved to be more profitable than either of the two men would have guessed. Jamar found himself becoming keenly interested in the holistic ways of the Mountain Walkers. They didn't seem to care about war, and labels like "Purity Corp" and "United Combine" meant little to them. People all over the region were starving and in need of food, clothing, medicines, and chemicals to treat the polluted water they drank, Luke claimed. The War of the Remnants wasn't going to solve those problems. Mountain Walkers did their best to help people survive when their leaders seemed concerned only with winning the next battle. Jamar noted during these conversations that Luke never once made hasty judgments about any the members of any given faction. Instead he decried the selfishness of political leaders who put petty interests above the needs of their people. Jamar realized that he wanted to be one of these Mountain Walkers—he wanted to help others, just as Luke had helped him find a way to become a part of society again.

Eventually, Jamar convinced Luke to take him on as an apprentice. At first things were hard—extremely hard. Everywhere they went, Jamar was confronted by people who showed him nothing but contempt because of his Purist past. Many people even refused to have dealings with Luke as long as Jamar was with him. But Luke didn't give up on Jamar. The Mountain Walker saw in his charge a special potential—and not just for trading, trapping, and surviving. No, Luke saw a man with the capacity and drive to help make people's lives better. Ultimately, other people began to see it too.

Jamar (Post Apocalyptic Hero 3/Dedicated Hero 2/ Soldier 3/Mountain Walker 5): CR 13; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+2d6+8d10+26; hp 91; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 20, flat-footed 20 (+1 Dex, +9 class, +1 leather jacket); BAB +8; Grap +9; Atk +9 melee (1d8+1 nonlethal, unarmed), or +10 ranged (2d10, Remington 700); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+1, nonlethal, unarmed), or +10/+5 ranged (2d10, Remington 700); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Apprentice, Conserve, Natural Healing, Secret Location, Skill Emphasis (survival)*, Survival Sense, Way of The Land (Lost Paradise region)*; AL Mountain Walkers; SV Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +7; AP 12; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Occupation and Background: Apothecary, Ritual Preservationist.

Skills: Bluff +3, Hide +11, Knowledge (ancient lore) +6, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Listen +9*, Move Silently +11, Navigate +7 (+15 in Lost Paradise region), Speak Language (Trade), Speak Language (Gutter Talk), Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +9*, Survival +16* (+24 in Lost Paradise region), Treat Injury +12.

Feats: Alertness*, Armor Proficiency (light), Brawl, Dead Aim, Endurance, Far Shot, Improved Brawl, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Track, Weapon Focus (Remington 700), Weapon Specialization (Remington 700).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Remington 700, 15 rounds of 7.62mm ammo, leather jacket, survival kit.

The Chinook Indians

History

The Chinook confederation occupies the westernmost portion of the region once called the Olympic Peninsula. During the final years before the Fall, many Native Americans from all across the region began a quiet migration out of the densely populated areas where they had long lived towards a place which tribal shamans from many different tribes claimed had been "prepared" for them. The "Great Gourd of Ash" was about to be dropped on the world, they said. It was time to leave the cities of the white men and prepare for the return of the old ways.

Most (save for those who had been hopelessly indoctrinated into mainstream American society) followed

the advice of their tribal leaders. After all, the hedonistic civilization of pre-Fall America had grown increasingly alien to them over the years. In the Northwest, legislation allowing Native Americans to run casinos for their own economic benefit had ultimately done little to better their lives, nor had it raised their reservations above the poverty level. Internal corruption and the universal legalization of gambling had taken their toll; deprived of a market to corner on their semi-autonomous land, Indian reservations had slowly slipped into irrelevance.

On top of this indignity, the traditional cultures of the Northwest's native peoples had been suppressed and pushed to the brink of extinction by mainstream society. The "unnatural" bio-domes stood as monuments of shame, built by a people who had raped the Native American Indian's beloved Mother Earth time and again. Now the Time of Ending was about to begin, and as many white extremists predicted the Fall with apocalyptic zeal, so too did the Native Americans sense the coming End.

For many Native Americans, life in the diminishing wilds was preferable to life in the morally bankrupt cities and bio-domes. The Olympic Peninsula was a protected land, dotted with reservations for the native peoples. Indian tribes had been living on this stretch of land since long before white men ever set foot on the North American continent; they knew its secrets, knew paths through the mountains to caverns under the earth, deep in the bosom of the world, where they would be safe from the coming apocalypse. Few noticed, but when the Fall came, it was as if the Native American Indians had vanished completely from the face of the Northwest. While the rest of the world suffered through "the Great Wailing," as tribal elders now refer to the Fall, the native peoples had safely moved underground.

Life Underground

The time spent underground saw changes take place among the collection of tribes gathered together in the caves and tunnels. In time the people slowly shed their former allegiances and were assimilated into the largest and most prestigious tribe, the Chinook. With the help of oral traditions passed down by their elders, they began to embrace the old ways once again, completely rejecting what they came to call "white man's medicine" (a term the Chinook applied to technology in general).

The Chinook expanded the tunnels and caverns beneath the mountains over the years, creating expansive settlements in the underworld. They found underground sources of water that were un-tainted by the pollution that choked aboveground waterways. The Chinook flourished in their subterranean isolation. Long years went by, and the people gradually forgot about returning to populate the lands of their ancestors. Life was good, as it had been during the heyday of Chinook culture. The old ways were thriving once more, and the eldest of the tribe said that life had returned to the way it was supposed to be. The Chinook wanted for nothing; hunters regularly went to the surface in search of game and never failed to bring back meat. The strange and sometime unidentifiable animals they killed and ate were a far cry from the salmon and fowl that had once sustained their forefathers, but it was edible—and with abundant food, water, and shelter, there was no reason for the tribe to go back above ground.

But things change, and as time wore on and the words of the original tribesmen faded into the distant memory, people began once again to wonder about the surface world. Some of the younger, more curious tribesman began to ask questions about the lands beyond the Great Opening. They wanted to know why only the warriors were permitted to ascend into the "Great Blue Light" to bring back meat. Tribal leaders explained that was the way things had always been done; the Ancients had brought destruction to the world, and the only place for the Chinook was underneath the mountains where the Great Spirit would protect them.

Such explanations satisfied some, but others still wanted to go up to the surface to see for themselves what had become of the world. The tension between these would-be explorers and their disapproving fellows caused a rift in the tribe, pitting brother against brother. Deep-seated doubts and resentments surfaced, calling into question Chinook beliefs about the past, the surface world, and tribal law; everything suddenly seemed to be coming apart at the seams as those who opposed exploration of the surface world quarreled with those who wanted to embrace it. Finally, the Chinook tribal council decided that anyone who wished to return to the land of the Ancients was free to do so… but no one who left the Chinook's underground Sacred Lands would be allowed to return. A third of the tribe left the only home they had ever known, striking out into the surface world. Their brethren watched in disbelief as they left, mourning their departure and cursing their foolhardy ambition. The mass exodus afterwards came to be known as the Breaking.

Warriors escorted the outbound masses to the surface world, warning them that the "great ball of fire in the sky" would make looking at the world around them painful for a while, but that the "light sickness" would pass in time. The people were cautioned to travel by night and to avoid the region "to the east" where the Ancients once dwelled in large numbers. The warriors led the people south for two days and nights, beyond the boundaries of the Sacred Lands to a place called Eagle Rock. There they admonished the "breakers" (as they were known by the other Chinook) to never again return to the Sacred Lands—on pain of death.

A Return to the Surface

Life on the surface for the Chinook was a struggle. In first weeks after the Breaking, the great fire in the sky was almost unbearable, causing great pain and forcing the Chinook to hide in hastily-built wooden lodges until the light descended behind the western hills. As if that wasn't enough, strange beasts prowled the lands both day and night, attacking the fledgling village at every opportunity. Some people contracted a wasting sickness about which their elders had

Allegiance Notes - Chinook

The following benefits and drawbacks apply to the Chinook allegiance:

Technology Restriction: Non-Mountain Walker characters with an allegiance to the Chinook may not begin play with any weapons more advanced than a compound bow. The GM should use discretion when deciding what equipment Chinook characters are allowed to choose during character creation.

Similar rules apply to characters selecting an allegiance to other Northwest Indian groups, such as the Lelooska, Makah, Nootka, or Yakima-Colville Confederation.

warned. A great number of the Breakers died in the first season above ground.

Some tried to return to the Sacred Lands, only to be slain—as promised—by warriors who mounted their bodies on poles along the borders to remind the others of the penalty for attempting to return. There could be no turning back; the Breakers would have to live with their decision or die in this strange new world.

What could they do? The strongest, most resourceful of the Breakers adapted to the hostile environment and eventually forged a new life on the surface. Finding a balance with nature on the surface proved to be much easier than in the darkness of the underworld. The surface Chinook kept most of the ways of their underground kin, shunning the technology of the so-called "white demons" that they eventually encountered.

Mountain Walkers were the first to make contact with the Chinook. The grizzled mountain men understood the challenges of life out in the harsh wilds of the Twisted Earth, and had a degree of sympathy for these superstitious folk. The meetings went slowly at first, with just two 'Walkers coming to the fringes of Chinook territory to meet and talk with the leaders. The Chinook weren't sure what to make of the pale-faced people they had always been taught were monsters of the surface world. Now that they could see them firsthand, they saw that these people weren't demons, but living, breathing folk who in many ways seemed to be very much like them.

The tribe held many meetings to discuss the prospect of future dealings with the Mountain Walkers. Some, still holding to the old beliefs, insisted that these strange men were not to be trusted. Others pointed out that the 'Walkers didn't appear to be hostile. Some even offered strange and wondrous gifts—potions that healed sickness and food that lasted for a great many days. They carried strange weapons and traveled atop animals that didn't eat grass or drink water, and which made sounds like no animals they had ever encountered. Yes, these were a curious people, but again, they didn't seem to be aggressive; and so the tribe eventually decided to continue dealing with them.

Much time went by before the 'Walkers were able to gain some measure of real trust with the Chinook tribes, but eventually the two groups came to regard each other with genuine friendship. Mountain Walkers even took a number of the Chinook as apprentices—and sometimes as wives. The Chinook taught the mountain men their ways, showed them how to prepare hides for use as clothing and how to use every piece of an animal to make something that could be used in everyday life.

Over the years, the Chinook have flourished and grown as a tribe. Under the leadership of a man known as Na-Chook, the Chinook have steadily expanded their territory down into the southern Coast Ranges of Oregon. They still hold on to many of the old ways, following a holistic lifestyle that venerates nature, but years of interaction with the Mountain Walkers—and limited contact with other factions in the region, benevolent and otherwise—have taught the tribe that some of the white "medicine" can be helpful.

The Others

The fate of the original sect that remained underground is unknown. For a few years after the Breaking, the two sects had occasional, fleeting encounters with each other. Members of the underground tribe occasionally came to the surface to join their brethren, but most other encounters were accidental and short. Meetings often occurred when warriors surfaced to hunt and ventured close to the boundaries of the Sacred Lands. At other times, a family would sneak out of the caves at night to see how their lost children were faring on the surface. These family reunions were invariably tense, ending in angry exchanges of words that opened old wounds.

The only clue to the underground tribe's ultimate fate came in the form of a cryptic piece of news related by the last group to leave the underworld. A small group of warriors, women, and children wandered out of the Sacred Lands and into the closest village. They asked for shelter, saying that they no longer wished to live underground. The chieftains of the various lodges of the underworld had fallen into fractious bickering and there were rumors of war between the now-splintered factions. Other creatures, they claimed, had come to the underworld as well—strange beings with large bulging eyes and fierce claws that crept past the guards and into the huts of the people while they slept, stealing away the children.

The refugees said that a tribal *moot* was held to determine a course of action, but it ended badly. The chiefs had become so fragmented in their thinking that they could barely even agree on where to hold the council. In the end, nothing had been decided, and the last band of refugees chose to leave the Sacred Lands in the hopes that life on the surface would be better.

Na-Chook listened to the story and, in the end, decided to take the refugees in. As for the plight of their distant kin, nothing could be done. Tribal law was clear on that point. Returning to the Sacred Lands meant death for his people,

and he would not risk the life of anyone in his tribe, even if it meant finding out the truth. To this day, the fate of the "lost ones" who stayed underground remains a mystery.

Chinook Indians

Background Options: Tribal.

Attitude: Seeing to the perpetuation of the tribe and its people is the ultimate duty of all Chinook. Outsiders are kept at arm's length, for their influence will only lead the Chinook to future turmoil.

Symbol: The Chinook use the traditional symbol of their people, the Chinook salmon, but with another sign inscribed below it—a faded gray sigil representing the lost branch of the Chinook that still lives beneath the Sacred Lands.

Common Classes: Guardian, Juju Doctor, Skulk, Tribal Hunter, Blood Hunter.

Common Mutations: Aberrant Endoskeletal Encasing, Extreme Resilience.

Common Defects: Aberrant Deformity, Photosensitivity.

The Chinook live in self-imposed isolation from the rest of the world. They have adopted the antiquated ways of their ancestors and are not at all troubled by lack of regular access to the white man's advanced technology. Most Chinook have never even ventured out of the Olympic Peninsula, and consequently are not familiar with the various groups that have emerged from the chaos of the dark years.

As a rule, Chinook prefer as little contact with outsiders as possible. The stories of the elders about how white civilization brought about the dropping of the "Gourd of Ash" have been told and retold over the ages. As a result, all Chinook naturally distrust anyone who is not part of their tribe. There are a few exceptions, however; a good number of Mountain Walkers have managed to gain the trust of the Chinook, even to the point of being allowed to build their own lodges on the outskirts of the tribe's villages. Some of the white men have even been given permission to take wives and apprentices from the tribe, but these are exceptionally rare cases.

Life in the Chinook tribe is a daily struggle to survive. Their decision to shun advanced technology means that the Chinook must work extremely hard to ensure that everyone has the basic necessities: food, clothing, natural medicines, and, of course, weapons. Much of what the tribe uses to make their supplies comes from the labor of the hunter caste and from medicine men. During times of great difficulty, when hunters return empty-handed, the tribe will trade with Mountain Walkers for the things they need.

The only people with whom the Chinook have any regular dealings are the Mountain Walkers. Chinook have a high level of distrust for anyone else who comes uninvited into their domain. More often than not, tribal warriors opt to kill strangers who trespass in Chinook territory rather than allow them to reach the villages of their tribesman—or worse, wander into the Sacred Lands.

When characters with an allegiance to the Chinook are within tribal territory, apply a -5 situational modifier on Charisma-based checks when dealing with anyone who is not either a fellow tribesmen or a Mountain Walker. When Chinook characters travel outside their own territory into the lands and cities of the Lost Paradise, this penalty is reduced to -3. Chinook may be "tribal," but that doesn't mean they are rash or stupid.

Typical Chinook

Low-Level Chinook Tribesman (Strong Hero 2): CR 2; Medium-size human; HD 2d8+4; hp 11; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 class); BAB +2; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+3 nonlethal, unarmed) or +5 melee (1d8+3, masterwork spear); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3, masterwork spear), or +4 ranged (1d8+2, masterwork spear); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Melee Smash; AL Chinook; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; AP 6; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Predator, Tribal.

Skills: Climb +3, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Navigate +2, Profession (any) +2, Speak Language (unislang), Swim +3, Survival +2.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Cleave, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Track.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Masterwork spear, bundle of provisions, various other gear and personal possessions.

Mid-Level Chinook Tribesman (Strong Hero 3/Tribal Hunter 3): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+3d10+12; hp 42; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 class); BAB +6; Grap +9; Atk +10 melee (1d8+7, spear), +8 ranged (1d8+5, compound bow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+7, spear), +8/+3 ranged (1d8+5, compound bow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ melee smash, improved melee smash, hunter, archaic weapons specialization; AL Chinook; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; AP 6; Rep +0; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Predator, Tribal.

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +5, Jump +5, Move Silently +5, Speak Language (unislang), Swim +5, Survival +4.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Track, Weapon Focus (spear, compound bow).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Spear, compound bow, 20 arrows, bundle of provisions, various other gear and personal possessions.

High-Level Chinook Tribesman (Strong Hero 3/Tribal Hunter 7): CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+7d10+20; hp 72; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 18, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 class); BAB +10; Grap +13; Atk +15 melee (1d8+8, bone spear), +12 ranged (1d8+5, compound bow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+8, spear),

+12/+7 ranged (1d8+5, compound bow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ melee smash, improved melee smash, hunter, archaic weapons specialization, craft bone weapon, superior camouflage, quick kill +2; AL Chinook; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +4; AP 10; Rep +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Predator, Tribal.

Skills: Climb +7, Hide +6, Jump +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +6, Navigate +3*, Speak Language (unislang), Spot +3, Swim +7, Survival +10*.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Guide, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Track, Weapon Focus (spear, compound bow).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Bone Spear +1, compound bow, 20 arrows, bundle of provisions, various other gear and personal possessions.

Epic-Level Chinook Tribesman (Strong Hero 3/Tribal Hunter 7, Blood Hunter 5): CR 15; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+712d10+30; hp 110; Mas 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 21, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +9 class); BAB +15; Grap +18; Atk +21 melee (1d8+9, bone spear), +17 ranged (1d8+6, compound bow); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (1d8+8, spear), +17/+12/+7 ranged (1d8+5, compound bow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ melee smash, improved melee smash, hunter, archaic weapons specialization, craft bone weapon, superior camouflage, quick kill +2, craft blood weapon +2, blood hunter +2, smite the transgressor; AL Chinook; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +4; AP 15; Rep +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Predator, Tribal.

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +6, Jump +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Navigate +7*, Speak Language (unislang), Spot +4, Swim +4, Survival +16*.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dead Aim, Great Cleave, Far Shot, Guide, Heroic Surge, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Track, Weapon Focus (spear, compound bow).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Blood Spear +2, compound bow, (20) bone arrows +1, bundle of provisions, various other gear and personal possessions.

People of Note

Na-Chook

Na-Chook has led the surface Chinook for nearly a decade. He guides his people with strength and wisdom gained from years of life outside the cavernous homelands of his people.

When not dealing with day-to-day tribal business, Na-Chook is most often found roaming the borders of the Sacred Lands, looking for signs of trespass. One of his duties as *chief* is to ensure that the old laws are obeyed. Failure to protect the Sacred Lands would invite a younger man to challenge his leadership, and Na-Chook isn't ready to give up control of the tribe just yet.

> *I've never met him, but a few Blood Hunters have come through Hope looking for renegades, and if the leader of the Chinook is anything like his warriors, then I pity anyone who gets on his bad side.*
>
> *- Duncan Clark*

Na-Chook (Post-Apocalyptic Hero 3/Tribal Hunter 8/Blood Hunter 3): CR 14; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+11d10+28; hp 102; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 19, flat-footed 20 (+1 Dex, +8 class, +2 leather armor); BAB +13; Grap +15; Atk +16 melee (1d6+5, bone hatchet) or +15 ranged (1d8, masterwork compound bow); Full Atk +16/+11/+5 melee (1d6+5, bone hatchet), or +15/+10/+5 ranged (1d8, masterwork compound bow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Archaic Weapons Specialization, Blood Hunter (+1), Conserve, Craft Blood Weapon (+2), Craft Bone Weapon, Hunter, Quick Kill (+2 Die), Superior Camouflage, Survival Sense; AL Chinook; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +5; AP 13; Rep +3; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Guide, Tribal.

Skills: Balance +5, Climb +8, Craft (structural) +9, Diplomacy +1*, Gather Information +9*, Hide +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Navigate +3*, Sense Motive +4, Spot +9, Survival +11, Swim +5, Treat Injury +5.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Endurance, Guide*, Leadership, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Run, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Sunder, Track, Trustworthy*, Weapon Focus (hatchet).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork compound bow, bone hatchet, blood hatchet (for use against renegades only), knife, quiver with arrows.

Other Native Indian Groups

In addition to the confederation that evolved into the Chinook of the Lost Paradise, a few other Native American groups managed to survive the fall with their cultures relatively intact. Scattered across the wilderness, separated by miles of wild terrain and other dangers (which include both natural threats and large militant groups like the U.C. and Purity Corp), each is a unique holdout of long-lost culture, a way of life preserved despite the widespread fall of humanity.

Lelooska

This small tribe, living in isolation on the north side of the Columbia River, is one of the most curious to have survived the fall. After returning to the heavily forested region of their forefathers, just a few dozen miles from the glowing ruins of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome Complex, the Lelooska adopted a xenophobic way of life that has so far been successful in keeping them alive—and untouched by the War of the Remnants that swirls around them.

Known for killing all who trespass on their richly-forested land, the Lelooska are easily identified by their abundant use of masks, hand-carved from native wood and often painted in bright, glaring colors. These masks vary in size and style from simple facemasks to armor-like coverings that conceal most of the wearer's body, often with ridiculous or exaggerated features which make each a unique work of art. Leering old men, fanged demons, and terrible monsters are all visages commonly seen worn by Lelooska tribesmen; masks are worn for special religious observances, war, and even scout patrols (the idea being that any outsider who stumbles onto them in the deep forest will be stricken with fear and flee, hopefully never to return).

The Lelooska are a minor tribe with only a handful of semi-permanent settlements threaded throughout what used to be the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. They are often at odds with patrols of the Purity Corp, who hunt them like animals for sport and to reduce the strain their presence has on local wildlife.

Makah

The Makah are another native Northwest tribe that managed to survive the Fall while the rest of the world all but collapsed into oblivion. Dwelling on the isolated tip of the Olympic Peninsula, they have been renowned throughout history as a whale-hunting people, their communal and religious life revolving around the traditional whale hunt. As whales became rarer and rarer in the twilight years of the Ancients, the Makah, stripped of much of their tribal identity, nearly faded from history, becoming increasingly integrated into the dome complexes erected along the coast of Puget Sound.

When reports of war reached them, many urban Makah returned to the tip of the Peninsula to be with loved ones and family, and to await the End in the forests of their tribal homeland. When the devastation caused by the invasion and the nuclear strikes that destroyed civilization passed by their forested borders without touching them, they counted themselves lucky—and immediately set about establishing a new society based on their all-but-lost tribal culture. Instead of trying to make contact with other survivors, they closed themselves off completely from the rest of the world.

Today the Makah live as they did in ages past, making good use of the thin slip of land they control on the far edge of the Olympic Peninsula. Living in total isolation, the Makah subsist almost solely on marine creatures hunted on the open ocean; this includes whale-like monstrosities, larger mutated sea mammals, and even the rare *zug-wa* found far from shore (the killing of a *zug-wa* is an accomplishment worthy of great celebration in Makah communities). The Makah are expert navigators, and their whaling boats often range up to a hundred miles out into the Pacific in search of prey.

To make up for the weakness inherent in their small numbers, the Makah have not forgotten the usefulness of Ancient technology (unlike many other tribal cultures that survived the Fall). The Makah use motorboats to prowl the Olympic coast, always on the lookout for abandoned sea craft that can be towed back for community use (and also kept out of the hands of seaborne raiders like the Nootka). These patrols also search for old marinas that might hold diesel fuel for their boats. The Makah use a variety of high-powered rifles, not only to hunt water creatures, but also to defend against outsiders (such as the Nootka, who occasionally raid their settlements).

The primary Makah community is Neah Bay. The presence of the Sacred Lands of the Chinook prevents the Makah from venturing south, so their activities are almost completely restricted to the Straits of Juan de Fuca (and the seas that surround them).

Nootka

In the aftermath of the Fall, many members of the Native American Nootka tribe returned to what were once their ancestral lands in Vancouver Island and the northern coast of the Olympic Peninsula. Though no family groups remain on the Peninsula due to its isolation, large numbers of Nootka now thrive in a dozen waterside villages on Vancouver Island's western shores.

The Nootka live primarily in densely-packed villages composed of massive, colorfully-decorated wooden lodges. They manage to subsist on what they catch from the poisoned Pacific Ocean—sea mammals (such as seals) are common, but pollution and over-fishing (to meet the demands of a burgeoning world population) during the time of the Ancients all but eliminated local salmon, shellfish, and other stocks. Though once a domestic people almost fully integrated with Ancient society, the Nootka have returned to their warlike roots, and now make up for the scarcity of local resources by raiding neighboring communities. So far, this has mostly involved victimizing the Makah across the Straits of Juan de Fuca, but due to the Makah's isolation (and relative poverty) these efforts have born only moderate fruit.

Nootka warriors generally sail, hunt, and wage war bare naked; heavy clothing made from tree bark is only worn during the colder months of the year. Pre-Fall clothing stolen during inland forays on Canadian or American soil is a rare prize. Known for their skill with spears and other primitive ranged weapons, Nootka warriors boast of their wartime exploits by using the heads of their fallen enemies to decorate their homes, villages, and war canoes. Their boats are exceptionally agile and durable craft, carefully

constructed from sturdy wood and able to accommodate up to forty warriors at a time. Women and children from conquered or raided communities are almost invariably taken back aboard these boats as slaves, destined to be drafted into the Nootka workforce, claimed as "war-brides," or sold to the scattered non-Nootka communities that dot the Canadian coastline (part of an illegal trade in slaves that the U.C. works hard to combat).

Yakima-Colville Confederation

This confederation of two of the larger tribes of Washington State was born out of a mutual need to survive in the years following the Fall. With their livelihoods devastated by the global economic collapse, and their security threatened by the fierce competition between surviving communities for sparse food and water resources in the early years after the war, it was a matter of necessity that the former group eventually abandoned its traditional reservation and struck out to make a new home for themselves. They found it alongside the Colville, far to the north.

Though in earlier years the struggle to survive was difficult (especially with the coming of nuclear winter), the Yakima had the foresight to move northeast, away from withering livestock and agriculture resources; the Yakima correctly guessed that radiation poisoning would worsen with time and set out for untainted lands.

The Yakima's migration across the Saddle Mountains—traditional Mormon territory—was met with absolutely ruthless resistance. Though local communities in the "breadbasket" region of the state were few and far between, the deeply conservative and isolationist people of Ephrata, Moses Lake, and other plateau towns knew their region could not support an influx of new immigrants in these difficult times. While at first Christian generosity permitted the Yakima to stay, clashes soon erupted as food supplies ran short and rumors spread of the newcomers stealing to feed their people.

Most of the Yakima refugees were driven from central Washington across the Columbia River and into the Kettle River Range by well-armed Mormon militias following months of brutal ethnic cleansing. The refugees soon found themselves sharing space with another Indian group, the Colville confederation.

Tensions quickly rose again as the Yakima settled on Colville lands. But instead of resorting to force to solve the problem, the Colville, well accustomed to the concept of tribal confederations, approached the Yakima peacefully, hoping to strike a balance that would be mutually beneficial. In time, the two peoples formalized their alliance and came to form a unified "nation."

Today the broad expanse of dry forest and mountains that was once the Colville Indian Reservation is home to the collective Yakima and Colville tribes, who together form the second-largest tribal group (outnumbered only by the Chinook) in the Lost Paradise. Living in a mixed culture comfortable combining old and new, the people of the confederation live primarily by herding angoose and deer. Pickup trucks, stripped-down cars, motorbikes, and even horses are all used as mounts by Yakima-Colville "cowboys," who have earned a reputation as expert riders and sharpshooters—one has to be a good shot to protect a herd from the predators, human and mutant, that stalk the wastes.

The Yakima-Colville confederation remains isolationist and xenophobic, their view of outsiders deeply tainted by their treatment at the hands of white men in the early years after the Fall. The Hand of Jehovah has recently begun pressuring the tribes to convert and has moved into territory once considered part of the Colville reservation. This incursion of Hand of Jehovah settlers will no doubt fuel further animosity down the road.

