

HOME - OF THE - BRAVE

THE SOURCEBOOK FOR AMERICA IN THE DARK FUTURE



CYBERPUNK®

R. TALSORIAN
GAMES, INC.

A STATE OF DIS-UNION...

HOME OF THE BRAVE is the penultimate sourcebook for the *Cyberpunk 2020* system. A detailed examination of the Politics, Society, Economics, and Military of America in the 21st Century. Within these 144 pages you'll find:

“America’s undergone flood, fire, and famine in the last thirty years. Along with Martial Law and one of the longest guerrilla wars we’ve ever fought. There’s gangs on the streets, pollution in the air, and the Corps looking down from above. But when the Outside gets too nasty, we still pull together and get the job done.”

“Why? ‘Cause it’s our country—and that’s just the way it is.”

★ **The Fall of America**—How things got cyberpunk. The Collapse, the Chaos that followed, and the Martial Law that ended it.

★ **New America**—Work, Education, Religion, Family, Entertainment. How does the average(!) Punk live?

★ **The Government**—We’ve got a President...but what does she do?? Who runs things; a look at the uneasy triumvirate: National Gov’t, the Corps, and the Free States.

★ **The Armed Forces**—From international oppressor, to national savior, to just another job...Their organization, equipment, and bases. Plus, how your character can “be all that he can be.”

★ **State of the Union**—What’s still good (and what’s truly bad) about this land of ours. The states are grouped into eight Regions, with the hot spots and possible adventure hooks noted.

So jack into that cyberbike and get ready to explore America in the Dark Future. Because in 2020, Freedom really is just another word for **Nothing Left to Lose...**

R. TALSORIAN
GAMES, INC.

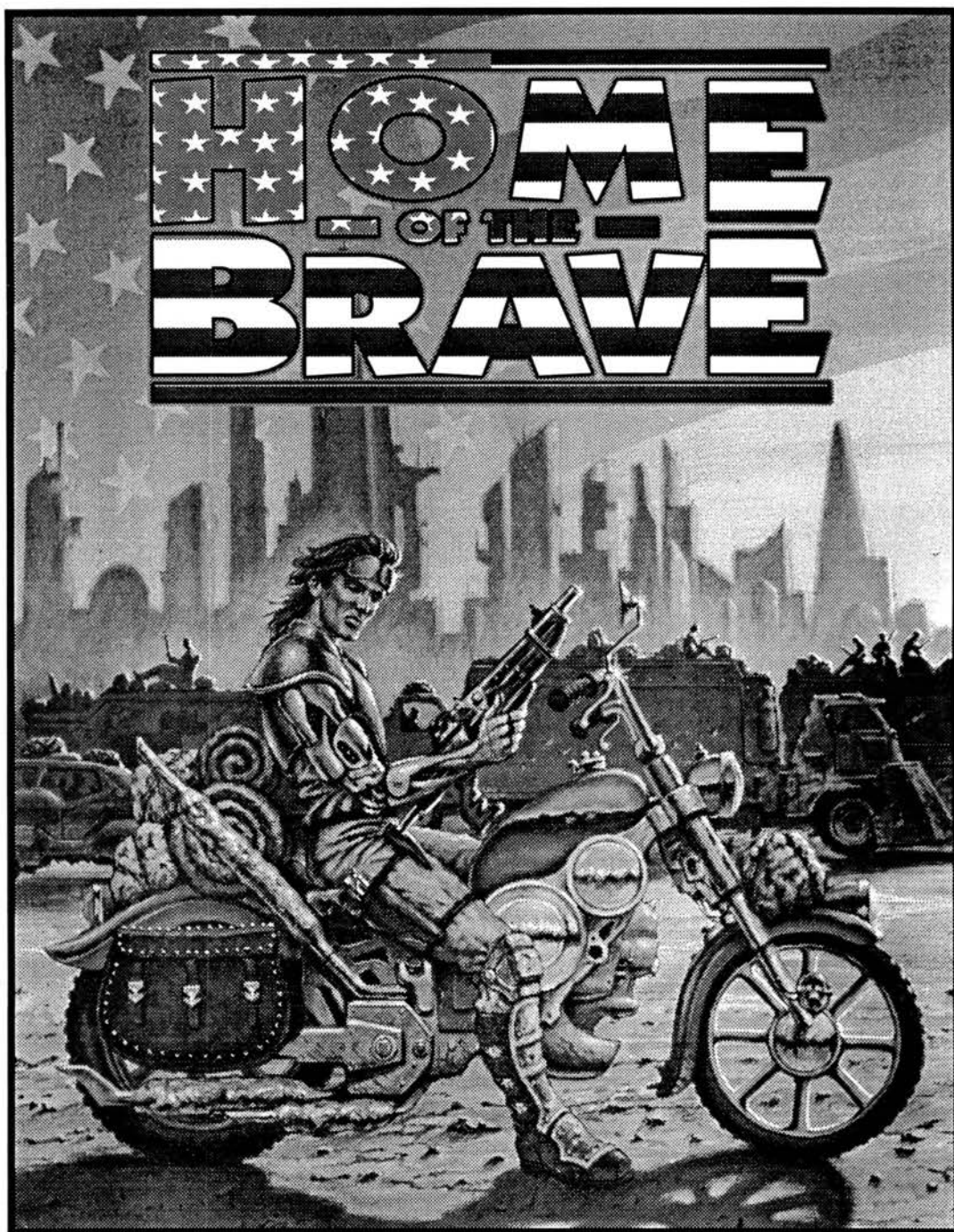


A CYBERPUNK
SOURCEBOOK

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A SOURCEBOOK FOR

CYBERPUNK®

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OVERVIEW

Welcome to *Home of the Brave*, the sourcebook for America in 2020. In these pages you will discover the reasons for the death of America as we knew it, and its rebirth as the familiar landscape of *Cyberpunk*. There are seven chapters in *Brave*, and each covers a portion of America.

CHAPTER 1: The Fall of America. This section covers the various reasons for the collapse of the federal government, and the chaos that followed.

CHAPTER 2: The New America. What came out of the destruction of the US, and how it effects everyday life.

CHAPTER 3: The New American Government. How government was re-built, and how it operates now.

CHAPTER 4: A Recent History of the Military. A background on the single entity that managed to save the U.S. from total destruction.

CHAPTER 5: U.S. Military Forces of 2020. A breakdown of how the forces operate, and who is in charge where.

CHAPTER 6: Military Soldiers. How to create Military PC's and NPC's, as well as standard equipment and sample NPC's.

CHAPTER 7: The State of the Union. A region by region breakdown of the America of 2020.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The FYI boxes scattered throughout the text are used strictly for game information and stats. Included in these are the statistics for important NPC's, Certain skill packages for PC's from particular areas, and skill tasks for things like black market connections or bribery. In the political section, FYI boxes are used for identification of political persons, as well as the way certain politics might effect the average 'Punk on the street.

In general, if it's in an FYI box, it'll affect your campaign.

ADVENTURE HOOKS



Throughout *Home of the Brave* you will find "Adventure Hooks" that deal with a person or place in the text.

These are thrown in as an extra, and can be used or discarded as you see fit. ★

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■ ANYSTREET, USA ■

“Welcome to the *Home of the Brave*, Cyberpunk America. The United States has seen some tough times in the last thirty years, from flood, fire, and famine to martial law, along with one of the longest, bloodiest wars on record. Take a look around, here on the mythical Anystreet, USA. At the girl, the teen over there with the silver legs and the metallic teeth. Yeah, her. She’s a mother of two and earns a cool 20,000eb a year. Doing what? Well, let’s not talk about it. And that man, with the mirror shades, wearing the Tanaka Exec? He’s one of the highest paid corps in the city, and he’s never stepped inside a classroom in his life. He’s in the same line of work as the girl.

“And those ‘zero’s’ over there, huddled around the trash can, burning the scream-sheets? The old man is Professor James Deckker, one of the team that was working on cold fusion. The girl is Amanda Harding, the only living heir to the Harding fortune. That fortune dried up with the stock market. The last gentleman is Richard Ellis, Ph.D. No need for him anymore; he was replaced last year by an AI in his company.

“Walk with me for a minute.

“See that building over there, the tan one? It used to be the Social Security building. Now the only help it offers the poor is a place to get out of the rain, if you want to risk robbery or rape.

“Look out, are you blind!? You almost walked onto that logo. What is it? It’s the turf

marker for the *Devils Brigade*. The red stuff? Blood. The Devils don’t like people stepping on it. Another foot and that kid would have put a bullet in your head. Yeah, the twelve year-old over there. Of course he’s packing; everyone is these days. Usually around here, you’re packing or you’re dead.

“True, it’s not like that everywhere these days; the Corp Zones are very well policed, and only the truly stupid try something there. But you pay for that protection. I’ve heard of girls whisked off the streets after catching the eye of some high-ranking corp. Lord only knows what happens then. Hell, who can know what goes on above the tenth story? It’s a mystery to us. If you ask me, they really run things.

“Now that’s a damn shame...Huh? You act as if you’ve never seen a dead body before. Probably got into an argument with her pimp. Pretty common; the cops are taking care of it.

“Hey, check it out, up there. A Mil-AV9. Some sight, huh? Enough missiles to level the city, and probably a tac-nuke to boot. See it flying over the Arasaka Building? Rumors on the street say that the Japanese really pissed off Uncle Sam by passing some harsh “quality” laws on American parts. The high-ups like to flex their muscle occasionally. Nothing like a good strategic bombing to show folks that black ops isn’t the only way to kill, huh?

“Well, here we are. See that? Yeah, the *flag*...

“Kinda neat isn’t it?

“What do you mean *so what*? Let me tell you a little story...

“Last week a gang of Hitler posers snuck into town, gassed some Jews and put a swastika flag up there. Burnt the old one. Real nasty stuff. Too nasty. The Devils and the Razors called a truce, and that guy I pointed out went to work; even the folks around the trash can helped with the spotting. In three days there were none of them left. And the girl with the silver teeth, she drove up to the capital and laid out a cool 500eb for the new flag, some polymer fiber. They say it’ll resist a mono-katana cut.

“That’s what America is all about.

“And I’m damn proud to be an American.”

“It’s not like that everywhere these days; the Corp Zones are well policed. But you pay for that protection. Who can know what goes on above the tenth story? If you ask me, the Corps really run things.”



■ **THE PAST TO NOW:**
TIMELINE 1990-2020 ■

In the year 1996, the United States of America died. It was not a quick death, nor a quiet one. The scars of the Collapse have never fully healed, and it is likely that they never will.

What follows is a small attempt to put the thirty most turbulent years in American history into perspective. In those thirty years, we have seen cars that fly, people who are no longer quite human, and the emergence of a whole new frontier: the Net. Yet these changes have been mostly overlooked. We speak of cybernetic replacement and direct neural interface as common, everyday occurrences. But these items were unheard of in the late 20th century, except as the venue of a few violent science fiction writers.

That all of this should occur during the greatest urban upheaval the United States has ever seen is nothing short of miraculous. What follows is by no means a total breakdown of every historical event, but it should suffice to give a general overview of those violent and uncertain years.

“As the Berlin Wall is demolished, the ‘Cold War’ becomes the ‘Quiet War’.”

1989: Berlin Wall comes down; Cold War ends.

1990: Start of the first Central American Conflict.

East & West Germany reunited. The anti-EEC “Quiet War” runs 1990-94. Breakup of the Soviet Mega-State. Andrei Gorborev appointed Gorby’s successor. South African government collapses into total anarchy.

1991: Eurospace Agency launches Hermes spaceplane.

Gorborev purges last of old hardliners. CHOOH2 developed. Artificial muscle fiber developed at Stanford.

First Arcology started in Jersey City. Chile and Ecuador collapse under anti-drug crop viral attack.

1992: EEC formed. Eurodollar established.

DEA/Euro drug war; this is subsumed by the First Central American War.

High energy laser-lift array used in the USSR. Prototype mass-driver established on the moon by ESA.

1993: TRC biologic interface chip developed in Munich.

AV-4 developed to deal with rioting in the densely packed urban areas.

Columbian drug lords detonate nuke in New York; 15,000 killed.

First organized Nomad “families” appear on West Coast and in the South.

1994: Stock market crashes, followed quickly by the U.S. economy.

Meltdown in Pittsburgh kills 257. Cancer rates soar for the next 10 years.

1995: Kilimanjaro mass-driver begun by ESA and Pan-African Alliance.

Mid- 1990’s-The Army begins to use primitive “smartguns” and vehicle cyberlinkages in the South-Am conflict.

1996: The US bites the dust. Nomad riots. First true Booster Gangs appear. Lawyer Lynching. Martial law in the US (Aug 1996). Constitution suspended; President & Vice-President killed.

“United States bites

the dust... Booster Gangs appear... The People hang all Lawyers.”

1997: Mid-East meltdown.

Toxic spill wipes out salmon in Pacific Northwest; regional economy crippled. Seward begins investigation of the “Gang of Four.”

COGs (Combined Operations Groups) formed; U.S. Military reorganizes.

1998: Neo-ludites appear in KY. Drought. Farms dry up by the dozens: the new Dust Bowl.

10.5 quake shatters L.A. 35% of city is submerged and 65,000 are killed.

1999: Federal Weapons statute established.

Millenium cults begin to appear. Tycho colony established. Full-scale mass-driver completed.

2000: Millenium cults run wild on Jan. 1st, killing and destroying.

First extended-family Posergangs established.

Firestorms rage over NW-Central U.S. Crystal Palace begins construction. Wasting Plague hits U.S. and Europe; hundreds of thousands die.

2001: WorldSat is in place. Framing of the Net complete.

2002: Food Crash: USSR, Canada hit by mutated virus, U.S. crops survive, USSR accuses U.S. of Bio-Warfare.

2003: Second Central/South American War (the "New Vietnam") begins. WNS media ace Tesla Johanneson exposes NSA tapes on First Central American War.

"The 'New Vietnam' —the

U.S. invades South America with total Cyberwar in the name of 'stabilization'."

2004: Gang of Four is wiped out in Army-CIA counter-coup. Tesla Johanneson assassinated in Cairo.

Cloned tissue first grown in vats. Micro-sutures and sterilizer fields developed.

First Corp War: EBM battles Orbital Air (over a dozen other Corps involved).

2005: Cybermodem invented.

Operation Big Stick (Nov.): first military destruction of a corporation. The Manto-ga Corp is wiped out by April 2006.

2006: First full human clone grown. Totally mindless, it lives only 6 hours.

Full cyberlimbs are now in use with all U.S. military forces.

2007: Second Corp War: SovOil vs. Petrochem. For the first time, national gov'ts openly back the Corps.

Braindance developed at UC Santa Cruz.

2008: U.S. attacks Soviet space platform MIR XIII. ESA intervenes. Orbital war breaks out between Euros and Yanks; a rock is dropped on Colorado Springs.

"Refomation"/Reorganization of U.S. Gov't. First post-martial law elections held.

Transcontinental MagLev train completed.

2009: Euro-Sov mission to Mars departs.

Mob rule ended in Night City by the Corps.

Abortive takeover attempt at Crystal Palace by U.S. intelligence using a terrorist group as cover. The ESA discovers the plan and drops a twelve ton rock off D.C. as a warning.

"A twelve ton rock off D.C. ends

the Euro-Yank 'Orbit War' after a mere six hours."

2010: End of Second Central American conflict. five hundred thousand Nomad workers stranded in South-Am begin the "Long Walk" back to America. A little over 10% are still alive when they reach the U.S. in 2011-2012.

Net 54 now controls 62% of the media in the U.S.

Food riots in Denver kill 52.

2011: Crystal palace is completed, ESA controls High Orbit. ESA-Sov mission reaches Mars.

2012: Bioplague kills 1700+ in Chicago.

Concert riot in Night City kills 18, wounds 51. Arasaka complex gutted.

2013: Netwatch established by joint US-Euro treaty. First true AI developed by Microtech in Sun-nyvale.

2014: I-G transformations redesign the Net.

Metal Wars begin in Night City as Boostergangs battle for turf.

Vatican III: neo-Catholic Reformation.

2015: Rise of the cyber-mercs as Lithuania hires cyber-soldiers to repel invasions by Latvian nations. Balsam city and tunnel project begun in N.Carolina.

2016: Third Corporate War is fought entirely in the Net.

2017: First self-aware human clone created. Hopelessly crippled, it lives for only a few weeks. In agony, it dies in an allergic reaction to the very medicines that keep it alive.

2018: Brushfire wars erupt in Eastern Europe.

ESA mission to Jupiter.

First laws that prohibit human cloning at the sentient level are passed in Europe.

2019: Orbital colony revolt at L-3.

2020: Now





THE FALL OF AMERICA

POINTS OF INTEREST

- ✓ Anti-Euro Conspiracy
- ✓ Stock Fraud Leads to Crash
- ✓ Chaos in the Streets
- ✓ Intelligence Civil War
- ✓ D.C. Runs Red

“When I was only seven, Mother told me to stay inside all the time. We lived in a part of L.A. called Newton. I hated staying inside a lot. Mom used to fight with everyone who came inside, even me. One day a woman from the Government came to see me and took me to another house. They said that Mom was dead in the bedroom. I knew it wasn't true, because my mother had a head.”

An unknown child, circa 1993

By 1993 the Gang of Four had covertly manipulated the American people for over a decade. As violent terrorist actions (like the detonation of a nuclear device in New York's Rockefeller Center in 1993) became more common, it was apparent the Gang of Four were not paying

attention to, or just didn't care what happened in America. This unwillingness to protect the populace while spending billions on international vendettas (the futile SouthAm War, as chronicled by the late Tesla Johannsen and others) led many in the Media, as well as the Government, to search for answers. The crisis that would become the first link to destruction of the Gang of Four was the discovery of the "Quiet War" on the EEC.

■ CAUSES OF THE COLLAPSE ■

Threatened by the growing power of the European Economic Community, the Gang of Four began to embark on a suicidal course of covert aggression later to be known as the "Quiet War" As EEC power grew, U.S. "interference" in Europe was less tolerated. Soon the EEC was the world power, and the U.S. was playing second fiddle, particularly in its overreaching international policies.

One example of this came in 1992. As the USSR staggered through the final stages of *glasnost*, the NSC continued with its outdated "Evil Empire" policies, blocking all aid to the Soviets, and insuring that its NATO allies did the same. Once the EEC was firmly established as a power, one of its first actions was to defy U.S. wishes and send much-needed food and aid to the Soviet states, over NSC objections. The result was that the Soviets accepted the EuroDollar over U.S. currency and NATO collapsed as the Soviets made peace with Western Europe for the first time in over forty years.

Infuriated by this loss of prestige, and also fearful that the Euros expanding space program (which had a prototype mass-driver on the moon by New Year's 1993) would give the ECC military superiority as well, the NSA embarked on a headlong campaign to undermine the structure of the EEC, using tactics ranging from stock market fraud to the attempted disruption of the first EEC-Soviet military treaty talks.

In an attempt to appear solvent (and to "show up" the economic power of the ECC), the Gang of Four also began manipulating the stock markets of Europe and Asia by hacking directly into

the systems. These artificial currency and stock manipulations allowed the Gang to promote an illusion of American wealth, but at a high cost; when this was discovered by the EEC, the Euros simply leaked the info to the world press. With the implied security of the exchange rate undermined, the system collapsed. In later years, this disaster would be called the Crash of '94. In reaction to the discovery of this fraud, the majority of developed countries immediately instituted embargoes on United States trade. These embargoes were crippling to America, and only served to hasten the Collapse.

The "Quiet War" was not the only reason for the Collapse. When the Gang of Four destroyed the SouthAm drug trade (1992), they also destroyed many of the local economies as well. The drug trade supported a large part of the Third World; the drug lords bought weapons, fielded troops, and provided millions of jobs in places where there was no other infrastructure. When these groups fragmented, many people had no markets, no trade, no money, and nothing to eat. One by one, the governments of the drug-producing countries were devastated, executed, or overthrown. Although parts of South America were supported for a time by the Gang of Four in its struggles to control the region, or by the surviving cartels busily warring with the Gang, the damage was done, and a lot of powerful enemies made. These groups allied with the EEC and its corporate multinat organizations, which provided the remaining SouthAm guerrillas with weapons, food, vehicles and advisors. The result was that money and manpower desperately needed to rebuild America was siphoned off to a drug war America couldn't win.

The third and final cause of the Collapse was environmental. As the biomes of Earth were despoiled by Corporate greed and shortsighted policies, acid rain and changing climates began to make it harder to grow crops, keep soil fertile, and irrigate effectively. The effects were already evident, and getting worse every year, culminating in 1998 as the dustbowls of the Midwest.

The Earth was already a global economy. However, most of the world's consumption had taken place in America. It was in America that most of the immediate effects were felt. In America, the world traded.

In America, trade stopped.

In 1994, thanks to the manipulations of the American Government, the World Stock Exchange finally collapsed. Human civilization was changed forever.

■ THE COLLAPSE ■

"We all knew that the market couldn't get much worse. I was working in Municipals. People were just looking for the quick take. Commissions were real high for a while. Buy, sell, buy, sell; I hardly slept for weeks. We were confident that the market would stabilize. We were hiring like mad, getting ready for the rally. Then, at about three o'clock one day, I was eating something and it came on the feed. Embargo. Everyone was in on it. The whole EEC; Switzerland even froze all American assets. Something about currency manipulations by hackers. I walked out on to the sales floor and there was no sound. People were just staring. Japan had abandoned us, then Mexico, even Australia. I threw up into a trashcan just as the first guy jumped."

- Joe Siegel, Shearson/
AMEX, 1994

It was the elderly that were hit first; the millions of Americans who lived on pensions and investments. The work and savings of their lives evaporated; they became homeless, or were forced to move in with relatives. A lucky few were able to reenter the work force.

Many died from exposure or violence. Sometimes it was treachery from within; Grandma's silver service would buy a grandson a lot of chemical excursions from life's pain. Some families pulled together or were forced into clannish styles of living. Even homeless, they made it, but millions of others died.

Both the World Bank and the World Stock Exchange were gone. The United States government had no one to borrow money from. Federal Bonds were cashed in at a rate so high that the Government could barely print money fast enough. This devalued the dollar and accelerated the process. Faster and faster the ship of state spun into the vortex.

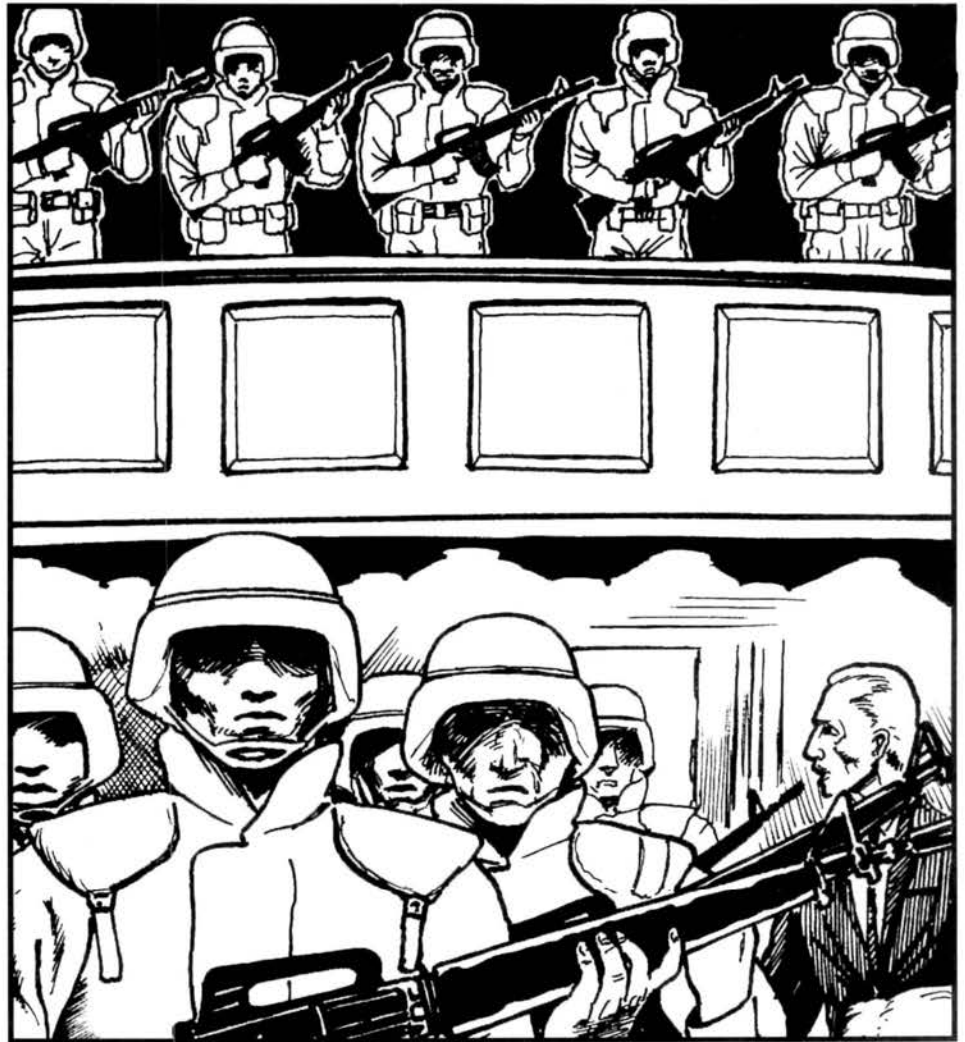
Assets of the Executive Branch, especially the military reserves, were committed in growing numbers in a Herculean struggle to control the violence as it spread like wildfire across America. However worthy, the struggle was futile; the unrest was not limited to "less fortunate" areas and neighborhoods, and could not be isolated. Let it not be said that the men and women who tried to save America did not fight valiantly. They may have saved millions of lives, but in the end, it just wasn't enough.

■ MARTIAL LAW ■

The military as a whole was not committed until August of 1996. On August 17, a Saturday afternoon, both the President and Vice-President were killed during separate campaign stops (in Maine and California respectively). The Speaker of the House was undergoing bypass surgery and the Pro Tem of the Senate refused the position of President

Why? No one is sure. It is entirely possible that, being in the hip-pocket of one Corporation/Organization or another, the Pro Tem was aware of the plot to manipulate the Vice President (detailed below). After the death of the Vice President, the Pro-Tem may have felt the idea of being a puppet repulsive. No one will ever know; he was killed by an CIA terror squad shortly before the start of the second Central American War.

As the situation grew worse, a joint session of Congress was convened to deal with the issue of who would lead the country. Absurd levels of infighting prevented anyone from forming a coalition. Stalled, Secretary of Defense Jonathan Seward was asked to address the Congress and plead for decision. A simple



and direct man, he summed things up in this historic address:

"Ladies and Gentlemen of the Congress, now is the time for action. This body has chosen not to act on the crisis we face. If someone does not take action now America is doomed. I will not allow this to happen. As the ranking member of the executive branch of the government I have signed an Executive Order suspending the Constitution of the United States. As of this moment, 3:00 p.m. Martial Law has been established and will remain in effect until this crisis has passed. At this time several units of the Central Command are positioning themselves around the Capital. Each of you has been assigned a squad of U.S. Army Rangers, at your homes, for protection.

This session is suspended until further notice. Thank you."

The reformation would take time. Several members of the Senate attempted to form Corporate-backed coalitions. These were beaten down soundly. The diplomatic corps attempted to eliminate the trade embargoes that were crippling America. They would not succeed until late in 1998. The greatest problem, however, the one that proved nearly insurmountable, was the Gang of Four.

■ THE GANG OF FOUR ■

Being comprised of the NSA, CIA, FBI, and DEA, the entire modus for the Gang of Four takeover of America was their near omnipotence. The various

members of the "Gang" were legally capable of doing anything, to anyone, at anytime. As an example, take the NSA. Since the 1950's, the organization had on file a major percentage of the telegraph, telephone, and radiophone calls made in Moscow until 1992. Even the encrypted calls were recorded, though some were not decoded for as long as twenty years. In the United States, they had records of every wire transfer and telegram from every on-line office in the country; every Western Union office, every bank, every savings and loan. The NSA was by far the most powerful of the Gang of Four agencies. They could work in or out of the United States with no legal restrictions whatsoever.

In the 1960's the NSA hired over 22,000 people a year as analysts. Most "operatives" in the NSA were either "attached to the Department of Defense" or untraceable, lost in the absurd amount of paperwork the government generated.

After the declaration of Martial Law in 1996, several theoretical mathematicians in the military intelligence community began to note a number of incongruities in the way that the various government agencies were operating in sync. There seemed to be a great deal of "black ops" being done without any authorization whatsoever. For example, in April of that year, one Alexia Valenze was "sanctioned" by operatives of the NSA and CIA. The girl was a nobody, a showgirl in a Las Vegas review. Yet her death was carried out with the care and detail of a high-level political assassination, costing the U.S. government thousands of dollars. In the end, the order for her death was traced to an empty office in the State Department. To this day, the motive for her death, and the man or woman who gave the order, remains a mystery.

In a totally unrelated move of desperation, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs formed the MIC, or Military Intelligence Cooperative, to deal with the vast amount of duplication in the nine intel agencies of the United States Military. The MIC was run by long standing Military Intelligence opera-

tives, and despite the cries of the NSA and CIA, the MIC remained its own department.

Taking this as a discovery of their true motives, the Gang of Four took several putative steps to sabotage the MIC. At first the MIC thought it was under attack from just the NSA. Since the NSA was also attached to the Department of Defense it was believed that a natural rivalry would exist. But soon problems started coming in from the CIA, FBI, & DEA. This worried MIC leaders, who knew what those organizations were truly capable of.

By 1997, when the NSA withheld massive amounts of satellite information from military and Israeli sources during the "Mideast Meltdown," it was obvious that *something* was wrong. The NSA had over three hundred operatives in the Mideast—when war was declared between Iran and Iraq, they pulled out without relaying *any* information to the MIC. The NSA also intentionally withheld all satellite photos for two hours. By the time the information was received, the old Russian missile carriers were already in position and it was too late. The Military lost massive assets in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Pleading that they'd needed to pull out their agents undetected, the NSA claimed that any action by the military would have set off the war before *any* operatives got out.

It was too much. Later that year, the MIC, under the direction of Mr. Seward (now considered the President), opened personnel files in the Department of Defense and started questioning.

■ THE BEGINNING OF THE END ■

It was painfully apparent, in Washington at least, that the Gang of Four had been acting on its own for some time. The MIC, having found sufficient cause for alarm in its investigation, immediately recommended the dissolution of the DEA and FBI to the President. Being that the duties of law enforcement were being completely handled by military courts and the CID (Military Intelligence, Criminal Investigation Divi-

sions), their existence was seen as unnecessary. Still not powerful enough to attack the strongest member of the Gang of Four directly, eliminating the DEA and FBI would allow the President to get rid of half the problem.

Seward, however, was not stupid. He realized that in order to combat such a powerful cabal, he would need the military, and the military was busy trying to keep rioting and looting from tearing the nation apart. By instituting the Federal Weapons Statute, and allowing weaponry to be carried openly "for protection of self and property.", Seward managed to cut rioting as much as 30% in most urban areas. This freed up the military assets he needed to finish off the NSA.

■ ANOTHER DISASTER ■

Fate, however, was not letting anyone off that easily. By 2000, the firestorms of the Pacific Northwest and the Wasting Plague had brought the nation to its knees. While touring the country trying to deal with the Wasting Plague, Mr. Seward was tragically killed in a riot. (Ironically, he was killed by the same citizens he had armed.) General William Newell, the Chairman of the Joint-Chiefs, took his place. An older man, he was a set in his ways, and decided that the best way to deal with the NSA was to wait for the enemy to make a mistake. Waiting was the real mistake—by the time General Newell found out the NSA (using CIA paramilitary assets as puppet gunmen) had initiated hostilities with five countries, he was embroiled in the Second Central American War. The army that Seward had freed up was sent to another "dirty war", and the NSA retained its position of dominance.

The so-called Drug War had really been over for years, almost since the bioplague had destroyed the cocoa and opium in the nineties. What drove the NSA to continue in its murderous course were the most base of emotions: greed and fear.

The American agricultural base had been destroyed by the mounting prob-

lems of the environment. Acid rain, drought, and toxic waste had made the previously profitable fruit-growing areas of California, Texas, and Florida economic wastelands. The "stabilization" of these South American countries could provide new areas for cultivation.

Since the restructuring of the Soviet Union, hundreds of nuclear weapons had gone on the "open" market. Many of these weapons had made it to South America. The possibility of a nuclear enemy within the Americas was horrifying to the "Gang". By testing Special Operations' new Cybertroops both the nuclear threat and cybertraining could be dealt with at once (though only a minor addendum to the reasons for a prolonged conflict, this program would become crucial in the fall of the CIA).

■ TIPPING THE SCALES ■

Over half of the Special Operations Command was controlled, or attached, to the CIA. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, an ex-beret himself, could not let "his boys" down. It was his connections in SOC that led him to the truth about the Gang of Four. He allowed the SOC full immunity if they would testify, and testify they did., revealing that the NSA had planned and coordinated the apparent "accidental" deaths of some thirteen high-level members of the former United States Government, including the death of the President himself. (strangely enough, it was found that the death of the Vice-President, in 1996, was an accident. The NSA had hoped to manipulate the Vice President once in office. Fate intervened and he was killed).

Even more recently, it has been found that John Seward was executed by a joint CIA/NSA op, not by an "irate Nomad" as had been believed. Seward, a difficult target, had pulled all the Secret Service coverage from the other members of the Government, replacing them with military guards. Those agents he used to beef up his own security. This made him nearly untouchable until 2002, when he was shot. If the Federal Weapon Statute had not been signed, then

the hired man would have never gotten so close.

After the testimony of the SOC, the CIA's command structure was co-opted into the plan to eliminate the NSA. As the end of the Gang of Four became evident, many of those on the operative levels of the CIA (who were formerly associated with SOC) went on operating along with the Gang as plants for the Government.

■ FINALE ■

Three months later, in March of 2004, a bloodbath in Washington rid the NSA and CIA of their mid-level subversive elements. It was this cooperation in the destruction of the NSA that led to the CIA's reformation as a part of the new Government.

It soon became obvious that the MIC had not fully eliminated the NSA when, just prior to the planned return to civilian government in 2004, Tesla Johannsen was assassinated in Cairo by NSA-related operatives. It took another four years, in bloody covert fighting worldwide, to eliminate the more powerful elements of the Gang of Four. Huge damage was done to the United States' intelligence community; damage that would never be repaired.

On November 7, 2008 the first free elections in America were held. It had taken twelve years, but the transition to the new Federal Senate was marred by relatively few acts of violence.

I remember election day in 2008. I was only twelve. None of the kids could figure out what the commotion was about. All the adults were real happy, though."

-Christmas, Streetpunk, sometime in 2013.

The final death throes of the Gang took place in metropolitan Washington; bottled up by the military, their operatives simply could not get out, and their allies could not get in. Many of the states surrounding D.C. simply blockaded all

traffic and let the Gang beat itself to death against the Military. It now seems strange that an organization like the NSA was destroyed so quickly. The real truth is there was no way to eliminate an organization of such size and power. It was not killed, just maimed. The realistic men in the Gang had sold out to the Corporations long before the organization was directly attacked.

■ AFTERMATH ■

During the massive confusion in the embattled Capital, many of the Free States took the opportunity to succeed, leading to a massive upsurge in States' Rights as a whole. Since most of the states in the Union needed military force to put down rioting and Nomad violence, they simply "nationalized" the Military Reserve elements in addition to all Guard elements, which were under the local Governor's command anyway.

These State Armies were willing to cooperate with the Military Government in terms of law enforcement and other military action, so long as the issue concerned the state in question directly. This remains true to the present day. These states of the former U.S. quickly realized that without the Federal Government they were alone. In the wake of the collapse, the states were unable to cope without the massive support that a federal tax base granted them. Without the support, chaos reigned. Think for a minute about pre-collapse America. Almost thirty percent of citizens were receiving some sort of federal assistance, when all federal social programs stopped: Medicare, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Welfare, Unemployment, Social Security, Subsidies, and Price Controls, everything. Consider the devastation. That was only a fraction of the damage done to America in the Collapse. Quite simply, everything that we understood about how society works no longer applied. 100,000,000 were dead, and no fewer than 25-50,000,000 were disenfranchised, homeless nomads—or worse (i.e., boosters) by the year 2000. ★

FYI: WHAT DO THESE NUMBERS MEAN?

The population of the United States by 1990 was 248,709,873. This was the last census taken in America. If the death toll as established by the MIC between 1990-2000 was correct, at least 100,000,000 died. This is well over one third of the American population. If another 25-50,000,000 are Nomads or Zeroes, that leaves a tax-paying popu-

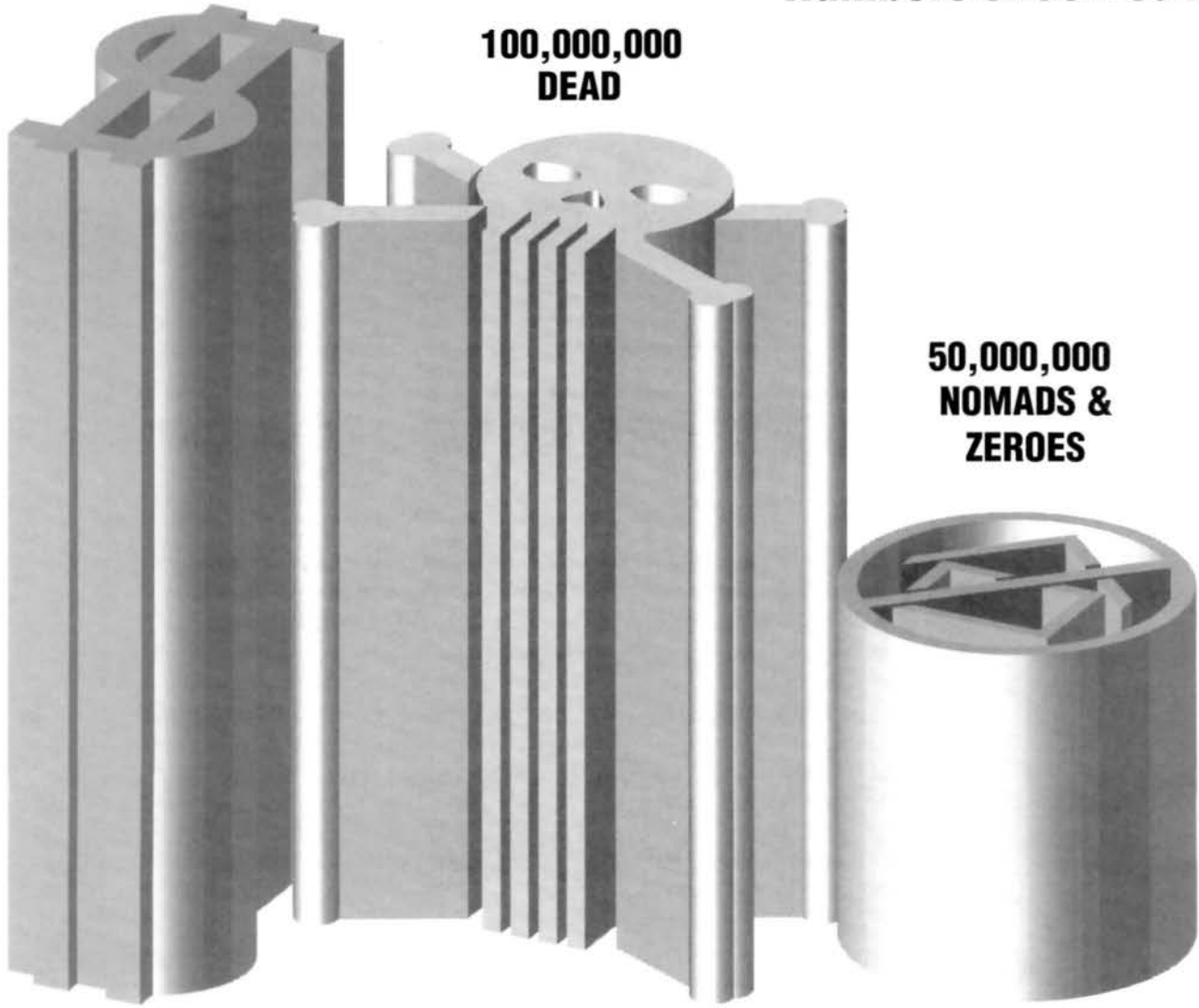
lation of about 100-120,000,000 in 2000. No only does this destroy the tax structure, but it also leaves hundreds of town and small cities bereft of population. Between the years 2000 and 2020, literally thousands of "ghost towns" appear throughout the U.S.. Many of the more centrally-located have been re-settled, but many more are left vacant and rotting. This leads to an "old west" feel, as some people leave the cities to settle in the wilderness. Only, instead of Indians and cattle ranchers, they must contend with Boosters and Corporations.