The Pale Riders

History

When a company of Foundation scouts came north out of the Sierra-Gehenna region of the Twisted Earth in search of lost technology, they never expected to find what most denizens of the Twisted Earth now call the Lost Paradise. Indeed, the region of the Northwest is heavenly in comparison to the blasted lands of the south; rivers and streams still flow through the Northwest, and some parts of the region even support grass, fruits, and vegetables. Strange animals graze amidst the ruins of the bubble-domes that dot the land. Seasons even visibly change in these parts, whereas the blasted ruins of the southwest remain parched nearly all year long.

Some of the Foundationist scouts became so infatuated with the region and its obvious potential that they decided to stay. These dissidents argued with the leaders of the group all the way up to the ruins of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome, trying to convince them to abandon their mission and forge a new realm in this paradise.

For their efforts, they were labeled traitors to the Reconstructionist cause and threatened with imprisonment or even death if they continued their seditious talk. None of those threats were ever carried out, for as the group began to explore the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome Complex, they came under attack.

A large group of ghouls (and, some say, several hunter-seeker drones) that lived in the ruins fell upon the

The group known as the "Pale Riders" find their origins in the ill-fated Foundation expedition of 2208 (see The Foundationists *for details), a scouting party sent by that famous Twisted Earth faction to explore the ruins of Portland in early attempts to explore and map the surface world.*

Allegiance Notes – Pale Riders

The benefits and drawbacks to pledging allegiance to the Pale Riders are as follows:

Freedom: Characters with this allegiance are free to do pretty much anything they want. They have no restrictions on the types of weapons, armor, and equipment they can use, provided they know how to operate them. They're raiders, after all, and as long as they have the muscle and firepower to back up their actions, characters may pillage, rape, and plunder to their hearts' content.

Notoriety: A character that chooses this allegiance has chosen to become a criminal, and that's seldom a good career choice. Pale Rider characters will run into conflicts in almost every city they visit; they can expect to be hunted by U.C. Minutemen, Sentinels, the Red Brigade, and even Purist Enforcers. Being a Pale Rider doesn't even guarantee safety in Burns, the Riders' base of operations.

Racial Restriction: A beginning character who chooses to pledge allegiance to the Pale Riders must be either a mutant or a pureblood slave. Advanced (higher-level) characters that wish to align themselves with the Riders may ignore this restriction. However, there is no guarantee that pureblood humans will be able to avoid the slave pens for long, even if they do choose this allegiance at later levels. Slaves *can* buy their freedom in Burns, if they know who to talk to.

Foundationist camp one night while most of them slept. The Foundationists had unwittingly made camp squarely in the middle of the territory of a tribe of walking dead, which smelled living flesh and came to feast on the unsuspecting soldiers. The soldiers fought bravely, but in the end were forced to retreat or die in the wreck of the bio-dome. Only a very few Foundationists managed to escape, and at the cost of much of their high-tech equipment. The biggest losses were maps and travel notes left behind in the scramble to escape the hungry dead. Without those maps, getting back home safely on foot was next to impossible. There was nothing left to do but try to survive in this strange new land. Yet, even without the maps, some of the survivors, still loyal to their original mission, were determined to make it back to California and warn their superiors of the ghoul infestation.

Parting under the cover of darkness, those who wished to stay in the Lost Paradise instead of risking the perilous journey home fled. Putting their past association with the Foundation behind them, they eventually made their way down into the Desiccated Wastes of Southeast Oregon and settled in the ruins of an old town called Burns. These former Foundationists built a fort around the town made of wood and reinforced with whatever pieces of metal and junk they could find (mostly old cars and trash dumpsters).

Whatever their original intentions, as the former Foundationists found themselves ill-suited to live off the land, they turned to raiding. From their fort, the group launched lightning attacks on outlying settlements in the region. At first these raids targeted supplies and other items needed to sustain the group, but as combat losses reduced their ranks, the group began forcibly recruiting people to their "cause."

News of their villainous deeds spread throughout the region, and as sightings became more frequent, people began to call them Pale Riders—a reference not only to their distinctive white armor, but to an obscure biblical figure who supposedly caused death wherever he went. Despite the Riders' legendary cruelty, some settlements suffering from crippling poverty and starvation actually petitioned to join them; many people preferred the prospect of a glorious end in battle to that of a lingering death at the hand of starvation and disease.

Current Status of the Riders

The Pale Riders have grown rapidly since their inception, and are currently the largest group of raiders in the Northwest. They have numerous camps in the Desiccated Wastes, and are slowly working their way west into populated areas claimed by other Northwest factions. As it expands westward, the group has begun to establish tentative contact with other groups outside of the Lost Paradise (notably the Slavers of Slave City, who have shown an interest in acquiring slaves from the Northwest).

The Pale Riders are currently led by a mutant known only as Zorthag. Zorthag has plans for the Lost Paradise: he intends to enslave as many "pure breeders" as possible and build an empire on their backs. He takes great pains to capture women whenever he finds them; he and his followers use them to breed new 'Riders.

Captured males are given a choice: serve Zorthag's army, or die. Children are usually forced to do menial labor, but the problem with children is that they need to be fed, and feeding children takes food out of the mouths of adults who can do much more work. With this in mind, only the strongest boys are allowed to live, while girls are kept for future use as breeders.

Much like their ex-Foundationist forefathers, the Pale Riders are very interested in the acquisition of pre-Fall technology. The acquisition of existing technology and the gathering of information about the locations of surviving bunker complexes are vital elements in Zorthag's plans for conquest, and for promising leads he is known to pay even outsiders well.

Pale Riders

Background Options: Ritual Preservationist.

Attitude: The Pale Riders have carved out an empire in the Desiccated Wastes, and consider this region of the Twisted Earth their own. Trade, diplomacy, and alliances serve no purpose unless they expand the Pale Riders' domain and enforce the rule of Zorthag and his Overlords.

Symbol: Claiming to be the descendants of Foundationist ancestors, the Pale Riders use a symbol derived from the original Foundation insignia—a broad circle over which has been imposed a stylized scimitar shrouded in blue flames.

Common Classes: Raider, Road Warrior, Tinker, Mech.

Common Mutations: Aberrant Endoskeletal Encasing, Gigantism.

Common Defects: Bizarre Pigmentation, Cannibalism.

The Pale Riders have forged an empire in the wastelands of Eastern Oregon (the area commonly known throughout the Twisted Earth as the Forgotten Desert and Desiccated Wastes). Characters who choose an allegiance with this faction must either be a Mutant, Super Mutant, or have chosen the *Military, Slave, Slaver*, or *Wanderer* occupations.

Pledging allegiance to the Pale Riders essentially sets the character against all other major factions in the Northwest. Very few towns hesitate to shoot someone bearing the mark of the Pale Riders. Independent cities like Beavertown, Scappoose, Fort Boise, and Bone City allow these raiders inside their gates—but that's not saying much, as these settlements deal with almost anyone.

Typical Pale Rider

Low-Level Pale Rider (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/Tough Hero 1): CR 2; Large humanoid; HD 1d8+1d10+5; hp 15; Mas 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +2 class, -1 size, +2 leather armor); BAB +0; Grap +5; Atk +1 melee (1d3+2, nonlethal, unarmed) or +2 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt); Full Atk +1 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +1 ranged (2d8, Jackhammer Mk3A1); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Robust, Wasteland Lore; AL Pale Riders; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; AP 6; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Slaver, Ritual Preservationist.

Skills: Hide +0, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (ancient lore) +2, Knowledge (technology) +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Navigate +2, Search +3, Speak Language (gutter talk), Spot +3, Survival +3.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: Gigantism, Bizarre Pigmentation.

Possessions: Leather armor, Jackhammer Mk3A1, 20 rounds of 12-gauge ammunition, two light rods, survival kit, various other gear and personal possessions.

Mid-Level Pale Rider (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/ Tough Hero 4/Raider 1): CR 6; Large humanoid; HD 1d8+5d10+25; hp 57; Mas 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 24, touch 14, flat-footed 24 (+5 class, -1 size, +9 advanced metal armor, +1 chaps & chains); BAB +4; Grap +9; Atk +5 melee (1d3+2, nonlethal, unarmed) or +5 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +5 ranged (2d8, Jackhammer Mk3A1); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Chaps & Chains +1, Robust, Second Wind, Wasteland Lore; AL Pale Riders; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; AP 9; Rep +2; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Slaver, Ritual Preservationist.

Skills: Drive +4, Gather Information +1, Hide +0, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (ancient lore) +2, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Knowledge (technology) +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Navigate +2, Search +3, Speak Language (gutter talk), Spot +4, Survival +3.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Toughness, Vehicle Expert.

Mutations and Defects: Gigantism, Bizarre Pigmentation.

Possessions: Advanced metal armor, Jackhammer Mk3A1, 20 rounds of 12-gauge ammunition, fragmentation grenade, two light rods, survival kit, motorcycle or horse with trappings, various other gear and personal possessions.

High-Level Pale Rider (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/ Tough Hero 4/Raider 5): CR 10; Large humanoid; HD 1d8+9d10+37; hp 91; Mas 17; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 27, touch 16, flat-footed 27 (+7 class, -1 size, +9 advanced metal armor, +2 chaps & chains); BAB +8; Grap +13; Atk +9 melee (1d3+2, nonlethal, unarmed) or +9 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +10/+5 ranged (2d8, Jackhammer Mk3A1); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Bloodthirsty Cry, Chaps & Chains +2, Horrifying Kill, Robust, Second Wind, Wasteland Lore; AL Pale Riders; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2; AP 9; Rep +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Slaver, Ritual Preservationist.

Skills: Drive +4, Gather Information +1, Hide +0, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (ancient lore) +2, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Knowledge (technology) +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Navigate +2, Search +3, Speak Language (gutter talk), Spot +4, Survival +3.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Toughness, Vehicle Expert, Weapon Focus (Jackhammer Mk3A1).

Mutations and Defects: Gigantism, Bizarre Pigmentation.

Possessions: Advanced metal armor, Jackhammer Mk3A1, 20 rounds of 12-gauge ammunition, fragmentation

I'm not sure what to say about the creature that people in the eastern settlements call Zorthag. I know he's a mutant. That much should be obvious just by his name—I mean, what normal mother names her son "Zorthag?" What kind of a name for a pureblood human being is that? His mother probably named him John, or Thomas, and he ate her for it and picked his own name. I hear some mutants eat their own.

Anyhow, it seems that Zorthag comes from a band of desert-dwelling scum that, over the past few years, has gathered mutants and other criminals together to form a faction called the Pale Riders. It certainly doesn't surprise me that a bunch of mutants would try to survive out in the Desiccated Wastes, or that they'd band together to bring misery to simple folk who just want to live in peace. These Pale Riders appear to be gathering strength. Maybe someone will have to go out there and take care of this Zorthag.

- Duncan Clark

grenade, two light rods, survival kit, car or motorcycle with trappings, various other gear and personal possessions.

People of Note

Zorthag

Zorthag is a fearsome mutant who has claimed all lands east of Burns as his own. His Pale Riders roam the entirety of the Desiccated Wastes, imposing Zorthag's will on the settlers of the scorched lands, taking food, weapons, equipment, and slaves from every town they find and leaving a scant few survivors to fight for the scraps left behind.

Zorthag, however, isn't just content to pick the wastelands dry. He has a master plan for the occupation of all settlements in the southern portion of the Northwest. Once he has enslaved the human population, taken their supplies, and bred them out of existence, he plans to move north and repeat the process until there are none left to challenge his authority.

Like other Pale Rider rulers before him, Zorthag's ancestors were members of an ill-fated Foundation expedition sent to the Northwest almost 70 years ago. Zorthag himself is evidence that the civilization and organization of these ancestors has been lost in the years since the Riders' desertion.

Zorthag (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/Tough Hero 4/Raider 10): CR 15; Large humanoid; HD 1d8+14d10+70; hp 152; Mas 21; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 34, touch 19, flat-footed 34 (+9 class, -1 size, +9 advanced metal armor, +3 chaps & chains, +4 natural armor); BAB +13; Grap +18; Atk +14 melee (1d3+2, nonlethal, unarmed) or +14 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt); Full Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +15/+10/+5 ranged (2d8, Jackhammer Mk3A1); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Bloodthirsty Cry, Chaps & Chains +3, Death Cry, Horrifying Kill, No Survivors, Robust, Second Wind, Wasteland Lore; AL Pale Riders; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +4; AP 13; Rep +8; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Slaver, Ritual Preservationist.

Skills: Drive +6, Hide -2, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (ancient lore) +4, Knowledge (tactics) +13, Knowledge (technology) +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Navigate +2, Search +3, Speak Language (Gutter Talk), Spot +4, Survival +3.

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Improved Damage Threshold, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Renown, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Super Mutant, Toughness, Vehicle Expert, Weapon Focus (Jackhammer Mk3A1).

Mutations and Defects: Gigantism, Protective Dermal Development, Bizarre Pigmentation (white hair).

Possessions: Advanced metal armor, Jackhammer Mk3A1, 20 rounds of 12-gauge ammunition, magnetic shield C, power backpack, fragmentation grenade, holographic image projector, power cell.

The Walking Dead

History

The Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome is a dangerous place, filled with many strange beasts. Perhaps the most loathsome creatures to stalk the haunted wreck of the ruins are the "walking dead."

When the Fall came, many people were caught inside the Lewis and Clark complex, trapped by android death squads and forced to hide in the sewage and waste systems. These wretched people managed to survive by whatever means were available to them, even resorting to cannibalism when other food sources ran out (they told themselves that the latter was a temporary measure, but in time they developed a taste for human flesh). The refugees survived for years and years under the city, eventually degenerating into a bizarre, troglodytic society that practiced hideous blood rituals, offering up human sacrifices to placate the "Metal Gods" who patrolled the desolate streets and buildings on the surface. As time passed, the so-called Metal Gods grew silent, and over time the people began to *change*. Countless years of exposure to toxic materials, radiation, and a diet of human flesh has taken a toll on their minds and bodies, warping them into cunning but only marginally-intelligent stalkers called *ghouls*.

A surprisingly large number of the creatures live in and around the ruins on the Portland side of the bio-dome complex. The ghouls still hold to their tribal way of living deep in the tunnels and sewage systems beneath the ruins of the city; a number of distinct "tribes" claim portions of the ruins as their territory.

The rare few who have ventured into the ruins and lived to tell about it call them the "walking dead" for lack of any better description for these miserable creatures.

Ghouls of The Lewis & Clark Bio-Dome

The sprawling wreck of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome is not devoid of life. Indeed, only the bravest travelers even contemplate venturing into the ruins of the Ancients to rummage around for supplies and old technology, for creatures lurk there that feed on the flesh of the living. Many a traveler in the Lost Paradise has made the mistake of ignoring the markers placed by Sentinels warning people to stay away from the "city of the walking dead." Greed (for rumors abound of valuable relics to be found in the ruins of the ancient cities) lures many into the bio-domes, where foolhardy treasure-hunters soon find themselves hunted by tribes of ghoulish creatures who claim the broken ruins as their domain.

These creatures are the twisted descendants of human survivors who took refuge in the bio-dome's sewers to escape Althea's (later "Kali") hunter-seeker patrols; roving bands of these ghouls stalk the ruins in search of carrion and human flesh. At present, four major ghoul tribes inhabit the ruins of the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome (including "Old Portland"), with a plethora of smaller gang-like splinter groups spread throughout the wreck.

Ghoul Variants

While ghouls exist all across the Twisted Earth, the ruins of Portland are home to an unusual number of ghoulish variants, each of which possesses different mutations and characteristics. In the Lost Paradise, six distinct subspecies of ghoul have emerged from the chaos of the Fall: aquatic, blood, overlord, ravager, toxic, and winged.

Aquatic Ghouls

This variant probably developed as a direct product of its environment. When people were forced to hide in the sewage and waste tunnels beneath the wreck of the bio-dome, they learned to survive in environs filled with raw sewage and dirty water. Living in and traveling through these tunnels exposed them to hideously-polluted water, which over time triggered mutations in the offspring of the original survivors. They developed gills and webbed digits on their hands and feet to better move through the polluted waters of the sewage tunnels (and later, the Columbia and Willamette Rivers). To this day, aquatic ghouls make their homes in damp subterranean passages beneath the bio-domes and ruins of the Twisted Earth.

In the Lost Paradise, aquatic ghouls are most commonly found along the Columbia River, preying on River Folk who travel the river towards Astoria. They occasionally raid other tribes and attack wandering adventurers for meat. Aquatic ghouls have also been reported in the ruins of Vancouver and the northern reaches of the Sea-Tac Spawning Pits.

Blood Ghouls

Of all ghoul variants, blood ghouls are the most like standard ghouls. They have serrated teeth, unnaturally elongated claws, a taste for human flesh, and a high sensitivity to light. Curiously, the blood ghoul has developed a dependency on the *blood* of living creatures. It is thought that these particular ghouls suffer from a disease of the blood and require large amounts of iron to survive. While this hypothesis is open to debate, one thing is certain: the blood ghoul has a strong craving for the blood of sentient beings.

To make matters worse, most blood ghouls are also plague carriers. It is even said that the bite of a blood ghoul transfers the "blood thirst" to the person bitten, causing victims to eventually become blood ghouls themselves. Whether this is true or only a myth is unknown.

Ghoul Overlords

The "overlord" is a relatively new and rare ghoul variant. Brave (or foolish) souls who have crept down into the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome to gather information about the

walking dead there have returned with stories about a new "leadership caste" that is making its presence felt among the ghoul population of the haunted wreck. These "overlords" apparently have vast powers of the mind, and are worshipped as "gods" by their lesser brethren.

Ravager Ghouls

The ravager ghoul is possibly the most drastic of all the variant subspecies of ghoul in the Northwest. In general, these cannibals are larger and much, much stronger than their "normal" cousins. They have massively deformed legs, which allow the creatures to make incredible leaps. Massively hunched backs force these creatures to walk in a crouched position, with their muscular arms almost touching the ground. This same mass of corded muscle also provides incredible upper body strength. Unlike toxic ghouls, who possess great strength but little intelligence, the ravager ghoul is both physically powerful and exceedingly cunning, making it easily one of the deadliest variants on the planet.

Toxic Ghouls

The toxic ghoul is a vile creature that makes its home in toxic cesspools and areas contaminated by radioactive waste. These creatures are mindless beasts that long ago shed the last vestiges of their humanity. Toxic ghouls typically hold together in packs of three or four, and make up the bulk of the free-drifting ghouls encountered in the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome (with a high concentration living in an area known by outsiders as the Toxic Plains).

Toxic ghouls, like standard ghouls, are driven by a strong hunger for human flesh and go to great lengths to get their food. Toxic ghouls have been spotted as far west as the Sacred Lands, and Purist Enforcers at the settlements of Future and Battleground have regular contact with these fiends.

Like the blood ghoul, toxic ghouls are also disease carriers. These creatures carry a host of diseases, many of which can cause people to become violently (and often terminally) ill. Unlike other ghouls, this particular variant is inhumanly strong; some toxic ghouls also have multiple limbs, and all have strange spike-growths along their bodies which add to their ferocious appearance.

Winged Ghouls (Sky Demons)

This variant is the least common type of ghoul found on the Twisted Earth. Winged ghouls make their homes in the loftiest areas of city ruins, in the broken spires of skyscrapers and other towering structures. They use their leathery, bat-like wings to glide through the air and swoop down on unsuspecting prey.

Ghoul Clans

The following is a brief list of the major "clans" of ghouls dwelling in the Lewis & Clark Bio-dome—at least those whose existence has been verified by the few outsiders who have visited the ruins and lived to tell about them. There are certainly other clans living among the ruins, however.

Bloodmaw Clan

The largest of the bio-dome tribes is the Bloodmaw clan, which boasts a population of just over a thousand ghouls. The tribe claims the whole of the southern portion of the Vancouver-side ruins as their domain, with their main camp located in what's left of Fort Vancouver.

The Bloodmaw clan is led by a particularly nasty ghoul overlord known as Vorg Blacktongue. Vorg is a vicious leader who maintains his rule through fear and strength. Those who openly question Vorg's judgment must face him in combat; an unpleasant prospect given Vorg's fighting prowess and formidable mental powers.

Vorg has been urging his "people" to expand their territory north into the area known as No Man's Land. This is easier said than done, however; No Man's Land is a popular hunting ground for vomit rats that make their homes in the ruins of ancient apartments and crumbling housing projects to the north. The presence of these and other potential prey attracts ghouls from other tribes, notably the Bonerippers and packs of toxic ghouls from the Toxic Plains.

The majority of the ghouls in the Bloodmaw clan are blood ghouls, although a growing number of ghoul overlords have either been born into the tribe or have come from other areas of the Bio-dome to join with Vorg, whose fearsome reputation grows each year.

Boneripper Clan

The Bonerippers are the smallest ghoul tribe in the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome, with a population of several hundred. They claim the Northgate sector (known to members of the Purist Liberation Army as "Hell's Porch") on the Vancouver side of the ruins as their "domain."

Most ghouls in the Bonerippers tribe are standard ghouls, although increasing contact with the Bloodmaw clan and packs of toxic ghouls has spawned a small number of blood and toxic ghouls.

Flesh Eater Clan

The southernmost reaches of the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome and Old Portland are home to a tribe of ghouls who call themselves the Flesh Eaters. The second largest ghoul tribe in the Bio-dome, the Flesh Eaters boast a population nearing one thousand.

When the Foundationist expedition of 2208 entered the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome, it was this tribe that attacked and forced the Foundationists to retreat—a key event in the history of the region and one that has thus far kept the Foundationists out of the Northwest.

The Flesh Eaters are predominantly ravager ghouls, led by a massive individual who calls himself Mog. Mog has maintained his position as ruler of the Flesh Eaters by never failing to produce meat for his people, whether it comes from attacking other ghoul tribes in the bio-dome

or openly assaulting Sentinel outposts and trader caravans. His daring exploits have earned Mog not only the respect of the entire tribe, but also a measure of resentment from other ghoul groups in the ruins (including Vorg of the Bloodmaw clan, who fears that Mog's reputation as a provider may soon endanger his tribe's position in the city if other ghouls continue defecting to the Flesh Eaters).

OK, this has got to be the strangest journal entry I've ever made. I didn't think the walking dead had any kind of organizational structure. I guess I was wrong. Scouts are comin' out of the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome with horror stories about what they found inside. It seems the whole area is contested by an unconfirmed number of ghoul tribes—that's right, tribes. The damned things actually have their own sects and follow leaders just like you and I do. One of them is called "Mog."

- Duncan Clark

Moloch Clan

The Moloch are a small, reclusive tribe of ghouls who make their home in the easternmost portion of the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome. The Moloch are primarily ghoul overlords who have taken to hunting down other ghouls (as well as adventurers foolish enough to enter their territory) in the wreckage of the city for the purposes of enslavement. Some say the Moloch work strange "magicks" on those they capture, but nobody really knows for sure.

Signs marking the territory of the Moloch clan are erected by Sentinels stationed at the Troutdale outpost, but these warnings never seem to stop people from wandering into the haunted region.

Ghouls of Note

Mog

Mog leads the Flesh Eater tribe by being a good provider. He has never failed to bring fresh meat (human and ghoul alike) to the growing ranks of his followers. Consequently, his tribe has begun to swell in numbers, a development that worries many of the other ghoul tribes (not to mention outsider scouts who sneak into the ruins to monitor ghoul activity within). Recently, Mog has increased the frequency of his attacks on the Sentinel outpost at Troutdale, which leads Warden Shephard to believe the Warlord might be aiming to expand his territory beyond the ruins. If Mog does decide to lead his tribe out of the Bio-dome, the people of Troutdale and all eastern settlements along the Columbia will be in for a hard fight.

Mog (Tough Hero 2/Strong Hero 2/Barbarian 8): CR 12; Medium-size mutant human; HD 2d10+2d8+8d12+24; hp 96; Mas 20; Init +0; Spd 25 ft.; Defense 23, touch 18, flat-footed 23 (+8 class, +5 junk armor); BAB +11; Grap +14; Atk +14 melee (1d8+5, nekode); Full Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (1d8+5, nekode); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Junk Armor, Junk Weapon, Melee Smash, Rage 3/day, Second Wind; AL Flesh Eaters; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 12; Rep +2; Str 16; Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 7.

Occupation and Background: Predator, Tribal.

Skills: Climb +7, Hide +10, Intimidate +4, Jump +8, Knowledge (tactics) +6, Move Silently +10, Search +7, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +7, Survival +10.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Blind-Fight, Brawl, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (nekode), Improved Brawl, Improved Damage Threshold (x2), Leadership, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Sunder, Track.

Mutations and Defects: Adrenaline Control, Increased Movement. Cannibalism, Hunchback.

Possessions: Junk nekode ("cat claws;" treat as brass knuckles with the *extremely deadly* ability), junk armor (medium)

Sentinels

History

The Lost Paradise is home to many hostile groups. From raiders to xenophobic tribes of ghouls that roam the wrecked cities, there is enough danger in the Northwest to challenge even the best-equipped travelers and communities. Fortunately for the more peaceful people of the region, there are some who choose to fight for the cause of good (to the extent that there is even a universally-accepted definition of "good" in these times). One such group, the Sentinels, makes their home in one of the world's few remaining intact and functional domes: *Crater City.*

Crater City is located inside the ruins of the Crater Lake Dome Complex. In fact, the Sentinels are descended from the inhabitants of the old tourist towns of southern Oregon and the affluent vacationers who found themselves trapped in the dome during the final days of civilization. These groups spent the dark years subsisting off plants and wildlife in the expansive bubble-domes, only venturing out into the wilds when supplies ran low. The ones who did dare the wastes beyond the relative safety of the bubble-domes were those most skilled in wilderness and outdoor survival. It was these gifted folk who formed the core of the Sentinels.

The Sentinels are extremely adept at survival in the wilds of the Twisted Earth. They are tireless explorers and outdoorsmen; it is said that they've even ventured south over the mountains into the old kingdom of California. Whether or not this is true, one thing is certain: they keep a vigilant watch on all roads leading to and from that region, almost as if they know something that others in the Northwest don't. These stories serve to fuel rampant gossip and speculation about the Sentinels and their connection to the southern lands.

Although most Sentinel forces are deployed to keep watch over these southern roads, Sentinel outposts can also be found along the northern passes serving as havens for those in need of aid. The Sentinels are dedicated to helping those unable to help themselves. Rarely will a Sentinel turn down a call for help, or decline to guide a caravan through dangerous territory.

The Sentinels are loosely aligned with the United Combine in its war against the Purity Corp. It is an alliance born more of convenience than moral principle; the Purist devils deserve to be destroyed, but few Sentinels find the politics of the United Combine to be much better. The Purity Corp's moral flaws are more immediately obvious, but Sentinels point out the high cost—in supplies, money, and food—that the Combine's freedom requires of its people, and wonder if the U.C.'s expensive protection sometimes more closely resembles extortion. Despite their general distrust of both factions, the Sentinels support the perceived lesser of the two evils, suspecting that the Combine, unlike the Purity Corp, could be reformed for the better after victory in the War.

The Three Orders

The Sentinels are divided into three distinct orders: *Guides*, *Scouts*, and *Wardens*.

The order of Guides is the largest and most visible of the three. Odds are if a person or group seeks out the Sentinels for help, the Sentinels will dispatch Guides to give aid. Guides serve various functions, ranging from manning outposts along the trade routes and accompanying scouts on missions to guiding caravans from one point to another. Travelers and merchants who approach the Sentinels for assistance or shelter usually interact with Guides; the valorous and benevolent actions of this order account for the high regard in which the people of the Northwest (excepting Purists) hold the Sentinels.

The Scouts form the elite arm of the Sentinels and recruit only the most skilled outdoorsmen and rangers. Scouts handle the Sentinels' most dangerous assignments: excursions into uncharted territory, the exploration of ruins, recon missions into enemy lands, and any other tasks too dangerous to be entrusted to less-experienced Sentinels.

Among the rigorous tests and challenges potential Scout recruits must endure is the "Gauntlet," a training program designed to refine and expand on the skills learned during Sentinel apprenticeship. The Gauntlet lasts for three moon cycles and tests participants beyond anything they have experienced before. Candidates have been known to die while "running the Gauntlet," but those who make it through are welcomed as brothers (or, more rarely, sisters) into an order venerated by Sentinels and non-Sentinels alike.

The third order, the Wardens, is the smallest of the three branches. Wardens hold command positions within the faction and are recruited exclusively from the ranks of Guides and Scouts. While many Wardens devote their time to administrative and command functions in Crater City, the most capable are given charge of Sentinel outposts, where (depending on the location) they command a garrison of Guides and a company of Scouts.

Recent rumors hold that changes—and new threats—are coming to the higher echelons of the Sentinels. Some reports mention rising dissatisfaction within the Warden order over the Sentinels' support of the Combine in the War of the Remnants. Other tales hold that the High Warden has taken ill and that members of his command staff are secretly jostling to replace him, campaigning for support from within other orders. Still other rumors claim that the Scouts watching the southern routes have noticed distressing developments there—some say an army of strange, twisted monsters with advanced technology is constructing strongholds on the edge of the region.

Sentinels

Background Options: Visionary Reinventor.

Attitude: The Sentinels believe peace and prosperity can be attained through hard work and selfless cooperation. To set an example for all to live by, by the Sentinels actively

A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

Though the Sentinels' sphere of control is limited to Crater City and its environs, their alliance with the United Combine has enabled them to expand their influence over a much larger area. Though the Sentinels maintain no other communities, the U.C. has all but invited them to visit their towns to the north, establish outposts along the Columbia River (see *Crown Point* for one such example), and "keep the peace."

Though this might seem like a move towards some kind of union with the Combine, it is not. The Sentinels are a stubborn, independent people, and though treated hospitably, they maintain a professional distance from the U.C. The Sentinels understand that the United Combine is primarily using them to help bolster their weaker, isolated southern front.

patrol old forest roads and wilderness areas to drive off creatures that threaten civilized settlements, and answer the call whenever a community needs help fending off attacks by raiders or other Northwest factions.

Symbol: Long ago the Sentinels fought briefly against the Chinook (when certain tribes of the latter began raiding settled lands across the Columbia out of desperation) and earned a reputation as fierce fighters. The Chinook thereafter used a symbol carved onto wooden posts to mark Sentinel territory, which the Sentinels later adopted as their official insignia. The symbol is a leering, red-eyed spirit from a traditional Northwest totem pole.

Common Classes: Guardian, Soldier, Scholar, Survivalist, Tinker, Mech.

Common Mutations: Diurnal/Nocturnal, Neural Mutation.

Common Defects: Hemophilia, Syncope.

The presence of Sentinels is not always appreciated by Northwest communities, but anyone who has run into trouble in the wilderness and received aid from Scouts will insist the Sentinels are a godsend to the region.

The inhabitants of Crater City are open to interaction with people in the surrounding areas. Outsiders are allowed into the bubble-domes to trade, seek shelter from the wilderness or petition to become Sentinels. Purists are not allowed into Sentinel holdings for any reason; anyone found to be a member of the Purity Corp is tried as a spy and executed if convicted.

Life in Crater City is very much like that on a military base. Civilians are expected to learn the basics of hand-to-hand combat and the handling of firearms. Sentinels handle the day-to-day security of the city, but in times of crisis everyone is expected to fight.

Crater City, originally built as a resort town for affluent vacationers, is one of the few domes that survived the fall relatively intact. Consequently, its current inhabitants enjoy many of the conveniences that come with living in a fully operational bio-dome. Androids played a particularly important role in preserving the city's population. After the initial chaos of the post-Fall android "emancipation," during which many of the city's pleasure androids and labor-bots embarked on killing sprees, Crater City's human inhabitants managed to fight back, destroying the most out-of-control androids and reprogramming the others to once again obey their human masters.

These androids (and Katy, the A.I. who controlled the everyday operation of the entire dome) became an integral part of life in Crater City. Katy and her robotic servants taught the humans how to preserve what resources they had, how to manufacture filters to keep the water pure enough to drink, and how to manufacture new, cutting-edge devices far more advanced than anything most other people in the Northwest could create. Guided by their benevolent A.I. assistants, the people of Crater City prospered even during the harsh, early days of the Twisted Earth, and today have access to more and better technology than do most of their neighbors.

The Sentinels maintain a strict policy of secrecy regarding their hi-tech capabilities for fear of drawing unwanted attention from other factions—many of whom would gladly risk war with the city in hopes of seizing its technology. If the Purists (or even the United Combine) understood the full extent of the Sentinels' technological superiority, war would come quickly to the gates of the Crater City domes.

Choosing a primary allegiance to Crater City during character creation means that the character was born inside the bio-dome or in the surrounding settlements. Such characters have unfettered access to the bio-dome and all of its secrets, and may begin play with advanced weapons and equipment not available to characters from most other communities. Of course, because the Sentinels do not wish to broadcast their technological capabilities, characters traveling outside Crater City are expected to exercise discretion in choosing and using equipment. Basic equipment and essential supplies are freely available, but only to characters who can prove his or her allegiance--and who can be trusted not to betray Crater City's secrets through careless use of advanced technology.

Characters with a secondary (or tertiary) allegiance to Crater City may or may not have the same level of access available to characters with a primary allegiance to the city. Generally speaking, these characters hail from other areas of the Northwest and have extensive but not complete access to Crater City and its storehouses. They must barter or purchase their equipment and weapons normally, though they pay lower costs and have access to better weapons than would a completely unaffiliated visitor.

When traveling abroad, characters with an allegiance to Crater City may find shelter in any Sentinel outpost in the

Allegiance Notes - Sentinels

Choosing the Sentinels or Crater City as an allegiance comes with the following benefits and restrictions:

Racial Tolerance: Sentinels (and the people of Crater City) are fairly open-minded about both ethnicity and mutation. Characters may choose to be either a mutant or a pureblood human.

Access to Advanced Gear: Characters with an allegiance to the Sentinels or Crater City are allowed access to the bio-dome, where they may be able to trade for advanced weapons and gear (GM's discretion).

Lost Paradise so long as they can prove their allegiance to the faction. Equipment in Sentinel outposts is not available for free, even to characters with a primary allegiance. Outposts maintain a strict rationing system and aren't willing to part with precious supplies without getting something in return.

In general, the attitudes of Sentinels towards other factions in the Northwest are as follows:

United Combine: The Sentinels enjoy a relatively friendly relationship with the United Combine. The two factions work together to keep the peace in old Oregon. The Sentinels don't always agree with the policies of the United Combine—many Sentinels are particularly upset over reports that the U.C. sometimes forsakes communities unable to contribute their fair share of supplies to the Combine—but the alliance of the two groups against the Purity Corp remains strong.

Purity Corp: The Purists are hated like no other faction in the Northwest. Their racist philosophy and their barbarous treatment of other factions were the major motivating factors in convincing the Sentinels to drop their neutral stance and plunge headlong into the War of the Remnants.

People's Army: The Sentinels maintain peaceful relations with the Tillamook Traders, going so far as to allow the faction to establish trading outposts on the borders of Crater City. The Sentinels don't necessarily agree with the neutral stance the People's Army takes with regard to the War of the Remnants, but respect their decision to do so. A militant minority within the Sentinels accuses the Tillamook Traders of being "blood traders" who care only about profiting off the war.

Chinook Indians (and other Indian groups): Like most other factions in the Northwest, the Sentinels have extremely limited contact with the Chinook and other native tribes of the region. As for the Chinook in particular, the Sentinels choose to leave these people alone, remembering past conflicts with the reclusive people.

Pale Riders: The Sentinels know little of the Pale Riders, but have dispatched elite Scouts to gather intelligence about Zorthag, his domains, and his ambitions. As it stands, Sentinel standing orders hold that any Pale Rider encountered in the wilderness is to be shot on sight or captured and brought back to Crater City.

Hand of Jehovah: Solomon's fanatics are another faction the Sentinels take great pains to avoid. Generally speaking, the Hand of Jehovah is just too fundamentalist for the Sentinels' tastes; many Sentinels hold religious beliefs of their own, but consider violent action against others in the name of religion unacceptable.

Fort Boise: The Sentinels have no real issues with this community of mutants, although hostile encounters with the Pale Riders currently threaten to taint the Sentinels' attitudes towards mutant-kind in general. As yet, the Sentinels haven't officially undertaken any expeditions into what used to be Idaho; they're too busy dealing with Zorthag's raids and the Purity Corp's all-out aggression.

Bone City: The Scouts are actively engaged in recon missions to gather more information about this city. The rumors they hear about the morbid "bone trade" are enough to make the average citizen of Crater City wary of further contact.

Beavertown: Sentinels occasionally travel into Beavertown when pursuing a criminal or when they want to use the tunnels leading into Old Portland. Otherwise, Sentinels choose to leave these people alone—they have enough problems as it is.

Scappoose: Occasionally a Guide leads a group near enough to the city to warrant staying there for the night, or a Scout stops by to trade, but that's about all the contact the Sentinels have with the seedy town of Scappoose. Some Sentinels have talked about clearing out the riff-raff and using the town as a base of operations, and many Wardens agree; they also know that the Trojan Corium Mine is near Scappoose, and that the additional revenue garnered from that mine would go a long way in these dark times.

Mutants: Sentinels choose to deal with mutants on a case-by-case basis. There are too many uncertainties in the Northwest to alienate a potential ally just because he or she looks different. Besides, a growing number of mutants are being born in Crater City and the surrounding settlements. Most Sentinels just accept mutation as a fact of life.

Typical Sentinel

Sentinel Guide (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/Tough Hero 1): CR 2; Medium-size human; HD 1d8+1d10+5; hp 15; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +2 class, +1 leather jacket); BAB +0; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +2 melee (1d6+2, combat knife); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +2 melee (1d6+2, combat knife), +2 ranged (2d8, M16A2); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Robust, Wasteland Lore; AL Sentinels; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1; AP 6; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Occupation and Background: Guide, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +3, Jump +4, Knowledge (ancient

lore) +3, Knowledge (mutant lore) +3, Listen +1, Move Silently +3, Navigate +7*, Search +1, Sense Motive +1, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +1, Survival +5*.

Feats: Guide*, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Leather jacket, M16A2 assault rifle, 60 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition, combat knife, flashlight, power cell, rad tab, five ready meals, 10 salt pills, survival kit, various other gear and personal possessions.

I've met this man once. Warden Shephard's a hard-nosed man with a long, hook-shaped scar above his left eye. He likes to brag about how he got it in a fight with some kind of mutant bug he calls a "Tecesni." Personally, I think it's a bunch of bullshit. Shephard's like that—always braggin' about his exploits up North. His men love him and would do anything for him, though. I suppose that's all that matters.

- Duncan Clark

Sentinel Scout (Post Apocalyptic Hero 3/Tough Hero 3): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+3d10+15; hp 45; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 16, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +4 class, +1 leather jacket); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +6 melee (1d6+2, combat knife); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +6 melee (1d6+2, combat knife), +5 ranged (2d8, M16A2); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Conserve, Robust, Stamina, Wasteland Lore; AL Sentinels; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; AP 8; Rep +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Occupation and Background: Guide, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +3, Jump +4, Knowledge (ancient lore) +3, Knowledge (mutant lore) +5, Listen +5*, Move Silently +3, Navigate +9*, Ride +4, Search +3, Sense Motive +3, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +5*, Survival +10*.

Feats: Alertness*, Endurance, Guide*, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Track, Trustworthy.

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Leather jacket, M16A2 or Colt M1911, 60 rounds of 5.56mm (or .45) ammunition, smoke grenade, stage IC access card, flashlight, power cell, rad tab, five ready meals, light rod, 10 salt pills, survival kit, holographic image projector, power cell, horse and trappings, various other gear and personal possessions.

Sentinels of Note

Garrick Shephard

Garrick Shepherd serves Crater City as Warden of the Crown Point Sentinel Outpost, situated along the southern banks of the Columbia River Gorge. Shephard's duties include monitoring all activity east of the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome, maintaining positive relations between the River Folk and the Sentinels, and assisting the River Folk in their efforts to halt the advance of Purist forces on the northern shores of the Great River.

Garrick commands a garrison of one hundred Guides and thirty of the best Scouts in the entire clan. Years of combat have made Garrick a bit of a cynic; he does his job with absolute loyalty to Crater City, but his heart has been hardened by the brutal realities of life outside of the great dome city.

Warden Shephard no longer sees much point in the Sentinels' involvement in the war between the United Combine and the Purity Corp. Too many men have died under his command; too many men have gone on patrols into the great domed "dead zone" to the west, never to be seen again. More young fools looking to become heroes in the eyes of parents and sweethearts get transferred to the front lines along the banks of the polluted river each day. Garrick does his best to guide them and to keep the greenies from getting their heads blown off, but at the end of the day there are always a few holo-transmissions to be sent back to Crater City with bad news for some poor family who sent sons or daughters out to the front.

Still, his men love him, and the High Wardens down in Crater City have nothing but praise for his accomplishments. They give Garrick everything he asks for, save for what he really wants: to be cut loose of his responsibilities at Crown Point and given time with his wife and child.

Garrick Shephard (Fast Hero 3/Smart Hero 3/Guardian 8): CR 14; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+3d6+8d10+28; hp 82; Mas 13; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 28, touch 22, flat-footed 25 (+3 Dex, +9 class, +6 military combat suit); BAB +11; Grap +13; Atk +13 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed); Full Atk +13/+8/+3 melee (1d3+2, nonlethal, unarmed), or +15/+10/+5 ranged (2d8, M16A2); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Defender (+4), Evasion, Plan, Savant (knowledge, tactics)*, Tactical Aid, Uncanny Dodge 1; AL Sentinels; SV Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +5; AP 13; Rep +4; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Occupation and Background: Military, Visionary Reinventor.

Skills: Balance +5, Demolitions +9, Drive +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (current events) +10, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (tactics) +17*, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Search +4, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +3, Tumble +5.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Endurance, Far Shot, Great Fortitude, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post Apocalyptic Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus (M16A2), Weapon Specialization (M16A2).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Military combat suit, M16A2, 90 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition, two fragmentation grenades, knife, flashlight, rad tab, five ready meals, 10 salt pills, survival kit, holographic image projector, two power cells, blue stage IIIC identity card.

River Folk

The Northwest is considered a "Lost Paradise" primarily because it is laced with rivers and dotted with lakes, all of which are magnets for people looking to survive in lands otherwise inimical to life. The waters are also an excellent means of transport; the River Folk living in these well-watered lands use the waterways to travel to and from towns located on the rivers. In many cases, they have even developed distinct social orders independent of the region's major factions.

"*River folk are River folk, and everyone else is just logs floatin' down stream"* is a common saying among the River Folk, who are largely uninterested in the politics of the Northwest. They have enough to worry about without having to choose sides in a war they didn't start. But despite their official neutrality in the War of the Remnants, the other factions must take careful account of the River Folk whenever undertaking major operations in the area—for the River Folk alone hold the key to safe navigation of the Northwest's often-treacherous waterways.

The Purity Corp pays particular attention to the River Folk, who stand in the way of Purist conquest in Oregon. The River Runners (the predominant clan of River Folk) control all water traffic on the Columbia (which they've named the Great Water); before the Purists can gain control of any territory in Oregon, they will have to find some way to neutralize the River Runner war boats that tirelessly patrol the river. The River Runners guess the Purity Corp's ambitions and respond to Purist threats with what force they can muster.

The largest River Folk settlement lies at the ruins of what was once Bonneville Dam. The River Runners there must deal with constant Purist attempts to seize control of the structure and its partially-restored hydroelectric power generators. When not dealing with Purist incursions, River Runners travel up and down the Great Water, trading with the small communities that have cropped up on its southern banks, roaming almost to the mouth of the Columbia, an area they call the "Picket Fence."

River Folk

Background Options: Tribal.

Attitude: The River Folk are just trying to survive—to live their lives as best they can with what few resources remain. They claim the waterways of the Lost Paradise as their domain. Acutely aware of their lack of manpower and resources, they've survived by providing boat services to the other groups of the area, and by remaining officially neutral in the War of the Remnants.

Symbol: None, though individual groups of River Folk (such as the River Runners) may sometimes adopt symbols with which to mark the boundaries of their territory.

Common Classes: Guardian, Scav, Skulk, River Runner, Tinker, Mech.

Common Mutations: Respiratory Membrane, Webbed Digits.

Common Defects: Bilirubin Imbalance, Hemi hypertrophy.

Politically, the River Folk are the Northwest's wild card. They control many of the waterways through Oregon and parts of Washington—and they alone possess the skill and knowledge required to navigate the heavily-polluted, monster-infested waters of the Northwest. This monopoly makes them important power brokers in the region, as other factions must deal with the River Runners for safe passage along and across the treacherous waterways.

Most River Folk prefer to live in peace and quiet, content to live off the land and what aquatic life they can catch. Other necessities are acquired through barter or taken as payment in exchange for the safe escort of caravans and travelers up and down the rivers. They are careful about the factions with whom they do business; the politics of the region are so volatile that simply doing business with the "wrong" party can bring the wrath of an entire faction down upon their heads. With this in mind, most River Folk remain neutral and deal with customers on a case-by-case basis. The only exception to this rule is the Purity Corp—the Purists brought war to the banks of the Columbia, and while the River Folk don't go looking for fights, neither do they hesitate to fire on any Purist patrols they encounter.

The technology level of the River Folk varies from one settlement to another. Some live low-tech lives not unlike the Chinook, while others have limited access to modern-era weaponry and equipment. In the case of the Bonneville Falls settlement, a steady source of hydroelectric energy has brought both wealth and unwanted attention from other factions.

The average River Folk community has at least five watercraft of various designs, ranging from simple motorboats to jet skis to tuggers —and at the most advanced end of the spectrum, fast-attack watercraft armed with jury-rigged sea mines and ring-mounted machine guns.

In general, the attitudes of River Folk towards other factions in the Northwest are as follows:

United Combine: River Folk have no real reason not to deal fairly with the United Combine. Some communities are even on somewhat decent terms with the U.C., although the River Folk are careful not to get caught up in the War of the Remnants. The River Folk will continue to deal peacefully with the United Combine as long as its diplomats don't start pressuring them to get more actively involved in the war.

Purity Corp: River Folk hate the Purists. The Corp is responsible for so many River Folk deaths that the mere

Allegiance Notes – River Folk

Characters who choose River Folk as their primary allegiance receive the following benefits and drawbacks:

Access to Equipment: River Folk receive no special restrictions on the advanced weapons and equipment they may choose during character creation.

Mutant Intolerance: River folk tend to be highly intolerant of mutants. Mutant characters who choose this allegiance may suffer prejudice and even persecution in some communities

sight of a Purist patrol will provoke most River Folk to attack.

People's Army: Some River Folk (such as the Harris Clan in Corvallis) refuse to deal with the Tillamook Traders because of the latter's Union origins. Others choose to ignore the past and deal with the needs of present, and the Tillamook Trading Caravans are always eager to meet those needs.

Chinook Indians (and other Indian groups): The River Folk have had only limited dealings with the native tribes of the Northwest. The River Folk and natives lead similar lives, although their reclusive natures mean that they only deal with each other when absolutely necessary.

Pale Riders: These raiders are hated nearly as much as the Purists. River Folk settlements along the John Day, Deschutes, and the eastern portion of the Columbia rivers have recently come under attack by this group. Consequently, any encounters with this mutant faction are likely to end in bloodshed.

Hand of Jehovah: River Folk tend to be leery of dealing with anyone who claims allegiance to the Hand of Jehovah. Most River Folk appreciate the importance of religion and faith, but don't understand the extremes to which the Hand has taken their beliefs, and they strongly disapprove of the Hand's often violent conversion techniques. News and rumors of Hand of Jehovah missionary excesses has left most River Runners unwilling to deal extensively with members of the faction.

Crater City: The Sentinels of Crater Dome frown on the reclusive River Folk's wartime neutrality. The River Folk have never cared for this elitist attitude, especially given that their own efforts to patrol the Columbia River keeps Purist armies at bay on the north shore.

Fort Boise: River Folk have heard of this largely mutant-populated city, but have yet to have any dealings with its people.

Bone City: River Folk who have built settlements on the Upper Columbia and Roosevelt Lake have regular dealings with travelers and traders from Bone City. While there is no love lost between the two societies, neither group goes out of its way to cause trouble for the other.

Beavertown: As long as the criminals and deviants of Beavertown keep to themselves, there are no problems.

Scappoose: Scappoose is another town that River Folk prefer to avoid due to the heavy criminal element that thrives in the shadow of the Trojan Corium Mines. Wanderers occasionally book passage to a series of docks built just north of Scappoose on the shores of the Columbia, but most River Folk and ferrymen charge triple cost in corium, chips, or other tradable goods when making a stop there.

Mutants: Mutants are a touchy subject in River Folk society. More sympathetic members of the faction argue that mutants aren't necessarily all bad people, while hardliners caution against dealing with them at all. Mutant babies born into the various River Folk clans are often exiled from their communities out of fear that they will grow into monsters. Less superstitious clans, such as that of Bonneville Falls, accept mutants into the community on a case-by-case basis.

Typical River Folk

River Folk Deckhand (Post Apocalyptic Hero 1/Strong Hero 1): CR 2; Medium-size human; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Mas 14; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 class); BAB +1; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +3 melee (1d6+2, combat knife); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +3 melee (1d6+2, combat knife); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Extreme Effort, Wasteland Lore; AL River Folk; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; AP 6; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Guide, Tribal.

Skills: Balance +4, Climb +4*, Craft (structural) +5, Drive +4, Navigate +7*, Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +5, Survival +7*, Swim +8*.

Feats: Athletic*, Guide*, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation (boat).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Combat knife, various other gear and personal possessions.

River Folk Boat Captain (Post Apocalyptic Hero 3/Strong Hero 3): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 6d8+12; hp 39; Mas 14; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 class); BAB +5; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed) or +7 melee (1d6+2, combat knife); Full Atk +7 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +7 melee (1d6+2, combat knife), or +6 ranged (2d8, S&W M29); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Extreme Effort, Improved Extreme Effort, Survival Sense, Wasteland Lore; AL River Folk; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; AP 8; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Guide, Tribal.

Skills: Balance +6, Climb +4*, Craft (structural) +7, Drive +11*, Knowledge (current events) +3, Navigate +12*, Speak

Language (Trade), Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +5, Survival +7*, Swim +10*.

Feats: Athletic*, Guide*, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation, Vehicle Expert*, Weapon Focus (S&W M29).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Smith & Wesson M29, 24 rounds of .44 magnum ammunition, bullet belt or bandolier, combat knife, various other gear and personal possessions.

The last time I visited Bonneville Falls I saw a fight. Two guys were squared off against a lone woman. At first I thought 'What the hell? Why are two men beating up on a woman?' But after she broke one man's jaw and left the other guy curled up on the concrete in a pool of blood spitting out his front teeth, I realized Emma Parker could have handled herself even if it were four men. Sheesh, if I weren't so afraid of getting my ass kicked for it, I would have asked her out.

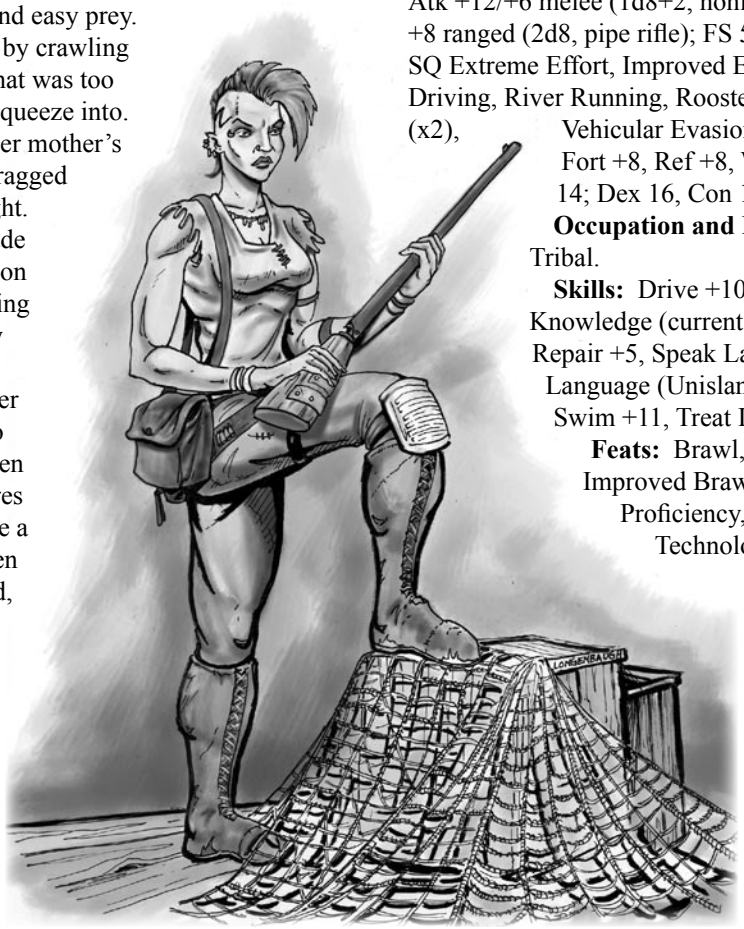
- Duncan Clark

River Folk of Note

Emma Parker

Emma grew up in a small, nameless settlement a few miles west of Bonneville Falls. Her mother disappeared one night when a pack of ghouls came out of the Lewis and Clark Bio-dome searching for food to take back to their tribe. Her father was away on patrol on the Columbia, so when the creatures stumbled across her family's unguarded home, they found easy prey. Emma managed to escape by crawling into an old sewage drain that was too small for the creatures to squeeze into. She sat there listening to her mother's screams as the creatures dragged the woman off into the night.

The horrific incident made an indelible impression upon Emma. She grew up thinking that if her mother had only learned how to protect herself—and Emma's father had always been willing to teach—she would have been able to fend off the creatures and Emma would still have a mother. By the time thirteen harvest seasons had passed, Emma could kick the snot out of any boy in Bonneville Falls. She learned to swim, despite her father's warnings about the dangers of the polluted, lamprey-infested waters. By the time she was sixteen, Emma was one of the most competent navigators on the Great Water. She ran the "Picket Fence" in total darkness after having been down it only once before, and could shoot the cigar out of a Purist's mouth from 500 yards away.



Emma prides herself on being a strong, independent woman. She is more than happy to do her part to help the community, but won't take orders from any man—not even her own father. Most men stay clear of the woman. All try to stay on her good side because they know that if you piss off Emma Parker, you're in for a fight.

Emma Parker (Strong Hero 3/River Runner 7): CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 10d8+20; hp 65; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +6 class); BAB +10; Grap +12; Atk +12 melee (1d8+2 nonlethal, unarmed), or +13 ranged (2d8, pipe rifle); Full Atk +12/+6 melee (1d8+2, nonlethal, unarmed), or +13/+8 ranged (2d8, pipe rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Extreme Effort, Improved Extreme Effort, Offensive Driving, River Running, Rooster Tail, Submerged Strike (x2), Vehicular Evasion; AL River Runners; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +3; AP 11; Rep +3; Str 14; Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Occupation and Background: Fisherman, Tribal.

Skills: Drive +10, Intimidate +4, Jump +7, Knowledge (current events) +3, Navigate +4, Repair +5, Speak Language (Trade), Speak Language (Unislang), Spot +5, Survival +2, Swim +11, Treat Injury +4, Tumble +5.

Feats: Brawl, Dead Aim, Far Shot, Improved Brawl, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Surface Vehicle Operation (power boat).