**120,000,000
TAX PAYERS**

**100,000,000
DEAD**

**How the Post-Collapse
Numbers shook out**

**50,000,000
NOMADS &
ZEROES**





■ THE “NEW” AMERICA ■

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ✓ Families in Flux
- ✓ What the Working Punk Makes
- ✓ Prayer in the Electro-Future
- ✓ Rockin' for Causes
- ✓ SCOP 'n Kibble for Dinner

Life in America during martial law was one of the bloodiest periods in human history. Stalin's purges in the late 1940's pale by comparison. Over 100,000,000 Americans died in only fifteen years. The Viet Nam War only cost 3,000,000 lives, and that took over thirty years. Americans died from violence, pesti-

lence, or starvation. Most of those deaths could have been avoided, had the states coop-

erated with each other. The country still had sufficient resources to feed itself, though not in the style to which it was accustomed. The individual states, scared and foolishly confident due to their new military strength, hoarded their own resources. Strict border policy and huge tariffs all led to disaster. Other problems made things even worse.

“We were coming out of Kansas. Running milk across Oklahoma into Texas. We never realized how desperate the Army was until they shot at us over Tulsa. Those were real missiles! Not the cheap stuff, either. Those were Chaparral-3's.”

- W. J. “Ace” Williams,
Smuggler, 2002

Many states were home to large numbers of nonproductive citizens at the beginning of the Collapse. Florida and New York were two of the worst hit. The welfare system quickly reached a state of attrition. States that instituted stringent controls in the beginning, like California, Texas, Utah and Nevada were much more prepared to deal with an extended crisis. But many states simply tried to bury their heads in the sand. Many felt the crisis would end quickly; it did not. Although many other states soon instituted systems similar to the standard NorCal Citizen Identification process by 1998, it was far too late. By the year 2000 over 150,000,000 were disenfranchised. Probably 75% of these died.

■ THE DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY ■

The greatest betrayal of the Collapse was the destruction of the family unit; the basis for all forms of civilization since the species first walked erect. By the 1980's the family unit had already fragmented and then shattered, to be replaced in part by the Neotribal, Booster, and Metafamily structures. These units were a suitable replacement for a family after the base socialization skills were in place. But in the early childhood stages of development, the lack of a cohesive and demonstrative family structure only crippled the youth of post-collapse America. America is still losing much of its future to the violence of Boostergangs. The toll in unused potential is staggering.

■ GROWING UP IN THE NEW AMERICA ■

So what is happening to our children? Though any complete explanation would take volumes, the body of research shows that three distinct structures exist; the Neotribals, representing the Nomad families; the Boosters, dealing with the entirety of the Streetpunk scene, and lastly, the mixed Nuclear/Meta-families that cover much of the Corporate world.

To understand the real magnitude of the problem, let's preface with some facts. In the last 60 years the number of Americans in a nuclear, or classic two-parent, family had gone from 80 percent to 2 percent. During the Collapse the population of America was decreased by about 100 million. One in three of these deaths was a parent. Almost half of the families were sole-parent (no significant contribution by the second biological parent) families. With the other socio-economic factors in sync this effectively orphaned some thirty million children in the space of eighteen months. Ten million of these children were completely unable to support themselves in any way; they simply died or were killed in the Collapse. Another ten million were killed trying to survive under martial law. This left ten million people loose in society without even the socialization skills of an adolescent. The violence of the martial law period added another ten million to this figure. By 2020, fully eleven percent of the population of America had grown up with no real family structure. This segment of the population also reproduced at twice the rate of other Americans. The question still remains: With a huge section of the population having neither a frame of reference for parenting, or any parenting skills, who raises the next generation?

CORPORATE CHILDREN

By far the smallest of these groups (and also the best educated) are the "Corporate Children." They are divided into the Metafamily at the technician/clerical level (profoundly effected by both sociology and Deming-era management theory), and a return to upper middle-class child-rearing methods (similar to the indulgent style of the "baby-boomers" and the "yuppies" of the last century) at the management/executive level. A child who is taught in the Corporate Metafamily is properly supervised and disciplined in corporate day care and preschools. Irregardless of the number of parents in the family, the opportunity for individual attention is encouraged. The classical style is encouraged, and most instruction is given in classrooms. At an early age, all

instruction is basic communications and computation skills. The only other area of significance is in physical education; including health and sex education.

At age eight the children are assigned to cells of about six to twenty members. The cell is analogous to the Spartan fraternities, and will effect the child for the rest of his/her corporate life. The cell is intentionally mixed in assignment. All eligible children regardless of sex, status, or ability are assigned to cells. The base idea is to train all of the members in teamwork, hence all members live, eat, and sleep together. They participate in team sports and projects. Visitation with parents is limited to holidays, and family emergencies.

It is necessary for Corporate personnel to be able to work unsupervised. In the Cyberpunk era, hesitation is death; delegation and accountability are the rule of the day. Students are taught most facets of the business, but proprietary information is withheld. A more advanced curriculum in communications and computation is also included, along with a second language and higher mathematics. Aptitude testing and more specialized training is begun after age twelve. At age fourteen the students are given a test examination, and the final curriculum for each student is decided upon. At age fifteen, the student is given a final examination. This examination will determine where the student will begin his/her career within the Corporation. After the examination the student enters into specialized training for about a year.

There are several obvious faults to the cell system. Though supervision is good, the students lack a large selection of role-models. The cell also mirrors several of the elements of gang culture. As members move up in the company, they usually try to promote and assist other members of the same cell. This can lead to cronyism and bullying. The second major flaw is the great amount of self-guided study. If a student is not motivated, or is injured due to another's mistakes the results can be very negative. Dropouts and defection are also met with a nega-

tive reaction, as are the occasional newcomer replacements. The system also does not prepare the students for radical change outside of the direct working situation.

In the middle and upper corporate levels, child-rearing has again become much more personalized. Having worked their way through the "hard times," those corporate parents that can afford to raise their children at home, with the help of *au pairs*, servants, and a new group of exclusive care centers utilizing European methods. A child growing up in this environment will have a strong sense of elitism, matched only by the most exclusive of his peers. This is fostered by Upper Management in order to refine and strengthen the inherent class structure of the Corporation. Among the parents, there is a constant current of vicarious competition (the "stage-mother" syndrome), as the triumphs of their children allow them to score social points against other corporate parents. Such success is supportive of the prevailing notion that these offspring will be the rightful inheritors of the mother's and father's company positions. Some social scholars have postulated that in a decade or so, the final result will be a "Corporate Feudalism," in which hereditary upper-management positions rule over selected corporate fiefs (areas of operation), run by a corporate-born and -raised "serf" class of technicians and office people.

FYI: CHARACTERS AND THE CORPORATE EDUCATION

Just about any PC Corp who starts out with a Special Ability of 5 or better can be considered to have been Corporate taught. To represent this, any Corp who desires this background may have 5 to 10 extra points of skill in his profession package, at the cost of those 5 to 10 points from his pick-up skills.

STREET CHILDREN

Street children make up the vast majority of youth in Cyberpunk America; this is thanks to minimum supervision due to the increasing workloads, and the lack of any public schooling system in most states. By age six, most streeters are unsupervised for up to six hours a day. By age twelve this figure rises to sixteen hours a day. By the age of ten, almost 90 percent of streetkids are involved in some type of youth gang; either simplistic and feral child-families, or possibly a block gang, or as a junior affiliate to a larger Boostergang. Whatever the modus, the streetkid is well on his/her way to death in their teenage years.

Most gangs are fairly simplistic at the early age levels. These Feral Families are a common sight in post-Collapse America; groups of children living in a morass of garbage. There are definite parental figures within the family. For example, Billy is ten; as the toughest and most aggressive, everyone knows he will look out for them. So Billy will become the father-figure. Mary is nine and she is the most sexually aggressive and nurturing. So she is the mother-figure. The "children" are all devoted to the "parents." Very occasionally a group like this will form around an adult; who is colloquially known as a Fagan. Members of Fagan groups are adept at stealing, begging, and prostitution. About half will reach age twelve.

Block Gangs are an entrenched part of gang culture. Being that these alliances are tied to a neighborhood or building, children are naturally included in the structure. These types of gang are arguably most similar to their nomad cousins. All facets of life are shared and supported. These are the spiritual descendents of the welfare families of the pre-Collapse. Some look after the children while others get jobs. Some watch for intruders while others sleep. Some are able to teach the basics of literacy. These Block Gangs still have some semblance of human dignity and shy away from blatantly illegal activity. They cannot risk the chance of police retribution. Without the money to protect themselves, the streeters are abused by most police. They are the huddled masses of America in 2020, the working poor.

Last are the affiliates. Large and powerful Boostergangs always look for replacements and new members. Attrition and the police are a constant toll on their numbers. Many allow very young "sets" to form. Jobs are farmed out as favors to loyal affiliates. Tribute in the form of cash and drugs is paid to the Patron. There is a slightly adversarial relationship between the affiliates and the block gangs. As the kids get older, the affiliates are given higher and higher profile crimes to commit. The local Block Gangs don't appreciate this attention; both sides are also wary of the other going to the police. An uneasy compromise, punctuated by violence from both sides, usually wins out. By age fourteen the affiliates are usually either full members, or dead.

One interesting point on the issue of affiliates. It is not uncommon for a Patron to give an execution over to a group of twelve year-old kids. Even in the Cyberpunk era, a murder conviction is difficult to obtain with a juvenile. The most logical explanation of this is the generational gap; most judges grew up in the more liberal times before the Collapse and there is still a prejudice against executing children. Usually, if any vague pretense of self-defense can be alleged, the kid will get off with a few years. Even with the poor state of our prison system, minors are usually treated better than adults (and at least taught to read). When speaking of minors, the child is usually under thirteen; sixteen is now legally considered an adult.

NOMAD CHILDREN

Called Neotribalism by the scholars who study it, there is honor in the Nomad system, even if it only internal. It is not the honor of bushi; it is an honor reminiscent of the Old West. So it's not an easy life, but it is fair, at least when dealing with other Nomads. Another similarity to the Old West is the fear of other people dealing with the community's children. Even when Corporate education is offered, it is usually not accepted. Strangely enough, these *nomad brats* are probably the luckiest of

the children of *Cyberpunk* America. They have a very close community to grow up in. These children have the most opportunity for creative play. They are exposed to the greatest selection of role-models. They are taught value systems and cultural identity. They are also taught respect and discipline. Contrary to the Corporate system, these things are not taught in an artificial setting, and they are not forced. Young Nomads are also taught reading and writing, math, mechanics and electronics; all the skills necessary to survive in the *Cyberpunk* age.

The internal respect that is so prevalent in Nomad culture is a crucial factor in its success. The Nomad "policy" of acceptance has led an interesting group to its doors. The families have a very high percentage of teachers; not just literate people trying to teach, but real, academic teachers. In the wake of the Collapse, many of the revolutionary leaders were teachers. When the military finally regained some control, the first thing they did was round up the "radicals." Many of these people were smart enough to leave before the military arrived. When they fled, they joined the Nomads. Teachers are not the only people who have fled to this sanctuary: artists, military who had "gone native," lawyers (this is not widely publicized), bankers, economists, ex-intelligence operatives, criminals, rockers, priests; simply a huge number of very educated and experienced people, and a large number of farmers and craftsmen give the Nomad groups the ability to survive (when at times, simply the will to live is just not enough).

Though most *Cyberpunk* games deal with adults, some may find the need to use younger characters, or NPC's. If the GM allows younger characters in his/her campaign, there should be strong conceptualization behind them. If a GM decides that the players will have long periods of "down-time," they should be awarded skill points to spend, and a life event each year. Most Streetpunks would start their careers before age sixteen. Many Nomads would start almost at birth.

FYI: CHILDREN AND CYBERWARE

The effects of cyberware are very tricky in young people, especially in children who are going through the changes of puberty. (Mess up these kids' body-chemistry and watch them go crazy.) Because of this, most licensed cyberware dealers will not even talk to a preteen. The majority of Nanotech, Optics, Audio, and Neuralware has no adverse effect after age 10. Any type of Reflex Boost will cause debilitating growth pains. Muscle and Bone Lace stops all skeletal (Body) development. Grafted Muscle does not grow properly. Most other cyberware must be replaced at each age level, as the body grows. New studies have shown that children age 10-12 can assimilate headware with little, or no, humanity loss. Even to age sixteen, the amount of trauma is greatly reduced. In game terms, all headware implanted up to age eleven will roll humanity cost normally and divide the result by three. Between age twelve and fifteen, halve the cost. After age sixteen pay normal cost. Most headware is beyond the means of children. Only a very strong character concept, incredible luck, or imprisonment will allow it.

■ EDUCATION ■

Education is the most valuable commodity a person can own. Consequently, it is also very expensive to obtain. In America today there is little public education to speak of. Most urban areas have only one university, if any. Most rural areas schooling concentrates on the day-to-day aspect of survival, rather than obscure mathematics or other higher education.

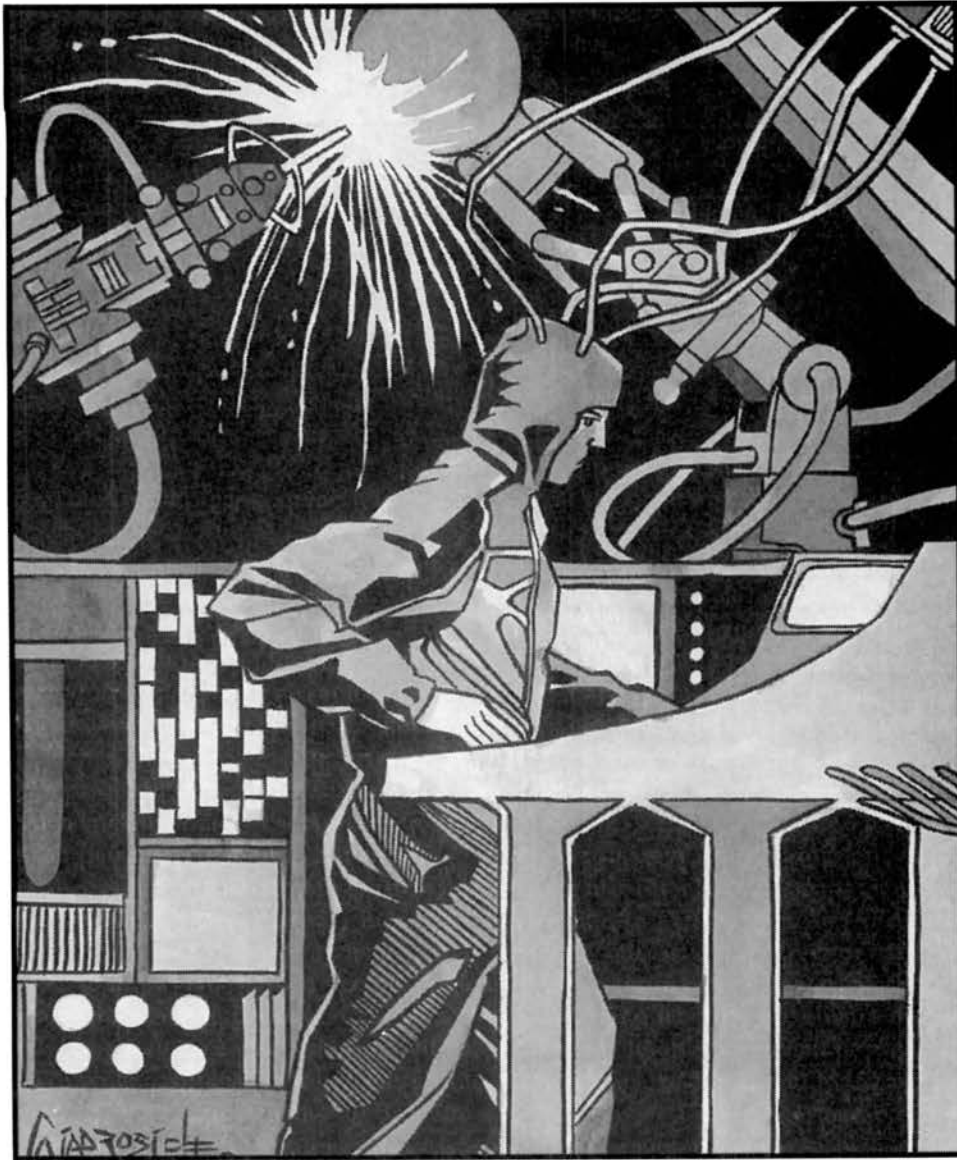
Among Universities, the waiting list is very long, and tuition very expensive. Without a common education system there is no common education theory. So the process has fragmented, mostly due to new technology.

One of the important breakthroughs in education is virtual reality. This technology allows a great increase in speed and retention of material. However, the possibility of hostile interference with the computer can make the students pawns or psychological cripples. Artificial intelligences have been employed as watchdogs, but the inability of machines to adopt human thought patterns often makes for a series of traumatic incidents. Virtual schooling is the fastest and most complete way to realize true education, but, without a great deal of money, and a closely supervised system, it is also the most dangerous to the psyche.

Corporate education has produced some fine minds. The education is fairly complete, but the stress level is hideous. The students are constantly battered with behavior modification, loyalty testing, indoctrination, and propaganda. Many children are not given much choice in what they will study. All curriculum is based on the individual's aptitudes. All of these factors build to a head at age fifteen, at which time the students are given a final examination. This examination not only determines where the individual will start his corporate career, it is also often the final straw that forces many of these children to suicide.

For some people, chip technology is the simplest form of education. The media refers to this as education for the lazy. There are serious drawbacks here as well. Corporate ad loops are rampant in the chip market. (e.g., an unexplained bold text on words related to FOOD) All in all, learning to read is probably less dangerous.

Self-education is the hardest of all. Self-starting programs for reading, along with personal research (both the sophisticated databank search, running-down of rumors and leads on the Street), and the exchange of experiences with other Edgerunners are the most common methods. Medias and Rockers are forced to resort to such self-teaching methods due



to the amazing amount of propaganda in the media; these kinds of people usually have access to information that is restricted to most others. One must also remember that the education process does not stop with entry into adulthood. To be "cyberpunk" is to question, and not accept the world at face value. Nomad education deserves some special mention here. Nomads do not allow others access to their children lightly. Coupled with this protectiveness is a deep respect for teachers and education as a whole. Nomad schools are open to all children, however. They will teach even the children of strangers, rather than strand the ignorant in a dangerous world.

■ WORK ■

Is there an average *Cyberpunk* American? Yes, there are people who live in a socio-economic niche that could be called average, or more correctly, median. At the same time we must realize that the traditional "middle class" is small, especially when compared to the average American of the twentieth century. In the *Cyberpunk* world the nightmares of near total concentration of wealth and limited importance of manual labor combine to create a two-tiered economy. Either you have it all, or you have nothing. Those caught in the limbo of corporate middle class are a shrinking minority.

Continued on page 22

PERSONALITIES



FREDERICK "GARY" GYERSON, Media Celeb—from the *Media Today* section of *Rockerboy* magazine:

Both of Gary's parents were entertainment execs when he was born in 1984. When the Collapse came his family was moved from suburbia into a walled corporate enclave. Gary did not leave the corp plex without a family member along until 2008. In that cornerstone year, Gary passed the high school equivalency test administered by his corporation school and was sent to college in France. Eluding his Corporate welcoming committee, Gary spent the first 48 hours on his own buying addictive recreational drugs, being robbed and beaten, and was finally located at an Industrial dance party.

He then spent two years in college and then returned to a prime starting job with the family corporation. Such a position would be heaven for 70% of America, but for Gary, it was going nowhere fast. If there wasn't vertical lift in the division, he would create his own. He drew on his early experiences to create **Harsh Realities**, a corpkid survival school. The proposal was an immediate success.

Corporate teens, ages 14-17, pay big money to spend two weeks living in cubes, eating kibbles, meeting real street people and practicing in braindance simulations of urban situations. They learn Street Speak and how to barter. The final is 48 hours on your own, (being shadowed by a real street solo for safety, of course).

PERSONALITIES

The program is not without its critics, of course. Johnny Silverhand said, after being asked to do a Harsh Realities street concert in the early days, that it was like asking a "committed vegetarian band to do a gig for polled, stockyard Herefords."

Gary lives in a corporate plex in New Greensprings, Maryland, but maintains offices and a perq pad in Baltimore, where he splits his time between doing publicity for Harsh Realities and what he calls "pertinent research," i.e. the old unholy trilogy of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. He keeps a coterie of "colorful" fringe people as instructors.

INT	6	REF	7	TECH	7
COOL	9	ATTR	8	LUCK	7
MA	7	BODY	7	EMP	9

Skills: Resources 6, Personal grooming 8, Wardrobe & style 8, Streetwise 8, Persuasion & Fast Talk 9, Social 7, Teaching 7, Dodge & Escape 8, Handgun 5, Driving 6, Brawling 5

Cyberware: Light Tatoos, Tech Hair, Contraceptive Implant, Wearman Mark 2



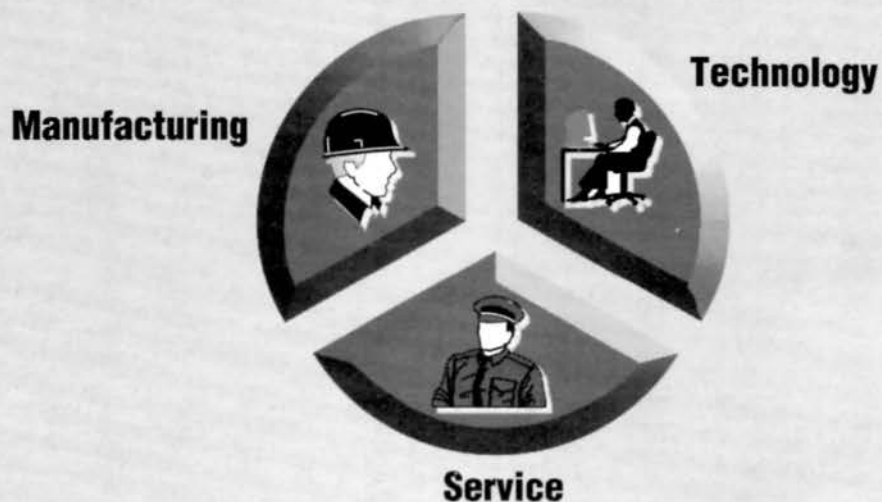
RIPT KEVLAR, ENN Entertainment News Network— Interview from *Night City Today* screamsheet, June 2020:

Continued on page 20

Current Distribution of Wealth



The Primary Divisions Of American Industry



"My favorite news story I reported this year was about Simple Minds, the booster gang where all the members had to have I.Q.'s of under 90."

"I remember the story, but I don't remember where it happened."

"Oh, I don't know. I'm sure it happened somewhere. If it didn't, it really should, you know? In fact, a lot of the hottest trends I report only happen after I report them. Like nipple rings for pets. Now that's on the Edge!"

Witnesses first report Ript Kevlar as a fitness trainer in Night City in 2016. In a few years, his charisma (and bio-enhancements) progressed him to personal trainer for Mita Parente, news mogul for ENN. At this point ENN bought him a SIN card and he begins to appear in official records. He was in a perfect position to start feeding Ms. Parente fresh, hot news from the street - none of which she checked for accuracy - but people were entertained, anyway

"People say I have a Svengali-like influence over Mita. You know what I say? I say 'Sven Golly, wasn't he a Swedish opera impresario?'"

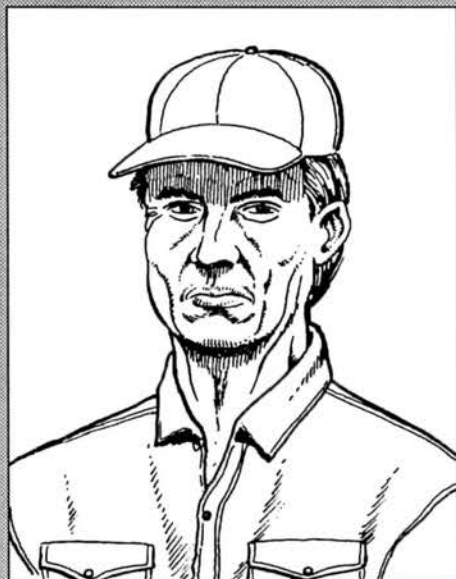
Kevlar lives in an ENN flat in the tower of parent company, Network News 54 in Night City. He has a chauffeured AV and spends most of his time at stylish parties or sweating out difficult stories at ENN headquarters (none of which seem to have the slightest resemblance to reality).

INT	7	REF	6	TECH	5
COOL	9	ATTR	9	LUCK	8
MA	6	BODY	9	EMP	7

Skills: Credibility 3, Wardrobe & Style 6, Endurance 5, Intimide 6, Human Perception 7, Education 5, Persuasion & Fast Talk 8, Brawling 8, Handgun 5, Drive 5, Pilot Vectored thrust 5, Stealth 3, Disguise 4

Cyberware: Grafted muscle, Mr. Studd Sex Implant, Skinweave, Biomonitor, Optishields, Shift-tacts

PHILIP BERN, Farmer— An excerpt from the intro for *Gods of the Green*, the



latest info-chip about ag-entrepreneurs breaking new ground in the poisoned Midwest.

Today, Philip Bern is supplier to some of the most exclusive restaurants and boutique groceries for the well-heeled. But the last thirty years have been a long and twisted road. Before the Collapse, he taught agriculture classes at a state college then. When the Collapse came, government-supported higher education was all but wiped out. The Agricorps were only hiring bioengineers and geneticists. The Bern family became homeless, along with tens of thousands of other government employees across the nation, but they still had faith that the government which had supported them would provide. They reported to a government camp in the Badlands of South Dakota. Inefficiency, corruption, starvation, rioting and death followed. Philip lost his family, but survived. Doing unskilled field labor as a zero, he moved around the country looking for a scrap of land to start a self-sufficient farm, but every parcel he found was contaminated or priced sky-high by corporate competition - until Philip came back to the beginning. The New Resolution farm is built on the site of Federal Relocation Camp S.D.3. The land in this area is usually inhospitable, but the New Resolution farm lies over the mass grave of an estimated 30,000 homeless, including Philip Bern's family, now dead over 20 years. The land is cheap and the Corps don't want it.

Bern's pet project is searching out seed and rootstock for antique American strains which have all but disappeared in the face of produce like the Lightner's Tomato P-16. The P-16 probably provides every tomato (or image of a tomato) your average Cyberpunk has ever seen. It is easy to produce with entirely robotic labor and it has a shelf life of 8 months under ideal conditions.

New Resolution produce is delivered by Nomad caravan to urban centers flush enough to pay for fresh food.

INT	8	REF	8	TECH	6
COOL	6	ATTR	5	LUCK	6
MA	7	BODY	7	EMP	8

Skills: Family 8, Resist Torture/Drugs 5, Streetwise 7, Human Perception 6, Leadership 4, Botany 8, Chemistry 5, Education & General know 7, Expert Agriculture, Teaching 7, Wilderness Survival 4, Zoology 3, Brawling 4, Driving 4, Rifle 5, Basic tech 7, First Aid 5

Cyberware: None



AURELIA CHANG, Fixer and Labor Organizer— INFOCOMP Personnel Report #17356-f:

Aurelia's parents fled Hong Kong before the oncoming mainland Chinese. In Hong Kong, San Francisco seemed like the promised land for a Cantonese speaking population. Unfortunately for Aurelia's parents, they were the tail-end of a massive wave of Chinese immigration. Chinatown overflowed, and gang warfare broke out between various immigrant factions. In order to get work, the Changs left the community and became dispossessed. Aurelia was the only member of the family who spoke English. Nomad survival called for endless negotiations and barter. Aurelia learned fast and by 2008 she was family negotiator for a multi-national workpool. Aurelia and her network became something like organized crime among the European immigrants of an earlier era.

Today the Chang network operates almost entirely through the net. A family who joins the network is supplied with a netrunner liaison. This arrangement offers several benefits to the member family. The network can make sure that a new job is ready as soon as the current job is finished. No more moving through possibly hostile areas looking for work for weeks at a time. The network takes care of work permits and customs if necessary. Jobs or employment inquiries can be listed by size of work force, geographic area and special skills. The network can make special arrangements for personal services like tutors, doctors, and dentists.

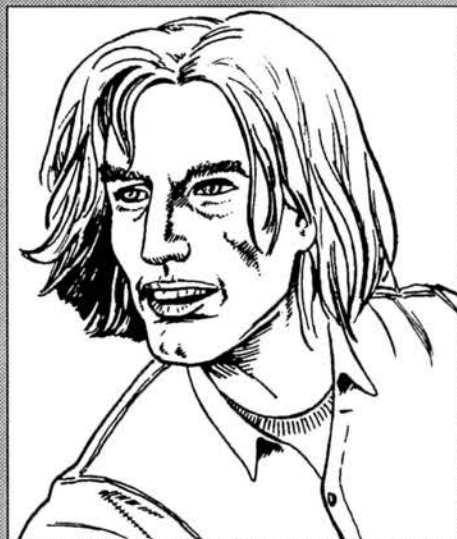
Aurelia Chang coordinates masses of Nomad labor from central Mexico to the Canadian border. This is especially impressive since she hasn't set foot on land in over four years. The Chang network operates out of a plush custom-appointed Sky Queen blimp, the *Swan's Down*. Her agent's percentage is paid in kind and transferred to the *Swan's Down* under carefully controlled conditions. She drives a hard bargain, doesn't back down and doesn't go to meetings in person.

INT	8	REF	6	TECH	5
COOL	9	ATTR	9	LUCK	9
MA	6	BODY	5	EMP	5

Skills: Streetdeal 7, Personal Grooming 5, Wardrobe & Style 5, Interrogation 5, Intimidate 3, Resist Tor-

ture/Drugs 4, Oratory 6, Streetwise 5, Human Perception 6, Leadership 8, Social 4, Handgun 5, Dodge & Escape 4, Persuasion & FastTalk 5, Accounting 4, Awareness/Notice 5, Expert (Negotiation) 6, Pilot Dirigible 5

Cyberware: Basic processor, Tactile Boost, Chipware socket, Interface plug set, Cybermodem link, Smartgun link, Cyboptics, Times Square Plus, Visual Recog. chipware, Infrared option, Cyberaudio, Voice stress analyzer, Radio link, Tight Beam Radio option



JEFF RAMOS, TV Producer— Bio from *ElectroCulture Monthly*, screamsheet for November, 2020:

Jeff is one of the most successful public television producers in 2020. But public television isn't what it used to be. The primary TV networks became more and more homogeneous as the entertainment corps searched for the lowest common denominator to sell cat food and feminine hygiene products. Public stations as they existed in the 80's and 90's

went the way of the dodo, the yuppie and disposable income. But in 2020, anybody can make public TV. All it takes is a little money and a camcorder.

In 2015, Jeff and a friend started *Waldo's World of Hot Rod Detailing*, which showed once a week at 5 a.m.; 9 a.m. if Jeff won some money on the horses that week. Then he had to help out on the set of *Sue, The Microwave Gourmet*. His cousin had an idea for a game show. Today, Jeff produces and edits sixty-seven public broadcast weeklies, including *Our Latino Heritage*, *Night City*, *Our City!*, *Babes in Boyland* and *Banana Slugs Go To Rio*. He lives in a walk-in closet off his video production studios in the basement of the *Night City Today* building. 60% of the Nor-Cal TV entertainment that isn't homogeneous pap goes through his hands. Noted fixer, Vinnie "Street Auction" Tedesco gets him cheap designer drugs in return for air time to auction off mysterious unmarked packages. These allow Jeff to work five days straight, well beyond exhaustion. He doesn't know how to say "no" to anyone and wears sunglasses indoors during the day. He keeps a 100 pound sack of kibble in one corner because "it's easier that way" and he doesn't have to go outside. He has cub reporters on the street night and day looking for stories for *Raw News Report* and a letter nailed to the wall from a mother who spotted her missing son during local gang rumble coverage.

Between 1990 and 2020, public television has been transformed from the reserve of the upper crust to electronic community. The communications boom of the 80's and 90's made video technology cheap enough that, even after the Collapse, it is still available to the Man on the Street. Now if he'd just stop calling Jeff Ramos at two in the morning with one more idea for a TV show.

INT	8	REF	6	TECH	9
COOL	8	ATTR	7	LUCK	5
MA	6	BODY	8	EMP	8

Skills: Jury Rig 6, Endurance 5, Streetwise 7, Basic Tech 8, Electronics 7, Photo & Film 8

Cyberware: T-Maxx Cyberliver



JENNIFER CHU, Scientist and Technician— From *The Roll Call*, the Militech Employee Newsletter, March 15th-26th, 2020:

Jennifer Chu was born in 1980 in Trenton, New Jersey. She has been taking things apart since she was a child; clocks, toys, beetles, snails. Perhaps it is not surprising that she became a cyberware designer. She was hired for a song by IEC despite her magna cum laude twin degrees in electrical engineering and human physiology. She married her childhood sweetheart who was a zero martial arts instructor and IEC settled them in Berlin and bought him U.S. travel papers. But somehow the promotions didn't come rolling in. Jennifer did brilliant work on building and installing "organic friendly" cyberware, but her articles were buried by European and Japanese journals. Americans, they think, they used to believe they knew everything. Meanwhile, Jennifer's ideas just kept making money, but her boss told her that taking time out to have and raise children might endan-

ger her career. She remembered the contract, didn't she? Suddenly, six pages of corporate boiler plate she had signed when she was twenty-two appeared to rule the rest of her life. She began to notice male designers with less experience racing by her in reviews. After nine years with IEC, she was frozen in the corporate culture - until she met the nice man from Militech at a rare academic conference. Militech truly valued Jennifer's talents and understood what she wanted for her family. And the team that came to extract her and her family were so clean cut and polite.

Jennifer and her husband and two small children live on three acres in Western Oregon. In the morning she walks on the beach with her children and visits her husband's studio. Some mornings they have breakfast with the nice Militech security people who live just outside the gates. In the afternoons and late into the evenings she designs full cyberware packages for Militech. They have encouraged her curiosity and bought her the very best cybermodem. Not only can she now communicate directly with her design and testing teams in her net office, but she is working on small, inobvious cybermodems to be built into some of her most recent packages. Working for Militech has finally brought Jennifer and her family the peace and security she has strived for, for so long.

INT	9	REF	7	TECH	9
COOL	6	ATTR	8	LUCK	7
MA	5	BODY	5	EMP	6

Skills: Resources 8, Wardrobe & Style 4, Biology 6, Personal Grooming 5, Education & General Knowledge 8, Expert (Human Physiology) 6, Chemistry 4, Library Search 7, Expert (Cyberware Design) 9, Mathematics 4, Physics 4, Programming 4, System Knowledge 5, Basic Tech 6, Cyberdeck design 6, Cybertech 8, Electronics 6

Less than 15% of Americans can be called middle class; this is less than 30,000,000 people. By comparison, in Europe and parts of Asia the percentage may be as high as 40%. These areas are much more affluent than America in 2020. It is fairly obvious that the people who are average in *Cyberpunk America* work for a corporation.