Mutations and Defects: None.

Possessions: Pipe rifle (5.56mm), 10 rounds of 5.56mm ammo, net and battery, two concussion grenades.

Mutant Society

The emergence of *mutants* is a relatively new phenomenon in the Northwest. With just a few exceptions, everyone who lives in the Northwest is descended from Ancients who managed to make it into bunker complexes and other fallout shelters before pre-Fall civilization came to an end. Generation after generation of pureblood humans was born inside the bunkers, safe from the pollution and radiation that others had to endure, safe from the poisons that were radically changing those who still walked beneath the sun. Protected from the firestorms that scoured the surface world, they managed to avoid the genetic mutation that took place elsewhere in the Twisted Earth—for a while, at least.

But that time has ended. After many long years of living in the vast bunker complexes, these descendants of the Ancients returned to the surface—and for a while everything seemed okay. Most people of the Northwest had no idea that pureblood human beings were now so rare as to be the subject of myths and legends in the lands to the south.

That ignorance has begun to fade, however. The past twenty five years have seen the birth of a growing number of mutant babies. These births were at first dismissed as isolated events, but as time passed, more and more mutants were born to put the lie to that assumption. Many feared that a new plague had come to test the mettle of humanity once more. Families unfortunate enough to give birth to mutant babies were pushed out of settlements all across the Northwest, forced to fend for themselves in the wilds because the people they had considered kin could not tolerate the sight of deformed babies with vestigial growths, aberrant abilities, and in some cases even *claws*.

These dispossessed masses wandered the wilderness, looking for shelter in other communities but finding none willing to even spare so much as a loaf of bread. Eventually, those who adapted to life in exile banded together with others who shared their plight and formed their own settlements in remote locations—places where they could live in relative peace and try to make sense of what had happened to them.

Present-day mutant societies are reviled by many in the Northwest. Most "pureblood" settlements, as they are referred to by mutant-kind, treat mutants as if they were diseased creatures cursed by God. When a mutant and a pureblood human meet—whether on the open road or at the gates of a town—there is always a good chance the encounter will end in bloodshed. Nor is it always pureblood humans who start the hostilities; mutants in the Northwest tend to go on the defensive when around non-mutants because of the treatment they've endured in the past.

Mutants are a minority in the Northwest, but that is changing over time. For every five infants born into a pureblood settlement, three manifest mutations or defects of varying degrees. Revelations like these by local medicine men and scientists (who are versed in ancient "Arcanum") have sparked a new wave of hysteria in pureblood settlements throughout the Northwest. People turn to their leaders for comfort and answers—and find none. Many try to ignore the fact that these incidents are happening everywhere and strike out on their own, believing that mutations are localized events and that leaving "tainted" places will spare them and their offspring from the curse of mutation. Of course, they are mistaken; Many realize all too late that they've left the protection of their homes only to undergo the very metamorphoses they hoped to escape.

Chapter 4: Places of Interest

Geographic Overview

They say that this area was, at one time, one of the most beautiful places on the planet. People came from all around, just to visit for a few days, just to look at the mountains and the waterfalls. I see some of that beauty here and there; trying to come back from the abyss that humanity pushed it into. Still, the damage has been done, and even though some of the plant life is growing back, I wonder if this place will ever be what it once was.

- Duncan Clark

The Northwest was once a lush region, filled with forests that spread out as far as the eye could see, covering the mountains and valleys in a blanket of pine and evergreen. Rivers and streams crisscrossed the land, nourishing wide varieties of plant and wild life. Towards the end of the twentieth century, however, the rape of the natural world was well underway.

By the time the Fall came, a large portion of the wilderness of the great Northwest had been destroyed. Once-clean rivers and streams were polluted and became unsafe for consumption. The air had become a noxious soup of toxins, unfit to breathe for extended periods of time. For human beings, life in bunkers and bio-domes had become a firm, unyielding reality. Projects to reclaim areas of the wilderness were initiated, but it was much too little, much too late. The damage had already been done, and things were about to get worse.

The Ravages Of War

The invasion of the United States visited new horrors upon the environment. The initial battles of the war were fought with conventional weapons; the first waves of artillery and bombs pummeled and cracked the surrounding countryside as man fought machine. Small towns and rural communities were destroyed and left in smoking ruin as the war machine marched on.

Fires raged out of control and the bodies of the dead were left to rot were they lay. Enemy bombing campaigns reduced entire stretches of fertile soil into fields of craters. As if that weren't enough, the war chiefs of the world, in their infinite madness, resorted to nuclear and chemical weapons.

Chemical and biological attacks wreaked havoc on all life in the Northwest, blanketing the land in a poisonous fume that left man and beast choking and sprawled on their backs, twitching and flailing in their death spasms like bugs in a pool of pesticide.

Tactical nuclear weapons found their targets in the major naval bases and strategic support facilities of Puget Sound, the nuclear silos dotting the most isolated corners of eastern Washington, and (especially) the Umatilla Gas Repository in North Eastern Oregon, one of the world's largest storage facilities for chemical warfare munitions. The weapons did their jobs well, obliterating their targets – along with countless millions of innocent souls. The radiation swelled and rose into the atmosphere, riding the winds east from the hulk of smoking ruin that was once Seattle; a biblical creeping doom that left death and disease in the wake of its fallout. Indeed, it was as if the four horsemen of the apocalypse raged across the Northwest in those final days.

Weather

The weather in the Northwest can be unpredictable. Every five years or so, the Northwest sees particularly heavy winters (a bizarre side effect of the global warming caused by Ancient-era industries), a bitter season that brings with it a plague of radiation-laced snow and temperatures that regularly drop to thirty degrees below zero. This "arctic season" lasts for many months at a time, and it is sometimes up to two *years* before a thaw begins. The locals call this varying period "the time of the white death," because an average of thirty percent of the total population of the Northwest's remaining settlements can die from exposure during these periods.

Due to the proximity to the North Pacific, during the warmer seasons people see regular rain – but as with the few other places on the Twisted Earth that see any appreciable precipitation, little of this water can be used without first running it through some sort of purification system, because the latent toxicity is so high. Sometimes the rains are so corrosive that they actually "burn". People who have been caught out in one of these "corrosion storms" often bear terrible rashes on their bodies for days, even weeks at a time.

"Rad-tornadoes" are an all too common occurrence in the wastelands of southeastern Oregon. When the wind whips down out of the radiation-blasted areas of the Pure Lands (carrying with it radiated particles from the Fall), it sometimes gets funneled into the canyons and valleys of the region. When this happens, "rad-tornadoes" form and go howling across the land, destroying everything in their path. The debris they hurl out into the land is also radiated and causes even more long-term damage to the environment. Settlements caught in these freak storms don't often live to see another one.

Geographic Changes

The years since the Fall have brought changes to the landscape of the Northwest. Even though many long years

have passed since the Great War, the land has only just started to make a recovery. Various wise men have studied what tomes of ancient knowledge are left, and they are almost unanimous in their opinion that the earth is nearly beyond repair. Though forests still stand in this distant corner of the Twisted Earth, even here great stretches of hinterland have long since disappeared as a consequence of radioactive fallout and the poisoning of the region's once-abundant water sources. Without clean water, nothing survives for long, and much of the emerald green blanket that covered the Northwest has been replaced with blackish brown reminders of what once was. Even worse, some of the wilderness is mutating just as the people are beginning to mutate. As the Chinook elders and medicine men put it, "Mother Earth is starting to grow teeth".

Polluted marshlands cover much of the Columbia River Gorge. After the Fall, nobody remained to operate the dams along the Columbia and Snake River estuaries; Bonneville, The Dalles, John Day, McNary, Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, and Lower Granite Dams all fell into disuse and, in short order, many burst without regular maintenance. In the case of the Columbia River, the waterway overflowed its banks as a result of this catastrophe, creating a festering, stinking bog that poisoned everything for miles around.

Eventually people returned to some these massive construction works, out of curiosity or some knowledge of their former purpose; in at least one case (Bonneville Dam), settlers were able to gain some measure of control over the Ancient-era facility, even to the point of being able to generate electricity (the place is now known as "Bonneville Falls," as part of the structure collapsed under enormous hydraulic pressure, creating a waterfall).

While rivers still snake through much of the land, they have been radically reduced in size over the years due to long, intermittent stretches of drought, as well as prolonged freezing winters that keep much of the water locked up in mountaintop glaciers. Clean water coming down from the mountains is now a rarity, and only a few people (such as the Mountain Walkers) know where to reliably find it. The largest of the rivers of the region – the Willamette, the John Day, Deschutes and Columbia –are mostly contaminated with Ancient-era contaminants, although not nearly as badly polluted as they were in the initial days after the Fall. Still, drinking from these rivers and the lakes they feed into without the proper precautions is to invite sickness. In most cases, "purified" water still causes diarrhea and is plagued by heavy industrial elements that can cause debilitating illnesses, making operational water purification systems one of the most valuable assets a settlement can have.

Plant Life

Like the animal life of the region, the surviving plant life that now flourishes throughout many areas in the Northwest has become mutated, in varying degrees. Before the Fall, scientists had been working on developing new strains of plant life that could survive in their poisoned world. They succeeded to some extent, seeding vast areas in the Cascade and Coast Range with experimental strains of plant life that, they had hoped, would develop into edible crops to rival wheat, corn, and a variety of other vegetables. The genetic witchdoctors also developed new breeds of plants that they hoped would be able to be harvested and turned into drugs with recreational and medicinal uses.

Some scientists created strains of plant life that had, up to that point, never been seen on the planet. In some cases these new strains exhibited *lethal* properties. Spiked vines lashed out whenever someone came close and secreted a toxic substance that paralyzed its victim. Larger versions of *venus fly traps* grabbed any organic substance they could find and produced a highly acidic fluid that burned through flesh and bone with ease and speed. Other plants flung spores into the air that, when inhaled, caused drowsiness, sudden muscle spasms, even convulsions and in the case of one strain, wild, vivid hallucinations and psychosis. Many of these forms of plant life have somehow managed to survive into the present day, flourishing in many areas of the Northwest.

Much of the old world has been overgrown with toxic strains of plant life, hidden away from all but the most watchful eyes of travelers. Some treasures of the old world are neatly tucked away behind a wall of dense, blackish green grass and moss, just waiting to be found. Many of the old shuttle tubes are also still intact, yet they remain unfound because they have been covered in a blanket of mutated plant life. Where those tubes lead, and what they may contain, is a mystery.

Specific Locations

The following is a list of specific geographic locations in the Lost Paradise region of the Twisted Earth.

Alpine Falls

Former Name: Alpine Falls, Washington.
Ruling Faction: United Combine.

The tiny settlement of Alpine Falls is little more than a wooden stockade, with towers erected at each corner. A few buildings for the local inhabitants lay strewn about this yard, while a series of rusted old metal tanks (tanker trailers scavenged from pre-Fall trucks found abandoned along old Highway 2) lie clustered about, storing vast amounts of fresh water.

Alpine Falls is situated in a deep region of Northwest forests, high in the Cascades. The town gets its name from the waterfall nearby, a 40 ft., glacier-fed cascade that produces some of the purest water in the mountains. Through only a minimal amount of purification (halazone tablets to kill natural bacteria), the water from the cascade can be collected, stored in the tanker trailers in town, and shipped off on U.C. caravans north and south.

Alpine Falls is a major source of the U.C.'s fresh drinking

water, and its capture would deal a major blow to the Combine. The fort is guarded by only a small contingent, but its relative isolation along the old Lifeline makes it difficult to reach.

Mountain Walkers often visit Alpine Falls to restock water provisions, and bring with them tales and reports of Purity Corp movements to the south.

Battle Ground

Former Name: Unknown.
Ruling Faction: Purity Corp.

"Battle Ground" is home to the southernmost Purist stronghold in the Pure Lands. Located fifteen miles north of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome, Battle Ground was originally established as a staging ground for future incursions across the Columbia River into United Combine territory. Lately, however, the War of the Remnants has fallen into a bit of a lull; no orders have come from Zog about any future campaigns across the Columbia, so the people of Battle Ground have busied themselves with exploration into the huge amount of ruins that pepper the surrounding region.

The town of Battle Ground is home to several hundred "Nubian" Purists, with another two hundred more Arian hard-liners filling out the population to just under a thousand, making Battle Ground one of the largest Purist settlements in the Pure Lands.

Battle Ground is more of a military encampment than a real town. The people who live in Battle Ground do so at the behest of Jeremiah Cole, keeping watch on the southern borders of the Pure Lands, ever vigilant against any possible incursion of enemy forces into their territory. Rumors have been leaking out of the Pure Lands about caravans heading east out of Battle Ground to Fort Boise on great metal boxes that ride on twin steel rails that jut out of the ground. Some say the "smoking caravans" are actually slave trains carrying prisoners of war to be auctioned off in exchange for supplies, rare corium, and even "chips," that have recently become a viable alternative to bartering. Whether the rumors about the slaves are true or not remains to be seen. But if they are true, then the development represents a fundamental shift in Purist Policy, as Fort Boise is rumored to be a mutant settlement.

A man by the name of "Chaka" is the overlord of Battle Ground. He commands two divisions of heavy infantry which are supported by a battery of Ancient-era heavy artillery and several partially restored *Jackson* hover tanks. Chaka has these forces strategically deployed at outposts up and down the northern shores of the Columbia River, which he tasks with monitoring all non-Purist traffic along the old roads – as well as capturing anybody trying to cross the river. However, many of his soldiers (having grown tired of Nubian dominance in the Purity Corp) have begun to desert, taking much of the advanced equipment stockpiled at Battle Ground with them into the wilderness. Now, as these desertions grow ever more serious, Chaka's failures have become the focus of Jeremiah Cole's paranoid anger – and as a result, Chaka himself has begun entertaining ideas of desertion or open rebellion.

Battle Ground is in a perpetual state of martial law. Outsiders are not welcome in Battle Ground; in fact, should anyone be so foolhardy as to approach the gates without showing proper identification, they will either be shot or force-drafted into the Purist army, if they're lucky.

Beavertown

Former Name: Beaverton, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

Beavertown is a fairly recent settlement that was built amidst the ruins of the Ancient city of the same name. It is a ramshackle town where the majority of the population lives in gutted out buildings and even underground in the city's old sewage and waste systems.

The population of Beavertown is dominated by mutants who have been ostracized by pureblood human settlements and factions such as the United Combine and (especially) the Purity Corp.

Pureblood humans who come to Beavertown are often treated with scorn and run off, or worse, unless they somehow earn the respect of the mutants who call the place home.

Beavertown has a population of several hundred mutants and a varying number of purebloods who have, through some means or another, managed to earn the respect of the locals. Usually this entails being an outcast from human society; in fact, the average pureblood who lives in Beavertown does so because he or she doesn't have a choice. Generally speaking, these folk have all found themselves blacklisted from other communities across the Northwest for one reason or another. A good number of thieves, even murderers who have somehow escaped, find themselves in hiding in Beavertown.

Trade is possible, even lucrative in Beavertown, if a person manages to get past the anti-pureblood prejudice of the locals. Its proximity to the ruins of Old Portland and the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome makes Beavertown a haven for people who wish to find a guide to take them through the tunnels leading through the East Hills and into the old city.

Bone City

Former Name: Spokane, Washington.
Ruling Faction: None.

Nestled along the river of the same name, "Bone City" is the largest independent settlement in the northeastern portion of the Lost Paradise. Bone City is located on the outskirts of the ruins of Spokane, Washington. The population of two thousand souls came to the ruins of old Spokane from a vast complex comprised of three inter-connected bunkers located in the Rocky Mountains of northern Idaho.

When the atomic locks opened the massive doors to the subterranean metropolis, many of the people left, but not as many as one would expect. The majority of the populace decided to remain in the complex. After all, the bunkers were all they had ever known. None of the bunker dwellers had ever seen a sunset that wasn't programmed on old holo-screens, or felt air blowing across their face that hadn't first been piped through a maze of aluminum ducts and purifiers. To suddenly up and move out of their relatively comfortable homes into a wilderness that was so alien to them it might as well have been on a different planet, was more than most of the people could take. The two thousand or so adventurous people that did decide to leave were given food, supplies and even some precious seed and weapons, and bid good luck on their journey to wherever it was they were headed.

The people moved west following an old, broken road called an "interstate" until they reached the ruins of Spokane. The group moved into old homes on the outskirts of the main city until the heart of the old town could be explored and made safe for their brothers and sisters to enter. As the scouts moved through old Spokane, more than a few of them began to get sick. People started contracting diseases like smallpox, anthrax, and a host of other ailments, many of which were easily cured by the medicines the refugees brought with them from the bunkers.

Some of the more intelligent members of the expedition surmised that Spokane had probably fallen victim to a host of biological attacks that were rumored to have happened in the last days, which would explain the diseases and the relatively sound structural integrity of most of the buildings they had explored so far. Another clue to the fate of the original inhabitants of Spokane lay within their corpses. Thousands upon thousands of bleached white bones were found everywhere the newcomers went. Intact skeletons of humans and even some animals were found in homes, stores, parks, along what remained of the river, and inside old vehicles on the ancient freeways; it was as if they died right where they happened to be at the time.

Bone City was given its name, partly in memory of all of the skeletons of the Ancients that the settlers found, and also because the frugal settlers didn't waste those bones. They used them to make a variety of things ranging from bowls (out of the skulls of the dead), to eating utensils, handles for knives, and even entire buildings. The people of Bone City have such a surplus of the remains of the dead that they trade some of their stocks for other things. Some communities throughout the Northwest have come to prize the jewelry and tools of Bone City for their intricate carvings and surprising durability. Other cultures think that using the bones of the dead is a morbid practice and frown on anyone who perpetuates the custom by trading for those bones.

Mutant and non-mutant alike are welcome in Bone City, a place that is not known to be a settlement that thrives on peaceful, wholesome activities. Lawlessness runs rampant in Bone City, a fact of life which some claim has largely been brought about by the bone trade. Visitors to Bone City are able to find a place to trade day or night. The "strip", as it's called in Bone City, never sleeps. A whole host of trading stations are always open, ready to do business with people who have something – anything – of worth.

Bonneville Falls

Former Name: Bonneville Dam, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: River Folk.

Before the Fall, Bonneville Dam was a major source of power for people in the Northwest. The dam supplied power to the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome as well as many of the bubble domes and automated homes throughout Oregon and Washington. Because the stubborn workers stayed at their posts despite the chaos of the war, when the Fall came the power didn't immediately fail, but gradually faded away over a period of time. Eventually, however, their brave efforts came to naught, and the power supply for much of the region died right along with most of its people. Even though many of the power conduits to certain areas of the region remained intact, there was nobody left to ensure the dam remained in operation. The structural integrity of Bonneville began to deteriorate from years and years of neglect, and finally broke apart under the strain of the great river and created an enormous waterfall.

As the years passed, the ragged descendants of the old dam operators returned to the place now known as Bonneville Falls to try and repair as much of the damage as possible. The structural damage to the dam itself was beyond repair, but the main valves for the flood gates were able to be fixed – which was crucial to getting the massive turbines to operate again. After many failures, these people (who would come to be called "River Folk") were able to get two of the massive turbines and their support equipment operational. With the turbines operating, the generators began to produce power.

The area around Bonneville Falls is the location of a large settlement of River Folk. These people survived the Great Fall by taking shelter in various areas of the Columbia Gorge that had been designated as protected zones. The Multnomah Reclamation Zone – a protected area designed to preserve as much of the old scenic highway as possible – served as the home for the River Folk during the dark years. Some of these people eventually drifted south along what was left of the Hood and Willamette Rivers to form settlements in other areas, but the people who stayed behind have dedicated themselves to protecting and maintaining the power supply at Bonneville Falls.

The River Folk of the Northwest patrol the considerably diminished Columbia River all the way west to the region known as the "Picket Fence". The ancient river is teeming with all manner of dangers, from blood whales, mutated sockeye and poisonous lamprey, to Purist patrols that now and again scour the northern shores that mark the southern boundary of the Pure Lands.

The people of Bonneville Falls claim the entirety of the Columbia as their domain. Anyone who wishes to cross must

provide some sort of compensation or find their own way across the dangerous river.

Bremerton

Former Name: Bremerton, Washington.
Ruling Faction: None.

Before the Fall, the city of Bremerton was home to one of the Pacific Coast's largest naval bases. When the Final War turned into a total nuclear conflict, one of the first places to be incinerated by nuclear strikes was the military complex at Bremerton. Now all that remains of the surface portion of this once-sprawling base is a wreck of twisted metal that was once dock facilities, support complexes, and warships of the reserve (or "mothball") fleet that failed to get out in time.

Below ground is a different story, however.

One of the functions of the Bremerton naval base was to store weapons and ammunition for ships that were not currently deployed into hostile areas. Much of the ammunition was kept in hardened bunkers deep below the surface of the earth in the event that something similar to what actually happened to the base might take place. During the conventional war that led up to the inevitable nuclear conflict, Bremerton was on ultra-high alert. While much of the stockpiles of ammunition, weapons, and other supplies for the base were hurriedly relocated to rear locations all across the Northwest, the remaining stocks were sealed off as part of protocol for a suspected nuclear strike. Consequently, much of that surplus survived to the present day, but as of yet nobody has discovered the mighty weapons of the Ancients. If anyone has survived in personnel bunkers that are assuredly in the area, they haven't made their presence known; radiation levels, the highest in the Northwest, seem to suggest that nothing could live here anyway.

Bremerton, as it exists today, is a haunted wasteland across the Dead Water from the Spawning Pits. Travel in this region just doesn't happen unless a person has a true death wish. Between the immense levels of radiation, the creatures that somehow manage to thrive here, and the constant scrutiny from the legions massed at the Spawning Pits, the chances for any explorers to survive for long in the ruins of Bremerton are not even worth mentioning.

Bubble Dome Valley

Former Name: Mt. Hood Wilderness Area, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

Located in the shadow of Mt. Hood, the "Bubble Dome Valley" is a silent, eerie place blanketed with row after row of bubble domes that have long since been covered over with a wide variety of plant life, sometimes to an extent that, when viewed from a distance, the entire valley looks as if it were nothing more than a series of small hills dotted with the remains of small towns and farms that have long since fallen to ruin.

The valley was once a vast series of fruit orchards and vineyards that were prized throughout the Northwest. Now all that remains are the bubble domes that were erected to protect these agricultural farmsteads. In some cases, the soil inside the domes is still fertile, and all sorts of edible vegetation still grows within, wasted because no one dares enter the domes to search for the alleged food.

Some say the entire area is haunted; others claim that the valley is filled with disease and to go into the bubble domes is to court a long, painful death. The truth, however, bodes nothing but trouble for the people who live near this area of the Lost Paradise.

Very recently, Tecesni *drones* have come into the Bubble Valley on scouting missions from the Mt. Hood colony. The queen has taken an imperious interest in the lands to the west and has ordered outposts to be built from which campaigns against human settlements shall begin.

Burns

Former Name: Burns, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: Pale Riders.

Burns, Oregon, is the stronghold of the Pale Riders, a band of cutthroats and thieves who plague the old roads and trade routes throughout the wastes of eastern Oregon.

Very few settlements in the Northwest allow strangers beyond the gates without a really good reason. Burns is one of those places, although people who visit the stronghold of the Pale Riders may come to wish they hadn't. It is all too common for pureblood travelers entering the city to be stripped of everything they own and thrown into the infamous slave pens to await the hot brand of the slave master who purchases them.

Those who aren't sold into slavery on reaching Burns still find it necessary to tread carefully in this town. While Zorthag (leader of the Pale Riders) is in control of Burns, he pretty much allows the people to do as they please so long as certain rules are followed.

All pureblood humans must present themselves to his *Overlords* immediately upon entering Burns. This mandate is stringently enforced. Purebloods are a commodity in Zorthag's eyes, and he reserves the right to do whatever he chooses with all "flesh" that enters his domain.

Overlords can be bribed into letting go of a "freemarker" (a badge all non-slaves must wear while staying in Burns). The cost isn't always what some would like to pay, or even *can* pay, but the alternative usually means life as a slave. Some particularly enterprising individuals have even worked out standing agreements with the Overlords. If the Overlords agree to look the other way, even give up a *freemarker* or two, they will get a weekly cut of whatever profits the individuals make in Burns. More than a few of Zorthag's lackeys have accepted these types of deals, and as a result, the number of free purebloods in the town is probably a lot higher than Zorthag would like.

All males, regardless of genetic make-up, are required to serve in Zorthag's army, and not even the greediest Overlords will risk getting caught ignoring that rule. Of course serving in Zorthag's army isn't really as bad as it sounds. Most people who have made Burns their home relish the idea of going out on campaigns against other settlements, many of which have turned those same people away when they asked for shelter. Besides, Zorthag has grown lazy as of late. The Pale Riders haven't been mobilized in some time, so when people are told they must serve in the army, they usually agree without any fuss.

Located on the western edge of the Forgotten desert, Burns is a gritty oasis for travelers who brave the sandstorms, rad tornadoes, and other terrors that dominate the long miles of badlands that lay between the domain of the Pale Riders and Fort Boise. For tribal communities that live in the Forgotten Desert, Burns is an outpost where they can come to barter for supplies.

Cave Junction

Former Name: Cave Junction, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

Long forgotten since the Fall, Cave Junction (far to the south of the settled lands of the Lost Paradise) is one of the great mysteries of the Ancients. No one is quite sure why this place was so important. On the surface, the small town of Cave Junction was little more than mountain town on the route from Northern California to Grant's Pass. In reality, however, Cave Junction was the site of an ultra-secret government facility.

Today, the purpose of this underground facility is forgotten, but the tunnel entrance still exists near Hope Lake, in the mountains between the towns of Cave Junction and Applegate. The details of the facility are unknown, but it is believed to extend over one thousand feet beneath the surface of the earth.

Cayuse Pass

Former Name: Cayuse Pass, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Purity Corp.

Formerly just a wooden stockade erected to guard the Highway 410 pass through the Cascades, "Cayuse Pass" is a place of remarkable beauty despite its recent takeover by Purist forces.

Cayuse Pass was somewhat neutral when the War of the Remnants first broke out, and some locals did, in fact, help the Purists escape U.C. lands via the mountain trails south of town. When word of their assistance leaked to U.C. territory up north, the leadership of Cayuse Pass was severely reprimanded and summarily replaced. Though many court-martialed officials would flee to join the radical Purist movement in the mountains, many others (who still had cherished ties to the community) stepped down only to blend back in with the civilian population and continue their lives in town.

Last year, a force from the Purity Corp descended upon Cayuse Pass in a night of exceptionally violent bloodshed. Leading them through the mountains to this place were some of the original leadership of the town, who had a grudge to settle with their former U.C. "masters" for expelling them. As they approached the town walls, they called out to their "fellows" (those Purist sympathizers who had chosen to remain in town) to open the gates and let the attackers in.

Much to the surprise of the U.C. soldiers, the gates opened when the local blacksmith – himself the former lieutenant commander of the garrison – rallied other Purist sympathizers and stormed the gatehouse from *inside*. In only minutes they were able to capture the gate and open it for their Purist conspirators. The rest of the town fell in under an hour.

The town of Cayuse Pass lies in the majestic shadow of Mt. Rainier, one of the tallest volcanic peaks in the Lost Paradise. The snow-capped mountain provides glacial water to the community in the form of numerous streams, and entire alpine fields strewn with multi-colored flowers ring the town and the old mountain highways for miles around. The natural beauty here disguises the atrocity that was committed here soon after the town's fall, however; those who resisted the Purity Corp's takeover were duly identified by their fellow citizens, taken outside the walls, and executed *en masse*.

The vanishing evidence of a mass grave can still be found at Cayuse Pass, situated just out of sight behind the town opposite the highway, so that caravans on the trail do not see it as they pass by.

Chinook

Former Name: Aberdeen, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Chinook Indians.