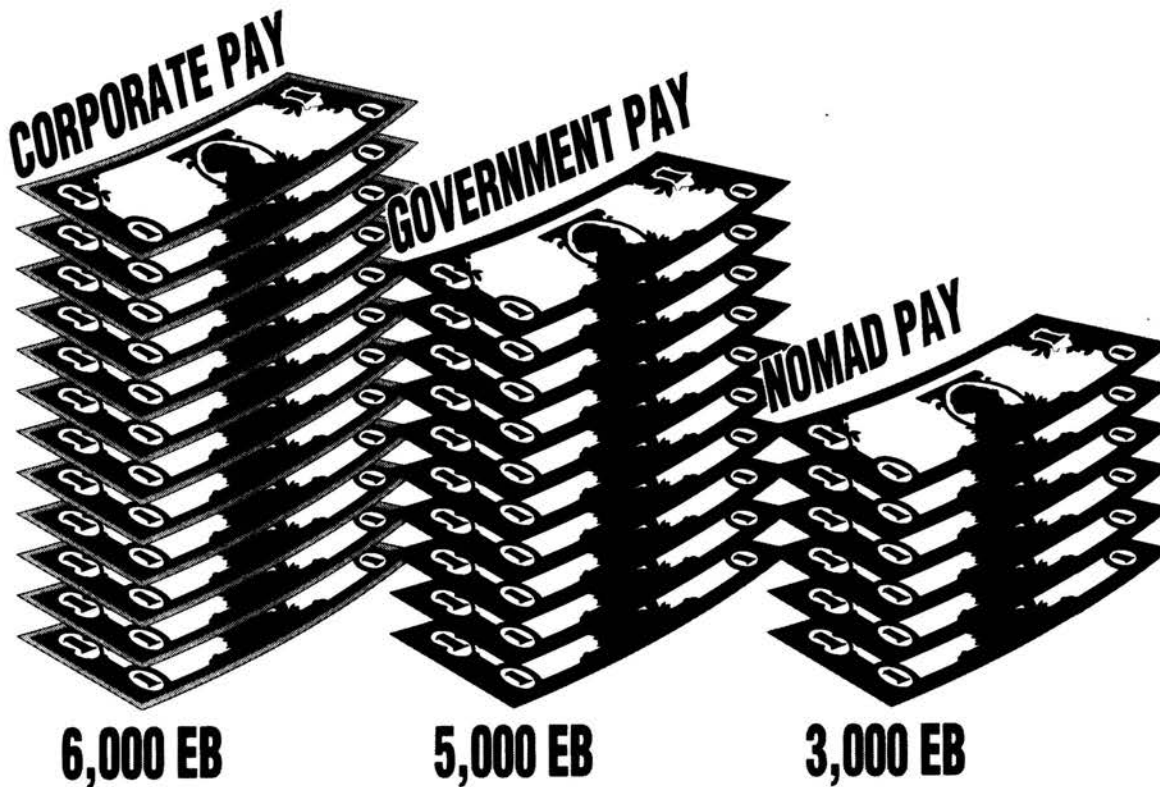
The American economy is made up primarily of three types of businesses: service industry, manufacturing, and technology. Service industry is a term defining everything from policemen to prostitutes. American service industries are primarily concerned with feeding, clothing, and informing the world. This is no small order for a population of just under two hundred million. Manufacturing has returned to America (the unions would be happy, if there were any). All aspects of manufacturing are once again cost-effective, due to the low standard of living in post-Collapse America. The technology industry is the leading edge of all economies. Cyberware, Nanotech and Biologicals are the highest profit businesses in existence. However, technology is also the most fickle and transitory of industries. American ingenuity is alive. Of course, so is Corporate thievery. It's no mistake that in America the real innovations in a field usually comes from below.

■ INCOME ■

In the year 2020, 90% of the wealth of America is controlled by only 10% of the population. Another 15% can be called middle class. These are the technical service people employed by the major Corporations. They range from the computer programmer to the extraction specialist. (Author's note: Most players fall into this category.) People living in borderline poverty make up another 10% of the population. These people range from starving artists and fry-cooks to street hawkers and game designers. The other 65% of Americans live in squalid misery, or at best minimal comfort. At this level plumbing is considered comfort.

The average reported salary in 2018 was 4,000eb per year. This figure does

Comparative Pay Scales



not include Zeroes or certain areas of Corporate payroll. AI assessments suggest a truer figure being slightly lower, possibly 3,200eb per year. The average corporate salary fell in at about 6,000eb per year. Benefits and perks add about 2,000eb to this figure. The average Nomad receives roughly 3,000eb of in-kind goods or services. The average government salary is 5,000eb.

The purchasing power of the Eurodollar is approximately twice the purchasing power of the U.S. dollar. The Japanese yen, once a very inflated currency, now hovers near par with the U.S. dollar. The other currencies of the world are a clear second best to the Eurodollar.

So what can this money buy? Considerably less than it used to. In 1940 a person who made forty dollars a week was doing okay. A loaf of bread cost a nickel and so this person could buy eight hundred loaves of bread with his week's salary. In 1990, if a

person was making four hundred dollars a week then they were doing okay. A loaf of bread cost about a dollar. With an average weekly salary he could buy four-hundred loaves of bread. From 1940 to 1990 the average salary rose 1,000 percent, but the purchasing power of the dollar fell by 2,000 percent. (Author's note: we remind the reader this is a gross simplification to show the point.) This average person made ten times his 1940 salary for only half the purchasing power of that money.

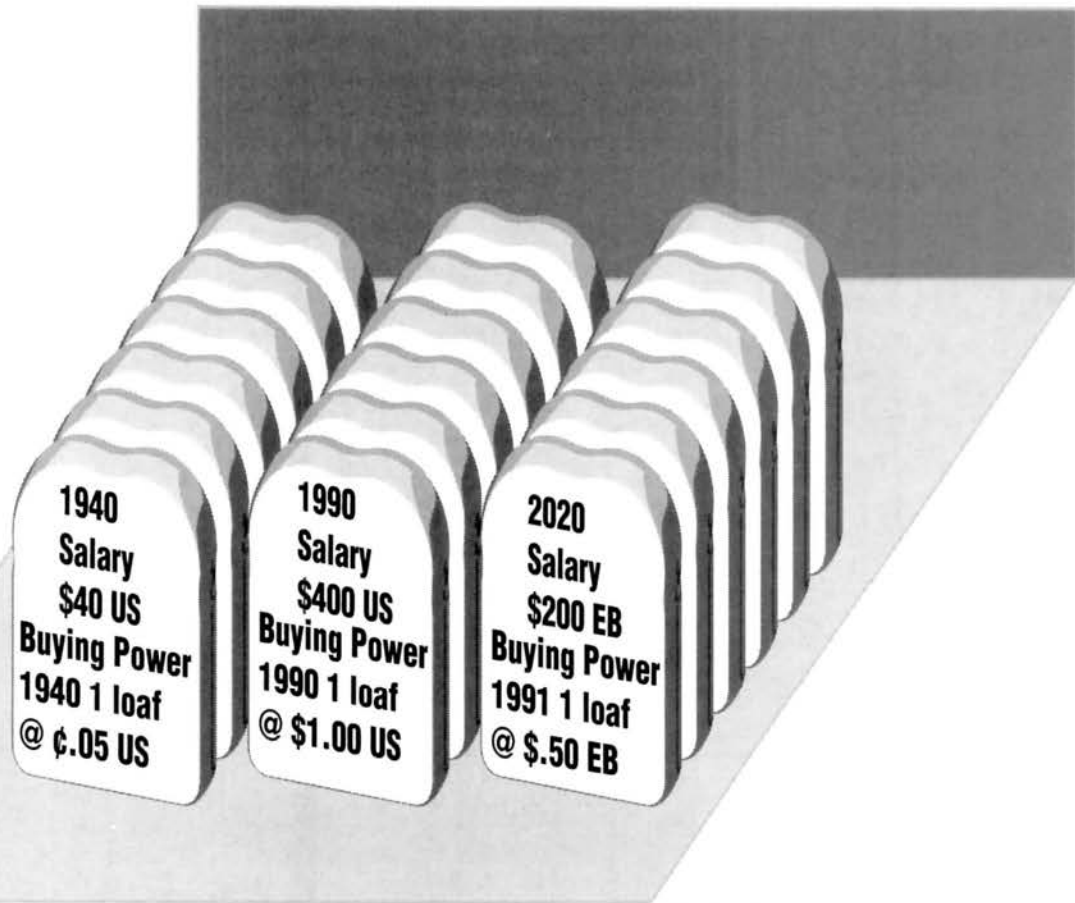
Between 1990 and 2020 the trend has, to a degree, slowed. If a person is making 200 eb per week, then they are doing okay. The loaf of bread has been replaced by the kibble bar, which costs about half a Eurodollar. So while the salary has dropped 200 percent, the purchasing power has remained constant (of course, most businesses that sell food won't accept anything but Eurodollars; if you get paid in American dollars you had better get them exchanged).

■ SINS ■

Established by both NorCal and SoCal in 2020, the California Citizen Identification process has since become the model for the rest of the United States. At the time of registration, (usually birth) a citizen number is assigned; this number is the source of all record keeping and benefits assignment, if any exist. A personal DNA pattern is also mapped at this time.

Without a State Identification Number (SIN for short) a citizen cannot get a passport or driver's licence, register to vote, or apply for any type of job within the state. An out of state SIN may be used for stays of less than thirty days. If the person wants to move to another state, his SINcard must be turned in and a new number issued. Without this card he cannot even rent decent living quarters.

Comparative Purchasing Power



The SIN is the only way the state can keep track of its taxpayers. To retain a SIN, the citizen must pay an average of ten percent of his wages in taxes. This pays for roads, police, and the other expenses of infrastructure. Part of this money is paid to the Federal Government for its programs. There are no deductions or reductions in tax. Corporations that support, or trade services with, states and municipalities sometimes get their employees exempted. Military personnel on active duty are exempt (consequently their salary is 10-20% lower than average, as is the case with all exempted employees). Benefits and perks paid fully by the employer are not considered taxable income—no Corporation would ever agree to *that!*

■ THE EDGE OF SIN ■

Many people are not part of the SIN system. Some exclude themselves. Some are left out for other reasons. These people are the truly disenfranchised. They are referred to by many names: Zeroes, Nots, Unpeople, Nosferatu, Zips. They exist only in the streets. They cannot make large purchases, nor do they have civil rights. During the period of martial law, if captured committing a crime, they were treated as prisoners of war. Now they are usually summarily tried and punished. Why waste valuable state monies on a nonperson, even to lock them up and give them a fair trial? Many commonly referred to as Nomads are also Zeroes.

Some are Zeroes for things as trivial as being a deserter, or for being the child of a well-known criminal. Others lose their citizen status as just punishment, but even more lose it just from Government spite.

■ HIDING FROM YOUR SINS ■

The largest problem with SIN numbers is the fact that few states, corporations, or federal agencies cooperate and share data. If they did, the number of repeat criminals would probably drop VERY sharply. The upshot of all this is that people can still run from the law. If the crime is minor enough, the authority may settle for beating up a perp instead of booking him. If you know

FYI: SINCARDS

All pertinent data is stored on a write-once holographic medium. The medium is then imbedded into a card that is five centimeters square, and 5 millimeters deep. Data stored includes retinal pattern, DNA pattern, State Ident Number, criminal record, known aliases, employer, height, weight, shoe size, etc. This information is encoded by both state and data type. Decoding any of the 100 or so different types of information will give no clue as to the encryption codes of the other data. Since the storage media is write-once, all you can do is add information; if you can find the correct encryption code.

OBTAINING A SINCARD

Sure, you can get a SIN later in life. It could be as a reward, or a perk with a good Corporate job. There are at least sixty documented ways to obtain one illegally. All of them require infinite patience and nearly infinite resources. If they catch you they can kill you, or just take it all away again. They are for sale as well, for only 50,000eb plus necessary bribes.

the right people, you may just walk away. If you mess with Corporations, you are usually just killed out of hand.

Though the CIA's LAWdiv tries to correlate and track data on a national scale, it does not always work. The primary means of identification is retinal scanning. DNA is much more reliable but takes hours. Since retinal scanning is field-portable, it is used more. Most police will not want to bring someone in and do the paperwork, so they settle for retina scans.

A DNA reader is very expensive and the cops only use it when necessary. Ninety percent of the populace believes retinal is infallible. They were right until 2017. The new industry of nanotechnology developed a mask: a layer of cells that could be etched, or allowed to grow natu-

rally. These cells could completely conceal or duplicate the person's retinal pattern. Various types of other biotech could actually impress minor changes in the DNA itself. The point of all this is the fact that criminals spend great sums of money to constantly change their identities. The simplest reason for this is the short life of those who do not. The largest problem with retinal scans is the number of criminals who simply opt for two cyber-optics, rendering the process useless (though the use of serial numbers on cyberware is attempting to address this problem).

■ LIVING SPACE ■

Living space is at a massive premium in all urbanized areas of America, yet very few people want to live anywhere else. The development of the mallplex and other arcology-style communities have made these areas incredibly dense in population. Full-scale arcologies are rare but not unknown. Housing has become tailored to the needs of its users and the prevailing economic climate. In 2020, there truly are people who'll "kill for a really nice apartment."

The vast majority of Americans in 2020 are single, so most living quarters are designed to house one person. Apartment cubes are pretty much standard: A single 2m by 3m room, with a closet and attached shower/commode. Though many have special hideaway furniture and appliances, the less expensive apartments do not. A bed and a workcenter or desk is about all the furniture necessary. Storage space is minimal, but so are personal possessions. The lack of any real kitchen is covered by the small refrigerator and microwave in the corner. The people who live at this income level don't eat, or enjoy what they eat, much at all. Most meals are eaten on the run, or at streetside vendors.

Many apartments are soundproof, or nearly so. With the crush of humanity omnipresent, people often go crazy; some degree of quiet helps. Really cheap apartments won't have this luxury. For all this, the person residing in the average conapt-pays about 600eb per month unfurnished.

Soundproof apartments are about 200eb a month more. Cube-style apartments with fold-out furniture and built-in appliances run about 1200eb per month. All these prices assume a moderate neighborhood. If you want to live in an uncontrolled area then halve the prices. Few people really want to live in the Combat Zone.

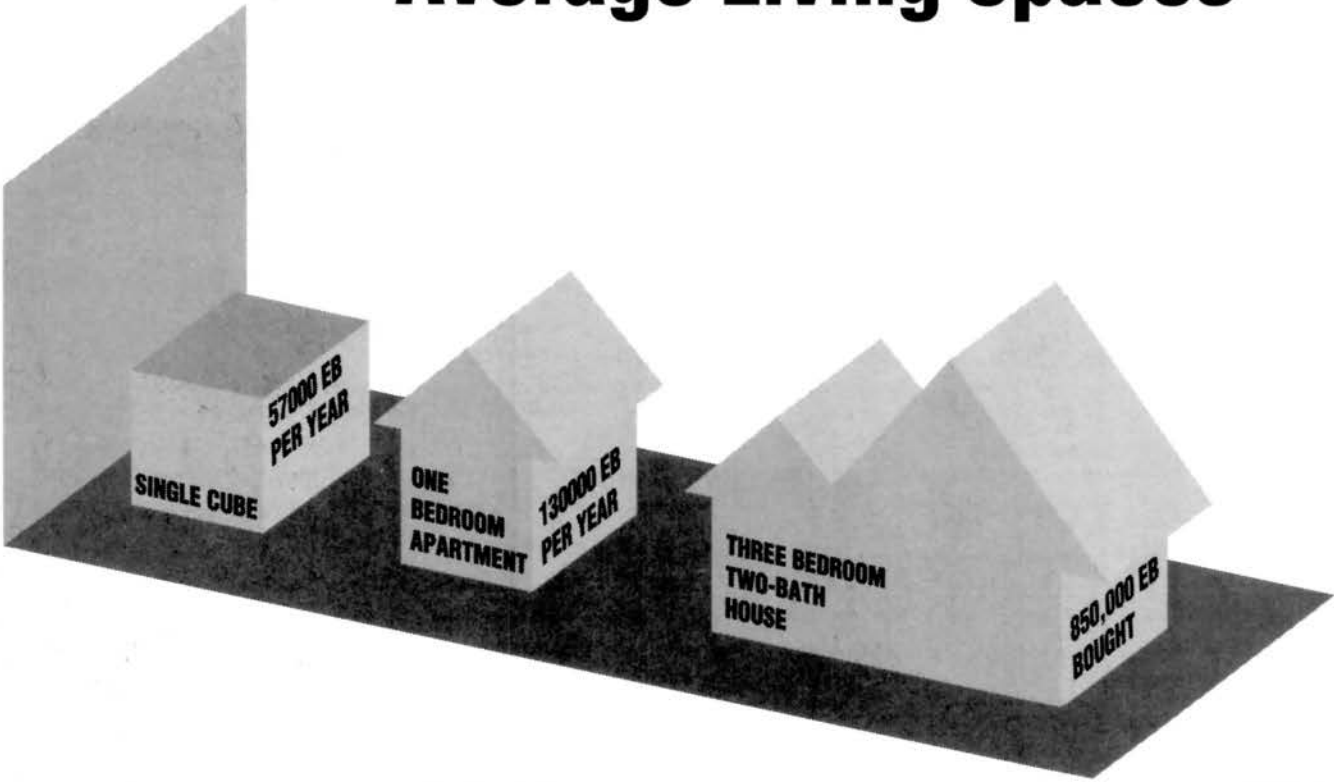
A real apartment is beyond the reach of the average person. A living room, bedroom, and a combined kitchen and eating area is a lot of space for one person, almost 24 square meters. Apartments in corporate areas run about 30,000eb per year, or 2500eb per month, furnished. A deposit and prepayment on the last month's rent is required, and runs to about 5,000eb. This same apartment in a less pleasant section of town runs about 1500eb per month furnished, or 1200eb per month unfurnished. Many single-parent families live in apartments like this.

Corporations have been subsidizing housing for employees since the Collapse. The Corporations are the only entities with enough money to actually buy housing. In 2020 the average three-bedroom, two-bath house costs in the neighborhood of 850,000eb. Consequently, no one wants to have a family, and those who do are generally miserable. Corporations step in to fill the void, but the employee sometimes pays a terrible price.

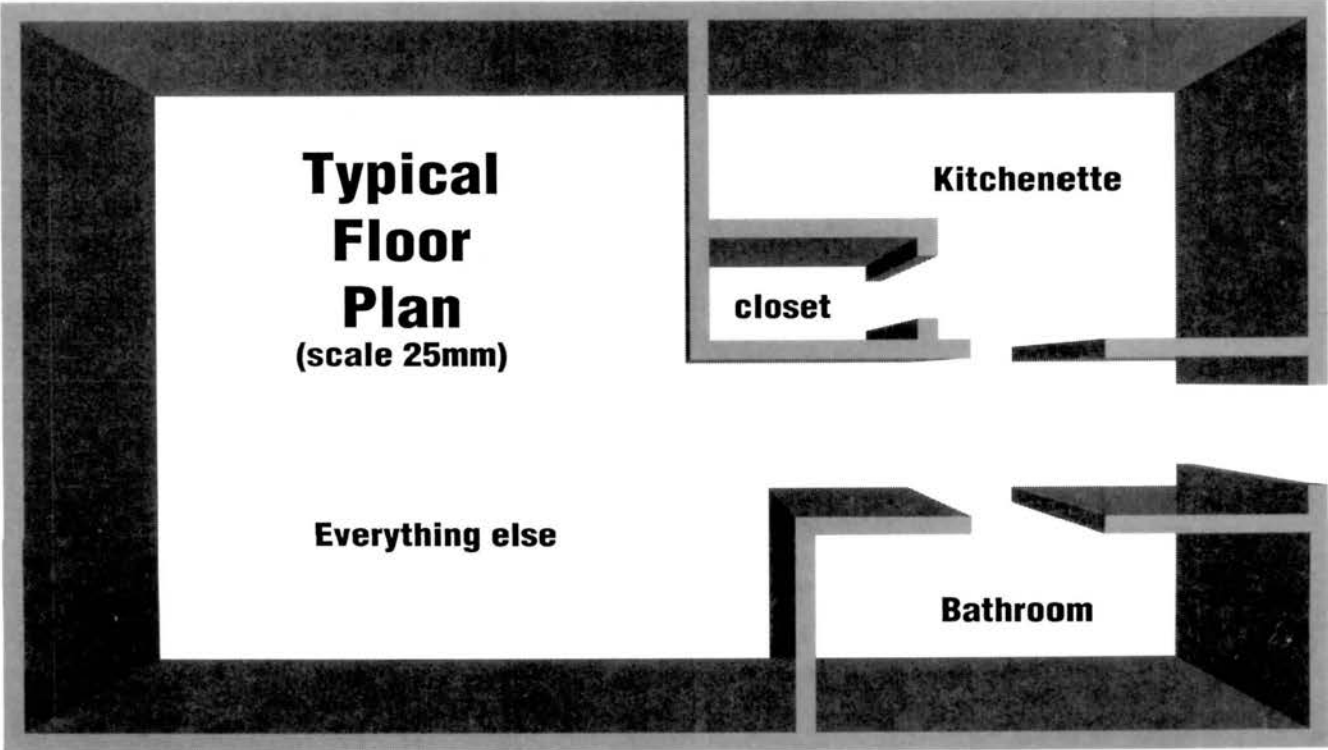
Subsidies start at the lowest levels of the corporate ladder. Even a tech or assembly worker can apply for housing. At this level the benefits are slim. The quarters are small: usually either a bunk, in a room with fifteen other people, or a coffin on a corporate rack. The food is average and the propaganda is thick. It is, however, free. That's right, free. Of course the Corporate prostitutes are not free, cigarettes are not free, drugs are not free, and clothes are not free; all of these things are available from the Corporate vending area. Nothing in life is really free.

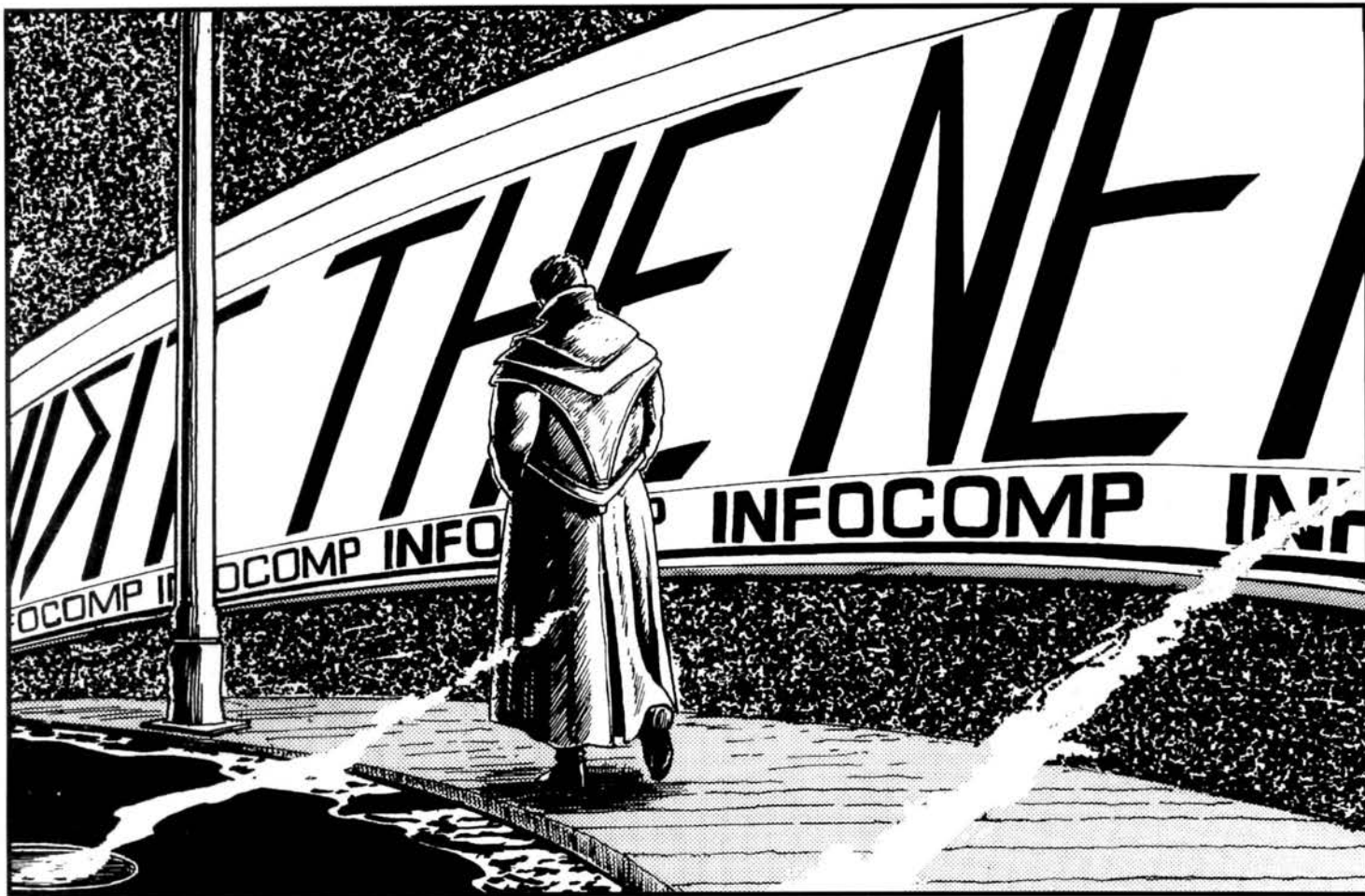
At the Senior Technician and Junior Manager levels, an apartment cube is common. Many corporate families are allotted housing at the Senior Tech level as well. Most Corporate housing is a perk or bribe to keep the managers ambitious. An up and coming young Corporate may

Average Living Spaces



Typical Floor Plan (scale 25mm)





even have a real apartment, or a house in Beaverville, but also has the stress level to go with it. At the highest levels, a sprawling house or a mansion is not uncommon. Of course, neither is suicide at forty-five, so it all balances out in the end.

■ INFORMATION SERVICES ■

We live in an era of information. It differs from the pre-Collapse in the area of freedom. Before 1994, the amount of information offered to the average citizen was staggering. Almost any type could be accessed by the use of public libraries, universities, and information services. Many of these systems were free, and so income was not a limiting factor in this. Today, information is treated as a valuable commodity. Corporations and Governments pay other Corporations and Governments for access to their Databanks. Meanwhile,

the average citizen is usually only exposed to headlines and “bites” of information. Add to this relative starvation the fact that most information freely distributed at the consumer level is dripping with propaganda and disinformation. So, at the consumer level, America is made up of citizens who feel informed—even though the vast majority of their information is manufactured and falsified. Almost all programming is a conglomeration of styles called Infomercialtainment. These shows are long commercials that inform and entertain, from a certain viewpoint.

“Sure, the job is relatively simple with the right tools. All I ever need is my Arasaka-Nike Tac-trainers. It’s the only shoe guaranteed to resist 500 foot-pounds of impact and still look great. Now let’s go get that felon...”

*Miles James,
Flying Solo on Net54*

The Media is a force in our world of 2020. It so permeates the world that fully twenty percent of our global economy is based on the exchange of information and entertainment. At the top of this spectrum are the massive Corporations; well-dressed men in clean offices who buy and sell the trends that shape our fashion and entertainments. In the middle are the lost revolutionaries, the Cyberpunks. They must constantly struggle to delineate the kernel of truth from the chaff of falsehoods. There are some who ride the line. They can afford a few different news-feeds. They check stories against rival networks. Some have the capital to get an account with Infocomp (for the real dirt, unedited) on the occasions that warrant further investigation. The truth is always available. The price of the truth has just been raised exponentially.

Humans access information in three ways; *Indirect* access, which could be any-

Continued on page 31

THE TOP TEN FOR 2020



THE TOP 10 SONGS WITH CAPSULE REVIEWS BY ROCKERBOY'S OWN SLATE TIDWELL. BE AFRAID.

- 1** **SIMULATION OF REAL** ★★★
ROCK
KERRY EURODYNE
 Slick raw metal, with a wounded sound. Classic Eurodyne after the breakup, without the cerebral edge of his old mate Silverhand. But still crunchy.
- 2** **SPEED SCREAMA** ★★★★★
CHROMA-ROCK
DAYZ OF MEN
 Slam your forebrain into the tarmac; rip it up. Back from the dead with this new underground track leading the chilled new *Heavy Time* LP chip.
- 3** **WORD IS NOW** ★★
URBAN RAP
ICEBOYZDOYA
 After last year's conquest of rap by World Musik, it's good to see this slammer take the ground back. Political and furious, the voice of Neo-Afrika speaks.
- 4** **DEATH AM DIGITAL** ★★★
TECHNO RAP
PERILOUS FUTUR
 German Techno meets Son of Ice Ice. Best of the World Musik fusion, this tasty lick out of the Big Deutschland runs top anthem for the anti-fascist facedown.
- 5** **BEAT THE METAL** ★★
INDUSTRIAL
HARDTECH
 Industrial, rough and jagged, delivered with blinding speed. Look for the long cut of this speed track master; it includes the overtrack dub of Slade McCallahan's last words if you sample it backward.

- 6** **SAID YOU WERE THE ONE** ★
CORPORATE POP
SARAH O'CONNER
 Should have stuck to covers of the Who; this overproduced sleeper is technically proficient, but lacks fire. Are you still Sarah O'Conner?
- 7** **DIAL CBC, XYZ** ★★
NONSYNCHRO DIGITAL
INTERNAL HARMONIX
 Cover blurb boasts "Not one repeating theme or note in the entire chip!" And it sounds it. The AI's must love this one, but meatmen have their reservations.
- 8** **DO THIS PARTY YA** ★★
GLAM JAM
FACE BOYS
 I give it a 1.9 and you can combat dance to it. Face Boys have put together a slick package to prove you don't have to go Corp to make the danceclub scene.
- 9** **MEKKAFUSION** ★★ ★
ROCK
GODZILLER IE!
 Lead track off the *New Star Rising* chip, this tight weave of harmonics and classic metal rips your feet off the deck and takes you headlong into the face. Love it.
- 10** **VIRAGO NO KAMIKAZE** ★★ ★
WORLD TECHNO
AZAKUCHI TORANOGA
 Toranoga's fast-track first cut from the new album, *I Am Not Samurai*, shows off the techno-guitar riffs of the Rising Sun's best chop master. Reminds us of ancient Satriani, and that's high praise.

THE TOP FIVE 20 YEARS AGO TODAY

- 1 Let it Mutate—The Dead Clintons
- 2 Haaawck Tu!—Sye Borg
- 3 The Complete Led Zephillan—Various Artists
- 4 I Remember Slim Whittman—Billy Idle
- 5 Duel Live!—Roland Duel

Monday

8PM

September 9, 2013

- 7** **FREDDY'S NIGHTMARES**-Thriller; 60m
An art student (Carey Scott) finds his sadistic drawings are increasingly lifelike.
- 8** **DISCOVERY-Religion**; 60 m
- 9** **80** **AMERICAN GLADIATOR**; 30 m
- 10** **NATIONAL SPORTS CAVALCADE**; 90 m
The final rounds of the Mr. Peanut Celebrity Pro-Am Golf Tournament, taped yesterday at the Monterey Pines course. Finalists include Tatiana Levadanoff of the Soviet Strategic Verification Team, and sensim star Kelly Rhodes.
- 11** **KING MEDICAL HOUR**; Advert; 60 m
- 12** **INTERNAL MEDICINE UPDATE**; 30 m
- 13** **MOVIE**- Drama; 90 m ○○○○
"Dial 1119." (1950) Homicidal maniac holds a group of people at bay in a bar. Tense, well-acted. Wycoff: Marshall Thompson. Freddy: Virginia Field. Helen: Andrea King.
- 14** **CBS NEWS** - Justine Barbour-Davis
- 15** **CURRENT AFFAIR** - Newsmagazine
- 16** **SENORA** - Novela; 60 m
- 17** **94** **700 CLUB** - Religion; 60 m
- 18** **To Be Announced**
- 19** **REMOTE CONTROL**-Game/Adult
Naughty Veronica is caught with her pants down; a boy is befriended by a magical toy.
- 20** **BEVERLY HILLBILLIES**-Comedy
- 21** **SON LAS CHICAS!** - Comedia; 30 m
- 22** **DAIRY QUEENS** - Adult/Comedy
- 23** **NINJA GAMES** - Game
- 24** **PERRY MASON** - Drama; 60 m
Mason's client: a harried husband accused of murdering his scheming, unfaithful wife. Ted: Paul Richards. Irene: Mari Blanchard.
- 25** **50** **36** **SKIN GAME** - Adult/Game
- 26** **WHACKERS** - Adult
- 27** **30** **YOU BET YOUR LIFE** - Game
- 28** **NATIONAL PREDATOR HOUR** - Documentary; 60 m
- 29** **POPEYE** - Cartoon
- 31** **BLACK AMARANTH** - Horror; 60 m
The Gnobblers have grown a Rezill; in Cavanal, Mrs. Peavey is having second thoughts about supporting Dihagetsch.
- 32** **MacGILLIVRAY** - Crime Drama; 60 m
MacGillivray's teen-age nephew is implicated in the murder of a black market software peddler.
- 33** **BM** - Newsmagazine
- 34** **RBN NEWS** - Dondre Whitfield
- 35** **CHASE, WYSS NEWS HOUR**; 60 m
- 36** **56** **TNN NEWS** - Kieth Cerullo
- 37** **JACK IN THE BOX HOUR** - Children
- 38** **SUPERBRAIN** - Game

- 39** **WORLD EYE** - Newsmagazine
- 40** **92** **GUERRA** - Novela; 60 m
- 41** **HONG KONG NEWS** - Art Wong
- 42** **MONEY MATTERS**
- 43** **RAMBO ADVENTURE HOUR** - Comedy; 60 m
Rambo and Mr. Protsky guard an Olympic athlete after her relatives are blinded by a boostergang. Rambo: Sylvester Stallone. Mr. Protsky: Kevin Dobson. Linda: Anne-Marie Ching.
- 44** **HOGG COUNTY, TX** - Comedy; 30 m
When Joe-Bill and Simon are too shy to express their feeling for each other, Billy-Bob tutors them both in the art of romance. Fred Masters-Vanderman, Susan Paxton.
- 45** **PASION Y PODER** - Novela; 60 m
- 46** **APPLETHWAITE** - Comedy/Adult
Rita Lavelle, Bert Convy, and Sebastian Norville appear in Kieth's dreams.
- 47** **STELLAR PRIVATEERS** - Drama; 60 m
The Antarean Armada destroys Galaxy 7, so Bertram threatens their Queen. Maranx: Helen Martin-Scott. Bertram: Gary Burghoff. Queen: Kiki Long.
- 48** **BALTIMORE ISSUES** - Documentary; 60 m
An examination of the Park Street Missile Crisis, which put Baltimore and Pikesville at the brink of war for 3 tense days in 2007.
- 49** **MacDONALD LAND KIDVID** - Children
- 51** **91** **700 CLUB** - Religion; 60 m
- 52** **AMERICAN MILITARY MIGHT** - Documentary; 90 m
- 53** **BORG, ROBOT AT LAW**; 60 m
- 54** **NETWORK NEWS** - Randall Ramsey
- 55** **WIN, WIN, WIN!** - Game
- 57** **89** **INSPECTOR GADGET** - Cartoon
- 58** **SUBGENIUS HOUR**-Religion; 30 m
High Epopt "Snakey" Patterson speaks about your personal savior; also, a video ShoDurMar (30 minutes limit) will be performed for the home audience.
- 59** **CRIME & PUNISHMENT** - Magazine
Bobby Reza-Chan, Barbara Eden. Also: a preview of "Elf Lust."
- 60** **TOLEDO HEAT** - Crime Drama; 60 m
- 61** **TEK TALK** - Newsmagazine
- 62** **SCANDAL THIS NIGHT** - Magazine
Scheduled: Hanna Werner, B.B. Rollins ("The Education of a Naughty Rich Girl").
- 63** **RACE AGAINST TIME** - Game
- 64** **HAVE TO KNOW** - Magazine
The rise and fall of a Kingston pirate video gang that used advanced military optical

- psycho-stimulators to increase it's sales by adding it's customers.
- 65** **INSIDE THEIR GUARD** - Celebrity Gossip; 90 m
- 67** **88** **MOVIE**-Drama; 3 hrs. ○○○○○
"All This, and Rich Too!" (2011) Allison Hernandez-Quinn is superb in this dramatization of the General Motors advertisement. George Valentine.
- 68** **PLAYBOY BUNNY HOUR** - Documentary; 60 m
- 69** **BOOM OR BUST** - Game
- 70** **RALPH, M.D.** - Comedy
The hospital is nearly overwhelmed by victims of a toxic event; Ralph finds himself enmeshed in family affairs - and it's not what you think. Ralph: Sean Bermudez. Sally: Betty Fox.
- 71** **MONEYMAKERS XXII** - Discussion
Topic: the benefits of investing in a mutual fund.
- 72** **MOVIE** - Drama; 2 hrs. ○○○○○
"Moon Ace." A young man (Doug Anthony) defies the EuroSpace Agency while romantically involved with a duplicitous ESA pilot (Roxanne Murphy).
- 73** **93** **HARD-ON**; 60 m
A knock on the head brings Harry a guardian angel (Heather Maher), who shows him what a wonderful life the Brazeltons would have without him, and vice versa. (Repeat)
- 74** **NEWS**
- 75** **GREAT AMERICAN EVENTS**; 60 m
Rep. Dwayne Silbury-Tate (Ref.-N.Y.) discusses the planned laser lift array.
- 76** **84** **FIREBASE COYOTE**; 60 m
Wallace (Mark David Singer) hunts for his former partner, while Lt. Reese (James Blackwell) tries to cope with an overly affectionate Venezuelan girl.
- Additional Cast
- Maria Louisa Garcia-Fenner
Sgt. Hale Gerald Hope
Cpl. Johnson Roxanne Reese
- 77** **AMANDOTE** - Novela; 60 m
- 78** **NEWS**
- 79** **DEWAR'S SCOTCH HOUR** - Advert
- 81** **BUDDING YOUTH** - Adult/Comedy; 60 m
Clarissa and Eve take a shower; Roger stays in his room; Toby (Marc Malone) takes a special interest in the next door maid. Miss Morley: Maureen Knox.
- 82** **ROCKVID FOREVER**
- 83** **JACKIE GLEASON SHOW**
- 85** **MOVIE** - Comedy; 2 hrs. ○○○○○
"A Bunch of Fun." (2012) Sam Chambers

September 9, 2013

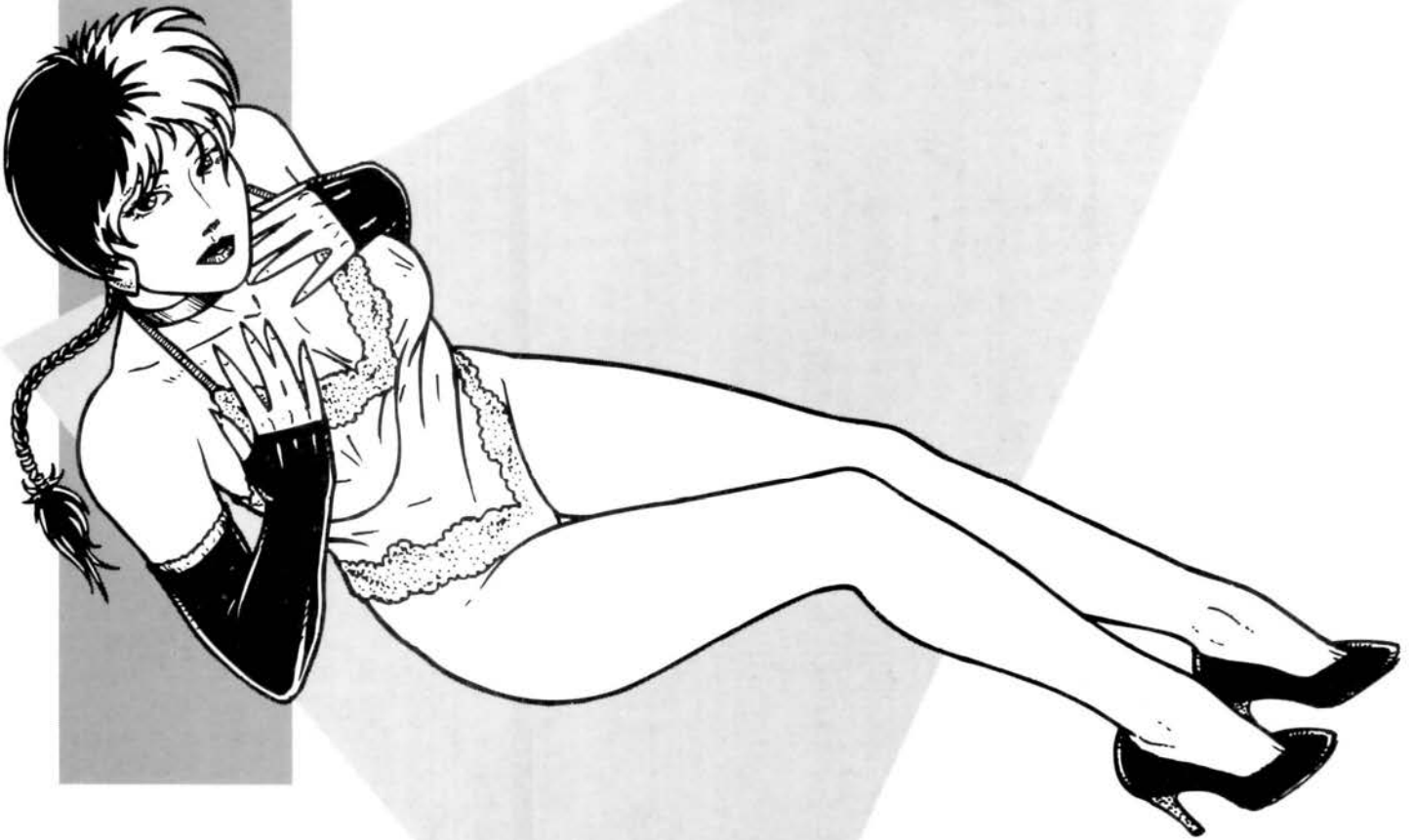
Monday

- stars in this entry in the "Bunch" series, as the poor but randy real-estate agent who tries to sell houses - and his ex-wife.
- 86** **SMURF NEWS** - Ted Smurffel
- 87** **88** **MOVIE**-Comedy; 1 hr. 40 m ○○○○○
"Clue." (1985) Familiar faces flesh out the game (with different whodunit endings); one version will be shown on each channel. Eileen Brennan, Tim Curry, Madeline Kahn, Christopher Lloyd, Michael McKean, Martin Mull, Lesley Ann Warren. Yvette: Colleen Camp.
- 90** **DEAL WITH THE DEVIL** - Game
Return: with host Sam Neill.
- 93** **MOVIE** - Comedy; 90 m ○○○○○
"Son of Porky" (1994) Joshua Bateman, Kerry DeLane, and Roger Brown star in one of the best entries in the "Porky's" series.
- 95** **SKIING**; 60 m
Stars from the world of sports and entertainment join host Michael J. Fox in the Gerald Ford Memorial Celebrity Cup, live from Vail, Colorado.
- 96** **NWA WRESTLING**; 60 m
- 97** **PLUGGED-IN HEROES**- Auto Racing

SENSTIM PROGRAMS

- MON1** **THE PROFESSIONAL** - Adventure
With Kelly Rhodes (F). Violence, Sex.
- MON2** **FILTHY RICH** - Drama
With June Nguyen (F) and Richard Hubbard (M). Sex.
- TNN** **WET DREAMS** - Adult
With Randall Morris (M) and Vera Baker (F). Sex.
- MU:1** **GLORY HUNT** - Drama
With Ramon Saxon-Venelli (M). Violence, Sex.
- MUR4** **CRIME BEAT** - Crime Drama
With Charlie Carter (M) and Tina Brikowski (F). Violence, Sex.
- RBN** **RUDE BOYS** - Adventure
With Albert Feore (M). Violence, Sex.
- NBT** **ACRYLIC ART IS FUN** - Educational
With Leo Ross (M-delete). Subject: a hummingbird.
- VN1** **THE DARK PLACES** - Thriller
With Valerie Newman (F) and Derek Jefferson (M). Violence, Sex.
- VN2** **NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT** - Educational
With Rupert Adams (M-delete).

THIS COULD BE YOU...



THIS SEXY 18 YEAR-OLD GIRL WAS A 90 YEAR-OLD GRANDMOTHER WHEN SHE ENTERED THE BRAM JHONSON NEW LIFE CLINIC. NOW SHE'S READY TO PARTY. BETTER LEGS THAN GRABLE, BETTER FIGURE THAN MARILYN, AND A PRETTIER FACE THAN BES ISIS! ALL FOR A PRICE SO REASONABLE, EVEN **YOUR** GRANDMOTHER COULD AFFORD IT!

Bram Johnson New Life Clinic.



thing from print media to holovideo; *Internal indirect*, composed of virtual realities with one way feed, or a datacoprocessor, and *direct interface*; active, two-way immersion. Except for the occasional VR interaction, only Netrunners really access direct. For those who *do go direct* there is a whole world waiting—an entire subculture exists in the Net that most never experience.

An information based society can also be *recorded*. This information, in whatever form, is only a few euro away. At any time, you can record/watch a whole season of your favorite television show (commercials included), the last game of your favorite team (even if it was last season), or a concise six-month long news story (generated by an AI). Every recorded event in the media is always available, for the right price.

Since the completion of the World-Sat network in the early 2000's, we truly live in a global society. Artificial intelligence technologies and expert systems have made language ineffective as a barrier to communication. Since the information we all share is held in a common form, there is no longer a "Tower of Babel" to separate us all.

The most common form of media in 2020 America is televideo. Television, as it was called in the previous century, is now a three hundred channel (if you can afford it), high-definition video with spatially-correct surround sound. The media corporations generate over ten million hours of programming per year. Most cable systems are interactive, so consumers can select individual programming. This allows the greatest range of sources without having to pay for the unwanted programs.

The increasing commercialization of televideo has almost reached maximum capacity. So what is left? Televideo is already reaching for the next step in its evolution—Holovideo: the first truly three-dimensional indirect information medium. It is available from most information services (with significantly higher cost). The main drawback in Holo is the expense. There is, however, a relatively inexpensive alternative: inter-

face with only a headset instead of plugs. There is some signal loss, but not much. It is not outside the realm of possibility that Televideo could be obsolete in as little as ten years.

In 2020, technology is cheap and plentiful. The cybermodem, the first real-time man-to-machine interface, was invented in 2005. Braindance was invented in 2007. The first true AI was born in 2013. In 2014, the I-G transformations redesigned how information flows, and more importantly how it is perceived by users.

None of these innovations would be possible without worldwide communications structure of the Net. With this breakthrough it was possible for all of the previous information processes to work together. The result is a new form of information exchange called Semantic Information Modelling (SIM). For the first time, ideas, concepts and feelings can be transferred wholesale. This gives us access to an entire virtual world from the comfort of our favorite chair. It is the world of hackers and netrunners, artists and musicians, fantasies and fears. It is the new wilderness, and we are the pioneers of this new era of exploration.

■ THE ELECTRONIC SUBCULTURE ■

There is a subculture within our information economy. Or, more correctly, there is another *world* out there—a virtual world. Since the earliest hackers and phone freaks, man has been attempting to forge an electronic escape from the chains of flesh; to build a new reality somewhere else. The process began with the earliest BBS and network systems. Their descendants are the Net and its various virtual realities

After the early pioneers built the systems, it was inevitable that all types of people would eventually access these networks. The problems began to arise when they discovered the possibilities inherent in a non-face to face reality. A broad range of people were exposed to the possibility that they need not be themselves.

For example, a man whose true identity is now lost constructed for himself the "online" personalit of a female psychologist and abuse counselor. The charade was successful for a number of months. When he was discovered to be an impostor, the entire on-line world was rocked. The women he had counseled, and who had trusted "her" point of view, felt intimately violated.

Admittedly, this was not the first incident of impropriety on a BBS. A sort of electronic transvestitism had been widely documented, but usually in people who had previously been involved in a transvestite lifestyle. Now, with greater freedom, artificial personalities, or persona, became the rage. While not necessarily detrimental to the on-line population as a whole, certain parts of the community, especially those who had poor interpersonal or social skills, were driven to more and more ludicrous extremes. Some practically lived their whole lives on-line.

With Collapse, on-line subculture died for almost a decade. By the time the subculture returned, we were no longer dealing with keyboards and verbal communication. We were dealing with the Net. Multi-media access and a large-scale computer modeling made it possible to change the way a user was perceived. With the advent of virtual computer-crime, Netrunners began to create new personas for themselves, from the simple two-dimensional, to amazingly complex, photorealistic, artificial people that seem to "live" within the Net.

In the 1990's, we had computer Bulletin Board Services (BBS). In 2020, we have BBS cities. These information centers are floating through the Net, usually mobile, appearing at a number of locations every week along a predetermined path. In these cities are night clubs, classrooms, bordellos and workshops. It is within these "worlds" that the clandestine exchanges of information take place. People learn the trade of Netrunning, access the help files, learn about the past, and plan for the future.

If the Collapse has ripped from our minds much of the reference for parenting

and other social structures, the Net has provided a new way of creating community. There are all kinds of new "families" within the Net, exchanging social contracts and making new emotional alliances.

There are also a lot of dangerous predators in this world as well. No one ever taught them that lying, cheating, fighting, or stealing was wrong. They have become the Netrunner gangs who roam the electronic "streets." There are clubs, police, repairmen, entertainers and shopping malls riding the space between the ether and the wires. There are Netrunner bordellos where people go to learn how to communicate—not just on a sexual level, but on a personal level as well. Always, the structures within mirror the reality without.

This is the key to our new era; a critical point that many do not understand. As animals, we seek a normalcy in our environment. As people, we have the capability to alter and create our environment. However strange it may seem, we have not yet been able to break with our frame of reference for normalcy. The electronic subculture, like all subcultures before it, is simply a micro/macrocasm of our real lives.

■ PHILOSOPHICAL CHANGES IN SOCIETY ■

Neo-Luddism: The word Luddite is late Victorian term used to describe a doctrine that fears technology. In the popular context, Luddites use terrorism and sabotage to accomplish their aims. The word itself comes from the name of a fictional hero of the times, Ned Ludd, who epitomized the doctrine by pitching his wooden shoes into a factory machine and destroying it. In reality, there was no real Ned Ludd; he was actually a mythical symbol created by the thousands of disenfranchised English textile workers who were put out of work by the advent of the steam-powered loom. While the authorities combed the murky streets of Leeds looking for a mythological "leader", the original Luddites took to the streets, burning and pillaging in an orgy of destruction that gained them a spot in the history books (but didn't get back their jobs).

It is important to remember that the true Luddite is more than just anti-technology; he is also willing to become violent in order to achieve his goals. For example, although groups like the Amish are definitely anti-technology, they are not violent, and are therefore not considered Luddites. However, groups like the cultlike Inquistors would be considered Luddites because they engage in acts of violence against users of technology.

Unlike their forebearers, Luddites of today do not wish a return to the ways of preindustrial England. These Luddites are looking for a return to a more personal society, a society that is not littered with the casualties of cyberpsychosis, the chaos of industrial waste, or the quagmire of bio-products. While factions differ within the movement, most agree that a different world order is needed.

Nihilism: The Nihilists represent those who have given up on the human race entirely. Usually dismissed as crazies, their ability to survive as a cohesive movement belies this; true Nihilists have a code, and a set of beliefs. Nihilism is usually considered a sect, or group, of Neo-Luddism. While the two groups may hold some of the same beliefs, it is safe to say they differ on one major point. Luddites believe that man still controls his collective destiny. Nihilists believe we are no longer men, but animals, slaves to the machines we have created.

Nihilism has clear tenets:

- 1: We cannot comprehend our world. The generations before us have created a world that we cannot abide. Things happen that are not controlled by men. Whether these new controllers are demons, or just machines, is irrelevant.
- 2: As rulers of this Earth, we have failed. The globe is choked with the reminders of our filth.
- 3: Nothing is sacred. We have killed all life here with careless disregard. Since we cannot stop these things, we chose to not remain a part of this society. Death is the truest form of expression, on our own terms, and our own time.

Nihilists now embrace death in all forms; the most recent is Art Terrorism. But the Nihilists of a few years ago simply wanted less technology in their lives. Only since the release of terrorist bioplagues, and alterations in DNA, have they given up hope.

Technohumanism: The Technohumanist movement is a new movement that has gained a recent following in young people, especially the academic community. This is due to the rise in a few Rocker bands that subscribe to the theory (especially the *Sinningtheteks*), as well as a great amount of support from the Net subculture.

The ideal of technohumanism holds that since Man is now controlling his own evolution, what we will become is beyond our current comprehension. There are five stages to the philosophy:

Stage one is the first stage in society. Called *The Body*, it assumes that before we were sentient, we were physical; we had arms and legs to travel, and to manipulate the world around us. We had the family group as a societal unit and tended to care for our own. It is important to note that this first stage took into account no real change; we struggled against change constantly.

The Body was, however, not truly complete until the second stage of our evolution, called *The Mind*, was reached. *The Mind* allowed Man to create a much more coherent social structure as well as a great deal of the foundations of this evolutionary philosophy. As the mind and body began to work together, man developed a tolerance for change. Though this sometimes failed, it allowed a new society to form, prizing knowledge above the physicality of the body, and allowing the development of the third stage.

The third stage, *Technology*, is not only concurrent with Toffler's *Third Wave*, but is a temporary retreat from change. As we allow the machines of our society to make the little day-to-day changes that we have grown accustomed to, we allow ourselves to resist the larger changes ahead. Many feel this is what ultimately caused the *Collapse*. It was in this stage as well that man began a second integration. Man, who was made up of the

mind and the body, now sought to graft technology onto himself. Since technology evolves at least one-hundred times as fast as man, there was a breakdown.

The nature of this breakdown is a heated topic of debate. Fully half the people who follow Technohumanism are in disagreement as to where we are in this phase. Half feel we are still in the technology stage, and therefore have a larger breakdown coming. Half feel that we have entered the fourth stage already.

The fourth stage is called the Fugue. It is a chrysalis stage; whatever we are to become will be evident after this stage has passed. Man will not fully integrate the technology he has made a part of himself until he has emerged from the Fugue. All of this change, with the acceleration of technology, will evolve within the span of a generation; forty years or a little more. It will be the mightiest change in all of human history.

The last stage in this chain is called Rebirth. It is a healing time, a time when we atone for the thoughtless things we have done to our world and its people. With Rebirth comes a sort of Nirvana; a place of shining cities where all manner of men and women may live in peace and harmony with our world, (and maybe other worlds as well).

What does this all mean? It is a positive note that like all philosophies, Technohumanists see a chance to create a future golden age, if only the world will listen. As with all great movements in our history, however, the true believers must wait, hope and maybe pray.

■ RELIGION IN AMERICA 2020 ■

The popularity of religion has fluxed greatly in recent years. A number of scandals in various religious organizations led

many to question their faith, and abandon organized churches wholesale in the 90's. But as the years of martial law and ecological disaster literally ripped through communities, religion on the parish scale once again became popular; while Bishops and Cardinals sat on high, local priests mostly ignored their rulings and helped their own communities in any way they could, even feeding and sheltering them if possible. People regained their faith. Slowly this "grass roots" movement gained popularity, and in time modernized the religious structure of America.

The Roman Catholic Church: After the 2014 reforms, the Catholic church has seen a strong surge of popularity. With a more modern view of birth control and a married priesthood, coupled with a revived image as a safe haven in times of need, the Church has enjoyed a following larger than it's had in the last fifty years.



More and more, Catholic churches have become a sign of stability in a hectic world. The church is still a world power, and the Swiss troops which the Vatican maintains as a standing army have been used, on more than one occasion, to counter Corporation-backed threats against church-owned lands. The Church, now more than ever, "looks after its own," and will go to great lengths to protect even a single member. There have been several cases of unlucky Catholics hunted by one Corporation or another, who have fled to the Church for sanctuary. They usually vanish into the structure of the church, never to be threatened again.



Judaism: Judaism in America has not fared well in the post-Collapse period. With the problems in the Mid-east, and the cessation of Israeli relations in the wake of the melt-down (Israel has never forgiven America for the lack of warning in that crisis), the Jews in America feel cut off and alone. While Israel has its own problems dealing with the fallout of the melt-down, it still offers a homeland for any Jew who can make the trip. While there aren't many synagogues still in existence, the ones that are left have a fierce and loyal following.



Islam: There has been a renaissance in the Islamic faith, the likes of which have not been seen since before the Crusades. In America this has been due to the purging of anti-ethnic terminology and doctrine. There is a mosque in almost every American city. People of all colors and backgrounds are flocking to this religion. During the collapse period, the dietary laws saved many Muslims from the septic conditions prevalent at the time. Both sects of the faith, Shitte and Suni, are here to stay. Islam is especially prevalent among the urban poor; the majority of Americans.



Buddhism: Buddhism has grown significantly in America. The change in form and doctrine are the slightest of any of the major religions. As people emigrated from India wholesale the sect of Jainism has also grown as well.



ADDITIONAL NOTES ON RELIGION

Many other religions are evident in America as well. Among Christian churches, three particular sects stand out. Since Mormons are, as a tenet of their faith, required to keep a year's supply of food for their family, this allowed a greater proportion of Mormons to survive the Collapse. Although the Mormons have been accused of being both fascist and rascist by some critics, they are, and will probably remain, one of the most powerful blocs in the West.

The Scientologists have also fared better than most., probably due to their skill in using the media and an immense amount of stored wealth. During the Collapse, large numbers of believers werelost in both Florida and California, but the sect been rebuilt through skillful advertising.

In the areas of Dixie that can actually support religion, there has been a resurgence of Fundamentalist Christianity. There are already six major Evangelical Televideo channels funded by opportunists.

FRINGE RELIGIONS

Beatified Circle of the Celts: A small sect living in isolated communities far from any city. Mainly composed of people who ran away from the fear and aggression of modern life, the Circle tries to guide it's flock back to the old celtic ways of communion with nature. Led by a group of elders called Druids, they are a peace-loving group who just wants to be left alone. They can usually be found either working on their farms or in forests (what's left of them), carrying out tree worship. Given the scarcity of wood, it is only a matter of time before a corporation tries to get rid of them.



Place the Celts in West or Pacific Northwest regions, where they'll be trying to save remaining second-growth forests and renovate acid-washed third and fourth-growth cover. They might have arrangements with certain Nomad groups to run them supplies, or to provide shelter to travellers. Good-hearted Punks (!?) might run across them being attacked by Agri-Corp goons and decide to help out.

The Immortal Pyramid:

A strange group, the members of the Pyramid believe human beings to be nothing more than particularly intelligent animals. Therefore, humans don't have souls and thus do not survive death. This religion draws heavily upon the beliefs and ideas of the ancient Egyptian pantheon, incorporating aspects of Rosicrucian and Masonic ritual, with some significance attached to the various Greek titles for academic excellence (Phi Beta Kappa, etc.). Although the ancient Egyptians considered life after death a fact, the cult has disregarded this and proclaimed the gods were actually a mix of animal and man, proving beyond a doubt that man IS an animal and nothing more.

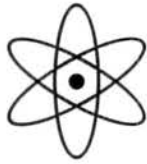
This has led to an obsession with *avoiding* death. Cult members are very cautious, always carrying/wearing various forms of protective equipment, and fleeing from any mildly dangerous situation. They are currently trying to find enough money to build an enormous data-center shaped like a pyramid. If they succeed, they will try to download their minds into the memory banks and wait in safety until someone finds a way to make them truly immortal.



Players will usually find the Pyramiders located in North-eastern Universities, There is some contact with the Digital Librarians, but it is rather acrimonious, as the Pyramiders feel that the Librarians are attempting to "exult Man's status above his true station." Players might be hired to help them locate an Egyptian artifact or as hired guns vs the Digital Librarians.



Worshippers of the Night: The Worshipers are closer to a vigilante group. Garbed in all-white armored clothing, they roam the streets at night to "protect the night's holiness against the evil that surrounds us."



Considering the night a time of rest and of spiritual purification which should be available to everyone, the Worshipers have decided to make the ultimate sacrifice and sleep in the day, thus keeping the night safe for the rest of us.

Despite their reliance on donations, the Worshipers are often funded by corporations for short periods of time. Several companies like to have the sect patrol their areas because they are less costly than mercenaries, don't require hazard pay, and will fight to the bitter end. On the other hand, they don't "work" during the day.



The Worshipers are in small groups spread nationwide. Chapters will be moved (or new chapters established) "wherever evil threatens by

night." The sect espouses a mix of Euro-Maximillist doctrine and an identification with such ancient religious knighthoods as the Hospitaliers and Templars (they are thinking of applying to the Catholic Church in a few years to be recognized as the first warrior order in over 300 years). The Worshipers could interfere with Player actions, be an unusual source of last-minute rescue, or heck, the Players might even decide to join them.

CASFG (Coalition Against the Satanic Fellowship of the Gods):

This is perhaps one of the most paranoid groups on the planet with an entire system of belief based on the assumption that a group of evil entities (gods) control the destiny of the entire human race. Fortunately, good gods exist, but in order to enable them to win, the CASFG must weaken the grip of evil on the world.

Coalition members have begun to kill various prominent persons they



believe are used as puppets by the Evil Ones. Their suicidal tactics are hard to counter by security forces; some corporations are becoming alarmed/annoyed and may start their own "counter-cleansing" procedure soon.



This is another cult that seems to have come to the U.S. from Europe and Asia. It combines aspects of Hinduism (the Phansigar/Thuggee cults), Illuminati legends, and a fictional philosophy created by an early 20th Century writer named Lovecraft. The whole mix combines into a sort of rabid anti-Nihilism. No one's quite sure how the "agents of evil gods" are identified: religious rituals, logic exercises, AI spreadsheets, or at random; all have been advanced as answers. Most people think the Coalitionists are crazy, some are afraid they're right. Players might be able to call upon them for aid vs Nihilist cults or certain types of booster gangs, but will probably have to pass various "tests" and undergo "purification." God forbid that the Coalition finds them unworthy or dangerous...

■ TRANSPORTATION ■

America today is much like it was at the turn of the century: large, sprawling metropolitan areas connected by long, dangerous roads. After the Collapse, society centralized, huddling together for protection. Before 1996, a typical region like the San Francisco Bay Area held many small cities: Hayward, Milipitas, San Jose, Oakland, Berkeley, Palo Alto. If you lived in any of these cities, you could walk to any of the others in a day's time. In some cases, it was hard to tell when you left one and entered another. Areas like these were effected the least. Other areas were not so lucky. In the Midwest and mountain areas, towns were isolated. If the local doctor died, or the local power lines went down, help was far away. Many flocked to the cities, seeking protection that the urban areas offered. This left entire counties bereft of population. This concentration of population is still the way of life to day.

FYI

PRICES FOR TRAVEL

A trip on the Maglev will cost about 100eb for a coach car, and 250eb for a first class car. The trip takes about twelve hours from coast to coast.

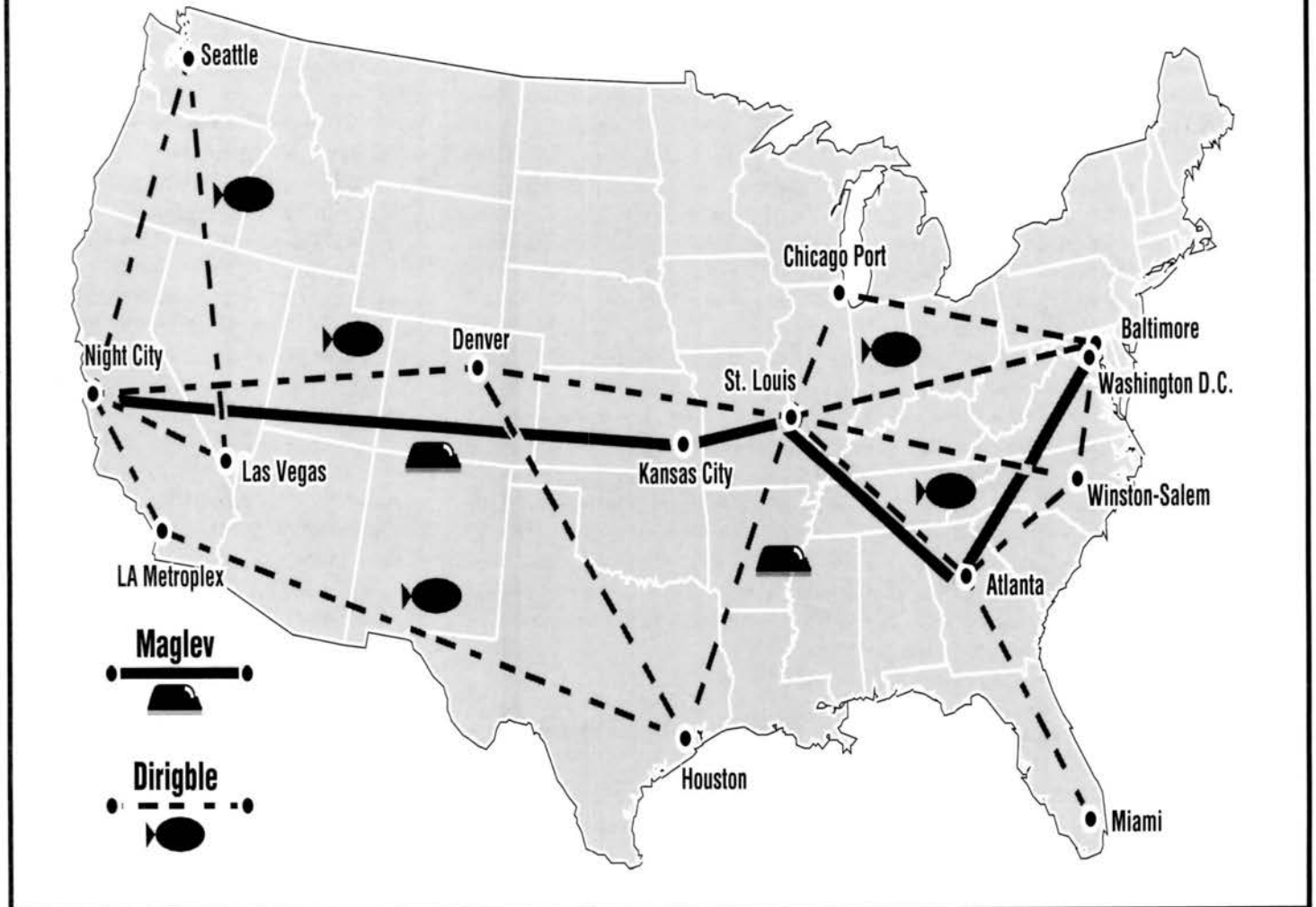
A dirigible trip will cost 300eb for an "average" ticket. For a first class ticket the cost is about 1,000-3,000eb, depending on the luxury of the carrier. The average ticket passengers are often referred to as "ballast" by the crews, and are not allowed out of their separate sections. There are rumors that these sections can be jettisoned, but there has been no conformation. The trip takes about two to five days from coast to coast, depending on the prevailing winds. The average speed a dirigible makes is much slower than its potential. In general, the longer the trip takes, the more the passengers enjoy it. (Except for the cramped folks in "Ballast") But if they wanted to make a quick trip, they could have taken the Maglev.

There is very little in the way of non-direct mass transit. If you want to go from Night City to Washington DC, you can always catch the Maglev, the bullet train that runs across the nation. But if you want to go to Lancaster, California, you've got a long walk from Los Angeles.

The Maglev was completed in 2008, and many feel its arrival ushered in a new transportation age. Built by the military for use as a rapid transportation device (when a plane was as likely to get shot down as not), the train was finished just as the rioting was winding down, and sold soon after to the Planetran company. The trip is entirely underground, and one of the safest ways to cross the country. The Maglev stops in Night City, St. Louis, Atlanta, and Washington DC.

With the outrageous cost of aircraft fuel, most jet airlines have gone under. Most jet work these days is done either by the corps, or abysmal companies offering flights between local cities in the same

Major Dirigible & Maglev Routes



region. Jets are OK if you want to fly between Night City and Seattle, but to go further than Denver, the newer Dirigible Liners are the only way to go.

With the advent of the Net, there is little need for any type of long distance travelling anymore. Now the philosophy is, if you want to travel, you must *want* to travel, so it should be as comfortable as possible. The result is the lighter-than-air ship has made a remarkable comeback. Airships have become the luxury liners of the sky, with amenities like those of the great ocean liners of the early 1900's. This is how the rich travel, in luxury and tranquility.

■ NOMADS ■

Nomad "Families" (the terms Tribe and Clan are also frequently used) first appeared in 1993, when in reaction to escalating violence, groups of displaced people formed protective alliances. By 1996, the number of homeless had jumped to 80,000,000, making Nomadism an everyday thing.

The first recorded Nomad incident involved gang harassment of a nomadic group of displaced migrant laborers (that later developed into the Aldecaldo Family) in South Central Los Angeles. The

group leader, Juan Aldecaldo, openly pleaded for Government assistance. When he was ignored, he reacted by insulting the President's maternal heritage—on national television. Similar public incidents would also occur in Atlanta and Chicago shortly before the Collapse. Some Nomad groups tried to take over cities and military facilities. Most of these were eliminated in bloody clashes with whatever authority existed to deal with them. (Some groups that attempted to control the early uprisings would soon form Packs of their own.) 60,000,000 died before the Military could regain a semblance of control in 2004, from a combi-

nation of violence, starvation and plague. It was a crisis that the Military saw coming, yet they just didn't have the resources to deal with the multiplicity of problems.

One of the most futile efforts of the military government was the Emergency Welfare Relocation Program. To receive a very minimal aid from the Government (referred to as Cot-N-Kibble), displaced persons were required to move to "training areas" (can you say concentration camps?). Many of the disenfranchised actually went to these areas expecting help.

It soon became apparent that the Government did not have even a third of the necessary resources to support the program, and people died in droves in the camps. By mid-1997, the camps had been hit by widespread revolt, as well as outbreaks of AIDS 2, Typhoid Beta complex, and general starvation. By the end of 1998, another 10,000,000 had died.

In that same year, a massive earthquake struck Los Angeles and crippled the military's hold on the region. The Government did not even have the manpower to bury the dead, or repair the state-wide damage, and was forced to hire outside labor. The Jodes, a powerful Nomad group from Oklahoma, successfully negotiated a manpower contract with the Military Consul of California, over huge protests from the regionally-native Aldecaldos family. Harassment by the Aldecaldos led to open skirmishes between the two families. The Jodes remained in the L.A. area until 2001. With their contract successfully completed, they established the idea of a competitive Nomad economy, with groups bartering their services all over the Americas.

The Government has long considered the Nomad groups a problem since its first public humiliation at the hands of the Aldecaldos. Though the Government has used Nomad manpower on several occasions since, a real set of laws pertaining to Nomads has not been established.

It is the legality issue that is most discouraging. As many as 70% of all Nomads are Zeroes. Without citizen status there is no way for them to be taxed. The Corporations, however, often need a large group of cheap

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MOST FREQUENTLY SEEN NOMAD FAMILIES

The Soldiers.

History: Col. Gregory Caspia was the commander of the Fort Ord Army base in Monterey county when the Collapse hit. The Bayside communities were hit hard, there was rioting in the streets in Monterey itself, and the entire town of Santa Cruz was nearly wiped out by spreading fires. Caspia was trying to cope with both disasters when the orders came that he was to pull his forces back to protect the small community of Carmel, which had been stocking food and supplies gathered from the surrounding county. As always, the rich were trying to protect themselves at the cost of the poor.

Caspia had always been a good soldier, but this was simply too much. His men had families in the nearby communities, and he simply couldn't leave them to die. He ordered his men to continue their efforts, and offered the mayor of Carmel a choice—either help with the relief effort, or try to make it on their own. The mayor declined, and the Army pulled out of the Carmel area. Caspia was declared a traitor, and a steep reward was offered for his death. This was broadcast to his men, in the hopes that they would turn against him.

They did not.

Caspia pulled his men and vehicles out of the base, and welcomed any civilians that wished to join the caravan. As the former soldiers left the county, the first military-based Nomad pack was born.

Structure: The Soldiers still have a great deal of military-born discipline. There are ranks and specific tasks each member must perform. The leader is called Colonel. The current Colonel is Jennifer Caspia, who inherited leadership from her father. She is a smart and capable leader, and the entire pack respects her greatly. Under Colonel Caspia, friendly contact with the Crazy Quilts has been initiated, and the two groups occasionally share operations.

Equipment: Over 200 assorted military-type vehicles, including combat AV-4's, 6's and 9's, along with ICV's (Infantry Combat Vehicles), mobile missile launchers and support units. The Soldiers are a bit light on air cover (only four Pinto VTOL aircraft), but have been known to supplement this by renting the services of the Aeropirates.

Locations: The Soldiers are usually found in NorCal and Nevada, with occasional wanderings into Arizona/New Mexico. They steer clear of most military bases, as there is still an execution order on the "deserters." The fact that this order hasn't been carried out in the almost two decades since the Collapse (despite the Government's clear ability to do so), leads some observers to the conclusion that the pack has come to some sort of covert arrangement with the Army. There's always a need for a deniable force to handle problems on the sly...

The Maxes

History: Originally a rampaging go-gang without a purpose, the Maxes entered their current phase when their leader discovered an abandoned vid-store and a complete collection of *Mad Max* tapes. With a guiding spirit to center them, the Maxes became a rampaging go-gang of posers determined to recreate all of the best parts of the most popular post-holocaust movie series. This means wrist crossbows, wild mohawks, tattooed faces, leather hockey masks and all the other trappings. The Maxes are driven to mimic the "Roadwarrior" pix in other ways, as well—since the Mel Gibson character was a hero, the Maxes consider themselves heroes too, and will occasionally descend on a town beset by other go-gangs to wipe the attackers out. They will also befriend any group of children they encounter, which has led them to ally with the Kidz on occasion. Maybe they're a menace. Maybe they're heroes. But one thing's for sure; they're entertaining!

Structure: The Leader has been bioscupted to resemble Mel Gibson, and his second in command looks like Tina

Turner. These two give the main orders, which are followed by a horde of close to 400 gangers.

Equipment: Lots of cyberbikes, trucks, paramilitary surplus, heavily armored, CHOOH2 powered automobiles. Count on homemade aircannon and flamethrowers, RPG-As and high caliber sidearms (sawed off shotguns are a favorite).

Locations: The Southwest (particularly the parts that look most like the Australian Outback).

The Technical Circuitz

History: The Cyberpunk world is held together by a vast web of electronic computer systems, cybernetic enhancement and high-tech hardware. But what happens when the techs that hold this all together go rogue, or are tossed out on the Street by a corporate employer? Answer: They run away to the Circuitz.

The Technical Circuitz is a roving band of technicians—technicians specializing in almost every type of hardware or software imaginable—travelling from place to place, dispensing high-tech solutions to insolvable problems. Circuitz “performers” might install a powergrid in one town, build a Punknaught defense force for another; then move on to construct an autofactory in a third location. Most members are techies who have been driven out of the urban zones by Corporate persecution or who have powerful enemies on the Street.

The original founders of the Circuitz were a group of EBM techs who attempted to start their own small consulting firm in violation of their Lifetime Contracts. A preemptive strike by EBM enforcement teams decimated almost half of the firm in its first week of operations; the remaining members fled into the desert and hid themselves among the Nomad packs there. Over time, other renegades joined this core group until it had expanded to its current (somewhat scattered) membership of over a thousand members.

Structure: About ten “Guilds”, based around particular types of tech (Cybertech Guild, Electronics Guild,

Mechanix Guild, etc.). A Council made up of the leaders of each Guild directs operations and bids jobs.

Equipment: Over two dozen “punknaught” style fan vehicles, with autofactories and labs scattered among the ten largest. SAMs and railguns are the main protection, although there is also a screen of AV’s and rotorcraft patrolling the perimeter at any time. About 500 people live on the remaining “air-rafts”, including pets, children and elderly.

Locations: The Rustbelt, particularly around the Chicago-Cincinnati-Pittsburgh area. Each year, the Circuitz makes a trek to the Southwest to winter.

The Kidz.

History: Imagine almost a thousand screaming cyberpunk teeners, packed into a horde of mini-bikes, sportsters and stolen recreational vehicles. That’s the Kidz. The original core of this pack is derived from a group which broke out of the Nevada State Juvenile Reclamation Authority in 2018. (Notorious for its sadistic enforcement practices and brainwashing techniques, the Authority was a favored “dumping ground” in the early 2000’s for Corporates with so-called “uncontrollable” children.) Over the years, the Kidz have become a magnet for all types of abused, disturbed and neglected children, most of them between ten and eighteen years of age.

Structure: Very little. What leaders exist are chosen more or less by acclamation, and rule only for the duration of a particular emergency. Leaders tend to be very bright, self-directed and prone to violent acts against all adults (whom they view as the Enemy).

Equipment: Mostly the sort of small cars found in any urban zone, with sports bikes, RVs and so on. No aerodynes, although rotorwings have been spotted occasionally. Handguns and monoblades are common; the Kidz greatest strength is in numbers.

Locations: Throughout the Western states, especially in the Free States of California. The Kidz are usually within a hundred miles of a large urban area.

Kaptin Cody and his Aeropirates

History: When the great jet aircraft of the 1990’s ran into the fuel crunch of the early 2000’s, there was a major shift in the style of air transportation over the U.S. One of the most notable changes was the re-birth of the lighter-than-air vehicle; with the advanced fly-by-wire computers and super alloys of the *Cyberpunk Age*, these massive airships once again became a common sight.

But unlike your average jumbo jet, these slow moving sky-ships were far easier to overtake and hijack. Soon, roving bands of AV, rotorcraft and light VTOL aircraft began to engage in commerce raiding on a scale reminiscent of the pirates of old. Sweeping in from cloud cover, these modern-day buccaneers stripped away cargos, took hostages and occasionally even commandeered entire airships. One of the most notorious of these aeronautical privateers is Kaptin Cody and the extended gang/family known as his Aeropirates. The Aeropirates operate from three large Sky Queen aeroliner retrofitted with interior catwalks and launching decks, and are the scourge of the skies from Maine to Mexico.