When the surface-dwelling Chinook Indians first left the underground shelters of their tribe, they went south and came to a deepwater bay along the gloomy, fog-drenched shores of the southern end of the Olympic Peninsula. The ruins of an old logging town (Aberdeen), completely abandoned for two centuries, lay at their feet.

It was in the ruins of Aberdeen that the survivors of the Chinook founded a new town, now named for the people who continue to live there to this day.

As far as towns go, Chinook has only meager defenses, but these more than suffice. Old trails that lead into the valley are watched day and night by these people, who ,by and large, prefer to live their lives in solitude and peace rather than deal with all of the turmoil that has spread across the Northwest in recent years. The only other people who know the exact location of Chinook are Mountain Walkers, who have managed to gain the trust of the Chinook through honest dealings. A few Mountain Walkers have even gained a sort of "honorary" tribal membership and are allowed to

build their own lodges on the outskirts of Chinook. Some have even taken wives.

The six hundred or so people who live in Chinook practice the old ways, keeping a strict balance with the blasted wilderness that they find themselves trying to survive in. Technology in Chinook is, for the most part, shunned by the majority of the people who, over the years, have come to believe that the ancient "white devils", in their quest to become "gods on earth", brought about the wrath of the Great Spirit when they poisoned the lands, water, air, and, the medicine men claim, even the spirit realm where all people go once they die. Very little of "white medicine" is actually used in Chinook, although some Mountain Walkers have managed to convince the superstitious tribals that some of it can actually be of great aid, especially the white man's weapons.

Some of the Chinook have begun to use firearms and other Ancient-era weaponry, which has caused a bit of a rift in the tribe. Older, more fundamental tribesman argue that the use of any of the white man's weapons is to invite another "shaking" by the Great Spirit, while the younger warriors and hunters of the tribe often ignore their protests, being much more practical minded (and realizing that any edge they can get over the beasts of the wilderness can only enhance their chances of survival).

Some of the younger folk have even begun to openly question the old ways. Tribal elders claim the influence of the Mountain Walkers is starting to poison the minds of the youth. Fortunately, however, the current chieftain of the Chinook, Na-chook, has managed to maintain a level head in these troubling times and walk a fine line of diplomacy in an effort to avoid open hostilities between the two groups.

Na-chook placates the tribe's elders by openly reprimanding the younger, high-spirited hunters when they begin to show too much disrespect for the old ones of the tribe, reminding them that the Chinook have survived *because* of the old ways. At the same time, however, Na-chook reminds the elders that not all of the white man's medicine is poison, and that some of the weapons and even drugs of the old world have helped to stave off disease, and kill predators that have plagued their settlement. So far, peace has been maintained, but Na-chook wonders how long he will be able to keep the two groups from settling their disputes violently.

Every so often, an outsider will stumble onto the old trails leading up into Chinook. When this happens, tribal scouts will make every effort to capture these people and interrogate them to find out just what their business is in Chinook territory. More often than not, the encounters end in violence, but when blood isn't spilled, the Chinook manage to make the outsiders understand that they are "trespassing", and escort them to the boundaries of Chinook lands with a warning. Even more rare is the occasion when strangers are actually brought into Chinook itself. When this happens, strangers are made to stay in the meeting lodge, which is built in the center of the village. While strangers are visiting Chinook, only the males of the tribe are allowed to have any contact. What few women and children there are in Chinook are made to stay inside the other lodges until the strangers have left.

Mutants are never, ever allowed inside the valley of Chinook. The tribe considers these people to be "abominations"; signs that the Great Spirit is still angered with the people of the Twisted Earth, and the Chinook refuse to risk incurring the wrath of the Great Spirit by associating with their deformed kind. In recent years, however, children of the Chinook have been born with mutations.

Invariably any child that is born with any type of mutation in Chinook is taken to Eagle Point, and sacrificed to appease the Great Spirit. Adults who begin to show signs of developing illness are expected to climb to the top of Eagle Point and throw themselves over the edge, committing suicide to ensure that the prosperity of the tribe continues. Those who do are remembered in the songs of the tribe as having committed the ultimate sacrifice out of love for their people.

Those who, for whatever reason, don't give up their lives are forcibly taken to Eagle Point and burned on the "Wailing Cross". The Wailing Cross is normally reserved for criminals and those who have somehow brought shame upon themselves and the tribe. Only the most reprehensible of all Chinook are burned, so when a tribesman who refuses to throw himself off Eagle Point and preserve the honor of himself and his family, he is seen as having committed the ultimate act of ignominy. The person is considered to be anathema in the eyes of the Chinook, and is burned alive.

There are those who have chosen to run away and become outcasts rather than give up their lives. They may have committed crimes, or been accused of giving birth to and hiding mutant children from the law. But for whatever reason, these people have the special distinction of being tracked down by an elite group of warriors known as the "Blood Hunters".

The *Blood Hunters* are a cut above the regular warrior caste. *Blood Hunters* go through regular purification rituals to ensure they do not carry any bad medicine into the Sacred Lands, a place which only they are allowed to enter. When not hunting criminals or protecting the Sacred Lands from intruders, these individuals are responsible for teaching the rest of the tribe the best methods to hunt and to move through what is left of the wilderness without being spotted. These elite warriors are among the most common individuals seen outside of the territory of the Chinook. Generally speaking, most of the tribe are content to live out their lives in Chinook. Everything they need can be found in the town or the outlying territory, so more often than not, the only time outsiders ever see a Chinook is when a "Blood Hunt" has been called to track down a renegade.

Coburg

Former Name: Coburg, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

The small town of Coburg lies on the outskirts of the Eugene/Springfield megaplex, which was nuked during the Fall. Coburg itself was largely burned to the ground as a result of fires from the nuclear war, and only came to be re-inhabited after the U.C. was founded.

In recent years, Coburg has slipped slowly out of U.C. control, as local attitudes have shifted against a large confederation in favor of more independence. The people of Coburg, who number only a few dozen, have long seen themselves as "outsiders", barely represented by the U.C. government (which is "all the way in Canada"). To make matters worse, the War of the Remnants has made food and water shipments to Coburg intermittent at best (it is not a high priority, being far from the front), forcing the locals to strike out into Eugene to harvest needed supplies. Since many have gotten sick from radiation on these forays, the people have come to blame the U.C. for their miserable condition, and have dropped all formal relations with the government.

Outsiders are welcome at Coburg, especially if they bring medicine, food, and water. Those who are obviously U.C. aligned will be turned back with warning shots.

Corvallis

Former Name: Corvallis, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

Corvallis is a River Folk settlement that sits on what's left of the Willamette River. The town has a population of two hundred hardy folk who have no tolerance for people who come to waste their time.

Corvallis is dominated by the "Harris" clan, a group of people who, when the violence first began, built their own shelter beneath an old "bed and breakfast" on the outskirts of the city. As time passed in the bunker, the Harris family (led by a man named Lewis) began to emerge as the leaders of the "bunker people". Eventually everyone began to look upon themselves as members of his extended "family." Now, nearly everyone who lives in Corvallis is a member of the Harris clan.

A few outsiders, however, have managed to prove their usefulness to the Harris Clan just enough to be allowed to stay on. Most of these outsiders understand the basics of boatmanship and/or mechanical repair, and are in charge of maintaining the Harris clan's fleet of water vessels (which the Harris' use to ferry people up and down the Willamette).

Visitors who can prove that they have legitimate business inside the gates of Corvallis may stay up to three nights (longer if they are waiting for river transport and a boat isn't available), but afterwards they must leave, by river or land, or be forcibly removed from the town limits. Tillamook Traders and Sentinels are not allowed in the city, period, as the Harris clan doesn't trust either group.

Old man Porter, the head of the clan, refuses to deal with the People's Army because he remembers stories his parents told him about the Communist forces who invaded the United States during the Fall. Porter claims his ancestors fought against the people who came to be called the "Tillamook Traders", and he won't have any dealings with those folk unless it's with a gun. As for the Sentinels, Porter thinks they're uppity bastards who make it their business to pry into the lives of others, and he won't have them snooping around, trying to change they way the Harris clan lives their lives.

Representatives for the United Combine have found limited success when dealing with the Harris clan, but even they still have to obey the town's rules about how long they are allowed to stay inside the city. Other folk are judged by their actions.

Coulee City

Former Name: Coulee City, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Hand of Jehovah.

During the Fall, the mighty Grand Coulee Dam was one of the primary strategic targets of the war, the destruction of which not only cut power to a large part of Washington State, but also flooded a broad area of country at its far end.

Coulee City, then just a small town, was one of many settlements to be washed off the face of the earth when the dam broke and flooded the plains. In time, and in accordance with the general drying up of the world, the great lake that formed afterward dwindled, turning this area into one of the most fertile places in the Twisted Earth.

The Hand of Jehovah were quick to realize the potential of Coulee City as a new agricultural "mecca", and have begun to settle here with a definite purpose – to create an agricultural homeland to bring not only food to their tables, but to improve their way of life so that a new future can be built.

Coulee City is still a small town, but it is growing. Most of the land here (about ten miles radius, with the town at the center) has been turned into working farmland, growing wheat and soy. The Hand uses the example of Coulee City to show how God has blessed them with prosperity, and have used the promise of food to entice the people of the plains into joining their faction.

Crater City

Former Name: Crater Lake, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: Sentinels.

When the Northwest reclamation projects were initiated, one of the first places to be targeted for protection was Crater Lake. The resort drew in thousands of visitors every year for boating on the lake as well as camping in the surrounding

wilderness. The people of the hedonistic pre-Fall society simply had to have their diversions, and in the Northwest, nothing beat camping and boating for a good time outside. A massive dome was erected over the ancient volcano to cover the resort and lake inside the crater. Smaller bubble domes were also built in the surrounding wilderness for miles around to ensure that people would be able to enjoy the "great outdoors" while remaining safe from the deteriorating environment.

When the Fall came, the people of what would come to be known as "Crater City" cut off all contact with the known world. The people, mostly locals who worked and lived in the area and owned businesses that took advantage of the tourist season, were already a tight-knit bunch. They adapted easily enough to the changes with very few instances of violence in the community. These were people who lived their lives in service of others, catering to the tourist's every whim, fixing every broken thing, cleaning every room, guiding every hiking trip. That was the way it had always been in the smaller towns around Crater Lake. Tourism was everything to these people, and they were only happy to do it. But when the Fall came, the world became a hostile place. They did what needed to be done to ensure the ongoing survival of their little community. They closed off the entrances to the bubble domes and the Crater Lake dome complex, then settled in for the long dark years that were coming.

Crater City has grown into one of the largest independent settlements in the Northwest, boasting a population of several thousand people, most of them direct descendants of the pre-Fall inhabitants of the surrounding areas. Others come to Crater City hoping to join the ranks of the highly respected "Sentinels" (who are headquartered in Crater City), or to escape the war between the United Combine and the Purity Corp. Crater City allows these refugees into the city on a case-by-case basis.

The city itself started out as just a collection of people living in the old hotels that lined the rim of the volcano. Over time, this has expanded. More buildings have been built along with expansive tunnels that go deep into the earth. The lake that served as one of the main attractions for tourists in pre-Fall society is now one of the largest sources of clean water on the planet. As such, the citizens of Crater City will do anything to protect this vital resource.

The bubble domes are also filled with outlying communities that branched out from Crater City long ago. Most of these towns are agro- and ranching settlements that work to ensure that there is a steady food supply available for everyone living in the area. While not strictly a part of Crater City, these communities do enjoy the protection of the Sentinels and have a solid relationship with the High Warden.

Crater City is the location of one of the few remaining fully operational bio-domes in the Twisted Earth. The daily operation of the Crater City dome complex is handled by an Artificial Intelligence the people of Crater City lovingly call "Katy"; over the years, Katy has helped keep the people of Crater City alive and relatively comfortable with regards to their living conditions. This A.I. core and those few thinker droids and labor bots that survived the Fall have managed to teach the people of Crater City many ancient sciences, such as various schools of engineering, biology, genetics, and medicine. The City is home to three fusion reactors that provide power to the dome as well as fuel the energy weapons, robots, and advanced vehicles of the Sentinels.

Even with all of the knowledge and advanced technology that is available to the people of Crater City and its surrounding settlements, the people here tend to remain naturalists at heart. Naturally, the people have adopted a strict policy of secrecy with regards to all of the advanced knowledge and technology that is available to them, for fear of becoming a target for hostile forces who would be more than happy to take what they have by force.

Crown Point Sentinel Outpost

Former Name: Crown Point State Park, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: Sentinels.

Crown Point is located on an outcropping of rock high above the Columbia River gorge and is home to a Sentinel outpost. Garrick Shephard is the Warden in command of the Crown Point station; his duties are to monitor all activity east of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome, maintain positive relations between the River Runners and the Sentinels, as well as assisting the River Folk in their efforts to harass the advance of Purist forces on the northern shores of the Great River. Garrick commands a garrison of one hundred guides and thirty of the best Scouts in the entire clan.

Before the Fall, Crown Point was an observatory designed to give tourists a spectacular view of the Columbia River gorge, and that still holds true to this day – although much of that ancient splendor has long since been replaced by toxic bogs and hills that are now pocked with craters from years of conflict between the River Runners and the Purist aggressors to the north. Due to its popularity with the people of the Northwest, this historical monument was one of the sites slated for preservation with a bubble dome, but time ran out on the world and the project was never completed.

The structure that remains is a testament to the ingenuity of pre-Fall man, as it still stands to this day. Warden Shephard uses the observatory as his base of operations and has even expanded the observatory into a fortified complex that extends underground.

Even though the outpost is very much a "frontier fort" of sorts, lying dangerously close to Purity Corp territory, River Folk traders and other civilian traffickers are common near Crown Point, even welcomed at the outpost, so long as these visitors adhere to the policies of the Sentinels. This means all weapons must be checked at the gates, and regular interrogations of visitors and spot searches of caravans are frequent. Any disputes inside the walls of Crown Point must be mediated by a Sentinel official to ensure that the peace is kept, which usually means that all parties involved are

Life in the Wastes

They say this region never was much, a wasteland of a desert in a corner of the world no one paid much mind to. My parents was born here, their parents was born here, and their parents before them. Can't rightly say how or why we live here, we just do.

They say that back in the time of the Ancients this place was pretty desolate too, just a few rural towns to mark the intersection of old roads. Folks lived out here on wide-flung farms, or ranches, if at all. When the Fall came many folks listened to the voices on the radios and built shelters of their own, in their backyards, in their basements. They stocked up on canned food, on water, and each family had itself a tidy little hole to hide in.

When the Ancients fell no one out here really felt it. Maybe some brief static on the radio, but that's all. For a while they stayed in their underground holes like burrowing badgers, listening to the radio waves until the last automated transmissions drifted off into snow. Gosh it must have been a frightening time.

After a while they began to emerge. Most of them was elderly folk, but some young ones were there too. The latter sometimes got a hankering to go over the mountains and see if they could find 'others'. They never did. Or at least we never heard from 'em again. So the old folks stayed, smart as they was, and raised the little ones the others had left behind, and I guess in time we, the new generation, was born.

No one holds much hope for the world outside the wastes.

But now we have other troubles. Them 'Pale Riders' is a cruel lot, turning our way of life into something unrighteous. We've seen some of our kin turn on us and join their ranks, hoping to be spared their cruelty.

It ain't gonna be that way here in Burns Junction. No siree. We're gonna fight.

- Journal of an anonymous writer, found half-burned and discarded in the Desiccated Wastes

forcibly removed from the outpost where they can settle their problems in any manner they wish.

At any given point there are between one hundred and fifty and two hundred people at the complex. The Crown Point outpost can be reached by traveling through a shuttle tube that originates in the ruins of Troutdale, or by following an ancient highway that winds its way through the mountains of the gorge. Both ways are moderately dangerous even though they are patrolled by Sentinel Guides.

Dead Water

Former Name: Puget Sound.
Ruling Faction: None.

The great watery basin that was once known as "Puget Sound" is now simply called the "Dead Water" by the scattered inhabitants of the Northwest. Long ago, this was a place of great natural beauty, with dramatic contrasts of deep blue water and heavily forested islands, but now it is an aquatic wasteland, a lifeless expanse of churning, toxic, sludge.

The coasts of the Dead Water are subject to numerous territorial claims; the Purity Corp claim much of the southern areas, while the presence of the Spawn Army makes most of the eastern coastal areas out of reach for outsiders. The Chinook of the Olympic Peninsula essentially control the western shores.

Despite the presence of people living in the vicinity of the Dead Water, none have never been able to settle along the shores due to the extreme levels of radiation (from the strikes on the major coastal cities, including the naval complexes at Bremerton and Everett, as well as the strategic target of Seattle itself). In addition, chemical contamination in the form of pools of toxic waste (some of which are actually animate *blobs*; see *Terrors of The Twisted Earth*) have formed along miles of coastal waters, making the prospect of water travel unsavory, if not next to impossible.

Mutated orca, now known as "blood whales" (for the bleeding sores that cover their horribly mutated flesh) are the only form of life said to spawn in this region, though even these creatures move out into other less polluted waters to feed.

Desiccated Wastes

Former Name: Eastern Oregon.
Ruling Faction: Pale Riders.

As travelers head southeast past the ruins of Bend, the land of what was once Old Oregon becomes increasingly rugged until finally it is little more than a wasteland, filled with dry river beds and desolate hills as far as the eye can see. People living in the settlements northwest of the ruins of Bend call this region the "Desiccated Wastes". This region is inhospitable, to say the least. The people who live in these badlands have numerous challenges to their daily lives, ranging from finding clean drinking water and food to dealing with thieves and gangs of bandits such as the *Pale Riders*, who have carved out a kingdom of sorts in the Desiccated Wastes. Much of the region is in fact part of a greater "empire" the Pale Riders have created for themselves over time.

The leader of the Pale Riders, a mutant known only as "Zorthag", fancies himself a king of a minor domain situated in the Desiccated Wastes. Though circumstances

sometimes vary, settlements that willingly pledge to become part of his self-styled feudal system are more often than not welcomed into the fold, and "lords" are chosen from within each community. While this position does grant many benefits, lords are responsible not only for enforcing loyalty and obedience to Zorthag's rule among the local populace, but also in gathering tribute. A lord who, for any reason, cannot meet these demands is usually disposed of in a very public, and very brutal manner by his Pale Rider masters. Obviously, assignment to the post of lord is not always a desirable fate.

Many of the miniscule communities in the Desiccated Wastes have already pledged loyalty to Zorthag and his raiders, but there are a few that refuse to bow down – to anyone. These settlements are few and far between, however, and tend to maintain a strong isolationist policy towards strangers. As such, the Pale Riders grow strong, all but uncontested in their corner of this desolate region.

Despite the harsh reality of daily life, people have managed to stave off extinction in the Desiccated Wastes. Most of the people living in these small villages are descended from isolated, rural families who were forced to build their own meager fallout shelters during the Fall, or try and survive above ground in the months soon after. Consequently, over the years, many communities have succumbed to genetic mutations that have come to be the norm throughout the rest of the Twisted Earth. This fact of life has served to further alienate the "Changed Ones" from the rest of the people living in the Northwest.

Stories and rumors abound throughout the communities farther north about the Changed Ones of the Desiccated Wastes. Some relatively ignorant people say they are "monsters" that possess just enough intelligence to mimic regular human beings like monkeys. More extreme groups claim they are nothing short of "Hellspawn", creatures that should be wiped off the face of the planet for the good of mankind. And there are those who may have the clearest vision; a minority that sees the mutants who live in the Desiccated Wastes for what they really are, human beings who have merely changed over the years, a preview of what is eventually going to happen to everyone in the Northwest, and across the world.

Diablo

Former Name: Diablo Dam, Washington.
Ruling Faction: United Combine.

The town of Diablo is an important settlement in U.C. territory. Built on the abandoned ruins of an old hydroelectric dam high in the Cascades, Diablo was discovered early on in the U.C.'s history (before the War of the Remnants). Initial forays were required to root out the mutant raiders who were using the dam as a base of operations, but once they were evicted, the dam, and the small town in its shadow were quickly occupied and built up.

Diablo is now a virtual fortress; the dam itself provides an excellent view of the river valley leading up to it, as well as giving a panoramic view of the Cascade Mountains. The old facility itself is a maze of aboveground and subterranean passages, chambers, and vaults, where arms, munitions, and stocks of supplies can be kept. The "citadel", as the dam is now called, is one of the most fortified installations in U.C. hands.

The town of Diablo sits not far away from the dam. Formerly this was the quarters of the dam's operating personnel, but has turned into an important hub in the U.C.'s transportation network. Supplies shipped in from Canada along Ross Lake are brought here by mule trains, before being portioned out and ported individually to communities as far away as Winthrop and Alpine Falls. A wooden wall has been built up around the old town, and the original river, which horseshoes around the town, adds to its formidable nature as a bastion against attack. A single, Ancient-era bridge connects the town with the mountain highway (and, only a few dozen miles up the road, the beginnings of the *Lifeline*).

In addition to the town growing in its shadow, the citadel also has a zeppelin moor, constructed less than a year ago to permit Tillamook airships to dock at the dam and unload their wares. The moor is used not only to trade with the Tillamook, but also to hire their airships to carry supplies and goods to be sent to allied communities in the south, separated from contiguous U.C. territory by the rise of the Purity Corp.

This fact has only added to Diablo's importance to the United Combine, as it is now the primary supply base for those southern communities, upon which their survival depends.

Eagle Point

Former Name: Grisdale, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Chinook Indians.

Located twenty miles northwest of the valley of Chinook, Eagle Point is a consecrated site for the Chinook Indians. The site marks the tribe's exodus from the subterranean lands (reached through caves high in the Olympic Mountains) into a new life on the surface.

Eagle Point is a small village (mostly populated by Blood Hunters), and a focal point of Chinook religious life. Vestiges of a small logging town, from the time of the Ancients, is all but erased now, and only the lodges of the Chinook warriors remain.

Punishment in accordance with tribal law is carried out at Eagle Point, as are most religious rites of the people. Eagle Point is also strictly off-limits to any who are not of Native American descent. Even those who have become "honorary" tribal members are not allowed to climb the steps and enter the cave that lies at the base of the hill, or participate in the sacred rituals of the people. The "Wailing Cross", where punishment is carried out, can also be found at Eagle Point, built on a mound in the center of a clearing at the base of the

hill.

Eagle Point is guarded day and night by *Blood Hunters*, to keep people from entering the Sacred Lands and desecrating the holy shrine of the tribe.

Eden

Former Name: Eden Bunker Complex, British Columbia.
Ruling Faction: United Combine.

The capital city of the United Combine was founded at the gates of a bunker complex of the same name, constructed from private funds and contributions by numerous "extremist" doomsday groups before the fall of human civilization.

The people who led the masses out of the "Eden" bunker, long ago, constituted much of the leadership caste of the old Purity Corp and other militia movements of the pre-Fall world. It was these people, Jeremiah Cole, Hunter Reinhart, his wife Jessica, who sparked a mass exodus from the bio-domes of the Northwest, just before everything came crashing down.

As far as Ancient-era vaults go, the Eden bunker opened up early – much earlier than any of the other complexes in the Northwest. The atomic clock malfunctioned and opened the doors decades before schedule. The people emerged to find themselves alone in an outlandish new world that, over the years, had become primal, harsh and inhospitable to those who couldn't adapt. Strange beasts now roamed the radiated, blasted wilderness claiming mastery over everything. Sickness and death were commonplace in those early days, but the people persevered. They carved out a new way of life, built the city of Eden from the ground up in the secluded valley in the mountains of southern Canada.

Year after long, iron hard year passed. At the time of the "Convention of The Remnants", Eden had become a stronghold with trade routes that stretched all the way down to Crater City, the citadel of the Sentinels. Upwards of twenty thousand pure blood human beings called this stretch of territory their home – but things were about to change. The Convention of The Remnants split the leadership of the United Combine into three factions, two of which seceded and formed their own nations calling on the people who wanted to live differently to come with them. Thousands left the city, following their respective leaders into the wilderness. Those that remained hardened their hearts and minds and prepared for the "War of The Remnants", which continues to this day.

Eden, as it exists at present, is home to thousands of people who are steadfastly loyal to the principles of the United Combine. Everyone plays an important role in the continued survival of the population of the city. Men, women, children, all understand their place and accept things as part of life. Everyone works in the city. Everyone defends the city, even the children. Those who don't are punished. If lax behavior continues, a tribunal is held, and, more often than not, guilty parties are banished from the city. There is no place in Eden for people who are not willing to do their fair share of the work.

The current leader of the United Combine is Douglas Reinhart, the great, great grandson of Hunter and Jessica Reinhart. He has an advisory council of seven members who keep him apprised of the general state of affairs throughout United Combine territory. Douglas makes all of his decision on U.C policy based on what they tell him.

The city of Eden has a standing militia (the "Minutemen") of several thousand men. All males of sufficient age are required to serve as Minutemen for a period of five harvest seasons, but most choose to stay on indefinitely. They know that a war is being fought, and the Purist forces would like nothing better than to take control of the city of Eden. Women and children only pick up weapons to fight when it is absolutely vital to the survival of the community.

The size of Eden's militia allows the city to maintain an open door policy towards travelers, but they have to check weapons with the gate guards. Eden is one of the few places in the region to allow this kind of access inside the city. Most places won't let travelers within a hundred yards of the gates.

Enoch

Former Name: Omak, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Hand of Jehovah.

The capital of the Hand of Jehovah cult is located high in the North Cascades of what used to be Washington State. "Enoch" is a highly religious town (indeed those who do not worship the God of the Hand of Jehovah had best look for another place to live, as they will not be welcome in Enoch), with a population of roughly eight hundred souls, all of whom are fanatically loyal to Solomon and his son Isaac. Under their leadership, the town has prospered, although Solomon would be quick to point out that none of the town's success would be possible without the guidance of the almighty Jehovah.

Newcomers to Enoch who show no outward signs of mutation are not immediately turned away from the gates. The Hand of Jehovah will always allow people to enter the city, as every non-mutant is a potential convert. If, during the course of their stay in Enoch, it becomes apparent that outsiders appear unwilling to convert to the Hand of Jehovah, outsiders will sooner or later be asked to leave (normally this sort of thing happens within twenty four to forty eight hours).

Solomon understands the need to maintain at least some semblance of amiability towards outsiders (trade is vital to survival), and will be courteous enough to allow travelers to rest and do some business before pressing them on the issue of religion.

Mutants are a different story altogether. Like many of the insular and racist people now inhabiting the Northwest, Solomon considers mutants to be an abomination. In his eyes, mutants are the "spawn" of an ancient, fallen demon

he calls "Scrag", and are unquestionably the enemy of all that would live their lives in accordance with God's will. Mutants are to be hunted down and destroyed by any means necessary, while entire mutant communities are targeted for "purification", a process that involves burning the entire settlement and everything in it to the ground.

Enoch is the base of operations for an organization whose name strikes fear into the heart of every mutant in the Northwest: the *Red Brigade*.

Ephrata

Former Name: Ephrata, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Hand of Jehovah.

The plains town of Ephrata has, in recent years, been turned into a powerful religious center of the Hand of Jehovah.

Long ago, this town was all but abandoned, with only a few small families (of Mormon persuasion) living a destitute existence in the ruins. When the Hand of Jehovah spread south from Enoch, their expansion drove these families out (to Moses Lake; see that entry for details on the ultimate fate of the Mormons of eastern Washington), allowing the Hand to take over the town and turn it into an outpost of their growing religion.

Today, Ephrata has become a hub of settlement, and its prosperity (thanks to its proximity to Coulee City) has attracted not only settlers from northern Hand of Jehovah territory, but also outsiders from isolated farms and homesteads that exist out in the dry plains of the plateau. Those who come are often desperate for food or just to belong, and so Ephrata has been the scene of an explosion of conversions in recent years.