Structure: Something like an old-fashioned pirate crew, with kids and old people holding down support tasks (refuelling, repair, etc.). The Kaptin is in charge of this ragtag fleet, while each aeroliner has a main commander to handle operations. Each aeroliner also supports a “wing” of “boarders”; an assemblage of airworthy vehicles used to swoop down on prey.

Equipment: There are over 300 known Aeropirates, not including children and elderly. In addition, Kaptin Cody also has access to three Sky Queen aeroliner, with up to 100 assorted airworthy AV’s, gliders, rotorcraft and converted ad-blimps. Weapons include a mix of light and heavy autoweapons, miniguns, some bombs, and a lot of surface-to-air/air-to-air missiles mounted in and around the aeroliner.

Locations: Anywhere in the U.S., although the Great Plains and Southern/Western Canada appear to be favorite locations. It appears that Cody

works for more than himself on occasion, and there's speculation that the remaining government of Canada (along with several American agri-corps) trades him sanctuary in return for services.

The Party

History: *If you're going to Party, then PARTY!* This may have been the basic idea behind this extended combination rave and Dead-head fantasy trip. Originally organized by twenty diehard *Samurai* fans who caravanned to the last Silverhand-Eurodyne concert in 2010, the Party turned out to be such a success that it has continued ever since. The current incarnation follows no set path, but veers wildly from city to city as the mood strikes, using an assortment of punknaughts, RV's, commandeered ad blimps and small ships (yachts, etc.). As most of the Partiers come from extremely wealthy backgrounds, the Party's resource level is subject to whim, and the tone can shift from techno-pop rave to virtual power-party in moments. Drugs, synth, sex and mega-violence are always a staple, but whatever's in fashion at the moment will also be provided.

Structure: Whoever has money makes sure there's enough food, drugs and music to keep going. There is no organization, just a lot of random ideas.

Equipment: Whatever works.

Locations: Just about anywhere. The Party has been moved to Fiji, to Paris, to Wisconsin, to the Gobi Desert and even Near Orbit. Only the players and the vehicles change. Sessions are even extended into the Net as a virtual Party.

The Digital Librarians

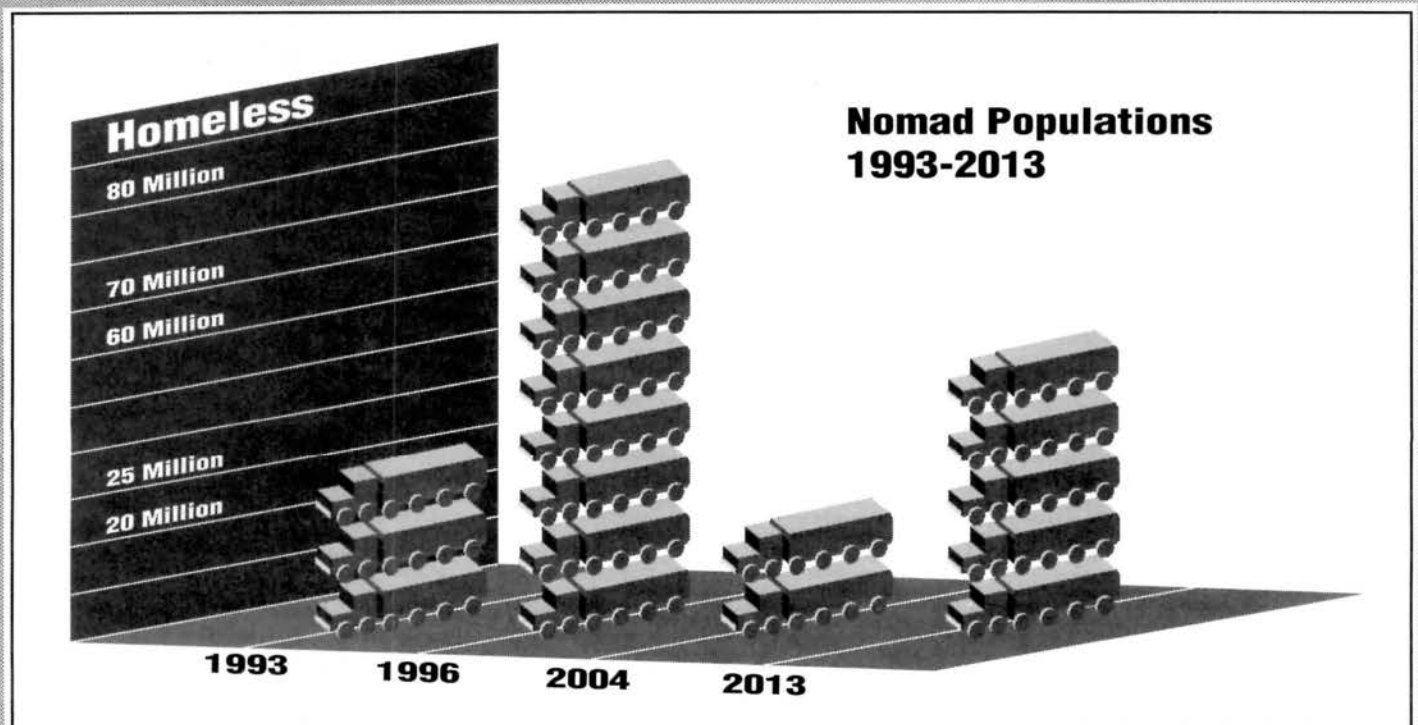
History: The sign engraved over the main hoverfan "building" of the Digital Library says *"So That Knowledge Will Not Perish From the Earth."* In a nutshell, that describes the Digital Librarians; a loose family pack of university professors, librarians, seminarians and collectors who roam the badlands of the balkanized U.S. The Librarians' mission is simple: collect and store copies of every single record, book, tape, compact disk, datachip and video every produced, then store it in the massive computerbank of their central Library. The flip side to this is, if you need to find some type of published information, the

Digital Librarians probably have it, and will freely give it to you.

Structure: The Head Librarian is ex-University of Free California/Berkeley Professor John Roger Mortensen, who deserted the campus in 2011 and rounded up various other interested members as part of his "Knowledge Project". The Faculty consists of a rotating Board of teachers and collectors which changes yearly. People like ex-Jesuit social commentator, Jonathan "Jack" Maximum, and political reporter Gary Stafford, are regular visitors to the group.

Equipment: Approximately 30 assorted R.V.-type vehicles and one large "punknaught"-style Main Library. This unit carries the core of a huge AI-based system (called Socrates); its own electro-thermal isotope powerplant, and an armor SP rating of 100 (capable of taking a direct missile hit). Armaments include Scorpion SAM launchers and assorted small arms.

Locations: Generally found throughout the U.S., enroute to major cities where there are universities. Prime stops include University of FC Berkeley, USC, MIT, Cal Tech and the Princeton Institute in New Jersey.



semi-skilled labor to help in its own agendas. Whole cities have been abandoned or wrecked, and millions of acres of land have to be reclaimed. The Corporations know that hiring local labor would weigh them down. The necessary bribes and infrastructure supports makes hiring local equal to buying the local government. So it is much cheaper to hire Nomad scabs. Another strong point was the time factor. The Nomads understand that this work is temporary. They have no illusions of corporate retirement centers, or yearly pay increases. As a matter of fact, most Nomads are paid "in kind": goods and services are traded for labor. Almost no cash changes hands. This has led to a number of violent periods, but the Corporations usually win out.

Even the Government had to use Nomad groups after they realized that recommitting too many troops in the SouthAm would cause a loss of control in America. A Clan from the Detroit area served so well in Columbia and Ecuador that, upon returning in 2010, they formed a mercenary unit, Motor Military Ventures. For the Motor Family, and the others who would go to the SouthAm, getting home was no easy task. After the government had admitted defeat in the war, no one knew what to do. Not only was the Government strapped for cash at home, they now had to transport almost 1,000,000 people back to the United States. Most of these people were Nomads. The government wasn't happy about hiring Nomad labor for the war in the first place. They were also opposed to the expense of bringing them home. Almost 500,000 American Nomads were simply marooned in the SouthAm. What was called "The Long Walk" had begun.

From Panama City to the Rio Grande, they walked, or rode, or drove, stealing and pillaging their way through Central America and Mexico. It may have started as an orderly military retreat. It ended, however, as a starved and angry mob. By the time relief workers surveyed the scene, they had become animals. At the end of their journey there were only about 60,000 people left. The rest lay dead in the jungle.

There is an interesting dichotomy between the Nomad groups from about 2010 to 2015. Both sides saw the day coming when their services would not be needed. The two sides reacted very differently. One side would welcome the return to a normal lifestyle, and the chance to settle. Others, many of whom knew no other life, reacted with a violent struggle of their own that continues today.

■ THE ROCKER MOVEMENT ■

In America today it is very hard to picture a time when we did not have a real political rock scene. The ignorance and simple hedonism of race, sex, drugs, Satanism, violence, and knee-jerk liberalism was the garbage that led to massive music sales for most of the eighties and nineties. Not so, the 2020's— whether civil disobedience or violent revolution, the Rocker movement has shown an intensity of artistic commitment nearly unparalleled in human history. Some have achieved a great deal. Others have not. The only reason that Rockers don't have a greater effect is probably an inability to stay alive long enough to achieve their goals.

If the term Rockerboy defines the level of commitment involved in getting the message to the people, then the first Rockerboy would be James "Rockerboy" Manson. Manson is often considered the definitive Rocker because his death in 1997 defined the term. Although Manson's career was mediocre at best, it can be argued that his real accomplishment was to expose the opposition of those in power to the Rocker ideal. Like many other performers of the period, Manson was afraid to perform in America because of death threats by the military government. These threats, in fact, were one of the very issues being discussed at the Amnesty International concert, where Manson was bloodily (and publically) clubbed to death by armed British Security thugs. His death galvanized a whole generation of people to become Rockers in their own right.

The Amnesty incident would force many to take sides almost immediately.

One of the first groups to come out of "the political closet" was *Justifiable Homicide*. Their first album, released in 1998, and titled *Jury Trial* was a great success both commercially and as a Rocker statement. Many modern Rockers recall their parents playing the disk when they were very young. The message of *Jury Trial* was one of nostalgia; a real longing for the now defunct criminal justice system (it seems that Barry Miyung, the lead vocalist and songwriter, had lost a good part of his family to the military government, executed for what he considered trumped up, trivial looting charges). It was more than ten years before *Justifiable Homicide* released their second album. Those years were spent running from the Government.

Late in 1999, a group of militant Catholic Rockers called the *Watchmen* released two albums, *Sign of the Times* and *Revelation*. The albums had strong political content and fabulous musicianship. Even the harshest critics agreed that the group was headed for stardom. Then, in April of 2000, all six members of the band were tried in absentia, for crimes against the Government, and were arrested six weeks later by the USMG, accused of treason, espionage, terrorism, transportation of illegal war material, possession of controlled substances with intent to distribute—sixty-two charges in all.

It had been determined by reactionary members of the Government that the *Watchmen* were attempting to subvert a large group of citizens. When "apprehended," instead of being executed, the members of the band were incarcerated at Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary, where they stayed for almost thirteen years. Beginning with the *Watchmen* trial, the military government made sure that volatile Rockers had short careers. Until the return to civilian rule, no one was safe. The period between 1999 and 2009 is called the lost decade by many Rocker historians. Though there were many powerful Rockers in this period, their careers were short lived.

After the return to civilian government in 2008, the music scene virtually exploded, with Johnny Silverhand and Kerry



Eurodyne leading the charge with the band *Samurai*. Since 2006, the band has released six albums. Three were studio work, and the other three were concerts and jam sessions optioned by their label, Universal Records. The band broke up in early 2008, but that was not the end for *Samurai*. Silverhand and Eurodyne would both have huge solo careers. Silverhand would become the new definition of Rockerboy. It was not that the “new” Rockerboy was any less committed to the idea of art over life; the new generation simply was smart enough to stay alive.

Johnny Silverhand released six albums of his own between 2008 and 2020. None was more provocative or more respected than his first, the 2009 release *SINS of Your Brother*. After an unsuccessful blackmail attempt by a rival recording company, Silverhand chose to go public about his desertion from the USMC. The brutal honesty about the

real causes of the wars, the lies, and the cyborg program led to the public acceptance of those dispossessed. It also hailed the return of the concept album as an art form.

The lost nineties band, *Justifiable Homicide*, had been hiding out in Mexico City for almost six years. After tiring of the constant pursuit by thugs of the military government, the band had gone to work playing the rough crowds of construction workers. Mexico City was being rebuilt and a large portion of the workforce were American Nomads, so the band had a following. By 2011, however, the band was on a slow downward spiral. It was only a matter of time before they burned out.

Bes Isis was in town doing a piece on the Nomad underground. She was in the bar having a drink, talking with the band, when an emaciated sixteen year-old kid walked into the bar and fell flat. Looking outside, the band found a military-issue

cycle. Revived by Bes Isis, he told the story of six hundred thousand people marooned in the SouthAm. Some of them were trying to get out by WALKING almost three thousand miles to get home.

The story was well-documented, and Bes Isis was nominated for a Pulitzer. The members of *Justifiable Homicide* stole six truckloads of perishables and supplies and went to meet the Nomads who had begun “The Long Walk.” The band, and Isis as well, joined in the Walk. For six months the band lived and worked with the Nomads. Two members died in the violent clashes along the way.

These experiences went into *Justifiable Homicide*’s second major label release, *The Long Walk*, released in January 2012. The album catapulted the band back into the limelight. However, the album also sparked the wrath of the new Government. The band was in the crosshairs again.

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INTERVIEW

SABLE AND THE BABIES

BY JADE SHADE

In 2016, the State of Florida liberated a chunk of precious Everglades land. Almost immediately it found its way to a company owned by an executive assistant to the governor. When the machinery came in they were opposed only by the presence of a small, impromptu concert, perhaps 100 people. Nothing Southern Arcologies security couldn't handle. No one recorded the music. All that **was** recorded is that the crowd fell on the SARC workers resulting in the death of eight rioters. It was the first **Sable and the Babies** Concert.

Two years ago, April 8th, the word on the street was that the hip place to be was Ciudad de las Pulgas, a cardboard city on the wrong side of the Texas border. Ciudad De Las Pulgas, Sable and the Babies are playing, maybe there's going to be action. When the day came there were 13,000 refugees, 5000 people looking for a good time and about 1000 professionals. I never asked who paid them. And there was the press. Like me. By the time the corporate army showed up the music was going down just fine, the children and viejos were moved to the center toward the stage and I saw a solo with a silver chrome hook start tearing the tops off cases of automatic weapons. It was inevitable that somebody would want to party. All in all, about 200 people died, including the guy on the synthesizers, Richard "Red"

Aguilar. And the press had their story. Meanwhile alot of politicians found it useful to be seen south of the border spreading some español around and the Picken-Garcia Resettlement Act almost passed. Almost...

Sable: lead vocals and synthizer magic. Merv Honeywell: drummer. Spike O'Rourke: wrangler of freelance horns and winds and possessor of the best bass guitar synth-software packages in Musicland. Possum Falwall in ratty grey tech coveralls: stage director, keeping the Babies' music mobile and hot under fire. Toad Patterson: unlike the rest of the renegades he is the picture of health and well-being. Maybe it's because he's only been lovin' the lead guitar for the Babies since last October when Dwayne Pell was arrested in a rainforest in Sumatra. Oh yes, and four

people with small precise guns and bad attitudes.

JADE: The Babies seem to have everything but a numbers man of their own. Why no fixer in the outfit?

TOAD: If the Babies had a fixer, he, or she, would have to do alot of advance work. Checking out security, stirring up the locals, arranging for equipment, feeling out the opposition forces. Someone like that would need to be very, very anonymous.

JADE: So you really do think of it that way. The opposition forces...

TOAD: Sure. That's the point. In conventional warfare one side gets more powerful arms and that starts escalation. In our war we take in less arms and try to bring them down to our level. We go out on the high wire protected only by the big net of public opinion. That's why you're here.

SABLE: We realized that the only way a handful of people could affect an environmental situation was to create direct confrontation. The Babies weren't the first to do it. I think the first was Greenpeace in the 1960s or '70s. Direct confrontation over whaling. To my knowledge the Babies were the first musical group to do it. Our original plan was to be totally pacifist. No weapons, no protection. And I still believed that until Red died.

JADE: And yet the violence of Babies concerts has begun to draw fire from areas that used to be friendly. The records say that in the four years that the Babies have been giving concerts over 900 people have died.

SABLE: It does happen. I'm sorry about that. But I doubt there's anybody who goes half-way 'round the world for a concert who doesn't know the score. These people would be insulted if I took responsibility for their safety. They consciously come out to put their life on the line, whether it's toxics, destruction of wild lands, political freedoms, manufacturer responsibility, or whatever, those people are willing to stand and die and I'm in no position to say that I can and they can't. We don't have any better protection than they do. The people we bring along for protection are instructed to protect everyone, to think in terms of the entire concert. And if people don't want to believe that, well, we paid our dues in Mexico.

JADE: O.K., spreading the word. All Babies concerts are free. All you have to do is get there. So who pays the bills?

TOAD: Well, there's the the records and about 85% is donations. A lot of people think that the records are total pirates but that's not true. We don't hire anyone to record but almost invariably somebody shows up there with a portable studio setup and we jack them in for a cut.

POSSUM: You're makin' it sound a little too easy. Most of the conditions are hellish if not down-right hostile. If you blow something, you can forget sending somebody out for a replacement. Usually it's so humid that your equipment sweats. The local government confiscates anything they don't understand or that they take a shine to. You have no second chance.

JADE: Why haven't the Babies recorded albums like other bands?

POSSUM: It's not really a money thing as some people think. For a thousand dollars I can do the recording in your living room. But if you do it you either

have to form your own business branch to deal with fabrication and distribution, or you have to link up with another company who, from that point, has control of your music.

JADE: I've heard you're supposed to be doing a music score for a vid or something.

SABLE: That's just one side-trip. We're glad for additional visibility, but we don't want to turn into one of those mass conscience bands; that makes everybody feel politically aware by going to the concert and buying the album.

JADE: How many gigs did you do this year?

SABLE: Only three, because we did Sumatra, Armenia, and Kampuchea. Those were lousy set-ups. In Armenia, the government pulled our visas at the last minute and we went in under the wire, so to speak. I don't like to do that because it burns your bridges with the government, usually. I didn't expect nearly the static we got there. I always say that the harder they fight, the more I know I'm doing something right. We got terrific press on that, but sometimes it makes you feel more like a tactical team than musicians.

JADE: You use a lot of black box instruments. Is this choice, or is it just easier to get in-and-out in a hurry?

POSSUM: The sound quality on the boxes is as good as the real thing. Most of them are commercial products that I've been able to tweak in my spare time. Not only is sound quality as good, but I can usually get a wider range of sound from boxes than I can from the original. They also swap parts real well and in some tight straits I've been able to pass them off as computer equipment donated to schools in under-privileged coun-

tries. Now if I can separate Toad from his Gibson....

TOAD: Fat chance. I'm going to get these good people into a studio. They all've become so shell-shocked that they've forgotten the joys of making music just to make music.

SABLE: This is about justice and wisdom and compelling force. Everything else has had to go. We use music because it brings something out in people and can raise them above themselves.

JADE: Toad, you're a recent addition to the Babies. You had to know that joining up would mean living on the run. Why did you join?

TOAD: It should have been a very difficult decision, especially since I have a wife and family that I love very much. But I always admired what the Babies were doing and then I heard a bad recording of **Suite For A Cloud Forest** and I couldn't kid myself that what they were doing wasn't music. Here I was, living on a corporate sponsorship, having to submit my music to my sponsor for creative control, having to go to the right corp parties, while living very well from a material viewpoint. My wife and I went to a few Babies gigs. We were in Sumatra. When I heard that Pell was going to be unavailable for awhile, I approached the right connections to contact Sable. Sable told me my family could be covered, so I went. When I look at my kids and think about the responsibility I have for their world, I know I made the right decision.

SABLE: We have to go now.

JADE: Can you tell me where the next gig is?

SABLE: The word will be on the street.

—**ROCKERBOY Magazine, December**

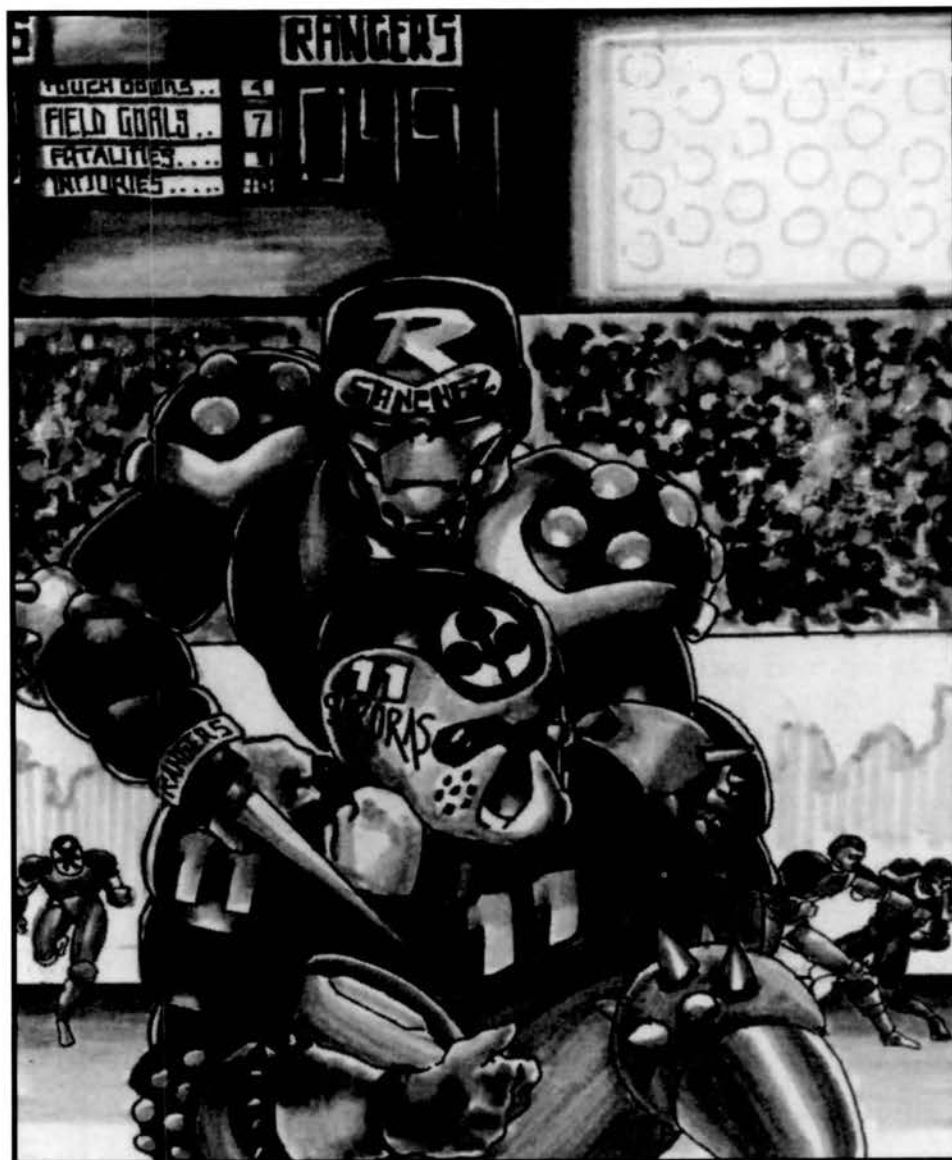
Continued from page 41

2012 was a big year in the Rocker movement. It was the year of the Silverhand-inspired Arasaka riot in Night City, in which seventeen people died in the most costly incident of Rocker vandalism to date. The Watchmen were released from prison, having spent the last five years in braindance. Their first new album was entitled **Betrayed**. It was considered a failure until six months later—when the entire band was assassinated by a Swiss Solo who was rumored to be a member of the Vatican Secret Police.

Late in the year, Wax Trax Records, an ailing independent label, signed *The Sinningtheteks*. They were the first real grindtek band, ringing in the new year with **Full Leather Jacket**. The album celebrated the gang culture, and was the first artistic expression of the Technohumanist movement. The “Sinns” were the first to use interface-controlled sampling and mixing live. The sounds of everything violent, from bone saws to the subsonic hum of AV engines, were in the mix. Boosters and Beavers alike bought into the lifestyle. The first single (oddly enough, sung by the band’s manager, the now-famous promoter, Vampyre Elton) “Violent Hickey,” set off a wave of killings wherever the band played. The band’s look—half-chromed bodies with rippers and sharkgrin vampire implants—is still fashionable today.

The Sinns second album was released in 2015. Entitled **I AM THE MACHINE**, it clarified the philosophical points of Technohumanism. The album was much less openly violent, due to the entire band’s intensive therapy. It was also a retrospective of the Grindtek sound, a descendent of the eighties’ Gothic, Industrial, and Angst-styles, all bled together and spat out against a wall of pain. Elements of the pioneers—*Sisters of Mercy*, *Joy Division*, *Ministry*, *Kraftwerk*, *Consolidated*, *Front 242*, *The Smiths*, *This Mortal Coil*, and *Nine Inch Nails*—many of the groups Wax Trax had made famous—were all sampled and put in the mix.

In 2016, Rockers moved back from preaching to protest. With the advent of nanotechnology in the general population terrifying many people, *Stranger Inside Me*



(SIM), a band specifically targeted to the anti-biotech audience, released the disk **Humanity**. Songs like “Bright White Smile”, “Every Fourth Child”, and “Helix” told the real story: biotech takes away from our humanity and makes us something else. As a result, some people still won’t eat government-inspected kibble. In the course of their 2017 American tour, all four members were killed or maimed.

2017 was mysteriously quiet in the music business. It turned out to be the calm before the storm. By April of 2018 the Rocker world shook on its foundations. DMS/Virtual, the first commercial braindance label, released the debut disk of **KIDROK**. A fourteen year-old child

prodigy, legend has it that **KIDROK** was found wandering the research complex at DMS Manhattan. He asked to be a Rocker and said he could operate an OmniMax (a fifteen thousand eurodollar, state-of-the-art, interface sampling board). When Kill Webster, DMS’ head tech, hooked him up, the kid made history. The disk is only eighteen minutes long, but the intensity (especially the thirty-three second nightmare scene) is unparalleled. All eighteen minutes are one “song”, entitled **KIDROK’S Bleeding Soul**.

Braindance is too expensive to be a high-penetration market tool as yet. But **KIDROK**, and the several other artists in the field, will someday be a force to reckon with.

■ SPORTS IN THE HOME OF THE BRAVE ■

Like all things in American life, sports have also changed. In the nineties, the professional sports industry was arguably the most powerful in the world. Sports teams were generating over 100 billion per annum in media revenues. The players were setting styles and trends worldwide.

“Is it the shoes?” (Spyke Lee to Michael Jordan, Nike 1990) “To be decided in Barcelona...” (Dan and Dave, Reebok 1992)

The most influential and talented of 20th Century athletes could receive over 50 million in compensation per year; not only salary, which usually only accounted for one-half to one-tenth of the players income, but wildly lucrative endorsement contracts as well. To attain the physical prowess necessary, athletes drove themselves to insane lengths. In many cases they were driven from birth, by parents on the brink, by coaches, by peers, and by omnipresent media ideals. They were tortured psychologically, and injected with primitive steroids and hormones; anything to drive them towards perfection. When their careers ended, these athletes were often left crippled or sometimes crazy; such was the mindset of professional athletics in the 1990's. Needless to say, the system was hugely destructive.

At the '93-'94 Super Bowl, all pretense of the “drug-free” arena of professional sports was pushed aside. Six players died in the game; causes ranged from aneurysm to suicide (one player suffered a psychotic breakdown). Moments before the Collapse, the era of augmented sports had begun.

Then came the Collapse. In America, pro sports was died for a decade. But as people changed, so did their tastes in sports; violent pastimes became the American obsession. After the martial government reestablished order, about 2002, there was a need to entertain people, and the concept of augmented sports was refined to its modern look.

The huge stadiums of the pre-Collapse are mostly gone today, ruins at best, built on cheap, lowlying land. Some that survived served as fortresses, like the Arrowhead complex in Kansas City; or command posts and jails during the martial-law period, like Giants stadium in New York. Others were inundated by swamp, or cannibalized by the rebuilders of America. These are the only reminders of the “golden age” of professional sports.

“Sanchez goes in for the score... He fakes Antonio... Wiecek is going for the block... Sanchez shoots... Wiecek makes the save, and what a beautiful play. The young fullback's foot actually penetrates the ribcage. We'll pause for a commercial.”

—Chenga Mbutu,
Net54 Sports

The concept of “classical” sports died with the last Olympics in 1992. Since then, most international sports have become more violent than ever (although not to the extremes of the U.S.). The professional sports industry of the information age needed to be truly global, truly brutal, and truly cathartic for a population of almost five billion humans. It had to be different on a massive scale.

International Soccer was the only sport followed globally, but since nationalism was dead in the greater sense, the corporations took over sponsorship of games. Teams like the Arasaka Sakuras, The Militech Rangers, and the OrbAir Flyers not only generated valuable public-relations; they made money as well. The first augmented players were added for the 2006 season. By 2008, so much of the game was cybernetic that the ball had to be redesigned to handle 500 psi impacts. In 2012, the design was changed again, to a smaller solid design that could both withstand the pressures of augmented play and allow more finesse.

Football was the king of American sports before the Collapse. It is regaining popularity in 2020. The huge eleven-man teams of the old days have been streamlined for modern times; the huge

stadiums are no longer cost-efficient. The players, however, remain expendable; modern football is the most violent sanctioned sport of 2020.

As far as the players are concerned, augmentation is the rule. Only full-conversion cyborgs and linear frames are disallowed. Full-body armor/plating is often adorned with spikes, and not just for show either. Fatalities are a must for big ratings in 2020; these men (and women) are eager to please. All of this cyberware is usually quick-change. Constant use would cause a much greater percentage of psychosis than is already present, and that is no small amount.

Modern football is not, however it may first appear, a game of brute force and cybernetics. It is a game of finesse and style. If a player gets hit it is usually messy; so the object is not to get hit (sort of like life). The other changes in the rules make this even more difficult.

The field size has been cut in half with the goal depth shortened to five meters. Teams are seven-man, with a maximum roster of eighteen. The “uprights” are only one-quarter their original width, though only half as tall. Extra points are a thing of the past, as are roughing penalties. The field is surrounded by a five-meter concrete wall, and there is no “out-of-bounds”. A touchdown is worth five points. A field goal is worth two points. There are no other ways to score.

There are still many similarities. The game still lasts an hour, broken into halves and quarters. The skills of passing, rushing, blocking, and blitzing are still instrumental in winning. Finally, even made of optical yellow ballistic nylon (reinforced to 60SP, it's not very flexible), the ball still looks the same. Other than the addition of violence, a fan of fifty-years ago would have little problem following the game.

Sadly, though, football is the most violent sanctioned sport, it is by no means the only violent sport, and may be considered tame compared to some of the gang sports of 2020. As the gang culture (and to a lesser degree the Nomads as well) faces their enemies, they have

come to a conclusion. With police and corporations breathing down their necks, killing each other is not always the best way to resolve disputes. Only the gravest offenses should lead to all-out wars. This enlightened thinking has created a number of new sports, some of which have found popular support. It's not a new idea; Native Americans long ago perfected the art of "counting coup", when real violence was too extreme.

Gang sports are pretty disorganized. There are usually no referees, and rarely any organized teams. If there are referees, they're usually armed with assault rifles, and are attending only to settle some greater dispute. Teams are small, usually only four or five players. Occasionally, they may be increased in size, especially if multiple gangs (or nomad families) are involved. There is no time limit, the game is over only when one team cannot continue. The distinction in violence is very clear. The idea is to temporarily incapacitate the other team. Open killing is forbidden, intentional maiming is an even greater taboo. These sports are collectively known as "sticking".

The term sticking is just coming into common usage. It is taken from the similarity of all these sports' equipment. Usually, each player carries what is collectively known as a stick. Explaining all the different permutations of sticking would take too much space; one will have to suffice.

The gangs of SoCal usually resolve the more petty disputes with a sport that they refer to as "stickball". There are two six-player teams. Each team has a goalie, three forwards, and two backs. The field is usually a warehouse, or enclosed space of some kind; not larger than about thirty meters square. There are as many goals as there are teams (usually only two, but sometimes four). Each goal is the triangle formed by a corner, with a depth of three meters. The ball is about the size of a twentieth-century softball; it is nylon covered with a rubber-wrapped steel core, and weighs one kilo. Each player wears a facemask/helmet, and carries a "stick". Some of the more organized groups even have SP4 nylux body suits.

The helmet/facemask serves three purposes. First, it identifies which team the player is on, being adorned with the logo or symbol of the team. Second, it protects the identities of the players, preventing back-alley reprisals. (If worn, the bodysuit will cover any other distinguishing marks.) Lastly, it protects the players' head with SP8 all-around.

The "stick" is a cross between a lacrosse raquet and a cudgel. It is one-and-a-half meters long, five centimeters in width. There is a fifteen centimeter by ten centimeter cup on one end; a fifteen centimeter, one-and-a-half kilogram sphere on the other. The stick is perfectly balanced (the weighted-end will add 2d6 to regular strike damage, the cup-end will add 1d6).

To score, the ball must hit two of the three goal-triangles in a single ricochet. If the ball is hit by, or hits, a player during the ricochet then the goal is not counted. The goal is three meters high, and three meters on each side. In more advanced games, the goal may be electronically keyed to a transmitter in the ball. The goalie must defend from the goal line to the ten meter line. The goalie may not step into the goal itself, and must try to keep the other players from the goal as well.

To begin the game, the three forwards from each team face-off in a hex. The ball is dropped from the roof of the field by a referee, or a neutral observer. Each player then attempts to catch the ball in their stick, after it has bounced. After the ball is caught it must be passed to one of the backs. Only the backs may pass the ball with their hands. The backs consequently, have no sticks. If any other player wishes to pass, or catch, he/she must use the sticks; that is, the forwards and the goalies. The backs then attempt to throw the ball to one of the forwards, who are attempting to evade the defending backs and goalie. The backs are also restricted to an area twenty meters from the goal.

There are several other permutations to the game. Violence is, however, the most common. The different plays all involve violence, and the main idea is putting the defending players out of action. Since each of the players is

armored, especially on the head, they are usually only stunned for a few moments. Because the sides are even, the only real way to score is to eliminate one of the defending players. Unless the attacking team is very, very good.

Many of the old sports are still around, but they are in scattered and disconcerted states. Golf is still played by some executives, but if you don't play combat handball then you aren't "in". Baseball is still a primarily unaugmented sport, there is almost no cyberware usage at all. The "American pastime" is not so popular anymore, though in Asia it is still the leading sport of young people. So far, it seems that most of the world's (and consequently, all of America's) diversions, are based around violence. It could be due to the erosion of socialization skills, it could be just a fad. For now, we watch, and spend, and watch some more.

DEATH SPORTS AND THE ECONOMIC FACTOR

The area of combat sports (and the so-called death sports) is still thankfully rare for several reasons. The most pressing of these is money. Even in 2020, sports is big business. It may not have reached the absurd levels of the early 1990's, but this does not mean that the forces of capitalism are impotent.

As a matter of fact, the global popularity of augmented soccer and football constitute a stronger rationale for high salaries; after all, these players are world heroes, not just national ones.

How can these athletes justify their salaries? Endorsements. The corporations that control these athletes have a monopoly on a huge sector of market-share. If these players do not have long and illustrious careers, then they cannot recoup their respective companies' capital investment. Sports stars hock everything from shoes to shuttles, so a short career is not a corporate consideration.

This does not mean that players don't die; they do. A study by the NRCC in 2017 showed that fully seventy-five percent of the players in augmented football will not survive five active seasons. The advances in medical technology have reduced most deaths (two per game is the national average) to mere maiming, followed by a long

recovery and training period. Enough irreparable brain damage occurs over time, though; there are even rumors that some players are actually brain-dead; living on chipped routines that keep them moving and playing under AI control.

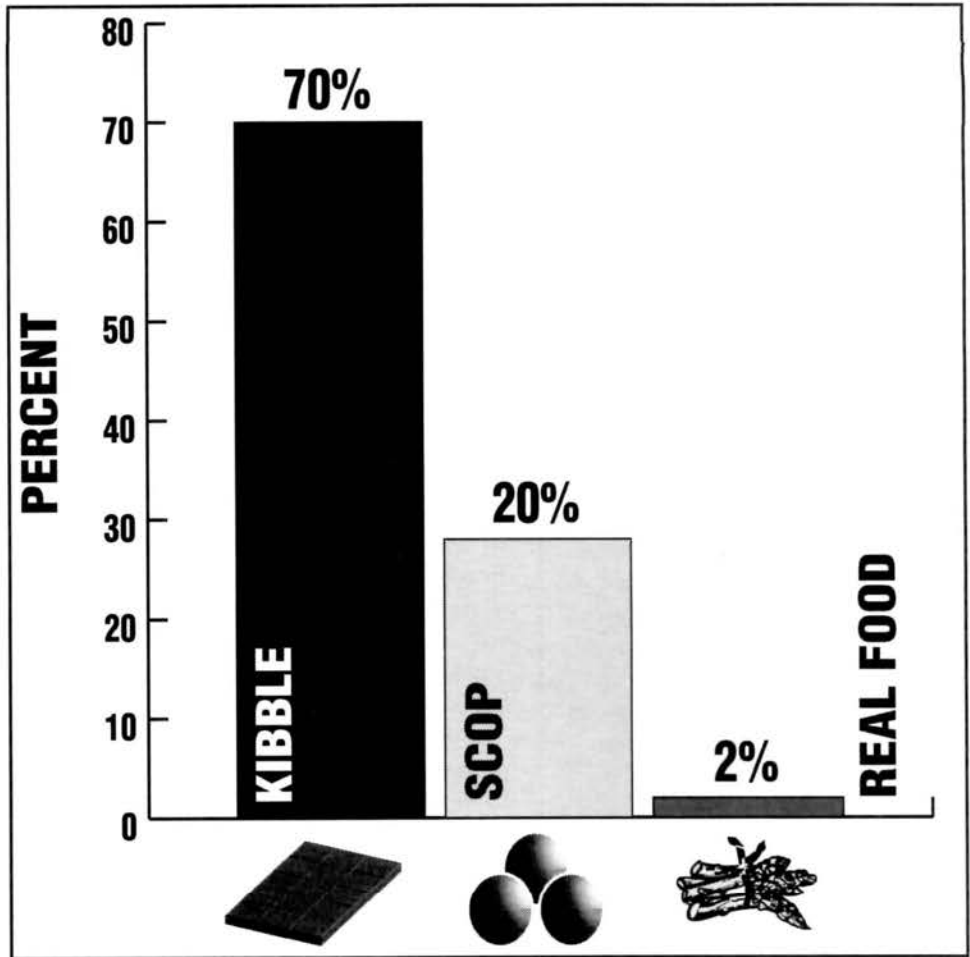
The non corporate-controlled Nomad and Gang sports are usually very bloody. As previously stated, economic and law-enforcement pressures force the teams to stop short of killing. For the most part, there is no long-term payoff in athletes killing each other for a living. While augmented sports allow for a great deal of cathartic violence, true-combat sports have failed to make the transition (except in limited local venues). The closest thing to a nationwide, big-money death sport are the North American finals of the World Kumite Tournament that passes through every two years. Despite attempts to keep combat drugs and cyberware to a minimum, killings in the ring are not uncommon.