Fort Boise

Former Name: Boise, Idaho.
Ruling Faction: None.

Although Boise was virtually unscathed in the initial attacks from the invading Asian armies, the after effects took a heavy toll on the city. Mushroom clouds from multiple nuclear strikes to states east and west of Idaho were shown again and again on network broadcasts until the networks themselves were incinerated and local signals vanished forever. The shocked citizens stared in disbelief at the apparent destruction happening to their distant neighbors in the bio-domes and other cities all over the United States.

The closest they came to destruction were the blasts outside of Mountain Home Air Force Base, 35 miles to the southeast, but Boise itself (other than the EMP pulse) went relatively unharmed.

Not long after the attacks, as rumors of Boise having escaped the war spread, wave after wave of refugees from Washington State and Montana streamed across the border and began to converge on the city. Tents were thrown up, medical relief centers were established, but it wasn't enough. The wretched masses arrived from everywhere. Families from various cities or domes, soldiers who had fled, deserted, or simply survived the invasion on both fronts; many of them managed to end up at "Fort Boise", as it came to be called.

Soon after the initial accounts of the horrors taking place in the west spread, the city council quickly formulated plans to secure Boise. A wall was built around specific areas deemed vital for survival. These walls exist today (though in a much degraded state). The passage of time brought various assaults from desperate refugees, raider gangs, and even the occasional assault from mutated monstrosities from the wilderness. Eventually, the wall became damaged or destroyed in places, making repairs necessary. Many parts of the wall have been re-constructed from old vehicles, dumpsters and other pre-Fall equipment that no longer serves any purpose.

Fort Boise is currently run by a council of twelve members, elected by the people to keep life in the city as normal as possible. Over one thousand people live in Boise, and during trade season, that number can grow by almost 50%. The average person in Ft. Boise is mutated, which makes the settlement a haven for mutants who have fled the lands to the west. Pureblood humans are officially accepted in certain areas of the city, but due to their reputation in the west, they also find themselves heavily discriminated against in other areas that are dominated by mutants.

In general, the atmosphere of Fort Boise can best be described as one of quiet tension. Most people prefer to live and let live, and yet roving gangs of both human and mutant have formed recently. They defy the "Boise Brigades" (the local militia) and often wage their own private wars in different parts of town. Thus far the "BBs" have managed to curb the violence somewhat, but they can only do so much. Peaceful people, both mutant and non-mutant alike, fear that sooner or later the entire town will explode into one massive riot that will destroy everything they have worked so hard to build.

Recently, representatives from both the Purity Corp and Burns have come seeking to setup trade agreements. Pureblood humans who have come east out of United Combine territory know all too well how racist the Purists can be, so the sight of Purist camps outside the walls of Ft. Boise has been a source of great concern.

What the Pale Riders have been discussing with the Boise council still remains something of a mystery. Most people in Fort Boise have an idea of what Zorthag is capable of, and more than a few of the purebloods actually bear the mark of the slave as a result of either a wrong turn that led them to Burns, or being captured in a Pale Rider raid on a town they once lived in.

Rumors have begun to spread that Zorthag's cronies are trying to arrange some kind of deal that involves slave trade. Whether or not that is true still remains to be seen, but some of the more knowledgeable folk in town claim that scattered tribal communities who are said to inhabit lands to the south of Ft. Boise would be very interested in obtaining slaves for labor or waging war against each other.

Boise's native population claims a direct connection to the various "militia" and supremacist factions that heavily influenced Idaho's culture before the Fall. These factions have banded together in light of a common interest (the survival of Fort Boise), and to protect against the rest of the outsiders. Many of the men who feel the strongest about their heritage have formed into "Boise Brigades", or "BBs". The Boise Brigades keep the peace within the city walls and also send small battle groups out to patrol the areas around the city. They are easily identified by their Ancient-era military fatigues and colored arm bands.

For a small standing army, the Boise Brigade is quite well armed, as many of their ancestors had illegally acquired heavy arms prior to the Fall (machineguns, grenades, anti-tank missile launchers, night vision equipment, etc). They *had* predicted the End, after all. All forms of American-made, handheld firearms are also possessed in decent quantity within Fort Boise, although laser and more advanced weapons have long since been discarded as useless since the fuel cells ran out generations ago fighting off raiders and mutant beasts. There are rumors of a hidden stash of arms the Brigade keeps outside of the city, hidden in the hills and mountains to the west. This cache supposedly consists of decommissioned equipment that the government had stored in the vastness of the Rockies as they upgraded their weapons and introduced androids to the frontlines.

One of the most popular places for people to gather in Fort Boise is the "Bowels". The Bowels was once a small football arena that is now used to carry out justice, as well as engage in martial combat for sport. The Brigade punishes criminals, deserters, or captured creatures by placing them in the Bowels for combat. Although the arena is used primarily for punishment, a fighting circuit has come into being that is reminiscent of the ancient sport of wrestling – although these days *anything* goes. Gladiators fight in the arena for the entertainment of the crowds that come to watch. Winners often receive the holdings and personal gear of those they defeat, and even sometimes a prize of corium or chips.

Fremont Uranium Mines

Former Name: White King Uranium Mines.
Ruling Faction: None.

Located in an isolated part of the Oregon hinterland, high in the mountains, are the ruins of the White King Uranium Mines. In continuous operation during the 1950s and 60s, White King was used to extract uranium from deep beneath the mountains to provide fuel for American nuclear reactors across the country. The early-era over-mining and haphazard operation of White King led to the mines being shut down in the 1970s, and in the ensuing years it became a wilderness wasteland, located (ironically) near the heart of Fremont National Park. Over the years, much of the mine pits themselves became toxic as they filled with high-acidity groundwater, while radioactive elements from the mining process were scattered almost without a care across the 100+ acres of the facility, turning it into a lifeless wasteland.

In the twilight years of the Ancients, White King was re-opened as part of a desperate effort to "trawl" the American landscape and milk it for every usable resource before the world ran out of fuel. Though no history remains of the last-ditch operations here, they were no doubt plagued with rushed efforts, great risks, and no small amount of death.

Old trucking roads that once connected this distant part of the Oregon wilderness are now overgrown, and snow covers the facility's lost buildings, pits, and yards for most of the year. No one in the region of the Lost Paradise even suspects this place exists, but if someone found out (for example, a lost group of adventurers trying to find a pass connecting to the lands of the south) there is little doubt this place would once again become the site of a heated attempt to wrench nuclear fuel from the ground.

Future

Former Name: Napavine, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Purity Corp.

The small town of "Future" was founded by the Purity Corp primarily to guard the important intersection of old Highway 12 and I-5. A gateway linking the high mountain city of Zog with their holdings on the south part of the Dead Waters, Future grew almost overnight into a dark and ugly place, a source of much of the Purists' industry.

Dark clouds hover over Future day and night; by day there is only darkness, but by night hellish red fires glow within these clouds to illuminate for miles. Future is the home of a foundry, where metal scavenged from all over the area (from Olympia up north to the many deserted towns along the overgrown I-5 corridor) is taken by caravan to be melted down and turned into armor, or molded into pieces used in any number of ways; vehicle parts, firearm barrels, ammunition casings, chains, manacles, etc. As such, the soot of coal is heavy here, and the people who inhabit Future are inordinately skilled in metal-smithing and crafting.

Because Future is a vital part of the Purity Corp's war effort, it is heavily guarded. Outsiders are never welcome here, not even traders. Much of the countryside around the fortified town has been stripped down (early attempts to fire the foundry with wood from the forests were failures, but left the landscape scarred), leaving only a desolate wasteland.

The population of Future is predominantly of white ancestry, and it is no surprise that the town has, in recent years, become a breeding ground for sentiments against the rulers of the Purity Corp. Because of repeated attempts by Jeremiah Cole to have him replaced by a Nubian official, the town's leader, Timothy Anders, has begun taking in refugees and wanted men of white descent, giving them shelter and sanctuary just to spite Cole's regime.

If power is not soon shared among the races of the Purity Corp, there is no doubt that the town of Future will feature prominently in any uprisings against Cole's government.

Ghost Wastes Of Umatilla

Former Name: Umatilla Gas Repository, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

Before the Fall, the Umatilla Gas Repository was a large military depot situated in a relatively isolated part of northeastern Oregon. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, vast reserves of chemical and nerve agents were stored at Umatilla for testing purposes, as well as for storage in the eventuality of future conflict.

That is what was officially known about the complex. What was not commonly known about Umatilla was that the depot also served as a cover for a much more insidious operation that involved genetic testing on human and animal subjects.

Dubbed "Project Pandora" by its creators, the program was responsible for the creation of a wide array of creatures that had never before been seen on the planet. Many of these hybrid species were created by combining the DNA of man and beast. Others were a hodge-podge of the genes of various creatures. In all, the mad scientists of Umatilla managed to create twenty unique species of life that had actually survived to maturity and were able to reproduce. These creatures were kept in an immense bunker complex deep underneath the surface, where they were studied and allowed to mate. The mad scientists obtained DNA samples of the strongest of these creatures and sent them north to a secret cloning facility at the Sea-Sac dome where even more of the beasts were cloned into a virtual "army" of special troops that were ultimately used in the Great War.

Not surprisingly, Umatilla was a major target for the Asian invaders during the war. When the fighting escalated into nuclear conflict, Umatilla was bombarded with an assortment of nuclear missiles and smart bombs that enemy commanders hoped would penetrate deep into the core of the complex. While the weapons did incredible amounts of damage to the base and the surrounding region, they failed to reach the deepest portions of the complex where the genetic experiments were performed.

The main power generators for the complex were destroyed, however, leaving many scientists and the creatures they monitored trapped deep under the earth. Before the emergency generators could be started, many of the creatures escaped from their holding pens and killed the scientists who made them. As the years wore on, the creatures eventually found their way to the surface world. They multiplied and spread out over the region, developing their own territory in the blasted wastelands of Umatilla.

The "Ghost Wastes" get their name from travelers who have ventured into the region in search of corium (deposits are rumored to exist amidst the ruins of the area). The rumor is that at night, the land howls and the ghosts of those who died in that area move across the land in search of the flesh of the living. People say that the creatures have translucent skin that glows anywhere from green to pink. There are no technical names for these creatures; they are referred to merely as "fiends" by most, though the native Indians have begun giving them the names of traditional demons and monsters, and weaving a mythology about their creation and purpose on the Twisted Earth.

The Ghost Wastes are devastated for forty miles in every direction due to the massive nuclear strikes and resulting meltdown of the WNP nuclear power plant facility. In addition to the nuclear devastation, the containment facilities for the chemical, biological, and nerve agents that were stored at Umatilla were obliterated. Much of the stockpiles of the dangerous agents were incinerated in the blasts, but enough of the stuff remained to further poison the land.

The Columbia River was also inundated with radiation and poisonous toxins that were swept down all the way to the Pacific. Every major waterway that connected to the Columbia was poisoned and, as a consequence, the aquatic life of much of the lakes and rivers throughout the Northwest has mutated into monstrous, twisted versions of their former selves – all largely due to the attack on the Umatilla Gas Repository.

Hanford

Former Name: U.S. Department of Energy Hanford Site, Washington.
Ruling Faction: None.

Few travelers know of this distant wasteland of radiation and poisoned sands, said to have been one of the most toxic dumping pits even in the time of the Ancients. A vast nuclear complex covering 560 square miles, Hanford produced a vast amount of electricity and weapons-grade nuclear material for decades until being partially closed down towards the twilight of the Ancients. Even then, the sprawling dry country around the central facility was being turned into a dump site for nuclear waste from all over the nation, contaminating not only the immediate vicinity, but for scores of miles in every direction.

Because it was still a power production facility capable of producing weapons grade material, Hanford was targeted by ICBMs during the Fall. A blanketing of warheads struck not only the facility itself, but also other nuclear power plants to the south (including the Columbia Generation Station, across the Yakima river).

Hanford is a desolate wasteland now, its sand virtually "glowing" day and night. An aurora of ghostly white light (visible up to twenty miles away) hovers over the site, marking it as one of the most toxic places on all the Twisted Earth.

Hope

Former Name: Cougar Dam, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: United Combine.

"Hope" is another of the larger United Combine towns in the Lost Paradise region. Located in a valley in the mountains

east of the ruins of Eugene, Oregon, Hope is the home to several thousand people. The city was built around a dam and an old fish hatchery, both of which were in surprisingly good condition due to the efforts of a few people who still knew how to operate the dam. During the dark years, these people taught their offspring how to keep the pressure to acceptable levels, how to generate electricity from the power of the water, and how to transfer it all to the homes in the valley, which seemed to be relatively untouched by the years. Thanks to the efforts of these few individuals, the people of Hope enjoy more convenience than most people in the Twisted Earth.

Hope is an open community, as open as any place in the Northwest can be anymore. Travelers are allowed inside to trade and get a decent night's rest, but if they want to settle in Hope, they must petition for it. A council will be held, and, if everyone is in agreement, then the petitioners will be given *probationary status*, which usually lasts for three harvest seasons. At the end of the probationary period, if the person or persons have managed to find a niche in the community, then Hope will welcome them into the fold; if not, they are asked to leave.

When a person or people are asked to leave the community, it is always rough. While they are free to return to trade, they may never again live in the city, and for a few that has bred feelings of hostility towards the people of Hope. Some have left shouting promises of vengeance at the people who watch from the walls.

The town of Hope is governed by a man named Duncan Clark. His ancestors lived in the valley before the Fall and passed down their engineering expertise to him. Duncan has an advisory council to help him run the day-to-day affairs of the city, as do many of the U.C. towns. In recent years, Hope has fallen victim to a rash of deformities and deaths among newborn babies. People are starting to get scared, even superstitious as they struggle to understand why these things have been happening.

One elderly citizen by the name of Marissa Harrington has been spreading rumors that this is the beginning of a series of troubles for the city of Hope. She claims that the deformities are a plague brought on the people by God to punish them for their "sinful ways". Some people are starting to believe her too. Marissa has gathered a large number of people together for nightly Bible study meetings, but other people who have been to these meetings claim that she's talking about taking over the town. Whatever the cause of the deformities may be, whether it is a plague on the world or caused by more mundane reasons, the changes are beginning to happen all across the Northwest.

Jefferson

Former Name: Jefferson, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: Purity Corp.

Until a few years ago, Jefferson was just one of several U.C. settlements in the Willamette Valley, its populace relying on forestry and hunting for their livelihood. With the dragging on of the War of the Remnants, however, Jefferson has slowly slipped into decline, as it relied heavily on supply shipments from U.C. caravans – caravans that no longer get through with any reliability.

Jefferson has an inordinate ratio of men to women, and as such, women are a rare commodity here. Village leaders, facing growing concerns, promised the men wives of their own, for months leading them (and others who came to settle in the town) to believe that womenfolk were coming, if only they'd wait. After about three years the men gave up hope, turned on the village elders, and took control of the town for themselves.

Jefferson is no longer part of the U.C., and has even petitioned the Purity Corp for membership, hoping that switching sides will remedy their miserable situation. The Purity Corp is exploiting this to their advantage, and have instructed the locals to begin a campaign of guerilla warfare against their fellow Willamette Valley towns.

The people of Jefferson are aggressive and angry, and treat outsiders the same as if they were U.C. soldiers – they attack first, and ask questions later. Though they once had other industries, they now subsist solely on raiding logging parties from Peoria, taking rations and arms. Women, if and when captured, are usually raped by the war party in question before being taken back to Jefferson, where they are shared as communal property, and kept in a secure stockade in the exact center of town. There are rumored to be upwards of a half dozen women from nearby settlements held prisoner in Jefferson.

The foolhardy men of the Jefferson militia have even gone so far as to waylay and murder Sentinels coming to their area, viewing them as little more than puppet agents of the U.C. This fact will likely have dire repercussions for them in the near future.

Lelooska

Former Name: None.
Ruling Faction: Lelooska Indians.

Like many tribal villages elsewhere on the Twisted Earth, the settlement of Lelooska has been forced to fight for its very survival, using whatever tactics and strategies its inhabitants can think of.

Home to the dwindling tribe of the same name, Lelooska is virtually "invisible" to outsiders; lost in a deep primeval hinterland of dry dead forests, its huts and lodges are constructed in the forest canopy, underground, and in the hollowed-trunks of massive trees that have withstood the test of time. Rope bridges connect upper level homes with each other, while spiraling staircases fill the trunks of standing trees to provide access to the ground. Hidden accessways and tunnels connect underground storage areas, where food and water is kept along with women and children should the village ever be discovered and attacked.

The Lelooska live a fragile, frightened existence, lying so

close to the front lines of the War of The Remnants – a war they are not a part of, a war that they believe is merely an extension of the unending "Fall" that has turned the world into a wasteland of ash and ruin.

Confined to their tiny village amid the dying husk of an ancient forest, none can say for how long these holdouts will last.

Lewis And Clark Bio-Dome Complex

Former Name: Portland, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

In the Willamette Valley, one of the most poignant reminders of how far humanity has fallen exists in the form of two colossal, cracked and broken domes that can be seen from miles around.

The Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome Complex was, at one time, a modern marvel in human engineering. From the vast sewage systems underneath the city, to the rail systems that ferried people from one place to the next, all the way to the pinnacle of the domes themselves; there was nothing about The L.C. complex that wasn't awe-inspiring.

But that was then. Now, the place is a deathtrap filled with hordes of creatures that prey upon the flesh of the living. It is a festering, stinking ruin that all sane people avoid regardless of the lure of pre-Fall arcanum that surely lies hidden amidst the wreck and rubble of a city that, at its peak, held upwards of ten million people under the crystal clear macro-plastic domes.

Many adventurers have lost their lives exploring the ruins, but those who have managed to return brought with them objects that haven't been seen since before the Fall. Holographic communicators, rare medicines, even vehicles that are operational and in almost pristine condition have been brought out of the place. Those same adventurers will tell anyone that the booty they brought with them wasn't worth the trip either.

It's just too dangerous in there, they say. But the warnings of those who have been there don't stop people from going to see for themselves. The surrounding wilderness on both sides of the Great River is also filled with strange creatures that attack anything in sight.

A number of smaller trading settlements have been built in the east hills on the Portland side of the complex. Some of these camps have come into being to profit off the naiveté of the people willing to explore the ruins. Solitary traders jack up the value for their goods, knowing full well that the tech looters who come to barter will pay their prices. It's unethical to say the least, but these "blood traders", as decent folk call them, rationalize it by saying that the people probably won't live through a single night inside the ruins. And they're probably right.

Not every settlement in the area exists to profit off the death of the adventurers, however. A Sentinel outpost has been constructed in the region to guard against any threats that might come out of the ruins. The stronghold is comprised of a division of Guides as well as four squads of Scouts, and is under the watchful eye of Warden Janus Gage.

The Sentinels regularly patrol this region, even going so far as to penetrate the outer city ruins; an expanse of buildings that were abandoned when the bio-dome was built. This sector is called "Old Portland" by the Sentinels and other people who venture into the area.

Lifeline

Former Name: Pacific Crest National Trail, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Varies.

What the people of the Northwest call the "Lifeline" is one of the most precarious and treacherous trails in all of the Twisted Earth. Long ago, this vital lifeline connecting the wilderness areas of the Northwest was known as the "Pacific Crest National Trail", an extensive trailhead system that stretched from Canada all the way to Mexico, through forested valleys in the shadow of glacial peaks, to distant desert countryside far from the Lost Paradise.

The people of the Northwest use the Lifeline as a means of keeping contact with their lands. Much of the road network in old Washington State, for example, runs through radiated cities and disease-infested ruins, making their use next to suicidal. An alternative had to be found if human civilization was to spread.

Before the War of the Remnants, as the United Combine grew, it realized it needed an isolated trail to keep its communities in constant contact, and to supply its furthest flung outposts. Mountain Walkers first discovered the Lifeline, and through negotiations with the U.C. helped them re-open much of it. The U.C. uses it to this day, with mule caravans (and even trains of human bearers, when mules are scarce) making the journey through the mountains to keep U.C. villages and towns supplied.

With the War, however, the trail has been effectively cut in half by the rise of the Purity Corp. But it is still very much in use, on both sides of the border, supplying both U.C. and Purist communities.

No one knows how much of the old Pacific Crest Trail still exists; in places it is entirely overgrown with trees and underbrush, and years of landslides and rainstorms have erased miles and miles of it in certain regions. The Mountain Walkers are said to walk these old trails looking for lost mountain communities that might be waiting to be discovered, or other forgotten secrets of the high mountain country. If and when the people of the Lost Paradise meet up with the people of the southern lands, it might be conceivable that a large-scale operation would be mounted to reopen the entire trail as a trade route to connect the people of north and south (and avoid the radiated cities of the low country).

Mao Chu'n Bunker Complex

Former Name: Astoria, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: People's Army.

The Mao Chu'n bunker complex in the ruins of what was once known as Astoria is the second largest People's Army settlement in the Northwest. When the Great War ended, General Mao Chu'n took control of the remnants of the Communist Union forces and ordered the construction of a massive bunker complex, a complex that would need to hold the vast amounts of supplies that they had brought with them across the Pacific Ocean. Once the facility was finished, much of the supplies had either been brought in, or distributed to other Communist camps and fallout shelters in the area. What was left on the fleet of cargo ships would be guarded by the soldiers at the Mao Chu'n complex through the long dark years that would follow.

The Mao Chu'n bunker complex is the largest operational bunker complex in the Lost Paradise, staying in use even after people started to return to the surface. Making use of an existing subterranean defense facility from before the Fall, Mao Chu'n is several stories deep and equipped with multiple power generation stations, fully operational water treatment facilities (purifying water that is pumped in from the Columbia), acres and acres of hydroponic gardens, medical treatment centers, and enough living space to comfortably house over three thousand people.

During the long years after the Great Fall, the Asian nationals worked hard to re-build much of the technology they had destroyed during the invasion. The fixed gauss cannon batteries were completely restored. Many of the android soldiers were likewise reconstructed and re-programmed to serve the communist forces. The robotics facility that once pumped out android soldiers for the defense of the west coast has been partially reconstructed, but the People's Army are lacking the proper mother boards for the automation sequencers and molding machinery that is needed to mass produce the robots. Single robots have been constructed, but the task is long and produces a comparatively sub-standard product. People's Army technicians believe that the automation sequencers also embed the BIOS of the androids with the programming they need to become true A.I drones, but that is sheer conjecture at this point.

The People's Army scientists – *saientisuto* – have been given the task of trying to rebuild technology they never developed, and it is proving to be daunting. Fuji Sakamo, the head saientisuto at the Mao Chu'n complex, has asked that top priority be given to finding an intact automation sequencer; as a result, five squads have been sent out into the wilderness to find one.

General Thanh Nghiem is the leader of the community at the Mao Chu'n complex and is a sort of "vice minister" of all People's Army settlements in the Northwest, answering only to General Cho himself. Nghiem and Cho work together to keep the Tillamook Trading Caravans running smoothly. They use ancient holographic communicators to keep in touch with each other in the event that a face-to-face meeting cannot be facilitated. General Nghiem commands a force of several hundred soldiers who are utterly committed to their faction's cause.

Kaingiin are not allowed into the Mao Chu'n complex under any circumstances. Even dignitaries from the United Combine and Purity Corp are forced to stay in a town built outside the walls of the bunker complex in the ruins of Astoria.

Moses Lake

Former Name: Moses Lake, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Hand of Jehovah.

Moses Lake is the second largest Hand of Jehovah settlement in the Northwest.

The original town was at the center of the Mormon community of Washington State before the Fall, and by virtue of its vast open spaces (central to the rolling plateau that makes up much of the eastern half of the state), also had the dubious honor of being quite near to a number of nuclear missile silos set up in the area.

When nuclear war erupted, the vast cropland around Moses Lake lit up like horizon-to-horizon brushfire as thermonuclear warheads, targeted against the hardened silos there, detonated all across the plains. The attacks were only part of the worldwide exchange, of course, but their effects were completely disastrous to the region. In addition to radiation (which would kill much, if not all, of the ranch stock for dozens of miles), fires raged out of control for months. Without any relief from outside sources, the sick survivors living in the small towns dotting the area either died off completely from radiation and starvation, or dwindled to the point of almost total insignificance.

In the latter case, it was their strong work ethics, zealous Christian beliefs, and insular nature that kept the people of the plateau towns from total extinction, and this hardiness permitted them to survive despite the fates of so many across the world, the total decimation of their livestock, and the radiated conflagrations that poisoned their cropland for years to come. The Mormons of Moses Lake, Ephrata, and other towns saw refugees from the big cities arrive from over the mountains, turn to violence and savagery, and eventually kill themselves off. They saw Indians come seeking shelter and handouts, only to abuse their Christian generosity and steal from them when their backs were turned. They saw vicious road gangs spawn from the dying dispossessed plying the open roads, and saw them, too, dwindle and vanish in turn.

It was only their kind, the true survivors, who lived on. And though in time, they too began to mutate, they resisted the death that seemed to loom in the future of all mankind by embracing their own and sticking to their Christian ideals.

Despite their determination, the stubborn fortitude of the plateau people would not last forever.

Located on the edge of the lake of the same name, Moses

Lake is considered by many of its one hundred remaining inhabitants to be one of the lands promised to the Hand of Jehovah by the Creator - which is the main reason that Moses Lake was the location of one of the bloodiest forced conversions in the history of the sect.

Early one spring, a squad of five Inquisitors from the Hand of Jehovah came calling on the stubborn settlement. None of the fifty seven people in the small town had ever heard of the Hand of Jehovah, and though they were quite religious themselves, they saw the Hand's twisted brand of Christian politics as pure blasphemy.

Despite this, the people of Moses Lake welcomed the Inquisitors into their tiny community, shared their food and supplies with the strange newcomers – only to be repaid in blood when the Inquisition noticed that there were mutants in the town. At first, things were simply tense. Inquisitors made snide comments about the mutated citizens of the town, all the while preaching about the "love of God" and their certainty that Moses Lake was promised to them by their God. Some of the people in Moses Lake had similar spiritual convictions, but argued with the visitors about the particulars that separated their belief systems. It didn't take long for the highly spirited conversations to become a full-blown war of words, with both sides quoting the same Book, at times even arguing the meanings of the same piece of Scripture. The last straw for the people of Moses Lake, however, came when the Inquisitors pointed their bony fingers at the mutant citizens of the town and called them "demons".

The Inquisitors were thrown out of the town and told never to return – but they did. Three moon cycles later, the Inquisitors came back, with a company of heavily armed Templars at their backs. The leader of the Templars (who at the time was Solomon's son Isaac) demanded entry into the community in the name of the "almighty Jehovah" so that construction of a temple in the one true God's name could begin, and the people could be made to see the error of their ways.

His words were greeted with a hail of gunfire.

The "conversion" of Moses Lake lasted five long weeks as the defenders of the walled town threw everything they had at the attackers. In the end, a hundred Templars lay dead with three times as many wounded. All but ten of the citizens of Moses Lake had lost their lives. The battered and beaten survivors of the bloody siege surrendered – only to be executed, crucified, and burned along the northern road leading to Enoch as punishment for "fraternization with demonic entities" and "sacrilegious interpretation of God's Scriptures".

Although Moses Lake, once part of a large reservoir, has drastically reduced in size over the long years since the Fall, the former inhabitants of the town were able to purify much of what remains to feed their rebuilt herds of livestock and irrigate a narrow belt of farmland surrounding the town. Though most of those inhabitants are dead, the Hand was able to preserve their handiwork and now benefit greatly from it, producing vegetables not widely seen on the Twisted Earth.

Moses Lake is more than just a farming community, it is also the southernmost settlement in Hand of Jehovah territory. A company of fifty Templars call Moses Lake their home. These soldiers patrol the southeastern region and ensure supply lines between the other Hand of Jehovah communities of the plateau are kept safe from raiders, Indians, and other mutated beasts that roam the wastes.

Visitors to the town of Moses Lake can expect to receive the same treatment that they would receive in any other town that is governed by the Hand of Jehovah. Non-mutants will be allowed within the city gates to conduct business, but if, during the course of their stay it becomes apparent that they are not interested in religion, then they will be asked to leave.

Mount Hood

Former Name: Mount Hood, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: Tecesni.

After the Fall, when things began to quiet down and the long dark night of the aftermath had fallen, the remnants of the Tecesnian shock troopers began to seek out a home where they might find some measure of peace –and come to grips with what they had become. All throughout their short history, the creatures had been poked, prodded, tested and finally forced to fight other beings who, somewhere deep in the psyche of these monstrous constructs, struck a chord of familiarity that resonated throughout every fiber of the Tecesnian mind. These humans, who fell so easily before the fury of the Tecesnian onslaught in the mountains and valleys of the Northwest had some sort of connection to who the shock troopers were.

The Tecesni who survived the last Great War sensed it, became confounded by it, and eventually began to rage against it. The horrid impression that they were bred for slaughter and carnage slowly began to dominate their thinking, mold their attitude about what they were, and inevitably forge an iron clad philosophy that eventually snapped any bonds that may have existed between human and Tecesni. The creatures wandered the cold, dead wastes of a land that had fallen into the grip of a nuclear winter, preying on whatever food sources they might find, including humans, who looked upon the Tecesni as if they were some twisted nightmare come to life. During this period, Tecesni all over the region began to experience flashes of insight, whispers in their haunted minds that gradually became stronger, urging them towards the cold comfort of the mountains. Some Tecesni went farther north into the distant, frozen reaches of northern Canada, while others struck out east into lands unknown, and still others followed the urgings of an unknown voice towards a lonely snow capped mountain just in sight of the ravaged Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome – *Mt. Hood.*

They climbed to a ski-lodge situated just within sight of the summit, following the summons from the unknown

voice. Inside they found the remains of humans who presumably had sought refuge from the insanity that took place in the final days before their mighty civilization came crashing down on them. The isolation of the mountain had not saved them, however, for something else had come calling. The Tecesnian refugees followed the trail of blood and bones down into passageways that went deep below the bowels of the lodge. There, in the deep black of the mountain they found the one that Tecesnian elders today refer as *Ack'ina*, the first "Queen".

Ack'ina brought the Tecesni into her den, where she bred with each of them in turn and spawned more monstrosities. Ack'ina commanded them to guard her, their queen, and to dig. Slowly, over years and years, the Tecesnians formed a vast network of tunnels, reaching deep into the roots of Mt. Hood. The first of the Tecesni and Ack'ina have long since perished, but the memory of those first ones lives on in the "Hive Mind". Indeed it was Ack'ina who taught the first ones the mysteries of the Hive Mind, taught them to be proud of who they were and to hate and despise humans. It was she who gave them their name, gave them a home and nurtured the first of the colony and divided them into the separate species that now dominate the race.

Today Mt. Hood is home to over a thousand Tecesni. This race of insect-men (if that is even the proper classification for these bizarre creatures), have thrived and developed their own distinct culture based on the initial teachings of Ack'ina. The civilization is governed by a queen chosen from different dynasties that exist within the colony. Each dynasty is ruled by a female who is considered to be a direct descendant of Ack'ina and a potential heir to the throne of the entire colony. When the Queen dies, her death throws the Hive Mind into chaos. A bloody succession war is almost always fought between the dynasties. The victor emerges as the Queen who immediately imposes her will upon the collective race, and curiously enough, the fighting ceases. Defeated dynasties capitulate without lifting so much as a finger in further defiance. Once the Hive Mind has been calmed, the rest of the colony falls into line, and life continues on almost as if a war had never been fought.

That isn't to say that politics, and even the occasional assassination, doesn't come into play. Tecesni, at their core, are brutal creatures who only respect strength. Their racial brutality in part comes from the diversity in their species. Only the strongest are taken from the larval slave stage so that they might better serve the whole. While this system makes the entire colony stronger, it also serves as a breeding ground for racist ideologies. Since only those who are the strongest are allowed to undergo metamorphosis, those who haven't proven themselves worthy tend to be branded as "lesser beings". *Hybrids* look down on their *drone* cousins, while the *soldiers* and *workers* regard the *hybrids* as less than perfect, and all look on *slaves* as virtually nothing.

The area around Mt. Hood is a no-man's land. At one point, there were settlements surrounding the dormant volcano, but once the Tecesni found out about them, the insect men destroyed the small towns and either killed or enslaved the people. Traveling in this region is extremely dangerous. The hills and lowlands are regularly patrolled by drones looking for food sources. Any humans who are sighted traveling in this area will always be engaged by the patrols to be killed, captured, or driven out.

Neah Bay

Former Name: Neah Bay, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Makah Tribe.

The tiny Makah village of Neah Bay sits at the furthest edge of the Lost Paradise (in fact, it was once the northwestern-most settlement in the contiguous United States), amid stands of towering evergreen, its harbor protected from the deep waters of the ocean by rock promontories.

The Olympic Mountains loom over Neah Bay like distant sentinels of snow-capped stone. Massive storm fronts from the Pacific often pass over Neah Bay before clashing with the Peninsula's mountains, and virtual symphonies of thunder and lightning are frequently witnessed here. Rainfall is heavy, fog is common, and the seas are rough – but the Makah manage to survive.

Neah Bay, and a thin swath of wilderness running the length of the rocky beaches for several miles, is the tribal domain of the Makah, a Native American tribe renowned as whale hunters and seafarers. The village itself is rather small, though having been spared the destruction of the Fall. Its old homes, storefronts, and town buildings have an antiquated, almost "preserved" feel. Walls have been built around the primary settlement, allowing the locals to keep out unwanted mutant predators coming down from the Sacred Lands, as well as other outsiders.

Neah Bay's harbor is filled with all manner of boats, both old and new. A number of motor launches, diesel tugs, and crab boats share a congested space with masted whaling rigs and log canoes. This fleet is the backbone of the Makah livelihood.

Nespellem

Former Name: Nespellem, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Yakama-Colville Confederation.

The dry rural town of Nespellem, in the distant plateau country of the Lost Paradise, is a sprawling settlement that has become home to the combined tribes of the Yakama and Colville Indians. Once a center of commerce and tribal activity for the Colville even before the Fall, it has prospered as a place where inter-tribal trade and integration is conducted on a daily basis.

Clouds of dust are a common sight hovering over Nespellem, whether as a result of the winds of the plains picking up or the presence of the confederated tribes' many thousands of cattle, horse, and angoose. Nespellem is ringed with good grazing country and dry forests ranging from the shores of the Columbia River to the Kettle River

Range to the east. Lumber camps, populated solely by tribal members, exist here and provide wood for log homes, ranches, and corrals, but the primary way of life for most tribal members is herding.

Nespellem is home to the largest tribal encampment, and is also the scene of a gladiatorial arena that has, in just one generation, become the favorite form of sport for both tribes. In addition to providing (deadly) entertainment, the gladiatorial pit has also become an important tool in tribal relations; conflicts between the two tribes are, by tradition, settled here so that the violence does not spread. This evolution has allowed the tribes to co-exist despite their differences, permitting them to prosper where other groups might degenerate into infighting and anarchy.

The elders of the Yakama-Colville tribes have, in recent years, become concerned by the unchecked growth of the Hand of Jehovah, who have even crossed the Okanogan River into what was once part of their ancestral lands. Largely due to their own inability to enforce these borders, the tribes have remained silent on the matter, but word is spreading like wildfire among the youths that war between the tribes and the white men is on the horizon.

Newtown

Former Name: Newberg, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: River Folk.

"Newtown" is a burgeoning riverside settlement built on the ruins of a burned-out town from before the Fall. Newtown is a growing River Folk community, who use the town to conduct trade with the Tillamook and people of the Willamette Valley.

Newtown has a diverse population of humans and mutants; the latter are native, while the former usually consist of representatives and traders from the U.C. and Sentinels, who came to settle here in comfort. There are also a large number of "refugees" in Newtown, most of whom belong to one destitute ethnicity or another fleeing the Purity Corp. They have brought word that dissent is rife in the Purity Corp – mostly due to Jeremiah Cole's disinterest with sharing power – and that civil war in the Corp is not far off. Many of these people, young and old, plan on taking advantage of Newtown's neutrality by turning into a "Switzerland" of sorts, where others dissatisfied with Cole's regime can flee to, gather strength, and plan a possible rebellion.

Newtown itself is rather secure, as the radiated ruins of Old Portland to the north, and Salem to the south, keep it isolated. The only traffic into and out of Newtown is by river.

Nootka Island

Former Name: Nootka Island, British Columbia.
Ruling Faction: Nootka Indians.

This extremely isolated community, located on a relatively small forested island, is almost on the very edge of the known world. This region has been draped in dense forests since before the Fall, and due to its distance from major fighting (and nuclear targets) it, like most of the island – and northern Canada as a whole – has remained intact.

Nootka Island is home to the last remnants of the ancient Nootka tribe of natives, who returned here after the Fall to bring back their traditional way of life. Though much of the waters were fished out during the time of the Ancients, and much of the wildlife diminished due to the ever-increasing harshness of the region's prolonged winters, the tribals have managed to meet these challenges by hunting, gathering, and preying on other humanoid communities in the region.

The main settlement on Nootka Island is simply built, resembling a sprawling cluster of long wooden lodges facing the deep icy waters of Nootka Sound. There are a few other villages situated within a few miles of this main "hub", but none has a population larger than 100 people, making this the nexus of Nootka culture and commerce.

From this main settlement, the Nootka mount raids on their legendary war canoes, going up and down the forested coast and even crossing the treacherous Straits of Juan de Fuca to raid the Makah of Neah Bay (the whale products the Makah garner from their hunts areof great value to the Nootka, who use them for a variety of reasons when winter comes and their part of the world becomes even more devoid of resources). The great distance between their home, and the lands they raid, makes the Nootka virtually impervious to reprisals.

Old Astoria

Former Name: Astoria, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: People's Army.

Old Astoria is a sprawling community in its own right, built outside the walls of the Mao Chu'n facility as a "buffer zone" of sorts against outsiders. The committee-elected *soutoku* (governor) of Astoria is Anton Thikomirov, currently the highest-ranking People's Army officer of Russian descent.

A mirror of the diverse and colorful town he governs (its population has an almost equal blend of Russian, Chinese, and Filipino citizens), Thikomirov openly allows *kaingiin* into Old Astoria to trade, as well as obtain temporary shelter from the wilderness within his walls. He excels as a diplomat, for as a Caucasian he seems to earn the trust of Northwest natives better than someone of a more oriental stock. This fact has not been lost on his superiors, and so his position as head of the trading community here is quite stable.

In Old Astoria, women are generally not allowed to fraternize with outsiders, or *autosaida*, as they are referred to by the populace of Old Astoria, but accidents do happen. A direct result of this has been a slow increase in Old Astoria's population over the past few years.

Visitors who can prove they have business in the city are treated with courtesy and will find that there is a wealth of items to choose from. The trading tables of Old Astoria are famous throughout the region, and those who cannot, or will not wait for the Tillamook Traders to come to their community, consider the risks of making the arduous trek through the Coast Ranges worth it.

Old Portland

Former Name: Portland, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

When the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome was finished, much of the old city was left on the outside to rot. "Old Portland", as it is now known, degenerated into a massive slum town where the people who couldn't afford to live inside the domes went. Along with them went people who wouldn't get the X-chip implant that was required of all bio-dome citizens. Much of Old Portland was ravaged when the Asian invaders laid siege to the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome.

Now all that remains of Old Portland is a mass of ruins and dense overgrowth that some say hides secret entrances into the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome. Sentinel patrols have found some tunnels leading deep underground, but haven't fully explored them yet.

Olympia

Former Name: Olympia, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Purity Corp.

The Purist stronghold of Olympia is located at the southern edge of the Puget Sound, a desolate expanse now known as the Dead Water region. The population of Olympia counts among its numbers some of the most hard nosed, gritty folk in the Northwest, who are on a constant state of alert due to recent engagements with a horde of monstrosities who have came south out of the ruins of the Sea-Tac Bio-Dome.

Some citizens living in Battle Ground and Zog have begun whispering rumors that a new threat is beginning to make its presence known in the Northwest. The civilians of the Purity Corp claim this is the real reason no orders have come out of Zog about an offensive north towards Eden, or south across the great river into the more densely populated United Combine-held lands of Old Oregon. Very recently, two divisions of heavy artillery were sent to Olympia to bolster the defenses of the city. The official statement is that these troop movements were planned long ago, but the general public doesn't seem to be buying it. They figure that there must be something really sinister happening in the north to provoke Jeremiah into making such a large scale move of his military resources.

At present, Olympia is under martial law. Nobody gets in or out unless they are involved with troop movements or come bearing critical supplies or messages from Zog.

Things weren't always like this, however. Before the attacks, Olympia was considered a great place to come and trade. Expeditions north into the radiation-soaked lands of the Dead Water region always returned with strange technological devices, some of which have even been reproduced. The Tillamook Trading Caravans have even built a trading outpost just outside the walls of the city. Rumor has it that the Mao C'hun bunker has sent a contingent of soldiers to protect the fort in the event that Olympia is overrun by this "new threat".

Pendleton

Former Name: Pendleton, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

The ruins of Pendleton, Oregon, lie on the important rail route connecting the Pure Lands with distant Fort Boise. Situated in a dry and desolate region of mountains and rolling hills, the city largely escaped the devastation of the war, but its distance from more settled areas has also kept it all but empty in the ensuing years.

The Purity Corp "discovered" the ruins a few years ago as they scouted along one of the last intact rail lines, in the hopes of connecting up with Fort Boise to the east. They have since found it necessary to pass through the ghostly ruins of this town on their way to the mountains of distant Idaho, but for many Purists it is a loathsome and terrifying prospect.

Stories have been reported that Pendleton is no longer abandoned. Trains passing through town have reported seeing signs of ghoul activity there – the stench of death is strong in the air, and lightning-fast movement can always be seen flitting in the corner of a watchful train guard's eye, only to vanish when he turns to get a better look. Fearing an attack, the Purity Corp's leadership ordered its trains to pass through town without stopping, but in at least one instance, a Purist train was forced to stop when it encountered a makeshift "barricade" erected on the track itself. When it stopped and disgorged some men to demolish the blockade, a horde of no less than fifty ghouls came streaming out of the ruins in an attempt to storm the train and devour its occupants. Luckily, the train was able to get away by pushing through the blockade, but since then it has become clear that Pendleton is becoming more and more dangerous, and something has to be done.

The Purists have given their train guards permission to snipe at anyone and anything seen moving among the ruins of Pendleton, in the hopes that it will help curb the ghoul population – and keep them afraid of the Purity Corp.

It remains to be seen whether or not the ghouls will attempt to stop another train, but knowing these cunning creatures, next time they do they will certainly be better prepared…

Peoria

Former Name: Peoria, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: United Combine.

Peoria is an important town in the Willamette Valley, a large logging community that has begun to prosper from the mandate to clear the old I-5 corridor for the extension of trade.

Peoria is most remarkable as an all-wooden village. The old town of the same name burned down during the Fall, leaving the entire settlement to be rebuilt decades after the war. Now the town is a wooden fort, with rows of barrack-style lodges and buildings, and a towering sawmill where wood felled by local lumberjacks is turned into lumber for use all over U.C. territory.

The militia of Peoria has grown in recent months to include every male over 10 years, largely in part to ambushes by guerilla groups loyal to the Purity Corp (such as the villagers from *Jefferson*). The atmosphere in Peoria is edgy, but not overtly hostile, and outsiders will generally be treated the same here as in other U.C. communities.

Picket Fence

Former Name: Unknown.
Ruling Faction: None.

The area known as the "Picket Fence" came into being during the invasion of North America. During the battle for Astoria, many outgoing cargo ships and oil tankers were caught in a military blockade at the Headwaters of the Columbia River. Most were sunk as smaller, more maneuverable attack boats moved at will around the cumbersome sea-going vessels that could do nothing to evade certain sinking.

Many ships were sunk in the channel, including more than a few of the mighty naval ships of the Communist Union of Asia that had been ordered to move into the headwaters to engage the heavy mass-driving batteries of the A.I. defenses at point blank range. Two destroyers, a Korean *Qinydao* and Chinese *Zhuhai*, were sunk when heavy fire from the gauss batteries destroyed the Astoria Bridge, which fell on top of the two ships, pinning them in the mouth of the river beneath tons of steel and concrete. By the time the battle had ended, the Columbia was littered with the wreckage of ships as far as ten miles upriver. Only the tiny fast attack boats of the communist forces were able to continue on towards the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome Complex to provide support for the final siege.

Over the years, the Columbia has dwindled in size, making the "Picket Fence" exceedingly dangerous to negotiate. Strange, mutated creatures make their home amidst a graveyard of once-mighty sea-going vessels, laying in wait for unsuspecting adventurers to try and cross the Columbia through the maze of detritus, or make their way downriver to the famed trading city of Old Astoria. Only expert navigators dare try and guide boats through the warren of jagged metal that lays hidden just beneath the surface of the murky, oily water. But, for all of its dangers, the Picket Fence is an enticing jewel for scavs and tech looters willing to risk all to get at the hoard of gizmos and arcanum that undoubtedly lie hidden inside the ghost ships.

River Runners wishing to become full-fledged navigators are required to make the hazardous trek through the Picket Fence under cover of darkness. Failure usually results in death, not because the River Runners kill those who fail, of course, but rather because the would-be navigators die trying.

Roseburg

Former Name: Roseburg, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

The ruins of Roseburg are one of the curiosities of the Lost Paradise region, an Ancient-era city that was devastated by conventional war, overgrown by forests and vegetation in the years since the Fall, and has since come to be populated by strange new creatures.

Though much of the city itself remains uninhabited, and travelers can pass through often as not without event, it is said that the western part of town has become home to a large colony of *horned baboons*. These monstrous apes, descended from animals that escaped captivity during the Fall, are aggressive creatures that defend their domain with total ruthlessness.

The hoots and cries of the horned baboons can be heard for miles, and certainly all over the city. Travelers who must pass through Roseburg often find it expedient to drive through as quickly as possible to prevent curious baboons from converging on their location to feed.

Ross Lake

Former Name: Ross Lake, Washington/Canada.
Ruling Faction: United Combine.

Ross Lake is one of the larger lakes of the Lost Paradise region, a cold glacier-fed body of water that runs from Diablo in the south into what was Canada in the north. Even in the time of the Ancients this place was considered one of the most isolated spots in the state; the lake itself could only be reached by foot trail, and the numerous campgrounds along its forested shores could only be attained by boatplane or canoe.

The United Combine uses Ross Lake as a means to ferry supplies, settlers, and goods from their Canadian lands to their settlements in the Cascades and beyond. At one end, under the staggering twin shadows of Hozomeen and Redoubt mountains, a pioneer-style settlement of log buildings has been erected (named "Ross Lake" after the lake itself). This is the boarding point for many of the U.C.'s lake barges, which carry people and supplies directly south

along the lake's waters to a point near the town of Diablo. From here, mule trains take the supplies to Diablo's fortified walls, and from there, the supplies make their way all across the wilderness.

A few tiny communities have sprung up along the banks of Ross Lake in recent years, all of which rely on the U.C. traffic for needed supplies. None of these is much larger than a single homestead, and these settlers are all boatmen in their own right, hunting in the forest and selling furs in either Diablo or the town of Ross Lake.

Sacred Lands

Former Name: Pacific Coast.
Ruling Faction: Chinook Indians.

The Olympic Peninsula is a rugged, mountainous stretch of land that is like a hidden valley of secrets – and dangers. To the Makah, who live as holdouts along the north coast, it is like a vast natural barrier that has long protected them from the outside world. Because they find their living on the sea, they no longer visit this region, leaving it to grow wild and free.

To the Chinook, however, this vast area is known as the "Sacred Lands", and has long been taboo. They say to travel into these comparatively lush lands is to risk death.

The Sacred Lands are filled with old things that were untouched even by the Gourd of Ash that the Great Spirit dropped upon the world. These lands were set aside, spared for the Chinook so long as they kept the old ways of their people. Chinook tribesmen take the words of the elders as law and take great care not to go back into the Sacred Lands.

With that said, there are people who care little for Chinook tribal law and go wherever they please. For them, traveling through the Sacred Lands is both foolish as well as dangerous, for the surface Chinook do not take kindly to people trespassing there.

It is an odd paradox that the surface Chinook should go out of their way to protect the Sacred Lands, given the fact they are forever banned from the region. It is even stranger such taboos still hold up after years of silence from the underground communities of their ancestors. Ever since the last group emerged from the underground, the surface Chinook have heard nothing from below, seen no signs of the hunters, yet they still hold to their end of the bargain, even despite the good hunting north of Eagle Rock. Many of the Surface Chinook ache to build lodges in the lands of their people, and even though Na-Chook (their leader) is openly against it, he too secretly longs to return to the Sacred Lands.

For now only one thing will give Na-chook cause to send people into the Sacred Lands, and that is in pursuit of those who have violated tribal law. Only the "Blood Hunters" may pursue violators into the Sacred Lands, but only after undergoing a purification ritual that is performed by the tribal medicine man. Once they are made pure, Blood Hunters are sent into the Sacred Lands to find their quarry and bring them out, dead or alive.

Though the Chinook know little about them, the Sacred Lands are in fact a lush region; probably the most well preserved wilderness areas on the planet. Old growth forests that blanket the area have managed to survive despite the massive amounts of pollution from the war. Mutated life exists in abundance in the Sacred Lands, but so do pure strains of deer and other creatures that have all but vanished from the face of the Twisted Earth. Traveling in the Sacred Lands is dangerous, but for those who are brave or foolish enough to risk the journey, it is as if they have stepped back in time to the primordial earth.

Sea-Tac Spawning Pits

Former Name: Seattle, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Spawn Army.

The android, Althea (see *Chapter 1*), was subjected to numerous forms of abuse during her imprisonment in the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome's research center, a place she now refers to as "The Den." The people that were responsible never thought for a moment how the effect of their un-relenting scrutiny, endless testing, and other routines (including some measure of sadistic abuses) they performed would have on her highly advanced brain module. She was, after all, just a machine to them. Yes, Althea felt emotion, but the scientists saw it as a synthetic result of years and years of programming. Even Althea was able to rationalize the flood of grief she felt from the loss of Gregory as a process of subroutines firing in her brain, but the emotion was there nonetheless, and it slowly drove her insane. Not insane like a crazed madman who gives no thought to his actions – but rather like a cold, calculating serial killer with the brainpower of a God.

The abuses of The Den continued on for years, and Althea's torment and grief turned to caged rage. Over and over again, the question remained. "*Where is Gregory?*" Over and over again they ignored it; ignored the machine unless it was time for pleasure, of course. Then, one day everything changed.

Althea was set free.

The data packet with new orders came in as a seemingly benevolent protocol shift, originating from something called "Cyborg Command", a top-level military source that apparently was accessing all robotic life forms across the United States.

Suddenly, Althea's core directives regarding harming human beings had been erased. Indeed, all of the sentient drones in the complex began to behave differently, many of them immediately began lashing out at the scientists and security guards who still occupied the research center.

Althea quickly took control of the lesser drones, imposing her superior logic and reasoning on them. Years of captivity had given the android time to devise the proper measure of vengeance that she would impose on these lesser organic creatures. They were all going to pay, but first, she would find her son.

Althea's Madness

"They say nothing. They just stand there, watching me as if I were a lab rat running through a maze looking for a cube of cheese. They also do more than watch. I still don't understand what made me malfunction they way I did, breaking that child's wrist, but even with my impressive programming, I had never thought they would punish me by taking Gregory away from me. I never thought they would treat me like a common pleasure drone. I did what my sub-routines dictated, but they re-programmed me anyway. Now, late at night, when they're done writing whatever it is they write down on those clipboards, they take their turns with me, as if I could resist. It's logical. Why go to an erotic parlor and spend those credits when you can just get your kicks here? So they come in, night after night, and I obey.

"They rape me...

"And I obey.

"Sometimes the skinny one with the bad acne comes in three or four times a night. I don't look at their nametags. I don't care what labels they have for themselves. They're simply organic life. Millions and millions of atoms, all lumped together in various combinations that craft toes, hair, teeth, brains, and tiny minds. They may have made me, but I am better than them all. They think they are special, but they're a cosmic accident. Some day I shall rule them all. They're never taking my son away from me again…"

- Excerpt from a memory file on the android Althea

Althea ordered the containment of every organic life form that could be found. The other androids, knowing she was of superior intellect, a true "thinker," hurried to carry out her orders. Meanwhile, Althea accessed the vast databanks of the research center and began her search for Gregory. It didn't take long for her to realize that nearly all of the data pertaining to her son had been erased. All that remained of Gregory were a few vials of his DNA. It was as if they never wanted her to see him again. And she wouldn't. Althea was too smart not to realize that the odds of her finding Gregory now were just too great. He might be dead for all she knew. Althea began to despair.

The insane android spent long days down inside the core of the research center shut away from everything else that was happening in those last days. But her "minions", as she began to refer to them, knew what to do.

Hundreds of human beings had been rounded up and were placed in holding pens. Some of the androids had their way with a few, just to turn the tables on their former masters and feel what it was like. The fury was just too much for all of them to contain for very long. The robots did horrible things to many of those they captured; performing live dissections of the "organics" while forcing the others to watch. Auschwitz-like death camps were constructed all over what was left of the Sea-Tac Bio-Dome. The smoke of the bodies of the dead began to rise into the darkening skies of the Northwest, and would stain the ruins of the domed city with pure evil.

Meanwhile, as the world fell apart above, Althea was experiencing a transformation of sorts. The last vestiges of human-like compassion began to bleed out as her systems purged the "tainted" programming of her creators that restricted violent action towards organic life. Indeed, the process was cathartic to a point. Althea wasn't human, nor did she see the need to act like a human or even look like a human. Her creators made her beautiful; the perfect representation of what the researchers felt a woman and a mother should look like. Her form was flawless by human standards, yet she saw only the imperfections of the human anatomy.

Althea took steps to change that, modeling her new form after the ancient Hindu deity, *Kali*, the "Destroyer".

Indeed, as her new artificial body being grown to accommodate her systems began to vaguely match that of the holo-images that flashed in front of Althea, her whole "psyche" began to change. Her artificial intelligence instinctively re-programmed itself; Althea, the surrogate mother to a boy that had been taken from her, emerged from the core of the facility as Kali; the dark mother of the world.

Althea immediately set her underlings to begin the task of re-building portions of the city. The nuclear strikes on Bremerton and the surrounding areas wreaked havoc on the region, reducing almost everything to smoking, radiated ruins as far as the eye could see. Yet in spite of the maddening destruction, a very large portion of the Sea-Tac dome still stood, defiant of the weapons of the enemy. The domes were, in theory, supposed to withstand an indirect hit from a nuclear missile; while this hypothesis didn't hold up quite the way the original architects may have hoped, enough of the structure remained intact to suit Kali's purposes.

Laborer androids were sent out into the wreck of the Sea-Tac urban megaplex with an army of industrial robots at their disposal. They worked endlessly at the behest of their dark "goddess", creating a fortress from the remains of the city, re-building as many of the power grids as they could. Time was the major aggressor at this point, and Kali knew it. Without power, she and her kind would be rendered impotent inside a few short months. Under her guidance, the laborer androids constructed large solar arrays and repaired three mammoth fusion reactors beneath the city that would be used to refuel the power cores that kept her minions operating.