This does not mean that there are no true death sports. Some areas of the world (and even some Free States) sponsor prison-inmate gladiatorial contests, full-contact obstacle courses, martial arts death-duels, and other wargames of all sorts. Some of these sports involve condemned people who must win to survive. These sports are still technically illegal in America, but that has never stopped the market from supplying demand.

■ FOOD AND SUSTENANCE ■

In the 20th Century, large sections of the U.S. economy were driven by food or food-related industries. Since the fall of the Gang of Four, however, America has lost and regained the power to feed itself.

With the American farm economy crippled and reborn as a fuel industry, most Americans in 2020 eat manufactured foods. These foods vary in quality and quantity but all are known by the lowest common denominator: "Kibble." Kibble is only one of the almost twenty manufactured foods that make up the majority of the American diet. By far the simplest of the foods, kibble was designed by Purina Foods for the SouthAm relief



effort that paralleled certain parts of the Central American Wars. It has a fairly dry and grainy consistency similar to the animal foods that enriched the profits of the Purina company. It also provides a full day's supply of all major vitamin and mineral compounds, along with a minimal amount of complete proteins.

Other products include tailored proteins generically referred to as SCOP. These Single Cell Organic Proteins are tailored to fit into almost any food niche. There is hamburger scop, chicken scop, broccoli scop, and cheese scop. It can, and does, look like any other food product.

Soya has also been genetically tailored to fit into any of the thousands of vegetable protein foods currently available.

Fresh foods are still available to the average millionaire. As little as three percent of the total population eats fresh food more than once or twice a year.

Some estimates are as low as one percent. One reason is that the virulent bioplagues and massive burials of the Collapse have ruined almost all the natural ground water in the continental United States. Fresh foods that are produced and consumed by Americans are usually grown in sealed hydroponic gardens to eliminate the chance of contamination. The majority of the fresh food consumed is imported; parts of Europe, Canada, and the OldSov Republics are the new breadbaskets of the world.

Almost all of the food consumed in 2020 is eaten out. Most city streets are filled with vendors. (The streets that do not are usually Corporate-controlled.) Most vendors sell either handfoods or prepack meals, though occasionally a vendor may have on a pot of fresh soup or noodles in broth. Real fresh foods are usually only available in very expensive restaurants. ★

■ THE “NEW” AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ■

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ✓ Our Prez...Who is She?
- ✓ The Regional Committee: Real Decision-Makers
- ✓ What **Does** the Cabinet Do?
- ✓ Canada & Mexico: Good Friends/Bad Neighbors
- ✓ The Black Market and **You**

Jonathan Seward was a man with a mission. He had the chance to right the wrongs and eliminate the waste of the United States Government. With the nagging problem of the Constitution temporarily suspended, he went to work. His vision retained much of the Constitutional apparatus of the former system. At the same time it conserved resources in critical areas.

He did not accomplish all of his goals, yet he made many changes for the better.

■ THE PRESIDENT ■

The Presidency was retained in a more limited framework. Though Seward still controlled the Executive Branch, all war-making powers were revoked, although any domestic peacekeeping action was fully within his power. This action has since been very effective in helping to contain some types of Corporate control. Foreign War, or preemptive military action of any kind, was only allowed by explicit vote of the Legislative Branch. The President is elected by the Senate, which acts as the Electoral College. There is still a popular election held, in which the populace sends its choice to the state Senators, who then carry that choice to Washington.

■ THE HOUSE ■

The Legislative Branch was also completely restructured. The House of Representatives was eliminated. Since an accurate census had not been conducted in almost twenty years, it was hardly a representative body of

the population. Instead, the Senate was expanded. Each state would have three Representatives: one from each of the two largest cities, and one Corporate Representative. The people's representatives are elected in a popular vote. The job of this Corporate Representative is to represent all the business concerns of the state. The Corporate Representative is appointed by the corporation that pays the most taxes. Of course, no corporation would overpay to guarantee a seat on the Senate. It was felt that the inclusion of Corporate Representation would limit the cost-effectiveness of PAC's. This was not the case. (give the corporation an inch and they take a mile). Political Action Committees are as potent a force as ever, and the corporations are one step closer to governmental power.

■ THE REGIONAL COMMITTEES ■

One of Seward's greatest changes, and possibly the single thing that saved the United States from falling into total anarchy, was the creation of the Regional Committees. The Regional Committees originally came out of the MIC's attempts to create the COG system (See page XX) used today. The MIC discovered that certain areas of the U.S. could be effectively grouped by certain boundaries, where each region contained a major base for each of the armed services. A young Captain in the MIC also noticed that in addition to military control, each section by pure chance happened to be able to feed itself, and for that matter held many of the same political and social views as well. This young woman would later go on to become the Secretary of the Interior, and Seward adopted her plan of "Government by Combined Interest."

Each region has a single member, or Consul, on the Committee. The free states were given a single seat and a Consul, and the representative is chosen by the Free States Board. Instead of being the Pro-Tempore President of

FYI: THE CURRENT PRESIDENT

Elizabeth Kress was born in a small Air Force hospital on Okinawa. Her father was a major in the USAF, a distinguished officer with a twenty-year career. At twenty-two, Elizabeth graduated from the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs; a promising career awaited her in the military. After only eight years she had risen to the rank of Colonel, commanding a unit in NORAD. When the Rock hit, Kress was returning from vacation, recalled due to the rising tensions between the U.S. and the EEC. She was less than 3 miles away, driving in a jeep, when the rock hit. The explosion blew her off the road and burst her eardrums, rendering her deaf. It was a miracle that she survived at all, but the mountains sheltered her from most of the blast.

After the strike, she was to find herself the ranking officer in NORAD. Though offered a discharge, she stayed on and oversaw the long rebuilding of the higher military command. When her monumental task was finished, she retired from the military. Soon her popularity as the "Lady From NORAD" catapulted her into politics.

After one term as Senator from her adopted home state of Colorado, Kress was asked to accept the nomination for

Vice President in 2016. Her acceptance speech at the convention, entitled "Rebuilding the Dream", was a huge success. When former President Blair was struck ill in 2018, Elizabeth was there to assume command. Blair passed away six months later. Elizabeth Kress was sworn in as President on April 14, 2019. Her casual manner and precise way of speaking have made her a popular president. Many expect her to win a second term in the coming election, although there is a strong contender in the corporate-backed Gerald Hasting.

INT: 9 REF: 7 TECH: 9
COOL:10 ATTR: 7 LUCK: 7
MA: 6 BODY: 7 EMPATHY: 9

SKILLS: Charismatic Leadership +9, Awareness +9, Education +7, Wardrobe and Style +5, Composition +7, Persuasion +8, Oratory +8, Social +9, History +6, Library Search +8, EXP: Military Officer +7, EXP: Political Science +6, EXP: American Politics +6, EXP: American Government +8

CYBERWARE: Audio W/ Tight Beam, Level Damper, Scrambler, Sound Editing

however, the board rarely agrees on anything. The most simple decision—who on the board will be "assigned" to the Free States seat on the Regional Committee—can take months. The board is constructed of two delegates from each free state. They serve a term of two years, and are chosen in state-wide elections.

■ THE LAWMAKING PROCESS ■

A bill is usually proposed by a member of the Senate. It is submitted to the Committee, who are empowered solely to rewrite portions or make changes. Once it is approved by the Committee the bill is voted on by the Senate. A two-thirds majority is required to pass the bill. If the bill passes then the President either signs or vetoes it. There is no "line-item veto"; each bill is a separate item. There is no myriad of additions to kill a piece of legislation. If vetoed, then a bill can be passed by a two-thirds majority in both the Senate and Committee. There is no longer a quorum provision in the legislature. A truly global communications system allows voting from anywhere on any issue. Since 2016, it has been law that more than twelve abstentions in a given year by a Representative will result in removal from office. The other interesting change is the elimination of Congressional "sessions." There is a three day recess for each national holiday. Other than that, the Congress is constantly working. On a positive note, deficit spending has become a thing of the past. There is no one to borrow from, and no real money anyway. The EEC has been instrumental in blocking major loans to the United States as paybacks for the "Quiet War."

■ THE SUPREME COURT ■

Many jokes have been made about the role of the Supreme Court since the resurgence of states' rights. The Supreme Court still has the same powers of constitutional determination. However, the scope of what is Federal has decreased so dramati-

the Senate, the Vice President is called the Proconsul. Consuls are elected by popular vote. In order to declare war the President is required to present his case for action to the Regional Committee. If the Committee deadlocks, then the President may appeal to the Senate. Effectively, the Committee replaces the myriad committees of the old Congress.

Consuls serve a term of four years and may not be re-elected. All other elected members of the federal government serve for four years, and may be re-elected for another term. In recent years,

the corporations have been attempting to get puppets elected to the committee. So far, none have managed to win. The current President is considering a bill to ban all Corporate-backed campaign efforts.

■ FREE STATES BOARD ■

The FSB was established fairly recently. The board was designed to form a united front for all of the free states when dealing with the federal government. Like most political bodies,

ically that the High Court is left idle most of the year. The revolution in legal automation, especially the use of AI and legal expert systems, has made for quick determination of cases at the lower levels. These new developments have prompted the Court to be reduced to five Justices. Each justice is assisted by an AI.

■ THE CABINET ■

The only Cabinet post that has been relatively unchanged in the new government has been the Department of State. This department represents Amer-

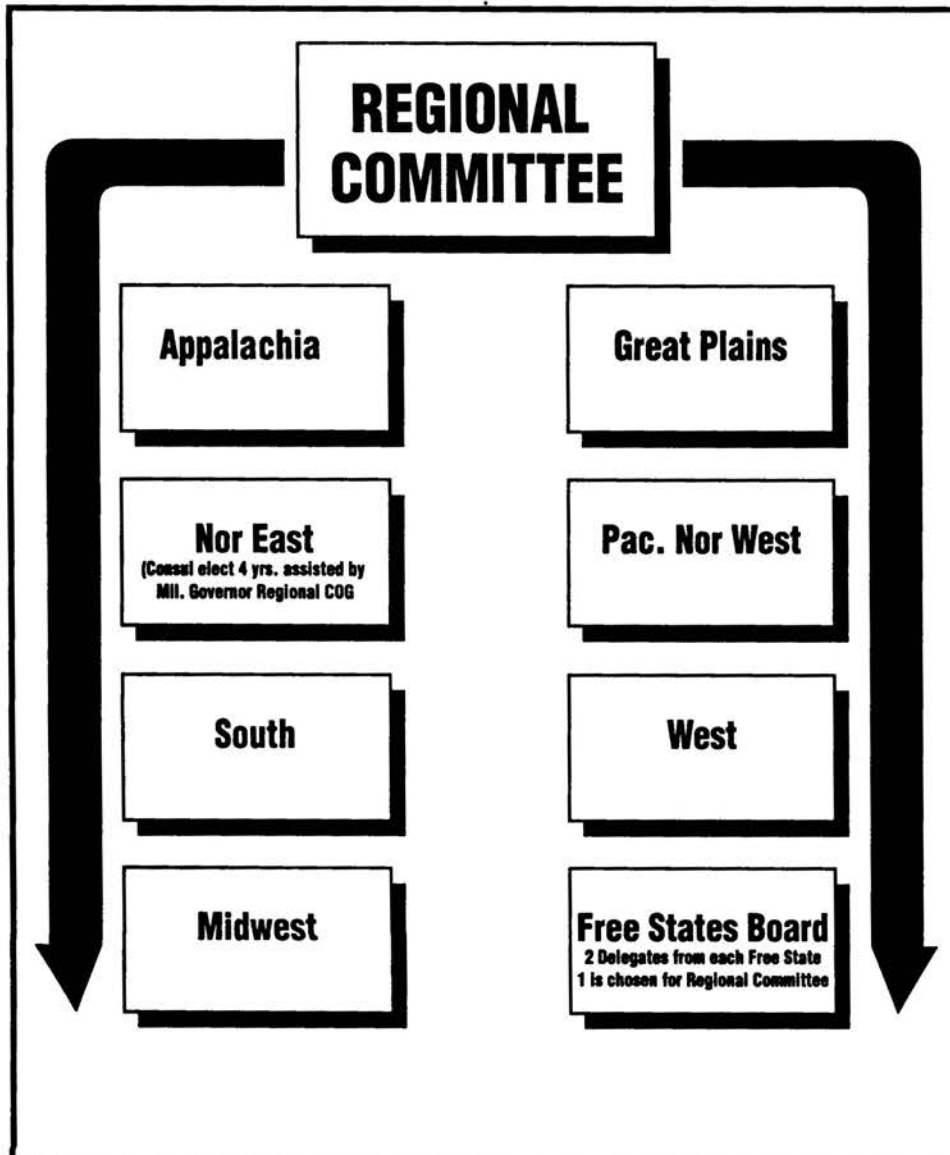
ican interests to the world. The major changes in this department have been in size rather than structure. Information systems have alleviated the need for many of the bureaucrats that crowded the system. Aside from the ambassadors and other foreign representatives across the world, there are only about three thousand employees in this branch.

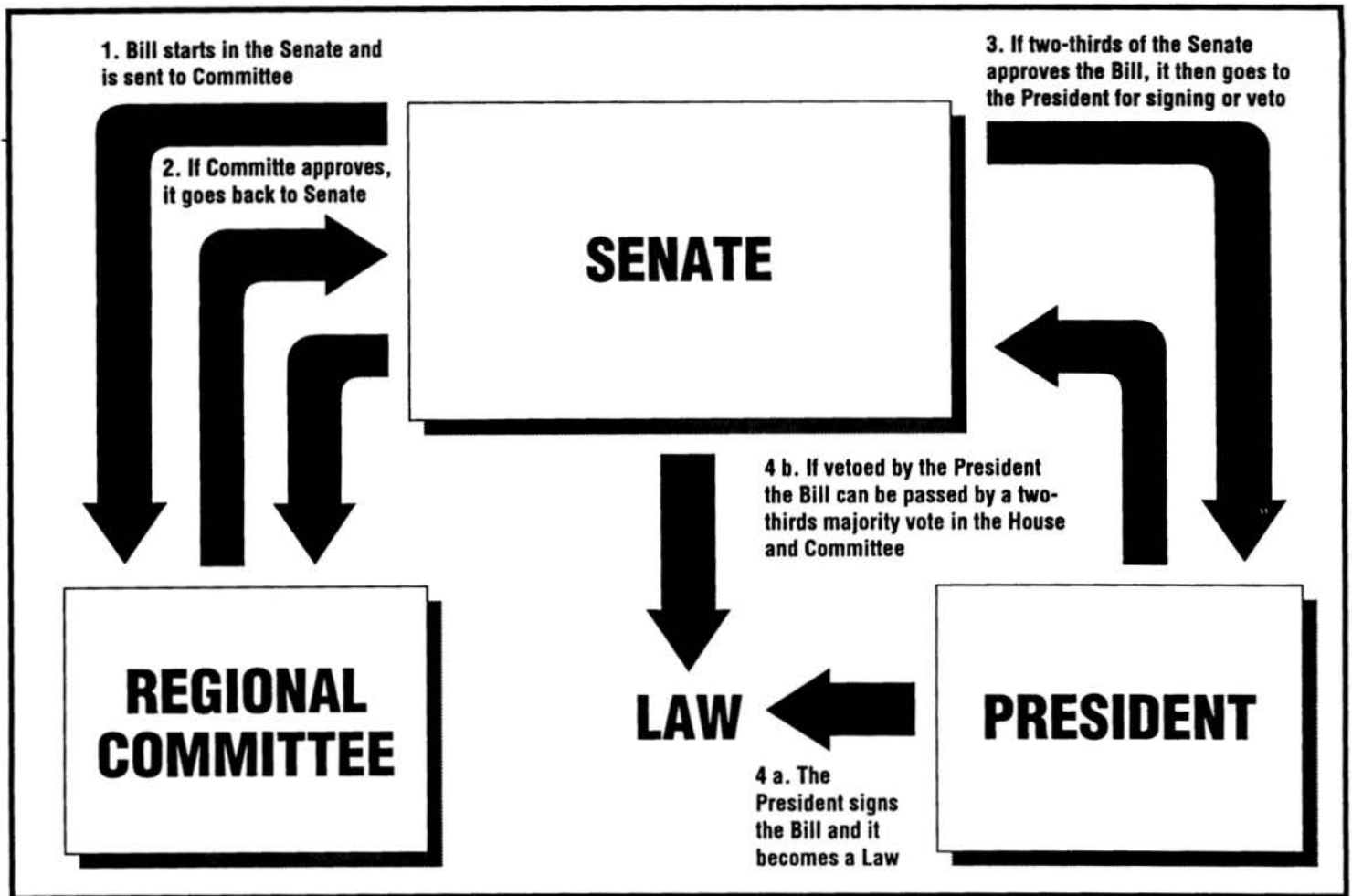
The Department of Defense is the most radically changed of the departments. This is probably due to the excesses of the Gang of Four. It was the monolithic system of government that had allowed the Gang to rise in power. The reformation sought to protect against this in the future. On the top of

this structure are the command elements. The Secretary of Defense (SOD) is the number three post in the *American Government*. He is responsible for all peace-keeping operations, foreign or domestic. Only the Regional Committee can replace the SOD. If a problem were to occur the Committee must vote unanimously for a successor. There are some restrictions as to who can hold this post. The SOD can never have been a member of either the Regional Committee, or one of the Joint-Chiefs. The other significant change in the office is in politics. The SOD is no longer appointed with each new President. The Office is considered to be so specialized and critical that it cannot be left to the whim of a candidate.

Below the SOD are the Joint Chiefs. They are the Staff Commanders of each armed service: Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. Parallel to the Joint-Chiefs are the Central Intelligence Agency and the Military Intelligence Cooperative. On the third tier the real work of the Defense Department is done. Here we find the Under-Secretary positions of the Inspector-General, for each branch; the Office of Management and Budget; the Veterans Affairs Bureau; Defense Administration Research Projects Agency (DARPA); Defense Procurement Agency; the Department of Compensation; and the Office of Military Justice. All of these offices deal with the day-to-day business of keeping a military machine running. What this means is that these are the people who spend our money.

The Inspector-General is in charge of proper maintenance documentation for all active-duty military equipment. The Office of Management and Budget directs all funds from Congress to the appropriate agencies, in the proper amounts, concurrent with its own five year plan. The Veterans Affairs Bureau handles all post-service benefits to veterans. DARPA handles all research, testing, and evaluation of new equipment requests. The Department of Procurement handles all the official purchase of equipment for all armed services.





The Department of Compensation handles payroll for all Defense employees. The Office of Military Justice watches over it all. They are the CID of the Defense Department. If any funds or equipment are misplaced, or misappropriated, they sort it all out. This is a greatly streamlined DOD from the pre-Collapse period of excess. With the added efficiency of modern information systems, only ten thousand people are employed by the DOD, not counting the CIA.

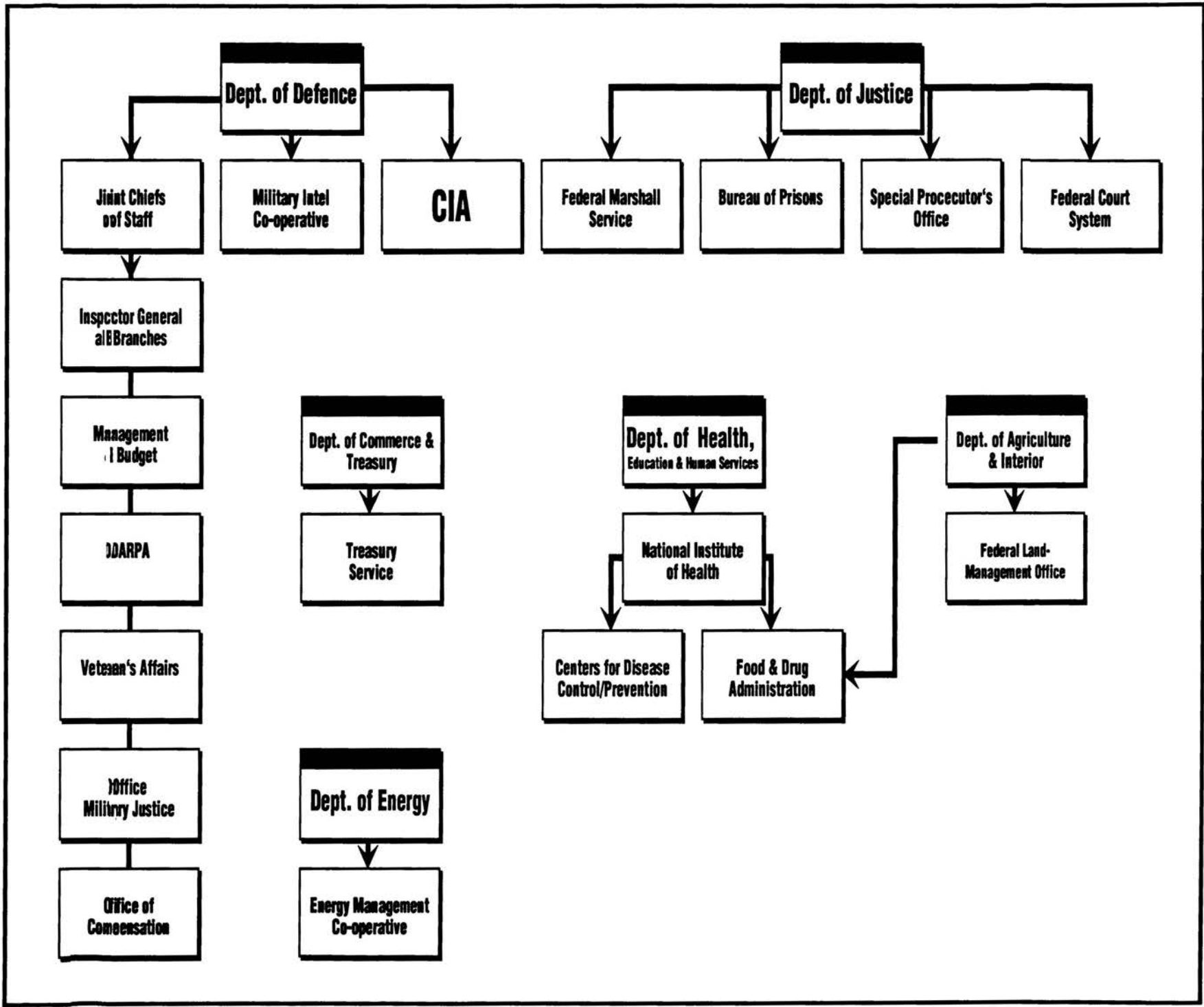
The Department of Commerce and the Treasury handles all policy and law enforcement with regard to currency and trade. In short, this is more directed to American currency as a whole. In recent years, however, economic pressure has forced the DOCT to investigate Eurodollar fraud and forgery as well. The Secret Service no longer handles any of this investigation; they are responsible strictly for the

President. The new enforcement arm is called the Treasury Service. Aside from enforcement, the DOCT handles all manufacture of monies to be used in the country. Since the American dollar is so seldom used, this arm is small. Tariff and trade status is handled by this Department as well.

Corporations have a very vested interest in seeing that this process is as neutral as possible, so Corporate manipulation is careful here. Finally, the office tries to insure that the American people are not defrauded by foreign Corporations. All of this is accomplished with about five thousand employees. The Department of Justice is responsible for all judicial law enforcement within America. Because the greater responsibility for peace rests in the hands of the Secretary of Defense, there is considerable friction between the two Departments. Since the CIA is under control of the

DOD, the Justice Department is left with the scraps. The DOJ controls the Bureau of Prisons, the Special Prosecutor's Office (which handles crimes within the government), the Federal court system and the Federal Marshall's service. The DOJ reports to the Supreme Court and the President. There are about five thousand employees in this department.

The Department of Health, Education, and Human Services is nominally responsible for all social programs administered by the government. The budget has not supported much in the way of programs, so this area of responsibility has been small. The primary reasons for its existence are the biotech crises of the twenty-first century. The National Institute of Health is under the control of the DHEHS. Both the Centers for Disease Control/Prevention, and the Food and Drug Administration are accountable



to the NIH. These agencies have been a mixed blessing. Though both Agencies were responsible for controlling the Wasting Plague, they have been accused of releasing some toxins as well.

It is a strongly-held conspiracy theory that the CDC deliberately released bioagents so that various area governments would relinquish control. There is as much evidence for this argument as there is against it. It is true that many strange viruses and other bioagents have been released into the government-controlled food supply. Some, like the Wasting Plague, were found to be deliberate terrorist actions. Many, like the virally-induced hardening of tooth enamel, were actually beneficial. Others, like the introduction of a mutagenic virus that actually allows free-form racial characteristics to appear in the children of same-race parents, are downright weird. Though none of these viruses can be linked to the CDC or the FDA, directly, the proximity of these incidents to areas in which the government has had other interests is a strange coincidence. About ten thousand people are employed by the Department of Health, Education, and Human Services.

The Department of Energy is the only arm of the Federal government that actually makes money. The DOE not only regulates all types of power generation, it also brokers power between states as well. The DOE operates the Energy Management Cooperative. A privatized monopoly similar to the postal system of the pre-Collapse, EMC is traded on the "big boards" of the stock exchanges. A citizen with a few extra dollars can make a quick profit on energy futures without a big risk. Several real improvements have been made by the DOE since the collapse. After the dustbowls and acid rains in the 1990's, the power industry was able to make a smooth transition. The industry switched from coal-fired generators to a hydrogen-fired refit. It cut costs and reduced environmental damage as well. About twelve thousand people are employed by the DOE.

The Department of Agriculture and the Interior has been as much of a joke as the Supreme Court since the collapse.

There has been no real or effective impact by this department since the early 1980's. If a project was blocked by the DAI, the corporation simply bribed all the officials it could and acted anyway. The FDA is responsible to both the DAI and the NIH, under the DHEHS. So, acting in typical government fashion, nothing really gets done any more. The DAI also distributes and inspects all rationing of kibble within America. Needless to say, this is a thankless job, even when there is enough to go around. At one time the DAI also inspected all food consumed in this country. Now we are left at the mercy of the producers, as there is no budget to support this either.

There was a time, immediately after the Collapse, when some good was done by the DAI. In a desperate move to save some of the protected lands all over America, ten million acres were sold to Environmental Action Groups for pennies. The Sierra Club, Greenpeace, the Cousteau Society, and others bought into the plan.

For two years, between 1994 and 1996, the Corporations fought a guerrilla war all over America, in an attempt to attain this land themselves. Some, like ARCO, were bankrupted in the process. In the end, about half of the protected lands ended up in the hand of the Corporations, usually through threat (or act) of violence. The other half was placed into trust funds and co-ops, protecting it in the full legal sense. This land is now usually home to Nomad tribes, who keep others from taking it by force of arms.

■ TAXES ■

The Internal Revenue Service ceased to exist in 1998; when the machinations of the Gang of Four were revealed in the media, many citizens felt the only way to stop the evil was to stop paying their taxes. Eventually, *all* of America stopped paying taxes. Faced with no money, or resources to fund any type of rebuttal, the IRS simply ceased to be. The job of paying taxes fell to the individual states. Each state collects its own taxes, and the federal government gets a percentage of this. The only taxes at the

FYI TAXES AND THE AVERAGE CYBERPUNK.

Most taxes are collected during the purchase and sale of material. Income tax is a thing of the past, as most edgerunners get paid in cash for borderline legal activities. The government gets its cut whenever they buy something. The government cut for ammunition is something like a 1/2 cent per bullet sold in the U.S.. And think of all the bullets an average punker buys...

federal level are collected on trade, by the Commerce Department. Withholding of funds from the federal government is a crime, and is handled by the Justice Department.

■ WHAT DOES THE GOVERNMENT CONTROL? ■

The federal government is to a great degree hamstrung by the state governments. The power controlled at the federal level is narrow but potent. The armed forces are the largest power bloc in the government. Though many states control large police, and even paramilitary forces, all pale by comparison. The full-time military is the only way to make war in America. It is the one thing we, as a nation, have always done well. Along with the necessity of a large armed force is the control of certain strategic resources: petroleum products, foodstuffs, radioactives, bioproducts, and precious metals. All of these are necessary for proper maintenance of a large armed military force. At one time, the Government controlled enough resources to operate for six months; in 2020 this margin has been reduced to twenty-eight days.

The basic patents for orbital energy transmission are held jointly by NASA and AT&T. Coupled with the large scale control of energy brokerage, this allows a decent income that is invisible to the consumer. Instead of taxing the service, the government provides the service. This cuts out the middlemen and turns a profit. The government also controls a great deal of land. It uses some of the land, but leases some to other interests as well. It does this not only on Earth, but also on various off-planet facilities.

■ MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES ■

The political Democratic and Republican dinosaurs of are everpresent in National issues. Along with them are over three hundred smaller, but not less committed, power groups. The two largest of these are the Independent Party and the One World Party. The former was formed in response to the dissatisfaction of many with the then two-party system. It has grown to be what it despised most: a fixture with little real impact for change. The latter is a Corporate-backed effort to create a free market economy. But large parts of the voting public are violently anti-Corporate, so this has not been to successful. All in all, the American political scene has been fractured by the relative demise of national politics. It has been replaced by a "hooray for our side" state by state morass.

■ AMERICA'S NEIGHBORS ■

As America lost its dominating influence on the world, many of its oldest relationships changed dramatically. Much of the change was due to the lack of a stabilizing force, economic or political, during the Collapse. The average citizen doesn't know or care about relations with New Zealand, but many of our closer neighbors affect everyone. They deserve mention here.

Mexico was devastated by the Collapse, even more so than America (sociologists feel the damage done in the SouthAm was not as severe as damage done to Mexico). The eighties were a boom for the Mexican economy.

Huge industrial development by corporations, like Ford and Volkswagen, coupled with the boom in oil, improved the lot of millions. But when the bottom fell out there was nothing to fall back on. Mexico City was the hardest hit. By 1994, the population was almost 20 million. By 1996, the population was only 8 million. The shining arcologies of the new city are truly built on the bones of its people. Mexico City is also an example of a society on the comeback. Many of the larger cities, the manufacturing and tourism centers, are rebuilt Corporate city-states. The areas between these cities is simply wasteland.

Canada was one of the countries least affected by the Collapse. Vast resources and a small population made life easier. The slow rise in global temperature made Southern Canada an agricultural paradise. Being such a stable area, most of the major corporations set up large operations across the country. Open Corporate military force kept the American Nomad population from streaming over the border. Many of the smaller Nomad Families did find their way into Canada, but only with the full cooperation of the corporations in question. Many of the small families were hired and trained wholesale. CHOOH₂ production is now one of Canada's largest agro-exports. The new luxury market in hardwoods is its largest growing industry. But the true scope of the Canadian economy encompasses all of the major corporations, products and services of the world. The national government is all but gone, replaced by the corporations.

The many island allies of America in both the Caribbean and the Pacific Rim are a varied lot. Cuba was long expected to return to what it was before the Communist revolution of the sixties. In a way it did. When the Castro regime finally ended, what was left of America could not even acknowledge "victory." Instead the vast resources were quickly bought up by the Corporations. Resorts, agriculture, and manufacturing operations started immediately after the infrastructure was prepared. Hedonism and its profits are driving the Cuban economy to impressive levels. Some of Cuba's citizens still feel they are getting the short end, so sporadic

guerilla fighting flares up at times. Much of this "insurgency" is actually a front for Corporate warfare, but some is legitimate.

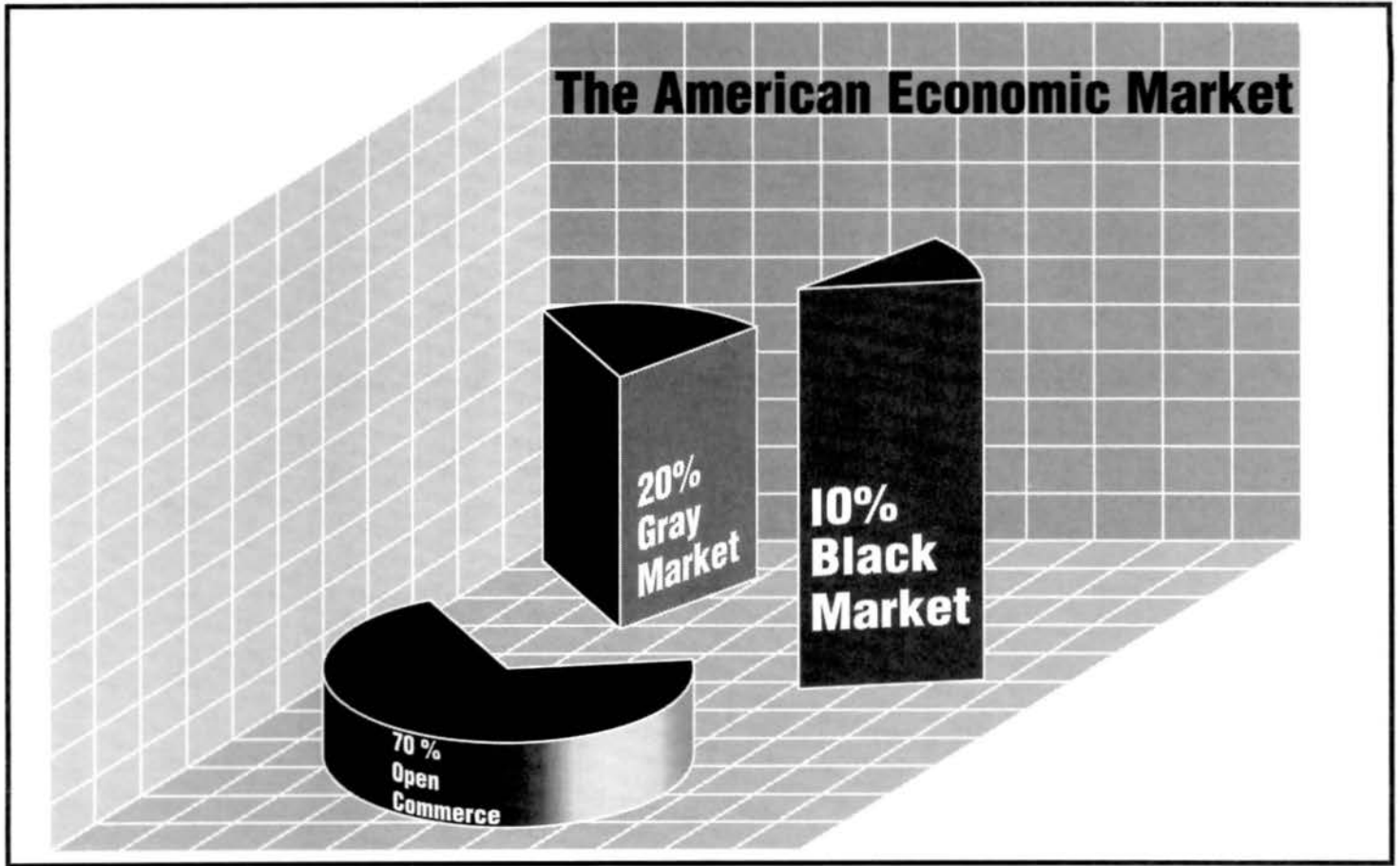
The Virgin Islands are a different story. Though well-endowed with fine resorts and a large marine fisheries industry, all was not well. After the Collapse, Cuba was much more cost-effective to support, and these tiny islands were left to rot. Pirates have returned to the Caribbean, along with nomadic fishermen and the like. Puerto Rico was rocked by civil war for a decade after the Collapse. Finally, people began to rebuild. Puerto Rico may become another Cuba, but the jury is still out.

The Pacific Rim areas once dominated by America have changed greatly. As America receded from the scene, Japan stepped in immediately to fill the vacuum. Japan's early alliance with the EEC allowed a huge gentrification in areas like the Phillipines. This gentrification, as well as a greater allegiance to Japan, allowed Japan to survive its expulsion from the EEC in 2015 almost unscathed. The exception to this rule is Guam. The military holds on to this small area in some bizarre Faulklandesque sense of former glory.

■ VOTING ■

The concept of voting is still relatively new to the *Cyberpunk* generation. At times it is almost a fad. To others it is a grave responsibility. All popular voting was abolished during the period of martial law at the turn of the century. A whole generation of Americans grew up not knowing proper representation. When the right to vote was first exercised again, in (the elections of 2008), many young people were simply at a loss. In the twelve years since, the issue of voting has become regional, as all other questions have.

In the Free States the right to vote, and the right of self-determination, were paramount reasons in the decision to secede. In these states, voting is no laughing matter. Weekly referendums are not uncommon. At the same time the access to vote is simple, as easy as plugging into a



local dataterm. The Free State legislatures, in whatever form, are professional politicians who are held intimately accountable for their actions. The citizens elect the State Assembly. The State Assembly usually elects the Governor/President of said state. Terms are commonly set at four years. The Free State Consul is elected by the Governor/Presidents of the Free States. He also serves a term of four years. The level of Corporate representation is usually high. Their profitable economies are the reason that these states can stay independent. This is no secret. At the same time the Corporations see these as very stable and safe areas to do business. Any manipulations are careful and measured.

In the rest of America situations vary. To the people of the Dixie, voting, if performed at all, is usually at gunpoint. These people are practically stripped of all rights, voting included. The people of the Northwest are almost as well off as the citizens of

the Free States. Many of the poorer regions of America have adequate representation as well. Without the hard cash to pay for the infrastructure and laws that are the will of the people, though, this is practically moot. From rich to poor and independent to indentured, the breadth of possibilities are addressed here. The most burning question is that of the future. Is America on the brink of renewal or the edge of disaster?

■ THE ECONOMY ■

When speaking of the economic situation in any single country it is difficult to delineate. In this era of globalism the economies of nations are more interrelated than ever before. What can be delineated are some trends that have affected the entire world. Those are the changes that have most affected 2020 America.