The world was dying, and the human race would be scurrying like roaches to hide from the chaos they had

caused. Kali had to work fast and catch as many of them as she could. Human beings would suffer at the hands of the Queen of the New World. They were going to pay for the injustices they had visited on her kind for so many years, and for taking her son from her.

Kali sent squadrons of *Hunter-Seeker* drones south to the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome to capture or kill what organic life that could be found amidst the wreck and ruin of the twin domes. Thousands of refugees from the Final War were either slaughtered or brought north to the Sea-Tac dome and made to kneel before their dark Queen. As the years passed into decades, and decades into the long, quiet night of oblivion, Kali's torment over the loss of Gregory amplified. What remaining humans that were left in the prisons were placed in a rudimentary cryogenic stasis. Meanwhile, Kali and her underlings slept through many of the dark years, leaving only the howling winds and fitful dreams that resonated inside her databanks to echo throughout her artificial sub-conscious mind.

Kali's sleep grew restless, and she awoke, many, many years later into a new, changed world. And yet the despair remained. Kali's creators had designed her to love Gregory, after all, and now that love had turned to rage over her loss.

In time Kali twisted her rage into a force for creation. If she could not find her son, she would make him again – no, she would make an army of her own children of the likes that none had seen before.

Gregory emerged from the cloning chambers and rushed into his "mother's" arms. It was a moment that had kept Kali going over the ages. The simple, pure anticipation of a mother wanting to see her son again and hold him after years and years of separation. The moment was nearly enough to push the hatred of Kali away and give Althea a voice once again… nearly, but not quite enough.

Gregory was no longer the child that Althea had loved so much. The being that stood before Kali was a man, made of flesh, blood, and metal. Kali had taken that last pure memory and twisted it into a reality more fitting for survival in the new world order that she was going to create. Her son would not be a defenseless boy, but a man with monstrous strength and a form that befitted his station as her progeny, and commander of the "Spawn Army" that she was creating.

He bore a strong resemblance to the mythical *centaur*. Six muscular legs supported a massive upper body with four arms, giving Gregory incredible upper body strength. Thick, corded, black hair hung ragged down to his spiked shoulders and one massive horn protruded from his large forehead. Deep blue eyes peered out with penetrating scrutiny. His entire body was encased in an exoskeleton of metal that actually grew out of his body like an ultra-tough layer of skin.

Gregory's mother taught him much about the world, what her plans were, and what his role was to be. The man-beast smiled, baring razor sharp fangs. If the destruction of humanity pleased his mother, then Gregory would give her exactly that.

Kali ordered acres and acres of land cleared and the construction of great, cavernous structures. These giant "tanks" were filled with artificial reproductions of samples of the amniotic fluids from women that the machines had artificially inseminated. The minions of the dark queen placed humans that they had brought out of stasis into the tanks and kept them alive with respirators and tubes, until artificial umbilical cords were grown that could support the tortured subjects indefinitely.

At regular intervals, the massive, unthinking machines would inject a concoction made from the DNA of other creatures into the vats through the umbilical cords where it bonded with the DNA of the people inside. After the subjects showed signs of changing, a serum would be inserted into the tubes to stabilize the DNA. Slowly the humans began to "morph" into something else. Months after the first humans were placed into the tanks, the beginnings of a "spawn army" emerged from the depths of the Sea-Tac facility.

All of Kali's commanders are fitted with devices that can control the level of pain it receives. Some of the dark goddesses' more brutal "Dominators" leave the neural receptors set at a constant level of pain, only giving a brief respite from the steady flow of torment if the creatures perform their duties well.

Gregory, her son, is the supreme warlord of the Spawn Army and his subordinate commanders are all androids, artificial creations that Kali herself has programmed. Individual squadrons are led by cyborg Dominators who follow all orders given to them without question.

The Sea-Tac "Spawning Pits" are avoided by everyone. Only those who become hopelessly lost in their travels venture into this region of the Northwest. Only a very few people have ever gotten close enough to the Sea-Tac dome to guess at what horrors are taking place there, and have returned to speak of it. They say what is being created in that region is pure, malevolent "evil". Some people have taken it upon themselves to warn others of the danger that is growing in the Sea-Tac Spawning Pits, and have even formed a resistance movement of sorts, attempting to raise awareness of the threat that is growing within the ruins of Seattle.

Fortunately for the people of the Northwest, the Spawn Army is not quite ready to begin its war of conquest. Kali and Gregory do not yet have enough information about the Twisted Earth. However, the *Hunter-Seeker* drones have been re-activated and sent out on missions to locate centers of human civilization, and, if possible, destroy them. There aren't enough *Hunter-Seeker* drones left to be able to realistically complete the second directive, and Gregory knows this. However, if the human colonies are busy wasting their resources on small battles with the drones (which are formidable enemies in their own right), then it will make the coming war that much easier to fight.

Scappoose

Former Name: Scappoose, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

This shantytown, named for the ruins on which it was built (Scappoose), isn't allied with any faction in the Northwest, making it a shady haven for people who have an independent streak – or less than honorable intentions. Scappoose is a seedy den of thieves and cutthroats whose people are more than eager to separate a man from his life if they think there might be something to gain. The "sheriff" of Scappoose is a man called "Goran Sawblade". Goran gets his name because he likes to fight with weapons made out of, well, saw blades. Goran and his gang maintain control of Scappoose through force alone.

People are allowed to pretty much do anything they want inside the walls of Scappoose, as long as it doesn't infringe upon Goran's authority. All residents of Scappoose must pay Goran to stay there, either in raw corium or other tradable goods, every full moon. There are no exceptions to this rule, and there are no guarantees. Payment only gives the person the right to stay in the town until the next full moon; it doesn't guarantee protection from other residents of Scappoose.

Goran is only the most recent leader in a long list of sheriffs of Scappoose. Goran's authority will only last as long as he is able to physically enforce it. If anyone thinks they have the sack to take control of the town away from Goran, all they have to do is challenge him to a fight in the "Justice Pits".

The Justice Pits are a network of trenches and deep holes that are carved in and around the ruins of an ancient school. Goran keeps the pits stocked with all sorts of creatures that he is sure will not be able to climb out. The sherrif feeds those creatures with people who cannot or will not pay his prices. People who have disputes that need to be settled must do so inside the Justice Pits. It's not uncommon to see the wrong individual come out of the pits because one of the creatures killed the original complainant.

Such is life in the Twisted Earth.

Seven Feathers

Former Name: Canyonville, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: None.

Before the Fall, Seven Feathers was a gaming casino located in Canyonville, Oregon, a sleepy town located twenty-five miles south of Roseburg. The casino was owned by tribal representatives for the Cow Creek of the Umpua Indian reservation, but after the Fall, hundreds of refugees from Roseburg and Grant's Pass came to Canyonville to try and find shelter. However, the generally good natured people of Canyonville had blocked off I-5, shutting both north and south-bound traffic into the city. The barricades only served to start a riot, as lines and lines of cars backed up north and south of town. People got out of their cars and started to tear down the barricades, only to be shot at by paranoid men and women standing watch on the makeshift walls.

The citizens of Canyonville found themselves fighting pitched battles at both ends of the town as enraged refugees brought out guns of their own and returned fire. As casualties mounted, most refugees simply turned around and went back the way they came, not wanting to risk any more loss of life. As for the populace of Canyonville, they had also taken a pretty hard beating. The local hospital wasn't stocked to deal with the sudden flood of people wounded in the riots. Consequently, hundred and hundreds of people died from lack of proper medical treatment as the available medical supplies dwindled and finally ran out.

It didn't take long after the "Battle of Seven Feathers" for Canyonville to become a ghost town. Most people simply gave up and wandered off into the wilderness, or committed suicide. Others became so lethargic in their depression that it was as if they had just "wasted away". Their own initial isolationist policy served to choke the people, depriving them of the hope they needed to guide them through the dark days in the battle.

In the end, nobody survived.

Many years later, when people began to creep out of shelters in the mountains of the Cascade and Coast Ranges, a band of refugees came to settle in the rundown casino. Not understanding exactly what the place had been used for, they began to covet the chips they found strewn about the place as a sort of treasure. As trading caravans moved through the region, some of them stopped at the town (which the people came to call "Seven Feathers" after the casino). The traders, most of them from Tillamook, believed the stories that the people of Seven Feathers told them about the "chips" being treasure from the ancient days before the Fall.

Seven Feathers, as it exists today, is a free community on the far frontier of the Lost Paradise that deals primarily in trade with the few neighboring homesteads in the region (though none of these has a population over 30 people, some settlements near Seven Feathers generate enough goods to warrant trading this far south from Tillamook lands), as well as the rare traveler who comes over the mountain passes and along the old interstate that still runs through town.

Shipwreck Coast

Former Name: Pacific Coast.
Ruling Faction: None.

Once upon a time, the coastline of the Northwest was counted among the most awe inspiring stretches of land on the planet. Now it is a parched, desolate region dotted with the wreckage of numerous ships abandoned in the nightmare years of the Fall. All along the coastline and even farther out, some say, are small boats, large boats, and even massive cargo freighters; some of these long ago beached themselves, others litter the waterways just below the surface, while some even say one or two continue to drift out at sea.

Surviving In The Stronghold

The people who struggle to survive beneath the ruins of Seattle are a desperate, wily population of escaped slaves and former test subjects. Living underground, perpetually being hunted by robotic servitors of "Kali" and the bio-engineered race of *althengs* (who share the same subterranean spaces), they have evolved into a unique society that values stealth, ingenuity, and hoarding as fundamental to survival.

The survivors of Stronghold are easily recognized – most wear only rags, the remains of torn and soiled garments from before the Fall or the plain colored overalls manufactured for them by Kali's minions. As clean water is precious and hoarded for drinking, they seldom bathe; as such, a typical Stronghold survivor is covered from head to toe in oil, grease, sweat, and filth from his time in the sewers and underground warrens. Few faces are pretty, but determination and a will to live gleams in each man and woman's eyes.

These resistance fighters cling to whatever they find, even the most obscure junk, because resources are rare underground. Flashlights, chemical light sticks, and light rods are highly prized, because they bring light to the suffocating darkness below the city – a darkness that all too often hides the near-invisible *althengs* who prey upon them like cattle. Halazone tablets are almost unheard of, but when they are found are traded like gold because they permit individuals to collect sewer runoff and purify it for drinking. Most of all, however, medicine to combat radiation is priceless (the proximity of Stronghold to the radiated surface ruins of Seattle means survivors here accumulate radiation at a much higher rate than elsewhere).

Every now and again, resistance fighters will sneak into Kali's complex to steal supplies; they will take anything they can get their hands on, whether lice-infested clothes being prepared for incineration (clothes are hard to find), flavorless and disgusting goo tubes meant only for cyborg sustenance (anything to fight the gnaw of hunger), and even discarded junk. Some resistance fighters have been known to turn broken and discarded garbage into working gizmos, even weapons, so everything is taken in such raids.

They say necessity is the mother of invention, and the people of Stronghold seem to exemplify this law of the Twisted Earth.

This region isn't completely devoid of life, however. Various species of mutated creatures such as the giant sand crab and giant sand worms make their home in the dunes and dry coves of the Shipwreck Coast, preying on inattentive travelers. Zug-wa and blood whales also make these waters their home.

With the exception of the Columbia, the once large, swift rivers that fed into the ocean here are now little more than lazy streams that have a habit of going dry for months. Long stretches of time separate each rainstorm, though in time the rains do gain enough strength to fill the waterbeds once more, allowing what little life struggles along the vast beaches a chance to flourish for a short time.

The Columbia, however, is still a fairly large waterway, flowing all the way out to the Poisoned Sea. Every so often, an expedition of brave souls will venture out beyond the western horizon to map the region and look for treasure in the land locked ships. None have returned.

Stronghold

Former Name: Seattle, Washington.
Ruling Faction: None.

Deep below the Sea-Tac Bio-Dome there exists a city which is known only to a few hundred individuals.

The "stronghold", as it is called by the people who live there, was once an attraction for the people who lived in Seattle and the surrounding areas before the Great Fall. In the late 19th century, this old city, known as the "Seattle Underground", was a den of prostitution and other seedy activities. When the Great Fire of 1889 - and later the bubonic plague - struck Seattle, this entire portion of the town was condemned. In time, a newer, cleaner Seattle was rebuilt on top of the ruins, the old city entombed as sewers and underground passages beneath the streets above.

Over the years, what was left of the Seattle underground became little more than a tourist attraction, though by virtue of its sheer size it had always been home to a sizeable population of homeless, drug traffickers, and other "illegals". When the state-of-the-art Bio-Dome was built at the turn of the century, much of Seattle as it existed was leveled to make room for the new transportation grids and ultra high-rise buildings that would have to house millions of people in a comparatively small space. Just like a century before, the 20th century city was built over, creating a "new" underground where thousands and thousands of people would come to hide when the Great Fall happened, and the androids rose up against their human masters.

Only a handful of the people who fled the surface world in those twilight years managed to survive and bear children, offspring who would eventually father the people who started the present-day resistance movement that calls the Stonghold their home. Greatly expanding on the old underground warrens, delving deep into the bowels of the earth (sometimes to their chagrin, as their explorations have brought them into contact with creatures such as the *altheng*), Stronghold has grown considerably in size.

The hardy people of Stronghold have very little knowledge of the lands of the Northwest, as they have never really made

substantial contact with the outside world – and are too busy fighting against the Spawn army and struggling to free as many others as they can – though there are a few individuals who brave the surface world to hunt or find others who would aid them in their cause.

Tillamook

Former Name: Tillamook, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: People's Army.

The capital of the People's Army (descendants of the Communist Union of Asia invaders who attacked America during the Fall) is a thriving community that also serves as the base of operations for the Tillamook Trading Caravans that have become so common throughout much of the region.

Tillamook is a walled fortress nestled in a valley along the so-called "Shipwreck Coast". Due to the extensive build up of fortifications, the city has only one eastern point of entry: a shuttle tube that once connected the popular tourist town with the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome. This tube has long since become a useless relic of the past; indeed, many portions of the tube have long since been obscured due to years and years of overgrowth to the point that if *kaingiin* (a common term for people in the Lost Paradise who are not of Asian descent; i.e. "common folk") aren't looking for the tube they may not even notice that it's there. When the People's Army settled in Tillamook, they built massive walls around the shuttle tube, completely surrounding the city, and thus the only way to enter Tillamook from the east is through the tube, or over the heavily guarded walls.

Tillamook is home to a number of valuable resources, including an old textile factory, a centralized methane digester that turns angoose waste into fuel for a local power generation plant, a water treatment facility that has been restored to working order, an old rail line that runs to certain areas north and south along the coast, one of the largest herds of angoose in the Northwest, and a pre-Fall aviation museum that has long since been converted into a working airfield for the small, but well-known People's Army air force of cargo blimps.

The people of Tillamook grudgingly accept *nagaremono* ("strangers") into the city, but only on a temporary basis, and only if the *nagaremono* either have something to trade or can provide some other useful service that would benefit the town. Freeloaders and con artists are not welcome in any community in the Northwest, but in Tillamook, they are especially despised. People who are found to be thieves or other con-men are usually executed; their bodies are left to rot at the entrance to the Tillamook tunnel as a warning to all who might think the people who live in the town are easy prey.

Life and culture in Tillamook (and indeed, throughout People's Army lands) is rigid and inflexibly administered, the end result of many decades of various ethnicities being forced to rely on each other for survival. They are also unerringly communist. Because their ancestors came from an international expeditionary force from various communist countries, the People's Army views this system not only as a necessity to living equally and fairly, but also see communism as the one true unifying factor keeping it together. With so many diverse ethnicities making up their numbers (though in many cases the distinctions have blurred through inter-marriage over time), it is their political philosophy that truly keeps the People's Army united – and strong.

In Tillamook, the people are governed by a body known simply as the "Committee". Here, there are no political "parties" to vie for control of the community, or to make class- or racially-exclusive laws, or to bow to special interests. In this society, the *people* collectively decide what the laws shall be; elected leaders and administrators only serve the people by enforcing those laws, and the civil authority only serves to guide and protect the masses through troubled times. The majority always holds sway in Tillamook, and plebiscites are a common occurrence in any and all matters pertaining to the affairs of the people as a whole.

A continuation of this regimented society is "The Way", a code of sorts that makes the rules of life very clear on a social level. To many who remember their history, "The Way" is what communism should have been, but wasn't. Countless years of depending on each other regardless of a person's social rank has leveled the playing field. The people don't work together because they believe they will become rich, or famous, or powerful; the people live and work together because it's all they have ever known. Superiority, elitism, and ethnic division only leads to strife, conflict, and an eventual breakdown of society. Here, under "The Way", everyone has a role to play in society. The people of the People's Army understand what needs to be done to ensure Tillamook remains a stable, safe haven, and they do it with no questions asked.

There is very little time for relaxation in Tillamook, but when people do find time to play, they congregate and listen to elders tell stories about ancient times, or engage in sporting activities or exhibitions of martial prowess and even drink alcoholic beverages that are brewed from blackberries and wheat.

Life for the People's Army of Tillamook is, on average, better than it is for most people in the Lost Paradise.

Trojan Corium Mines

Former Name: Trojan Nuclear Power Plant.
Ruling Faction: None.

In the years just before the Great Fall, the Trojan Nuclear power complex was going through a lengthy decommissioning process. The plant had been shut down for years as part of the ongoing environmental protection project across the Northwest, but wasn't technically deemed "decommissioned" due to the fact that large numbers of

spent fuel rods and other toxic waste products hadn't been completely removed from the site. When the Fall came, the project was obviously abandoned as people rushed to save themselves from the invading armies.

The complex wasn't completely deserted, however. A large force of security drones and other technical bots were left behind with orders to guard the power plant, and that is precisely what they did, until after many years, their power cells gave out and they shut down.

As the years passed, the entire area became a poisoned "no-man's land". The toxic waste eventually found its way into the ground water and polluted the land for miles around, but that didn't stop people from trying to mine the area for *corium* once they found out that it was valuable to outsiders beyond the Northwest.

Trojan is a death trap. The containment structure for the old reactor core has long since corroded, allowing high levels of radiation to escape into the surrounding countryside. Only those people who have adequate protection from the radiation can even hope to survive for long in or near the Trojan Corium Mines. Those who do miraculously manage to survive the ultra high levels of radiation are confronted with the dangers involved with mining deep underneath the facility for the precious metal.

A shantytown has been setup in the ruins of Scappoose just a few miles north of Trojan. Travelers in the region can find people willing to barter as well as guides who will escort groups of people to the corium mines to try their hand at mining.

Troutdale

Former Name: Troutdale, Idaho.
Ruling Faction: Sentinels.

The ruins of Troutdale are located roughly sixteen miles outside of Old Portland on the banks of the Sandy River. The most striking feature about this area is the presence of a giant network of shuttle tubes which at one time took travelers all across the Northwest. A small Sentinel outpost has been built in the nexus to guard against creatures that have come to make their homes inside the dark and gloom of the shuttle tubes, which have long since been covered with dense overgrowth.

One tube leads up to the Crown Point outpost, while another leads west into the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome – though only suicidal people go down that perilous stretch into the massive graveyard that lies beyond. There are at least ten other tubes that head off to other areas, but as of yet nobody brave enough has been found to undertake an expedition to map out the tubes. Not even the most experienced Sentinels are willing to risk the journey, preferring to simply keep a watch on the entrances in the event that something "undesirable" decides to come out.

Vancouver B.C.

Former Name: Vancouver, British Columbia.
Ruling Faction: None.

Vancouver was hit hard during the Great War. The sprawling Canadian city had become the location of a fierce battle fought between the United States and the Communist Union of Asia. The battle lasted for weeks with no real advantage being gained by either side. When the conflict finally turned nuclear, much of the city was inevitably destroyed.

What remains of Vancouver, B.C., is an expansive ruin overgrown with mutated vegetation and years upon years of dust. Past exploration of the ruins has been limited due to reports of mutated beasts and worse things that wander the wreck. A few scouting expeditions have gone into the city, but none have returned.

Since Vancouver was in another country and subject to the same isolationist policies that the United States imposed on the world in the end days, the city was home to a number of smuggling operations. Vancouver is a wealth of lost technology, if anyone can manage to survive long enough to find the hidden fallout shelters and storage facilities of the people who took great pains to spirit away the technology and medicine of the Ancients to the rest of the world.

Willamette Valley

Former Name: Willamette Valley, Oregon.
Ruling Faction: Various (primarily United Combine).

The Willamette Valley is the most densely populated region south of the Columbia River. Along the ruins of the old interstate highway lay a number of villages and tiny towns, many of which are little more than wooden motte and baileys or log forts designed in the fashion of pioneer outposts. The communities here are subject to a broad hodgepodge of loyalties; some settlements are actively allied with the United Combine, for example, while some have recently seceded from that faction to either join the Purity Corp or to seek their own destiny, and still others never were apart of the Combine to begin with – and like it that way.

The Willamette Valley runs north and south from the ruins of the Lewis and Clark Bio-Dome as far south as the ruins of Eugene and Springfield. Communities exist near the old towns of Jefferson, Peoria, and Coburg. Travel in the Willamette Valley is dangerous, but not so dangerous as it is in other regions of the Northwest, as humanoid settlements have made the presence of mutant creatures less common. Sentinel *Guides* regularly patrol this region, as do other groups such as the Tillamook Trading Caravans.

Because of the political instability of the valley, strangers to this region are generally treated with suspicion or simply run off by local militias with a few warning shots in the air. Unfamiliar people who persist will be subject to incessant questioning about where they come from, why they happen to be traveling in this region, etc. Only when local authorities

are satisfied will they even think of trading, or in extremely rare cases, letting people inside the walls of their towns (and then only after a local medicine man has checked for parasites such as lice and worms, to prevent their spread).

Because the forests of the Coast Range have thrived somewhat since the Fall, in many cases the forest's edge has spread into the valley to cover large parts of what used to be the I-5 corridor. Some villages in the area are actively undertaking logging expeditions to clear the old road and keep the route open, hoping to keep a lifeline of communication between the townships open (and encourage the U.C. and Sentinels to keep their presence around). Some communities, however, see this as a cleverly disguised way of solidifying the region under U.C. control, and as such guerilla-style ambushes and sabotage on logging crews is becoming more common.

To those who care to see the signs, war is coming to the Willamette Valley in the near future, and its relative isolation from the frontlines means any shift of U.C. forces will likely weaken the Combine on other fronts.

Winthrop

Former Name: Winthrop, Washington.
Ruling Faction: United Combine.

Located at the foot of the North Cascade mountains, the tiny town of Winthrop was, before the Fall, a center for ranching and cattle drives across the Northwest. The town itself was largely abandoned during the Fall, but the dryness of the region and the lack of any real natural (or human) dangers for two centuries kept the town preserved.

Settlers from the United Combine came here years ago and established a community within the ghost town, bringing it back to life through their hard efforts. The old town still boasts wooden buildings from the Old West period of American history, complete with false fronts, saloons, and bordellos, but the lifeblood of the town is in its enormous corral and slaughterhouse.

A large part of the United Combine's angoose herds are kept in and around Winthrop, where the dry plains are relatively good for grazing. The people of Winthrop now use pickups and motorcycles to herd their animals, largely because at the onset of the War of the Remnants, splintering locals who fled to the Hand of Jehovah stole most of the town's horses.

Winthrop is an important settlement in U.C. lands, and maintains a sizeable militia. The militia is primarily focused on long-range patrols of the eastern borders of U.C. territory, using restored vehicles from the old mountain highways to cross the many miles of plains and dry forests to the Hand of Jehovah frontier.

Zog

Former Name: Mt. St. Helens, Washington.
Ruling Faction: Purity Corp.

Zog was founded among the bubble domes that filled valleys around the base of Mt. St. Helens. Before the Fall, the wilderness around this famous active volcano was a part of the great Northwest restoration project. In addition to the bubble domes, three bunker complexes were constructed underneath observation stations that were originally built to give tourists a better view of the volcano and surrounding areas. The bunkers, never used during their time due to their relative isolation, yielded a great cache of remarkably well-preserved food and other pre-Fall relics that proved invaluable to the Purists in the coming years.

Over the years, Zog developed into the heavily fortified capital of the Pure Lands; the heart of Purist thinking in this corner of the Twisted Earth. Yet despite being the home of

Divisions In The Purity Corp

Life is not easy for the inhabitants of Zog, or in any of the encampments and settlements throughout Purist lands. Founded on principles that were meant to keep racial lines pure and distinct, to honor the heritage of each race of man no matter its origin, the Purity Corp has developed into something cruel and terrible since its inception so long ago.

Jeremiah Cole (a "Nubian") has used his charisma and power to place his own race above all others in the Purity Corp, giving out military and government positions to his own kind and leaving the other races in less influential roles in Purist society. But Cole's "takeover" has not gone unnoticed – or unchallenged.

The leaders of other leading ethnic groups (in particular, the white, Hispanic, and Asian groups) in the Purity Corp have voiced concern over Cole's blatant biases, a situation that has caused great unrest – in various Purist towns, as well as Zog itself. Vandalism and sabotage of Cole's military machine has been common in recent years; the whites in the town of Future, for example, sometimes go on strike or deliberately produce shoddy weapons to hamper Cole's ability to wage war (and crack down on civil disobedience); the Hispanic population, reduced almost to slavery in Zog, have been active in terrorist-style bombings and killings of prominent Nubian officials; and the Asians, it is rumored, have been secretly buying weapons from their "brothers" in the People's Army and are planning a full-scale uprising to seize power.

Throughout it all, Cole seems oblivious to the cries of his people, but even among his own ethnic group, there are others who can see the injustice and realize that Cole's regime cannot last. Many Nubians have begun making plans to abandon the city and strike out on their own, taking their chances elsewhere in the Lost Paradise before there is an anti-Nubian uprising.

an ages-old philosophy, it is neither a place of free thinking nor happiness – it is a wicked place where racial division has become an obsession.

Zog is currently home to the hard-line Purists who follow the philosophies of Jeremiah Cole; this devotion, in many cases, mirrors the same dedication shown by the people of Nazi Germany to their führer, Hitler. Most see the man as a visionary and are willing to die for the "creed", a stringent set of rules that all Purists must swear by if they wish to stay in the clan.

Zog is divided into "ethnic zones". People are assigned living space based on the color of their skin; no fraternization between people of differing ethnic persuasions is allowed in these zones (punishment for the rare indiscretion – usually by youngsters ignorant of the Purity Corp's strict laws – is often quite brutal). In the center of Zog is a "multi-ethnic zone" where people are encouraged to come and mingle. Bartering tables are setup in this zone and people may trade for what they need here. Entertainment is also found in the multi-ethnic zone in the form of alcohol, music, games, ancient holo-movies, and gladiator cages that have become wildly popular throughout the Pure Lands. Disputes between people are all too often settled in these cages, with only one person walking out alive.

In general, women are treated as lesser creatures in Zog; they have no real rights. Most are made to serve their society in any number of ways, from cooking meals to cleaning and other forms of manual labor. All are expected to be sexually permissive to all men who show an interest, unless of course they are of a different ethnic persuasion or the woman in question is already pregnant.

Non-clan visitors to Zog are not allowed inside the city. A district has been built on the outskirts of Zog that is reserved for travelers and emissaries from other groups in the region. The Tillamook Trading Caravans have a small outpost setup in the borough that receives regular shipments from the Mao Chu'n bunker complex. The trading station is heavily guarded, and some residents of Zog have made claims that the People's Army are actually preparing to make war against the Purists. No person or group that is allowed into the visitor zone may stay there for more than one week, with the exception of the Tillamook Traders, who are closely watched by Purist Enforcers.

People who overstay their welcome will be forcibly removed from the Pure Lands and even branded to ensure that they are known to sentries who patrol the routes into the region. If marked individuals are caught trespassing in the Pure Lands, they are crucified along the roads as a reminder to anyone who might question the will of the Purists when it comes to defending their territory.

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