On the larger scale the economy is more controlled than it was twenty years

ago. Now the Corporations not only deal with the hassles of international commerce, but the various interstate hassles effect them as well. There are more "nations" in existence today than ever before. All of these states, countries, municipalities, and districts desperately need an income. The only way to generate income, other than simply confiscating property wholesale, is taxation. So you pay 100eb for a box of bullets; twenty of this is probably wrapped up in taxation, user fees, etc. The Corporations must tolerate some amount of this. Without the governments of these areas the Corporation must accept the responsibilities of infrastructure. Road systems, social programs, and education are not jobs that offer large, (or for that matter any, profits).

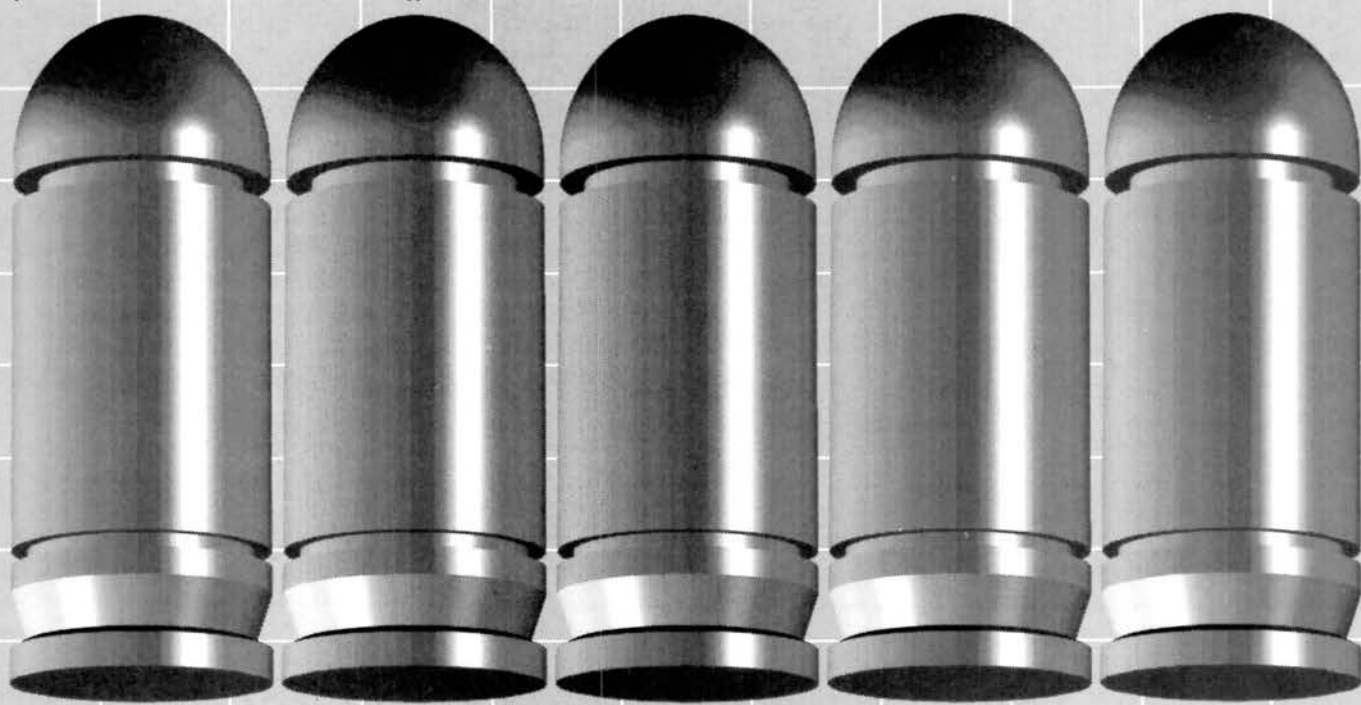
The players in this game are evident. The large, worldwide and smaller regional Corporations are the only real economic power blocs left in the world.

BITING THE "TAXATION BULLET"

100 eb retail cost (ONE BOX OF AMMO.)

20 eb taxes

80 eb actual cost



Corporate power is generally believed to be equivalent to the nations of the last century. This is not completely true. There is no analogy to the nationalism of the twentieth century. The only real national power is the EEC. The low and uniform tariff rates, and the united defense policy, have made the "Euros" the only superpower. This would have, in any other time, led to world domination. Now, with the whole world armed and sharing markets, no one is willing to risk really consolidating power. The occasional government is toppled, and the "New World Order" is upheld, but this is the exception and not the rule.

Corporations are not generally in the business of subsuming the role of government. In certain small-scale applications we do see a sense of Corporate statism. In the last twenty years, the idea of

Corporate towns, or more accurately city-states, has become almost normal. Large areas of Mexico are entirely Corporate-controlled. In most areas these cities are limited to populations of about 100,000. In America, most true Corporate cities are research arcologies. The field of research and development is one of the few that would require the level of security available to a closed-system arcology. It is also the only area of funding that could support the expense of infrastructure and remain profitable.

The examples of Corporate statism seen most in America are the Corp Zones in most of our cities. Why pay for the area's police force when we can have our own? Corporate zones are the easiest answer to this question.

With the rise in independent governments for states, came the inevitable

rise in the old tradition of separate currency. It did not take very long for the Corporations to also see the benefits of printing their own currency. In America, it is still illegal for companies to do so, but barter is a loophole in these currency laws. In the cases of large-scale intercorporate exchanges, very little cash usually changes hands. The trade is handled in a series of transactions that exchange goods and services from one company to another; Arasaka trades six months of security service to Biotechnica for producing ten tons of weapons-grade plutonium.

Within these Corporations much of the payment of employees is dealt with using corporate scrip for in-kind purchases. American employment law allows companies to pay up to thirty percent of their salary in "marks." Only company employees may use these "marks" in com-

pany stores. Each individual bill is tracked, in each separate transaction. There is no counterfeiting in this process. Simply put, a "mark" can only be in one place at one time. Since these systems are controlled by active Sysops and AI's, the reality of breaking the system is nil. So what do people buy with these "marks?" Anything. Since the big companies are constantly trading with each other for goods and services, they can make these things available to their employees.

About thirty percent of the GNP is subsumed in what is known as the "black market". Not all of this is truly illicit trading; a great deal of it can be seen as "grey". A transaction is considered grey when, though not necessarily illegal themselves, the goods or services are obtained outside the normal (taxed) channels. The grey areas include, but are not limited to: weapons, recreational pharmaceuticals, false identification, pirate software, body parts, borderline cybernetics, foods, etc. Black market goods and services are flatly illegal. They are considered a crime unless the user has either the money, or power, to justify the use of said assets. Certain strange legalities also apply—though it is not illegal to own certain materials, like carboglas, it is illegal to manufacture rippers.

Is the black market controlled by the Corporations? Though the simple answer would be yes, it is not always the case. The Corporations are in the driver's seat. Not only do they have the easiest access to illicit and illegal goods (many companies manufacture them openly in less-controlled countries), they also control the world's distribution network. But recent advances in technology have also made it possible to manufacture quality goods, up to and including tailored viruses, at the street level. Even the price is comparable. There is a sort of contrast in business today, as one side sits over us, and the other sits among us.

In America, the concept of cottage industry is once again a reality. The perfection of CAD/CAM (computer-aided design and manufacturing) has led to remarkable acceleration of innovation. There are systems available to assist with

all facets of industry, from the relative ease of "garage" recording/production systems, to the absolutely amazing "bathtub" viral development labs. This is why the best Edgerunners have all the chill Newtech.

There are manufacturing standards for almost everything produced. You can have an exact duplicate of almost anything made to spec, and for the discerning of tastes there is even more. As an example, take weapons technology. A Solo wants to perform a hit. He only gets one shot, so he decides to have a weapon manufactured to his own specifications. At his favorite weaponsmith, the Solo chooses the caliber, barrel length, action, trigger pull, material, etcetera. Even the Solo's arm length, shoulder width, and preferred shooting position can be entered into the design. This produces an untraceable custom rifle, specially accurized for that shooter. In the past, the production of a weapon like this would take weeks; now it takes twelve hours. Equipment like this costs a fortune, and rightly so, but if the job pays well enough, who cares?

Personal electronics can also be manufactured in this way. Cyberdecks are almost always built to custom specifications, or at least heavily modified designs, especially if the Netrunner is well established. Only recently has biotechnology entered into the realm of cottage industry. This is probably the most frightening of all. In 2019, a group of engineer terrorists, near Salt Lake City, were able to manufacture a virus that allows heterogeneous racial characteristics to appear in children of same-race parents. In English this means that two Caucasian parents could have a child that exhibited Asian, or epicanthic, eyes and African pigmentation. On the flip side, that same year in Appalachia, all children under the age of three were found to have tooth enamel 50-100% stronger than their parents.

It is reasonable to assume that most innovation now takes place at the bottom. To quote Gibson, "The Street finds its own uses for things." The Corporations buy these ideas and mass-produce them. The Corporations still control the production and distribution networks that make it all

possible. It is also true that these same Corporations steal and hide some technology, fearing its use. For the most part the Corporations buy, as much to protect themselves as anything else.

Proprietary law is a tricky business. Who owns ideas? Since there is no effective extranational policing agency, the Corporations must police themselves. It would seem that the Corps would abuse this power, but in general, it is bad business to steal. Patents are registered with separate countries. It is also now possible to file a patent with the U.N., but this is not usually done. A patent is a registration of a process, machine, or concept, and is usually owned by a person. If someone has an idea and then patents it, then the idea is legally owned by that person. If someone, other than the holder of said patent wishes to use it they may either pay a license fee to the owner, or purchase the patent outright. Either route is usually agreed upon by peaceful negotiation. The Corporations do this to protect themselves from each other and, only as an afterthought, protect independent inventors as well.

In the early nineties, the patent offices of the world were overrun by conceptual patents. A person who had no knowledge of medicine would patent the idea for a drug. This prevented a great many advances in research. Pharmaceutical companies were not interested in paying some guy a few million, just to test an idea. In 2020, most countries have accepted a more limiting system. A concept may only be patented after it has been demonstrated. If someone else can find another way to perform, or produce, the idea afterwards, then a license fee must be paid.

The last question is: What drives our economy? It is safe to say that anything the people ask for, someone will sell to them. It is also true that many trends in the market are shaped by constant media barrage. Everyone needs shoes, but there are a million brands out there. If you want to charge two hundred euro' a pair, your advertising had better be good. The biggest seller is usually the best marketed. As always there is no simple answer. ★



■ THE UNITED STATES MILITARY —A RECENT HISTORY ■

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ✓ Central American Quagmire
- ✓ The Army Cracks Down
- ✓ The South-Am Cyberwar
- ✓ Euro-Yank Space Wars
- ✓ Big Stick vs. Mantoga, Inc.

In 1989, the Berlin Wall was declared non-operational. With its death, the Cold War between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the western nations (primarily the United States of America and its allies) also died. The arms race which the Cold War inspired had taken the lion's share of the world's economy for over forty years, culminating in

gigantic standing armies, runaway peacetime weapons development, nuclear arsenals capable of devastating the planet several times over, and massive military-industrial complexes devoted to prospering from the arms race. With the cessation of the Cold War, the need for these unbelievable militaries also ceased. The United States had maintained its armed forces at a wartime level since the end of World War II, a fantastic record for a nation known for maintaining a peacetime army barely large enough for a cadre in the event of a real war. While this expenditure had assisted the nation's economy by providing jobs and industries, the multi-billion-dollar cost of the military did more eco-

conomic harm than good, contributing to the nation's seemingly impossible international debt.

As early as 1990, there were cries for a "peace dividend" in the U.S., a build-down of military power and a return of government monies to domestic programs. This movement gained strength after the Pyrrhic success of military intervention in Iraq in 1991. The U.S. military, with assistance from allied nations, scored an embarrassingly easy victory over the forces of Saddam Hussein, devastating his numerically impressive army. As usual, though, the success was not properly pursued; as soon as the battle was won, the U.S. government ordered a cease-fire and ended the war without achieving the goal of removing Hussein as a threat to the region. Indeed, the only thing that the short and expensive war seemed to prove was that the U.S. had the forces of a major world power, but not the will to use them to the country's advantage.

In the early 1990's the peace dividend was finally realized and the U.S. military was reduced accordingly, disposing of the large units that used to dominate the battlefields of the world and opting for a set of small, fast, rapid-deployment units that could act independently. These units were to incorporate their own organic support and, wherever possible, transport.

■ THE FIRST CENTRAL AMERICAN WAR ■

This decision proved to be invaluable with the advent of real warfare in Central and South America. In 1991-92, the U.S. anti-drug bioagent took effect all over the world. Hardest hit were the drug lords of SouthAm, the main suppliers to the U.S. market. Their power waned with the destruction of their narcotic-producing plants. They used their connections with the large EEC corporations to strike back, attacking the DEA on all fronts. Whether the Euro-corps were actually doing business with the drug lords or were simply taking advantage of an opportunity to weaken American resources, the

ARMY ORDER OF BATTLE FOR THE FIRST CENTRAL AMERICAN WAR—

7th Light Infantry Div. (LID), 25th LID, 82nd Airborne Div. (ABN), 10th Mechanized Infantry Div. (MDIV), 193rd Infantry Brigade, 75th Infantry Regiment (Ranger), 7th Special Forces Group (ABN)



7th Light Infantry Division



10th Mechanized Infantry Div

result was the same. Conflict had already begun a year earlier with a limited intervention in the Canal Zone. The DEA, caught up in the Gang of Four's political paranoia, expanded the war by sending the national armed forces further south.

The result was predictable. In the nearly thirty years since the Vietnam conflict, the lessons hard-learned in the swamps of Southeast Asia had been forgotten. As before, large units equipped with heavy machinery were sent into the combat theater, where they unsuccessfully tried to chase down guerrilla units and irregulars who refused to stand and fight. The pattern started all over again: The enemy would strike and melt away into the tropical forests, sometimes even disappearing into the local populace. Partisan activity took a heavy toll on U.S. forces, as acts of sabotage became the norm. Propaganda campaigns and assistance programs were useless. Local economies had practically run on the wealth brought in by drugs—if you weren't directly employed in producing drugs, then you got your money from someone who was. This was the economic bond that had brought the drug lords to power in the first place, so much power that the actual gov-

ernments of their countries were practically powerless to move against them. The people of the southern Americas were quite well aware of the fact that the Americans had deprived them of their livelihood, and hated them for it. They were only too glad to strike back in any way that they could.

The new organizational plans proposed to supply the peace dividend were supplemented and altered by developments in South America. As the war in Vietnam had created the Airmobile concept, the first Central American Conflict molded the airmobile unit into a total aerodyne-transport and combat outfit. Tactical experience proved that even helicopters couldn't deal with the thick forests in the face of interlocking anti-aircraft fire; only aerodynes had the speed and aerial dexterity to accomplish this. Most of the world's aerodyne development was accomplished to produce better VTOLs for the war; almost every aerodyne flying in 2020 traces its origins back to the AVX-2, the first viable combat aerodyne.

The U.S. military was becoming increasingly airmobile, and seemed destined to develop the world's first entirely aircraft-based army, which, when com-

bined with new long-range smart-weapons and 24 hour, "continuous battle" tactics, began reversing the heavy casualty ratio back in favor of American forces. Then the bottom fell out. The stock market Crash of '94 snowballed into the Collapse of '95, and the Gang of Four began recalling ground units to the U.S., fearful of what might happen. Their concern was justified when federal authority collapsed altogether in 1996 and anarchy began. Mr. Seward, the former SOD had little choice; to save what was left in America, he declared martial law.

■ MILITARY RULE ■

Military government districts were declared, and military governors were named to oversee their districts. Each military governor was the leader of a military *kampfgruppe*, a collection of military units assigned to the same district. Pentagon planners tried to group as many disparate units together as possible, under the precept that every military control district should have the units necessary to handle any situation or emergency. Thus, paratroop units found themselves sharing bases and duties with armor, special forces with supply, infantry with air superiority fighters, even Marine amphibious forces with Army artillery battalions. This hodge-podge *ad hoc* policy was the direct forerunner of the Combined Operations Groups of 2020.

The scarcity of supply and fuel brought even more changes to the once-airmobile units. One problem with AV's was that they consumed immense amounts of CHOOH₂ fuel. Ground vehicles, though gashogs compared to the average ground-car, were more economical to operate than aerodynes. Combined with a lack of parts for the relatively new aerodynes, this practically grounded the AV forces. Groups relying on AV transport were hastily converted to tanks, APC's, IFV's, and in some cases, trucks. At least these machines had ample stocks of spare parts and could be maintained and kept running without the need for large-scale new manufactur-

ing—the government hoped that the period of anarchy wouldn't last long enough to exhaust the stockpiles.

The period of anarchy was, as has been recorded elsewhere, brutal. It was one of the few good times in American history to be in the military. In order to attempt to maintain order, the military governors had to authorize actions that seemed, in retrospect, to be less than humanitarian in the very least: The Houston Incident, perpetrated by troops under the command of Brevet General Darrel Fister, involved the killing of over 2,000 civilians via concentrated artillery barrage when they refused to turn back from entering Houston, as per martial law orders. The mass hangings at Kansas City, as per Lieutenant General Marty Norman's dictates. The "shoot on sight" curfew in New York and other East Coast cities, where anyone seen after curfew would be shot by roving patrols; General Boyle Lodge saw it as a way of curbing violence after dark.

Incidents such as these, combined with the general attitude of the soldiery, and the fact that the populace perceived them as dictatorial thugs living high on tyranny, fed, armed, and maintained for the purpose of killing civilians, bred a negative image of the military that has remained to this day.

Most of the military actions of the martial law period occurred when federal forces clashed with state militias and national guard troops. By and large, these territorial troops had remained loyal to their respective state governments and had forsaken federal service, acting in unison with federal forces only when their purposes met the agendas of the state rulers. For the most part, these actions were small, involving units of platoon/squad size, more "turf fights" than military actions. There was one major battle of this sort, the Battle of Edwards, where Governor E. Brown III got greedy and sent Californian forces to capture Edwards Air Force Base and its crop of fledgling spaceplanes. With help from rival Nevadan troops, the defenders of Edwards repelled the Californian assault.

As federal planners had hoped, the period of martial law violence did not

last long. The major acts of mass violence took place within the first two years of martial law declaration. Between violence, economic upheaval, starvation and disease, the population of the U.S. was reduced to a number where the capability for mass mob violence was significantly reduced. The loss of food sources in the drought of '98 accelerated this trend, and the Wasting Plague of 2000 insured government control—medical care was provided only to those who would come into control areas and submit to martial law. A great many dissidents died of the plague.

■ THE MILITARY IN CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT ■

When martial law was revoked and regional committees took over government of the former martial law regions, the military retained a strong presence in the governmental process. Each regional committee has a military liaison, a representative from the military governor's office—often the military governor himself. These liaisons insure that military priorities are represented, as well as improving cooperation between military forces and civilian authorities. Despite the fact that the U.S. military is still viewed in a poor light by the populace, this cooperation is necessary for the security of the nation and the regional areas, because the U.S. military represents the only armed force capable of keeping independent corporations in line.

■ THE SECOND "SOUTH-AM" WAR ■

With a modicum of civilian control and order returning to the United States, the Department of Defense and the Drug Enforcement Agency once again turned their attentions to the Central American problem. They were confident that their new military units, equipped with AV's and the beginnings of cybersoldiery, could defeat the depleted forces of the South American drug lords. They legitimized the

UNITS "NOTED IN DISPATCHES" DURING THE SECOND SOUTH- AMWAR—

101st Air Assault Div., 2nd Light Cavalry Reg. (Airmobile), 102nd CyberCav Reg. (Mechanized/Provisional), 75th Infantry Reg. (Ranger), 21st Infantry Brig. (Light), SEAL Teams One and Two, elements of the 7th Special Forces Grp. (Long Range Cyber-Teams)



war by declaring that the drug lords were still a danger to the U.S. economy, despite the fact that the majority of drugs sold in the U.S. were purely artificial designer narcotics, manufactured domestically ("Buy American!"). It was universally recognized that the war was nothing less than a nearly naked land-grab to supply the U.S. with a captive resource base and a solid hold over the entire western hemisphere. This move is also what delayed the final destruction of the Gang of Four. It was resisted by the Euro-corporations, which already had a solid economic hold over SouthAm. The war turned into a struggle for domination of the rest of the hemisphere, with the U.S. pouring almost all of its military force into it, and the Euro-corps providing aid, training, equipment and money to the indigenous armies resisting the invasion. This pattern mirrored the decades-old Soviet tactic of fighting wars, "Let's you and him fight." This was not a coincidence; the Euros chose the military advisors of the Neo-Soviet Union to guide the progress of the war.

In this case, the European plan was not to directly contest the American military effort, but instead to make the invasion so costly that the Americans would lose in the end, replicating the pattern established in Vietnam and Afghanistan. Obliging, the Gang of Four decided to invade with full force into the inhospitable territories of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela, fighting in a combination of jungle and mountainous terrain against determined foes, people defending their ancestral homes and lives. Naturally, the American cost in casualties and material loss was tremendous. The war dragged on for almost eight years, draining the U.S. economy. True to the Neo-Soviet plan, the war was terminated not by military loss, but by the lack of military victory. The Gang of Four, struggling to maintain popularity with and power over the American people, had settled on a successful war as the best and quickest plan to bolster their sagging control (a time-tested and proven solution to low popularity, practiced by presidents from Johnson through Bush). It backfired, and the Gang of Four was swept from office by government

reforms passed by the new Congress. The war continued to drag on at a reduced level, degenerating into a series of small fire-fights between American troops and indigenous guerrillas. Finally, the U.S. gave up and the war ended with a whimper, the Euro-corps triumphant.

As the U.S. forces began to pull out of their bases and return to the states, one of the most tragic events of the war occurred. During the war, the understaffed military had hired hundreds of thousands of civilian contractors, most of them skilled but unemployed before the conflict began. By the end of the war, over half a million of them were on site in Panama City and other military bases in Panama and Colombia. Unfortunately, severe budget cuts by the new Congress curtailed the amount of money available for the withdrawal to the U.S., and the decision was made to abandon the civilians in Panama, terminating their employment and leaving them high and dry while the rest of the regular military left. The result was the infamous Nomad March of 2010-11, which had a higher casualty count than the war, and culminated in the formation of numerous Mexican Nomad gangs and coastal pirates.

■ SPACE WARS ■

The United States Aerospace Force, totally stripped of its domination of the skies by popular demand, turned to building the most powerful space force in near orbit. This was matched by the Neo-Soviet Union's own ESA-assisted space armament plan, and the two powers proceeded to litter near orbit with killer satellites, concealed drones, work habitats and massive battle stations which served as orbital fortresses and bases. Space patrols periodically cleaned out orbital nests of enemy hardware, under the basis of the U.N. Space Salvage Laws of 1995, which dictated that any unidentified object in orbit constituted a danger to orbital navigation, and could be removed and salvaged by any responsible party. Since the kill-sats, drones and spy-eyes were naturally not identified—to do so would negate

their concealment and therefore their effectiveness—Neo-Soviet and USAF shuttles plied the space-lanes, scavenging each other's weapons. The ESA and the Highriders stayed away from the conflict, because many of the devices were booby-trapped and highly dangerous to anything approaching too closely.

Needless to say, these operations brought inimical hardware into close proximity, with explosive results. Incidents of damage and injury began to mount, and opposing patrols started exchanging more than greetings and navigational data when they passed. The crisis mounted until the surprise attack on the Mir XIII space weapons platform, the Neo-Sov's biggest battle station. The USAF successfully boarded it with EVAT marines, in the only spacesuit invasion in history. The ESA intervened on the part of their allies, and a short space war raged for about six hours until the ESA bombed Colorado Springs from Luna. In the meantime, over 40% of the world's Earth-to-orbit platforms and vehicles had been destroyed by the all-out war. The fledgling Crystal Palace survived only because of its distant orbit and its low target priority (it was more important to kill off armed Neo-Sovs than unarmed, distant civilian targets).

The First Orbit War, as it came to be known, set the record for the highest cost-per-hour in material destroyed or expended: 2.98 billion eurodollars per hour.

■ THE U.S. MILITARY TODAY ■

Following the Second Central American War, the U.S. military returned in infamy to fade into the political background of the nation. It continued to exist as a fairly well-equipped defense organization, slowly rebuilding its strength after the SouthAm debacle. Its mission returned to that of a century ago: national defense, rather than a tool of international policy. The only military holdings maintained outside the continental U.S.A. are the Hawaiian Islands (although not technically military holdings, this state relies so

much on the military for its economic base that it might as well be a military base), Panama, and the island of Guam. Hawaii is strongly fortified because it is a state; Panama and Guam are held out of sheer stubbornness and tradition.

The USAF has two missions: the maintenance of military strength in orbit, and the elimination of ESA power on the Moon. Following the First Orbit War, the USAF has been steadily rebuilding its near orbit strength, with an eye towards the destruction of ESA far orbit assets—it's common knowledge that one good missile would put paid to the Crystal Palace. As soon as the mass-drivers on the Moon are neutralized, the ESA is targeted for destruction. This widely-known mission objective produces nothing but uneasiness in orbit.

■ OPERATION BIG STICK ■

Internally, the U.S. military has gained another duty: balance of power. The elected U.S. government sees the military as a tool to keep the powerful corporations that inhabit U.S. soil in line. Collectively, the corporations field twice as many soldiers as the U.S. Army and Marine Corps combined. Individually, though, no corporation, not even security giant Arasaka or mercenary power Militech, can match the firepower of three Army regiments.

The power of the U.S. military machine vis a vis corporations was amply demonstrated during what is called the *Mantoga Incident*, when the Mantoga Corporation was destroyed by military effort. This took place prior to the return of free elections in 2008, during an abortive attempt to relax military government and appoint a president. On November 5, 2005, Presidential appointee Henry Jacobi was assassinated. Evidence strongly pointed to Mantoga, Inc. involvement and instigation, and on November 17, 2005, the corporation was given four hours to completely pull out of the United States of America. This ultimatum was ignored by the corporation...to its sorrow. Exactly four hours after the issue of the ultimatum, Army

forces moved on all Mantoga, Inc. facilities, destroying every Mantoga office with concerted air strikes (the most impressive being a pin-point attack on the Mantoga office located in a Chicago suburb; a single air-dropped burrowing bomb shattered the entire office building with the surgical precision of a planned demolition), and overrunning all storage and factory facilities with troops, armor and artillery. The operation took twelve hours, including mopping up. Intelligence operatives and covert military direct-action units (e.g., assassins) followed up, pursuing and killing Mantoga employees and operatives who escaped the country. On April 3, 2006, Operation Big Stick was officially closed when the last Mantoga, Inc. administrator was assassinated in Bonn, Germany.

This genocidal military action has remained as an example to all corporations on American soil of what happens when the U.S. government is pushed too far.

■ U.S. MILITARY AND CORPORATE RELATIONS ■

Despite the example of Operation Big Stick and the generally poor reputation of the U.S. military, relations with powerful corporations in the U.S. remain largely cordial. The U.S. military is a big and powerful client, with a budget few clients can command, so most corporations attempt to maintain friendly business relations. Chief among these are Arasaka, EBM, IEC, Militech, Orbital Air, Petrochem, and WorldSat, all big suppliers of one commodity or another to the U.S. military complex.

Militech has particularly strong ties to the U.S. armed forces through the influence of former USMC General Lundee, its CEO. This influence extends from participation in secret U.S. military projects, to sales to the armed forces, to leasing Militech troops for Army or Marine Corps use when they don't have enough for the job at hand. When used in this fashion, the Militech troops don regulation U.S. uniforms and are identified as Militech mercenaries by their shoulder insignia. ★

■ THE U. S. MILITARY FORCES IN 2020 ■

The four groups that make up the United States' armed forces are still the same four that have existed since the end of World War II: the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Air (now Aerospace) Force. Each force has specific areas of national defense. These areas are still separate, but not as separate as they used to be, now that the policy of Combined Operational Groups exists.

Military bases and duties were once strictly segregated. The Navy and USMC shared bases, but this was because the USMC was technically a subsidiary of the Navy. The USAF and the Army usually had separate bases, relatively close to one another, but

vastly different, although the two forces shared responsibilities in the same theater of operations. In addition, units within each branch were not based to constitute a balanced force. Bases were designed more for training than for combat readiness; Fort Knox was full of armor, Fort Leonard Wood was for engineers and infantry, etc. In a peaceful nation, this was practical and efficient.

In the reorganizations of 1992-93, every military unit had been equipped with as many organic combat units as possible—for instance, an armored regiment was reorganized to include some armored infantry, mobile artillery, and a small armored engineer unit. The idea was for each formation to operate somewhat independently, without requiring close coordination with other units. During the martial law period, this was not enough. The heavier units couldn't operate effectively on the limited resources available at the time. The optimum mix, it was decided, would be one heavy striker unit, one lighter and larger patrol contingent, and an aerial support and recon element. Thus was born the concept of the Combined Operational Group.

Critics of the COG concept were many, and most hailed from within the service. The main charge was that disparate units wouldn't mesh correctly, and that supply problems would be too difficult. For proof, they offered the evidence of the old Combat Command system of the late 1930's-early 1940's, which was very similar to the COG system, and hadn't worked well under fire. Their arguments were refuted on the basis of improved communications technology and a different mission; in 1942, the Combat Commands had been formed to create several independent but mutually-supporting task groups out of one division. In 1996, the idea was have independent groups with internal mutual support, something the Combat Commands had not accomplished. Still, the protests did have an effect: COG's were formed as more-or-less permanent arrangements. The forces of each group trained together, lived together, and fought together, as a super-unit. Each unit within the group still retained its individual identity, but the emphasis was on COG first and parent unit second.

COG's even brought together units from different services, operating out of the same base and fighting together as a single COG. This could not have been achieved if the

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ✓ New Forces for a New Era
- ✓ A New Action Army
- ✓ The Shrinking Navy
- ✓ Marines Still Lead the Way
- ✓ USAF: Rocket Jocks on the Rise

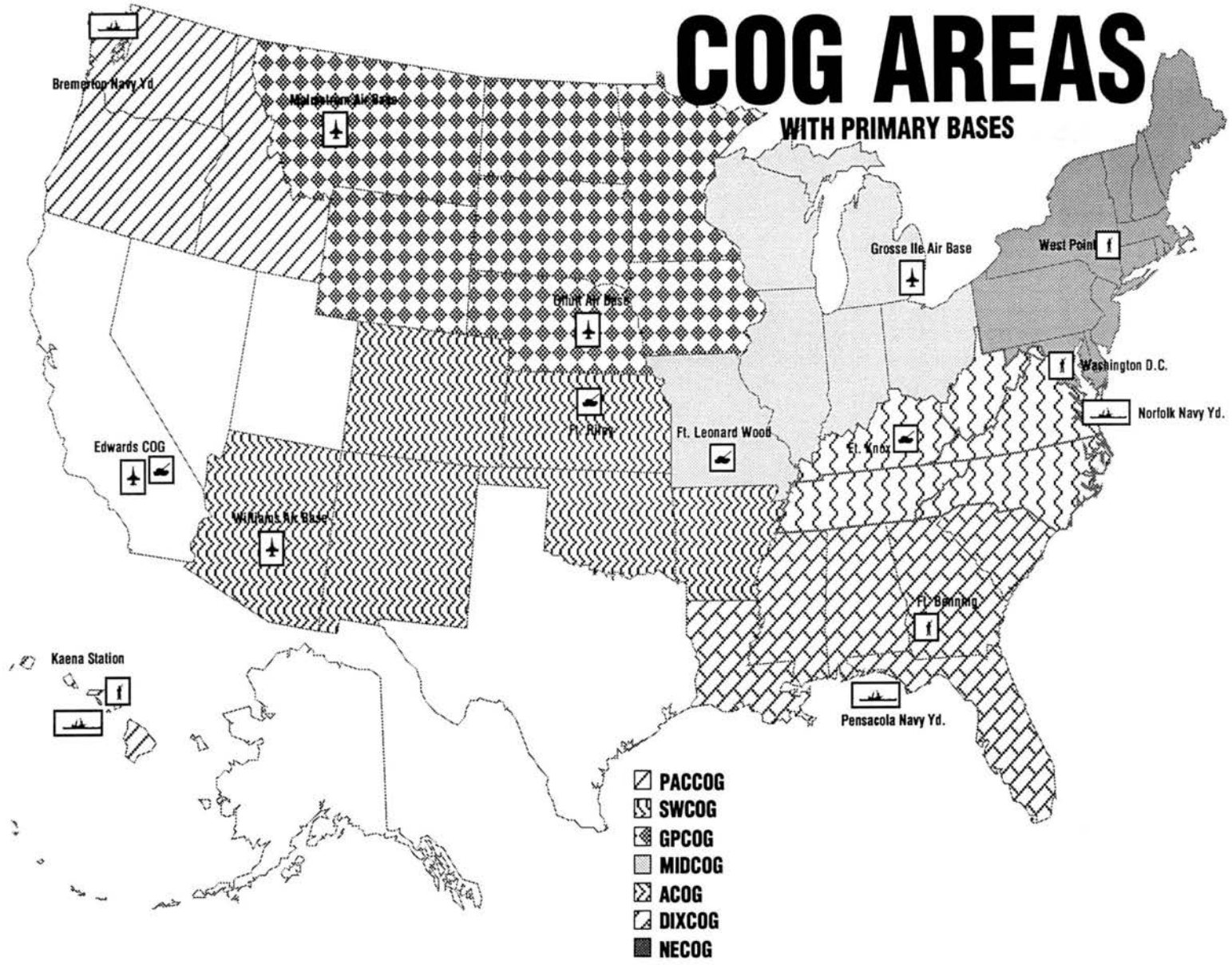
■ THE COG ■

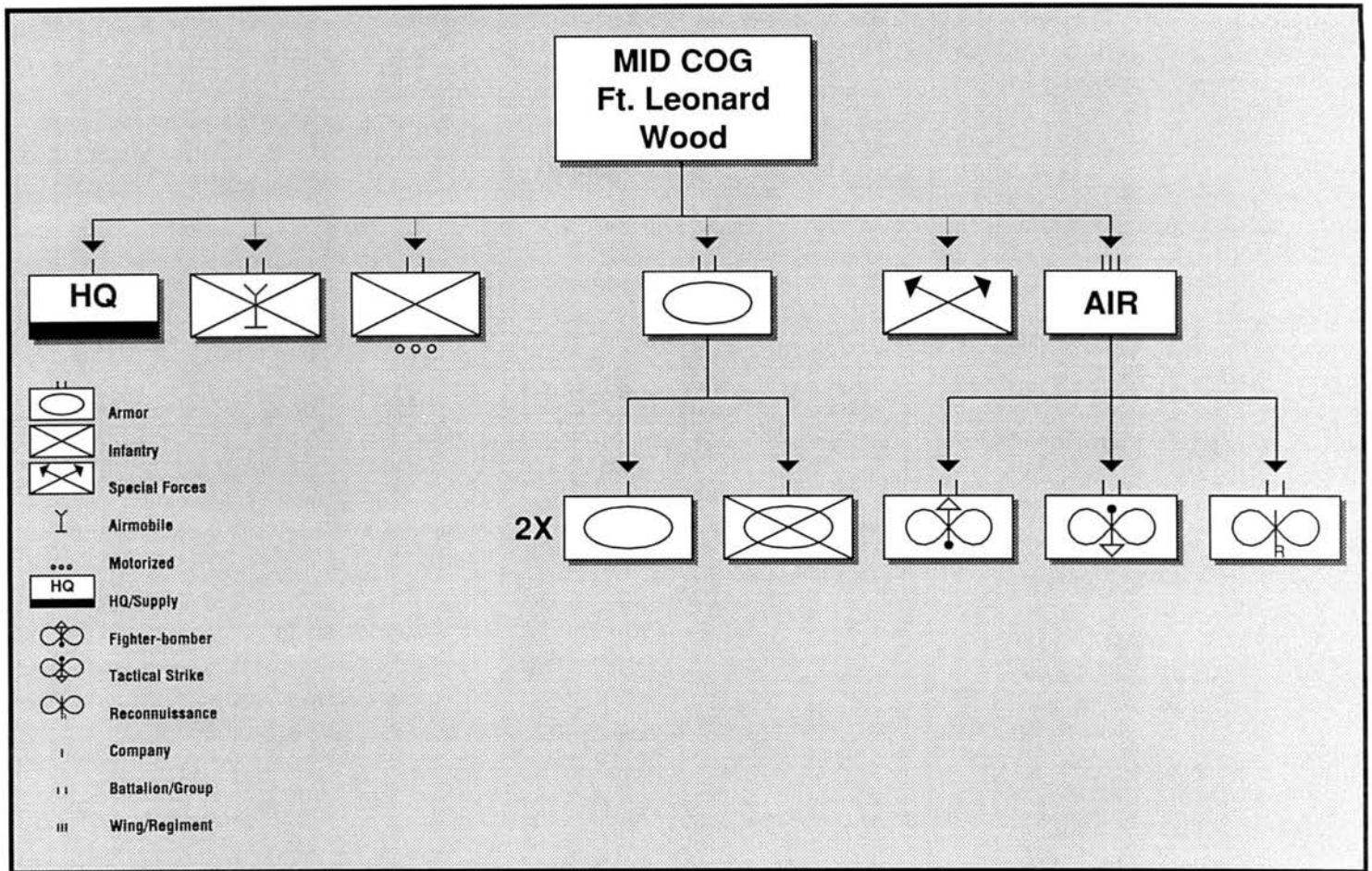


The problems that beset the nation forced a change in the deployment of armed forces. During the martial law period, it became necessary to disperse armed forces throughout the country to maintain order. Each military region needed its own forces, and each force mix had to be more or less balanced, in order to deal with any contin-

COG AREAS

WITH PRIMARY BASES





situation has not been so desperate; in anything less than total anarchy, the concept of a USMC battalion serving with an Army regiment would have been impossible. Morale propaganda was shifted from inter-service rivalry to a "Military versus Anarchy" stance.

Today, the COG's are still in existence. They patrol the nation, and guard the nation from internal and external threats. In addition, COG units have performed well in Panama against constant military pressure, putting to rest the last point made against the concept—constant coordination training has made them into effective, organic combat units.

■ COG ORGANIZATION ■

A Combined Operations Group is usually made up of three elements: one force with heavy armor or firepower, one larger infantry force, and an air wing. Typically,

the armor force is an Army armored battalion, since the Army possesses the bulk of the nation's armored fighting vehicles. The infantry force is either Army or Marine Corps, and the air wing can come from the Army Air Corps, the Marine Corps' own aircraft, or even Navy air forces. The size and composition of each COG depends on the amount and type of territory and the population base in its area of operations. A couple of non-regional COG's are currently being tailored for special missions (they will include Ranger and Marine Force Recon Companies and operational/strategic, non-nuclear airstrike squadrons). The Fort Leonard Wood COG is composed of one tank battalion with armored infantry and mobile armor, two battalions of infantry (one air/AV, one ground-mobile), one special forces group (an ad hoc mixture of squads and sections), and an air recon/tac-support wing. This COG has a large area of terrain ranging from plains to forested hills to

patrol, and has to keep the lid on Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, north Arkansas, eastern Oklahoma, and western Illinois. The Edwards COG at Edwards AFB is made up of two light armor companies, one heavy armor company, a regiment of airmobile infantry with artillery, and a wing of attack aircraft. The COG's bailiwick extends over most of Nevada, and includes watching the California Free States closely.

COG's operate from their central base (for which the COG is named), and from subsidiary bases scattered throughout their control zone. Small, light forces are kept in the small bases (perhaps a platoon or two), while mobile reaction forces are kept in readiness at the main base to assist any secondary base the needs reinforcement.

COG CONTROL AREAS

Northeast: The entire Northeast sector (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire,

New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, D.C.) is under the jurisdiction of the nation's largest COG, the NECOG. This COG is five divisions strong, spread throughout the sector, with the elite Special Operations Group Delta and a USMC Recon battalion located in Washington, D.C.

Appalachia: The ACOG has internal military jurisdiction over this sector (Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia). It is one of the smaller COG's, having its two main bases at the old Armor School of Fort Knox and at the Norfolk Navy Base.

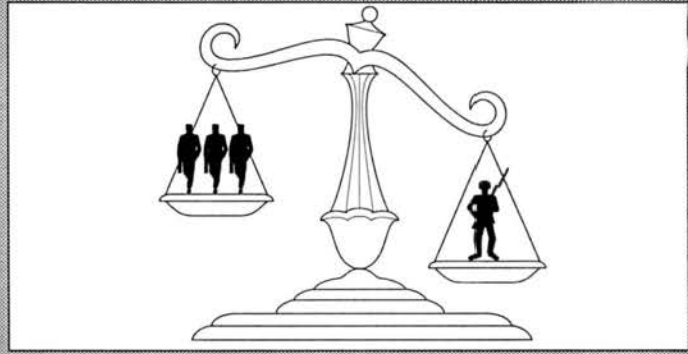
Dixie: This sector's COG has is made up of mostly Navy and Marine units. Considering the location of its military district (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina), this is not surprising. This COG and the Midwest COG share the responsibility of patrolling the Mississippi River.

Midwest: Starting with the Midwest sector, COG's are larger, so they can split off smaller forces to cover the vast amounts of territory in the control districts. This COG, based in Missouri and Illinois, has to cover Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Great Plains: The GPCOG is a huge organization, comprising a total strength of nearly three divisions. It is mostly mobile infantry and light vehicle battalions, and does military internal security for the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.

Southwest: The deserts and plains of the Southwest (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma) demand mobile forces not far removed from military versions of Nomads. Like the GPCOG, the SWCOG is largely mobile infantry and light vehicles.

Pacific Northwest: This COG is split, since its jurisdiction also covers the Hawaiian Islands. Two Marine battalions hold the islands, while the rest of the COG is stationed in the continental states (Idaho, Oregon, Washington).



CORPORATE SOLDIERS VS. NATIONAL SOLDIERS?

CorpSec units may be well-equipped, -trained, and -organized, but, unless they're Arasaka, Militech, or Lazarus troops, they are security—well-armed, ill-tempered cops; not dedicated combat troops. Corps teach economical conflict (Don't damage the assets!), not no-holds-barred warfare. Corp troops will hesitate before harming valuable property/people, while the Army won't think twice about blasting a building to rubble just to get one sniper...

Free States: Despite the fact that the Free States are no longer part of the Union, they still retain cordial relations with the U.S.A. In fact, the Free State of California, the site of the major spaceport, Edwards Base, has a U.S. military COG on its soil. The Edwards COG was established by mutual agreement; the U.S. pays rent, brings economy to the economically poor state, and assists SoCal in its state defense. In return, a mix of SoCal and Nevadan forces assist the Edwards COG in defending Edwards Base.

■ THE ARMY ■



The Army is directly responsible for the internal and external land defense of the nation, and for fighting wars abroad. It is the largest branch of the armed forces of the United States of America, and is also the branch with the worst reputation. For over a century, the Army has been considered the service with the lowest requirements for entry, the lowest level of training, and consequently the lowest level of competence. While this is not strictly true, con-

sidering the Army's performance in four major wars and several police actions last century, the perception is still there.

Currently, the Army is not the elite combat force of the nation—for that sort of soldiery, one would have to go to the USMC's Powered Armor Response Unit—and soldier for soldier, the Army doesn't have the quality to even compete with corporate soldiery, but the Army has lots of soldiers, and lots of guns for them to use, so it wields more military power than any single military force in North America. With its tanks, airborne infantry, mobile artillery, and tactical air commands, it is a force to be reckoned with.

Of special interest to military buffs and historians is the fairly recent addition of the Army Air Corps, the air wing of the Army. Like the Navy and Marine Corps, the Army now possesses its own air support and air force, no longer relying on the USAF for such things. The advantage of this is that the Army can build aircraft for multi-role purposes and specialize in ground attack, the real mission of air support, without having to rely on a reluctant Air Force for this. Many have compared the new Army Air Corps to the old *Luftwaffe* in function and design. For more on the history of this, see the United States Aerospace Force, below.

ORGANIZATION

Administrative unit organization in the Army has not changed much since over a century ago: Units are still mostly divisions, around 10,000-15,000 men, split into three regiments. With the advent of the COG discipline, units are dispersed in regiments and battalions, as necessary. The practice is to assign units in battalions and not to split them any smaller. The actual unit sizes are as follows:

Division: Consisting of three regiments and a command battalion, this unit has around 5,000 fighting men and 5,000-7,500 support personnel. Armored divisions have around 2,300 fighting men, 450-500 armored fighting vehicles, and 5,000 support personnel. Led by a General.

Regiment: A regiment is three battalions and a command battalion, adding up to 1,500 fighting men and around 2,000 support personnel. Armored regiments are 650 soldiers, 150 tanks, and 1,300-1,500 support personnel. Army Air Corps wings are two or three groups (the equivalent of a battalion), and have 300-450 fighting men, 145-220 aircraft, and 1,000-2,000 support personnel. Led by a Colonel.

The independent COG philosophy has caused the evolution of the seemingly command-heavy HQ battalion. In actuality, the HQ battalion of a regiment becomes the central command of an entire COG, and has to handle more weighty and more diverse command responsibilities than a regimental HQ of last century. In addition, extra "support" units (units added for special functions, like placing an engineer company with a motorized recon unit) are usually assigned with the HQ, to be used as needed.

Battalion: The main unit of battlefield combat, a battalion is three companies and a command platoon; 450 fighting men and 800-900 support personnel. Armored battalions are 200 fighting men, 47 armored fighting vehicles, and 200-300 support personnel. Tac-air groups consist of two to three squadrons (100-150 fighting men, 48-72 aircraft, and 300-500 support personnel). Led by a Major.

Once upon a time, battalions were entirely homogeneous, composed of like companies—an infantry battalion would have three infantry companies, an armor battalion, three armor companies, etc. This practice began to change during WWII, when armored infantry was included in armored formations—the importance of an infantry screen with armor was soon discovered. When the Army was reorganized, battalions were equipped with two homogeneous companies and an "organic" (that is, a natural part of the unit, not part of another unit that is attached) support company. Infantry battalions acquired a pair of artillery platoons and a heavy weapons support platoon. Armor battalions acquired a mobile artillery platoon and two armored infantry platoons. Tac-air groups retained the same formation, since they had almost always mixed different aircraft squadrons in the same group (air combat required, and still requires, too many specialist aircraft to make up homogeneous groups).

Company: The company is the smallest battlefield unit, aside from special forces units. It is exceedingly rare for a battlefield unit to be assigned in platoons or squads; instead, a company is usually assigned if the unit's specialty is desired in limited quantity (if you need tanks, for instance, you get 14 in a company instead of 4 in a platoon). A company is three platoons and a command section (a section is an archaic unit formed of two squads; the designation is now only used for special forces and command units)—140 men and 14 vehicles for an infantry unit, 55 men and 14 vehicles for an armored or artillery unit, and 35-50 pilots, 16-24 aircraft, and 100-150 support personnel for an AAC squadron. Please note that only the squadron has integral support personnel; the other companies usually provide their own basic support and receive more complex support from battalion level. Led by a Captain.

Platoon: A platoon is a basic fighting formation. While a company may have its component platoons spread out in separate order, usually the squads that

make a platoon stick in close proximity, to provide mutual support. A platoon is three squads and a command squad, which means 40 infantry and four vehicles, or 16-20 men and four AFV's/aircraft (AAC "platoons" are called flights). The command squad of an infantry platoon usually contains communications, technical support (i.e., a Techie or two), and limited quantity of heavy weapons. Led by a Lieutenant (usually, the actual leadership comes from the Platoon Sergeant—the officer's there to give the orders).

Squad: 10 men and a vehicle, or 2-3 men and an AFV/aircraft. This is the lowest unit of an armored or AAC formation. Led by a Sergeant or Corporal. Special forces units, such as the Powered Armor Commandos, are trained, assigned, and operate in this size. Infantry squads in 2020 are almost always mobile infantry, equipped with a transport—regular infantry has a truck or APC, armored infantry has an IFV, and airmobile infantry has a helicopter or aerodyne.

Fire Team: The infantry split their squads into even smaller groups, consisting of a fire team leader (who may or may not have rank higher than Private; fire team leaders are frequently the squad leader and the next most competent leader in the squad), three riflemen, and a special weapons gunner.

The reasoning behind the fire team is that in close or urban combat, a squad can split up to cover more territory. Since the fire teams usually operate in close order to each other, they can, in essence, increase their effectiveness by 50%.

Special forces units almost always split into fire teams, as their greater firepower/training makes one of their fire teams more effective than a regular Army squad.

DEPLOYMENT

As a largely land-bound force, the Army is usually assigned to land patrols and duties. Armor regiments and battalions are deployed in the nation's interior and on the borders, as heavy

reinforcements for lighter units and guards against foreign incursion. Infantry units are deployed everywhere, the unit orientation dependent on the terrain and duties—deploying a normal surface infantry unit in the western Rockies would be inadvisable, considering the mountainous terrain; an airmobile unit would be a much better choice. AAC air units are always deployed with regular surface Army units unless the COG has a Navy or Marine Corps air element included in it.

TACTICS

A rmy tactics depend on the situation, like all tactics. Typical infantry tactics come in two varieties: urban and non-urban. Urban tactical infantry doctrine calls for each platoon to cover an area of two to three city blocks (or the equivalent), splitting up into fire teams to cover the area more completely. Each squad's two fire teams are to work in close coordination with each other, remaining in close proximity for mutual support. The command squad is usually held in reserve. Non-urban doctrine calls for each squad's fire teams to act as two halves of a coordinated whole, one fire team providing cover fire while the other fire team advances, then vice versa. This tactic is called "bounding overwatch." On the defensive, each fire team sets up to defend each other as well as the squad's position.

Armor tactics involve steering clear of urban situations as much as possible, since the close terrain of a city is a perfect lurking ground for well-armed infantry. In the open (which is where armor prefers to maneuver), the "bounding overwatch" tactic is again used, but this time with entire platoons—as Platoon A advances, Platoon B provides covering fire, etc.

Support from artillery or aircraft is limited to destroying or pinning down enemy concentrations or strongholds. Since this support is less accurate and certainly less available than organic fire support (to a ground-pounder, "less

accurate" means "it might miss and hit ME," and "less available" means "it ain't here right now when I need it"), it is less a tool of short-ranged tactical goals (i.e., immediate objectives or when things go really wrong) and has to be planned, at least in order to have air support or artillery standing by and ready to help. Still, it's impressively handy when available.

ARMY EQUIPMENT

A s noted in the *Military Equipment* section, the Army uses the Mk IV Assault Weapon as its standard rifle. An infantry soldier in the field is equipped with standard field armor, a pack, an IR poncho, a canteen, a first aid kit, two spare uniforms, a bedroll, a small tent, a flashlight, a small survival kit (matches, water purification pills, vitamins, fish-hooks, line, etc.), a bayonet-knife, five ammunition mags, four grenades (of varying types, depending upon assignment), and a small weapon-cleaning kit. Two riflemen and the fire team leader carry M-205 grenade launchers and five grenades of varying types; the other two carry Army LAWs or other portable anti-vehicle weapons. The fifth man in a fire team carries a special weapon (e.g., M-12 CAW, M-60D machinegun, M-232 Squad Assault Weapon, M-212 grenade launcher). The two special weapons men in each squad carry different types of special weapons. Vehicle soldiers are equipped as regular soldiers, but use Militech Dragon assault rifles instead of the Mk IV Assault Weapon, and carry their field kits in their vehicles.

Army officers are equipped with a pistol and may have a rifle or submachinegun. They also have standard combat armor, binoculars, communications or artillery direction devices, and usually have their field kit carried by someone else.

The most common field vehicle is the Hummer, the all-purpose truck/jeep. The second most common field vehicle is the 2 1/2-ton truck. Army combat vehicles consist of the Darkwarrior motorcycle for recon troops, the M-11

FYI VEHICLE INFORMATION

For stats and further information on all vehicles mentioned here, check out the *Maximum Metal* sourcebook.

IFV for armored infantry, the M-50 Hellfire Vehicle for anti-tank action, the M-11 MBT for heavy armor, the M-75 LBT for light armor, the AV-6 and UH-9 for airmobile transport, the AV-8 and AH-99 as gunship support, and the AV-9 for command, ECM, and special operations. The Army Air Corps makes extensive use of the Wasp fighter, the Overlord Airship for EW control, the Falcon-B for recon and courier transport, the Osprey for standard VTOL transport, the A-01 Blitz for ground attack, and the C-200 Universe for mass transport.

THE NAVY



The Navy's duties are the defense of America's coasts, American ships, and American possessions overseas. This is accomplished through three supporting branches: the Submarine Service, the Surface Navy, and the Naval Air Corps.

The Submarine Service is arguably the largest of its type in the world. While international corporations use submarines for all kinds of work, only the USN still has nuclear-powered, long-haul attack submarines of the type insanely popular during the Cold War. Many of these subs are veterans of that decades-long stalemate, and have been refurbished and sent out to sea again. They still serve the same purpose that they held during the Cold War: Hunter-killers scour the oceans for enemy vessels and subs, while "Boomers" lurk near the bottom, constantly shifting their positions, bearing their cargoes of

smart-missile death. The only change is that this time the missiles are targeted for Bonn, Paris, Hamburg, Brest, and other sites in the U.S.A.'s most likely enemy, the EEC. The rationale of maintaining this fleet of powerful boats and some smaller coastal boats is that while the EEC may have a hold over the U.S. through the ESA's mass-drivers on Luna, the threat of nuclear annihilation restores the balance of power—if anyone pulls the trigger on Luna, Europe dies a horrible fusion death. Since submarine detection requires inserting sonar devices into the hydrosphere or otherwise getting close to the water, they are the perfect weapons to use as a counterbalance to the ESA firepower. To date, no method has been found that allows submarines to be detected from any altitude greater than that allowable to drop sonobuoys—the Cold War powers spent a great deal of time trying for submarine detection, but failed. In addition, there are no new technologies that promise the possibility of sub detection from orbit, even when trying to find old-style subs of forty years past. The revisions to the U.S. subs make them practically undetectable and more deadly than ever.

The Surface Navy consists of a large number of small, CHOOH₂-powered patrol boats, and a relative few nuclear-powered surface warships. The once-mighty "600-ship fleet" has been reduced to around 250 patrol boats, 39 frigates and escorts, ten nuclear cruisers, two nuclear carriers, and four refit nuclear battleships. Most of the patrol boats are stationed off the American coastline, serving as naval armed guards. The rest serve as small escorts to the bigger ships on their assignments overseas. The Surface Navy's function is to guard against aerial and naval incursions into American naval space, and to act as an instrument of national policy abroad. It is common to see a battleship combat group practicing maneuvers off the coast of an unfriendly nation. In this the Navy is assisted by its Japanese allies; between the Navy, the Japanese, and the Australians, the Pacific Rim is a bathtub hostile to EEC influence.

The Naval Air Corps is a blanket designation for the Navy's air arm. This arm uses its aircraft to support naval operations, conduct anti-shipping and anti-submarine patrols, and defend American possessions. Its planes and airships fly from land bases in America, Hawaii, and Guam, covering a large area of the world. In addition, the two nuclear carriers (*Nimitz* and *United States*) take NAC striking power wherever it needs to go.

Between these three forces, the U.S.A. possesses the strongest combat navy in the world. Once, the USSR had a navy of superior numbers, but this navy was largely sold and dismantled during the upheaval that took place after the death of the USSR and the birth of the Neo-Soviet Union.

ORGANIZATION

The Navy is organized differently from any land force. In the Navy, each ship is a unit. Patrol boats may be assigned to more-or-less permanent patrol units, thereby qualifying as the naval equivalents of platoons or companies within a larger unit. The capital ships (cruisers, carriers and battleships) are assigned as the core of naval task forces, with the frigates and destroyers as escorts. Naval task forces are made and revised continually, depending upon what ships are needed where and which ships are available.

TACTICS

Naval tactics haven't changed much since the 20th Century. Submarines continue their deadly game of cat and mouse, with the hunter-killers looking for enemy subs and the boomers attempting to stay out of harm's way. Surface ships continually scan and watch for aircraft, submarines, and vessels, ready to attack at the first sign of hostile activity. The weapons of choice are missiles, because of their range and striking power—a single missile can sink or severely damage most ships. The big bat-

tlehips are an exception to this rule; they can sustain nearly twenty times more punishment before being rendered incapable of combat. Aircraft use missiles and torpedoes, depending on whether they're making aerial strikes or on anti-submarine patrol duties.

The battleships are, as they have been in the past, used to intimidate less-powerful foes and nations.

EQUIPMENT

Most Navy equipment is used aboard ship, and consists of tools. Navy sea uniforms are somewhat different than normal uniforms, though; they incorporate inflatable pockets within the uniform that inflate to provide flotation devices when the pressure surrounding the sailor reaches levels encountered under four meters of water. These flotation devices can be activated manually.

When naval troops have to use firearms and body armor, they use the same equipment used by the Army, with one exception: Naval security troops on board ships prefer to use Sternmeyer SMG-21 submachineguns, because they do not penetrate ship walls like higher-velocity rounds.

Most naval ships are beyond the scope of this supplement (a battleship has SP in the four to five-digit range, and SDP verging on six figures). The most common Navy patrol boat is the PB-20, and the Navy still operates M-40 GEVs in shallow areas. Naval air units use the Wasp fighter and the A-01 attack plane, suitably modified for nautical duty.

■ UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS ■



The USMC was set up as an infantry striking arm of the Navy, as well as ship's troops. It slowly evolved into a separate strike arm on its own, still part of and allied with the Navy, but capable of per-

forming independent missions on its own. Eventually the Marines, not weighed down with the heavy equipment and top-heavy administration that dog the Army, came to be considered a sort of rapid-deployment force, a group of military troubleshooters who could be at the scene of military trouble swiftly.

Despite the fact that the Marines now work hand-in-hand with the Army, once their most bitter rivals, the Marines still maintain separate training and operational guidelines. Even their unit organization is slightly different. Because of their rigorous entry and training standards, and their mental conditioning, the Marines are still perceived as being the most elite of the U.S. land forces. (Even so, they are primarily light infantry; the Army still has the edge in mobility/firepower.)

Marine conditioning has long been portrayed as a matter of turning young people into mindless, wholly-obedient killers. This is not completely true; while Marines just out of basic training seem like this, this training is later refined to turn each Marine into a self-motivated, courageous soldier. Others interpret the results as brainwashing, and frequently see Marines as in need of serious attitude adjustment in order to fit into society, but the end result is that the average Marine is better motivated and more confident than the average Army soldier.

ORGANIZATION

USMC organization is similar to Army organization; after all, Marines are just infantry and tank forces, like Army units. However, Marine forces aren't as bulky, since they don't usually have exactly the same duties as Army forces. Individually, a Marine battalion is almost the same as its Army counterpart, but Marine units stop at the regimental level; the USMC doesn't have larger units. Marine armor units are quite rare, and in an aquatic role are replaced with hovercraft units. Marine air units are more plentiful, since the Marines have a long history of their own air branch.

DEPLOYMENT

Marine units are usually deployed in coastal defense roles, where they can make good use of their relationship with the Navy. Marine units are also deployed as ships' troops; a PB-20 patrol boat, for instance, usually carries a fire team or a squad of Marines on its patrols. These Marines are carried in crew positions, as gunners or other qualified ship's crew.

TACTICS

As ground forces, Marine units use the same sort of tactics employed by the Army, with the addition of amphibious assault (a Marine specialty). Marine armor prefers to outflank the enemy and either provide stiffening firepower for Marine units, or swiftly move into the enemy rear area, using tanks for the former and hovercraft for the latter.

EQUIPMENT

Marine infantry equipment and armor is the same as Army equipment. Armor tends to be light; they have a few M-11 MBT's, but most Marine armored units have either M-75's or M-40 hovercraft. Hover-trucks and jeeps are popular Marine transports when the terrain is flat or near open expanses of water; these are supported by wheeled, amphibious APCs/IFVs. Marine air units use the Wasp or A-01 attack planes. Normal infantry units also make good use of AVs and helicopters.

THE UNITED STATES AEROSPACE FORCE



In the beginning, there was the Army Air Corps, encompassing tactical, strategic, and logistic air command of every aircraft the Army flew. At this time, the Navy and Marine Corps acquired their own air arms.

After the end of the Second World War, a new service was formed that took over all the duties of the AAC: The USAF. The commanders of this group seized every responsibility and area of control that they could, and would have taken the air arms of the Navy or USMC if they had been allowed to.

The Air Force continued to do the job of the old AAC, and often better than the AAC did. However, as time passed, emphasis on ground support roles was degraded in favor of air superiority and strategic bombing (even though the bombing role had been rendered obsolete). This lack of close support contributed to the development of helicopter gunships—the Army needed something to replace the lack of dedicated ground-attack aircraft—and eventually to AVs. After the Air Force scrapped the A-10 Thunderbolt II, they had nothing to replace it in a ground attack role, so when the First Central American War heated up, there was inadequate air support for the ground offensive. During the martial law period, military governors all but absorbed Air Force units into their own unit structures. When military rebuilding and restructuring occurred after the restoration of civil law, the Army and the Air Force reached a compromise: If the Air Force yielded all control of terrestrial air support to the Army, the Army would help push the concept of an aerospace force, devoted entirely to the orbital arena. So the new USAF came into being.

Faced with the opposition of the ESA and the Neo-Soviet forces in orbit, the USAF started building scramjets, attack shuttles, and space stations at an alarming rate. The ESA and Neo-Soviets responded in kind, and the arms race culminated in the USAF attack on the Mir station in 2008. The short war was ended by the rock-dropping incident, but in the meantime the USAF revealed its intentions, and the ESA took the lesson to heart.

Since that time, the USAF has been rebuilding its forces. While the ESA has a firm hold on the high orbit, the USAF has the greatest number of attack craft in low orbit of any of the space powers. With its battlestations, assault craft, and EVA troops, the USAF watches and waits for a chance to strike.

ORGANIZATION

The USAF's organization is a bit sporadic by the standards of the other military services. The reason for this is that the USAF's operational theater is very different, and completely hostile to human life. Usually, organizations are ad hoc outfits, thrown together for their capabilities. Only the orbital assault fighters and the EVATs have somewhat rigid organization. The assault fighters are assigned to wings of sixteen craft; four craft make up a squadron, and two craft make up a flight. The EVA troops are organized in platoons of twenty troopers, further split into four squads of five men, each with its own squad officer. One squad officer commands the entire platoon.

DEPLOYMENT

In orbit, USAF forces are spread throughout the orbital workstations and battlestations. Since the workstations can't sustain large quantities of people for very long, the deployment of living orbital assets is highly variable. EVATs are always deployed aboard attack shuttles, if an attack is imminent; aboard battlestations to guard them from enemy attack, and at USAF facilities on the ground.

TACTICS

In space, terminal velocity is light-speed. At the fantastic relative speeds attained by simple orbital junk, an impact is catastrophic. Furthermore, there's very little terrain to hide in. Consequently, USAF tactics concentrate more on shielding one's signature, fooling the enemy, and dealing a telling blow from a low-signature weapon before the enemy can respond. EVA Troops are used when individual astro-soldiers working independently of a space ship can accomplish significant objectives—a space dogfight at nearly a thousand miles range is right out, but a furball around an orbital station is their oyster.

EQUIPMENT

The USAF's main equipment is its space craft: 118 Delta interceptors deployed from numerous ground bases, four battlestations, and two mighty, nuclear-driven gunships (there is a proposal on the boards to build a couple of modified cargo clippers for carrier work). For close work, space-suited EVATs armed with EVAWs are used, as well as combat powered armor suits.

The USAF is the U.S. military's single greatest user of powered armor. In space, a powered armor suit doesn't need to support its mass in a G-field, and with maneuvering vernier jets, a powered armor suit becomes a one-man, man-shaped spacecraft. When a job calls for extended EVA activity, more often than not, a powered armor suit is used.

STATE FORCES

State forces are those military forces directly controlled by state governments or authorities. They are typically weaker and smaller than the federal military, because they don't have that kind of money available to spend on military toys. These forces are important, though, because they are often easier to mobilize on a local level than federal forces. The state militia/guard is the force called in when disaster strikes and martial law is declared; when time is short and the Federals can't provide, the state forces are deployed.

In addition, for the Free States, their state military forces are their "National Guard," there to protect the Free States from military incursion.

ORGANIZATION

State forces are organized, whenever possible, on lines identical to that of the Army. The main difference is that a state military is unlikely to have units larger than battalions. States that have patrol navies organize their boats into squadrons, like Navy patrol squadrons.

DEPLOYMENT

State forces are usually kept at their bases, where they have support for their operations. These bases are almost always old installations that the federal forces have abandoned or sold to the states. One constant among state military deployment is that one elite unit is always kept near the state capitol to defend it from attack; this is a hold-over from the years of anarchy.

TACTICS

State forces aren't as well-equipped as the Federal ones, so ground transport and tactics are still important to them. Securing roads and bridges to insure logistics transport, moving in "fronts" rather than the air-hopping movements of federal airmobile forces, and slow advances with assured support firepower are all examples of these "ground-pounder" tactics.

EQUIPMENT

State forces tend to get the leftovers from federal armories. Many are still armed with M-16A3/204 rifle combinations; some of the luckier state soldiers have Militech Ronin rifles with M-205 grenade launchers. State soldiers' access to body armor varies widely, but all of them wear helmets with built-in communications, and as many as possible wear some body armor—usually a kevlar vest, or a light armor jacket and pants at best. Heavy weapons are a combination of LAWs, machineguns and grenade launchers.

State military vehicles are also castoffs: M-75 light tanks, old M-2 Bradley IFV's, some old M-1 Abrahms MBT's, F-16 fighter-bombers, Blackhawk and Apache helicopters, etc. Commercial vehicles such as Arasaka Assault-8's and AV-4's are common, along with of course, the ubiquitous Hummers and 2 1/2-ton trucks. ★

■ MILITARY SOLDIERS ■

The military life can be a hard life. A soldier is constantly reminded of the fact that he is required to lay down his life on another person's orders, without regard for the soldier's own desires. Furthermore, a soldier's time is usually taken up doing things that the soldier would rather not be doing, but that he has to do anyway. This concept is called discipline, and it features heavily in a soldier's life.

Why do people volunteer to become soldiers? For some, the military is a way to escape a

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ✓ A New Character Role
- ✓ Special Forces: Best of the Best
- ✓ The Military as Career
- ✓ Supporting NPCs
- ✓ Toys for the Troops

poor economic future. For others, the military represents a way of life where the person will be accepted, be part of a team, and perhaps even better his station in life. As for others, they want to go to new places, meet new people, and kill them with new toys of mass destruction. The fact that other people will tell them when, where and who they can kill is compensated for by allowing them to use expensive gear they could never afford otherwise.

Getting into the military isn't very hard. Normally, if you get into the recruitment office and prove that you're healthy, at least marginally intelligent, and sign the forms, you're in. Of course, forces with special missions have special requirements—the USAF's special mission demands above-average intelligence and adaptability, and they recruit for this, while the USMC just plain won't take weaklings. State militaries are even easier to get into. By and large, it's easier to get into the military than it is to get into Corporate armies. The rewards may not be as much, but the military isn't as nasty as Corporate armies, either.

■ GENERATING MILITARY CHARACTERS ■

As with any Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0. character, you start out with determining the statistics. Once that is done, Parts 1-3 of the Lifepath can be dealt with. Stop there; now the military takes over!

The next step is to enter the desired branch of the military. After that is accomplished, the character goes through Basic and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) in the service.

Following Basic & AIT, the player decides how many years he wants the character to be in the military, then generates annual events, one year at a time. Each year, the player rolls for the year's Life Event, then, if eligible, tests for promotion and Special Forces training.

■ LIFE EVENTS ■

Roll each year of Life Events separately. This is important, because things can happen in a soldier's life to cut his career short, or change it dramatically. Life Event tables and rolls are handled normally, except that the Big Problems, Big Wins, and Make An Enemy tables are changed. Replace them with the tables below.

DISASTER STRIKES!

- 1 Financial Loss or Debt: Roll 1D10 x 100 eb. That's how much you've lost. Who knows how? Poker, a bad loan, a swindle.
- 2 In the Brig: You got tossed in the slammer for 1D10 months. Plus punishment duty, yum yum. There are many ways to get into the clink—insubordination, dereliction of duty, being framed for an infraction, etc. You can't test for Promotion or Special Forces this year.
- 3 Illness: The world of 2020 still has a lot of odd diseases and bioplagues run-

ning around, and most of them run around on battlefields where you're working. Lose 1 point of REF permanently as a result. You can't test for Promotion or Special Forces this year.

- 4 Betrayal: You've been backstabbed. Roll 1D10: 1-3, you're being blackmailed; 4-7, a secret was exposed; 8-10, you were betrayed by a close friend in either romance or career (you choose)
- 5 Injury: An occupational hazard. You can't test for Promotion or Special Forces this year. Roll 1D10: 1-4, you were disfigured and lose -2 from your ATT (the military tries to fix you up); 5-6, you were hospitalized for 1D10 months; 7-8, you lost 1D10 months of memory; 9-10, you have flashbacks of your injury—any time you're under stress, you have to pass a Difficulty 10 Cool test or go into a flashback (usually a combat experience!).
- 6 Lover, friend or relative killed: You lost someone you really cared about. Roll 1D10: 1-5, they died accidentally/naturally; 6-8, they were killed by unknown parties; 9-10, they were murdered and you know who did it. You just need proof.
- 7 False Accusation: You were set up. Roll 1D10: 1-3, accused of theft; 4-6, cowardice under fire; 7-9, black marketeering; 10, murder. You were innocent (hopefully), but you can't test for Promotion or Special Forces this year.
- 8 Dishonorable Discharge: You did something beyond the pale. You went too far, and they gave you the boot. Lose all privileges of rank, and you're out of the military with only 1,000 eb. Period. Merc units might not hire you, either, with a black mark like

that. You can't test for Promotion or Special Forces this year.

- 9 Honorable Discharge: Someone wanted you out, and maneuvered you out of the service. Who knows, maybe the budget got cut again. You're out, with all privileges of rank and long-service pay, if applicable.
- 10 Mental or Physical Incapacitation: Breakdown. Who knows how it happened? Stress, bioplague, poison? Roll 1D10: 1-3, it's some sort of nervous disorder, some bioplague perhaps—lose 1 point of REF; 4-7, it's a mental problem—anxiety attacks and phobias cause loss of 1 point of COOL; 8-10, major psychosis—you hear voices, shake, etc., so you lose 1 point of REF and 1 point of COOL. You are honorably discharged from the military, and can't test for Promotion or Special Forces this year.

YOU GET LUCKY

- 1 Make a Powerful Connection: It's not what you know, it's who you know. Roll 1D10: 1-4, you connected with a fixer/black marketer—you can buy military equipment for half price! Just don't get caught with it; 5-7, you make a friend in the brass—+5 to Promotion rolls; 8-10, you befriend a Special Forces officer—+5 to get into Special Forces.
- 2 Hit It Big: Heart Royal Flush. Make 1D10 x 100 euro.
- 3 Cyber Windfall: You have a chance to get some cyber-parts. Roll 1D10 x 100 eb.; you can either have this in cash as a bonus, or twice that amount in cyberware.
- 4 Find a Sensei: The military martial arts teachers are sometimes willing to spend time tutoring an eager pupil. Start a new Martial

Art at +2, or add +1 to an existing Martial Art.

- 5 Find a teacher: Likewise, military instructors look for motivated pupils. Start a new INT skill at +2, or add +1 to any existing INT-based skill.
- 6 Ranker Owes a Favor: You did a ranking officer a favor. This Major/Colonel/General owes you back.
- 7 Befriended by Mercenary Outfit: You did them a favor, or maybe you just hit them right. You may hit them up for information (and vice versa) on mercenary affairs, and may request a mercenary favor at a reduced price once and once only. They're also more willing to work with you (at the regular prices).
- 8 Friend in MilIntel: You befriend a "spook." You can get information from Military Intelligence at a level of +2 Streetwise.
- 9 Heroism Is Its Own Reward: You did something stupid, er, heroic. Advance one level of rank automatically, and receive a 1D10 x 100 eb. bonus.
- 10 Find a Combat Teacher: Armorers are willing to pass on their secrets, too. Add +1 to Weaponsmith skill, and add +1 to any weapons or combat skill (except Martial Arts or Brawling), or begin a new combat skill at +2.

MAKE AN ENEMY

Replace the "This enemy is (choose or roll one) 1-10" with those below:

- 1 Ex-friend
- 2 Ex-lover
- 3 Relative
- 4 Childhood enemy
- 5-7 Squad ex-friend
- 8 Your commanding officer
- 9 Officer, not your commander
- 10 Your squad sergeant

■ COMBAT SENSE SPECIALIZATION (OPTIONAL RULE) ■

All Combat Senses are equal; some are just more equal than others. A combat pilot has a wonderful grasp of 3-D maneuvering and tactics; a power-armor pilot has lightning reflexes and the ability to read his suit sensors' data, interpret and integrate it in a combat situation without effort; a tank crewman can maneuver, lay the gun and fire on the move without thinking about it; an astronaut EVAT is more like a pilot than a soldier. Take any grunt and place him in one of these positions—while he might have the training to handle routine operations, he's nowhere near the equal of a specialist. Likewise, take a specialist and slap him into a different specialty, or in a fire-fight, and he lags. After all, how many "Top Guns" are good shots and ground soldiers? This variant on the normal Combat Sense makes the special ability much more deadly than normal, but also puts restrictions on specializations.

Such specialization has the following effects: The player/GM states the specialization, restricted to a category of combat expertise (aircraft, PA suits, land vehicles, but not ground combat!). What this does is make the character's Combat Sense act at full value when in his element, but at half value when out of it (take a jet pilot and put him on foot in a fire-fight. What you have is an effective greenie that probably won't survive the fight). The benefits of specialization are adds to all relevant skills when in the specialized element. Combat Sense 1-3 = No bonus, 4-6 = +1, 7-8 = +2, 9 = +3, 10 = +4. With this specialization, a pilot with Combat Sense (Aircraft) 7, Pilot (Fixed Wing) 5 and Heavy Weapons 3 is the equal of another pilot with Combat Sense 9, Pilot (Fixed Wing) 7 and Heavy Weapons 5. The +2 for specialization adds in to ALL skills used in conjunction with the specialization—for a pilot, that's all piloting skills, heavy weapons (when used for aircraft weapons), awareness/notice, and electronics when used for aircraft electronic warfare.

■ THIS IS THE ARMY, MR. PUNK ■

Joining the U.S. Army requires that the character have minimum stats of INT 3, REF 3, BODY 3, and MA 4. Once accepted into the Army, the character undergoes Basic and Advanced Individual Training (B&AIT). This training uses the standard 40 Career skill points. Basic Training (all soldiers get it) gives all soldiers:

Special Ability* +2
Awareness/Notice +1
Brawling +1
Stealth +1
Endurance +1
First Aid +1
Heavy Weapons +1
Rifle +2

*Special Ability as per the soldier's specialty. Soldiers, pilots, tank drivers, etc., are Solos. The Army also has Techs, Medtechs, Cops (Military Police), Netrunners, and Fixers. (Any supply sergeant. Trust me.)

Army Basic Training uses up 10 of the soldier's Career skill points. 30 are left.

In Advanced Individual Training, the soldier must spend at least 20 of the remaining Career skill points on the skills below. No more than 5 points can be added to any one skill. The character may spend all of the remaining Career skill points here, if desired.

AIT SKILLS

Aero Tech
Handgun
Programming
Athletics
Interrogation
Op. Heavy Machinery
AV Tech
Leadership
System Knowledge
Basic Tech
Martial Arts (choose)
Weaponsmith
Demolitions
Melee
Wilderness Survival
Driving

Motorcycle
Electronics
Pilot (choose)
Expert:Tactics

The character should try to choose skills that make sense, considering branch of the service. For instance, a Techie has very little business acquiring Interrogation skill, while a Cop wouldn't normally find much use for AV Tech.

Medtechs have a special AIT. They are limited to the following skills for AIT: Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Cryotank Operation, Cybertech, Diagnose Illness, Pharmaceuticals.

Final training uses the remaining Career skills (40 - [Basic + AIT skills used]). These skills can be spent on any skills from the Basic and AIT lists.

■ WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD PUNKS ■

Joining the United States Marine Corps is tougher than getting into the Army. The minimum requirements are REF 5, COOL 5, and BODY 5. Once accepted into the Marines, the character undergoes BIT & AIT. This training also uses the standard 40 Career skill points.

Basic Training gives all Marines:

Special Ability* +2
Awareness/Notice +2
Brawling +1
Stealth +1
Endurance +1
Swimming +1
First Aid +1
Wilderness Survival +1
Heavy Weapons +1
Melee +1
Rifle +2

*Special Ability as per the Marine's specialty. Soldiers, pilots, tank drivers, etc. are Solos. The Marines also have Techs, Medtechs, Cops (Military Police), Netrunners, and Fixers.

Marine Basic Training uses up 14 of the soldier's Career skill points. 26 are left.

In Advanced Individual Training, the Marine must spend at least 20 of the

remaining Career skill points on the skills below. No more than 5 points can be added to any one skill. The character may spend all of the remaining Career skill points here, if desired.

AIT SKILLS

Aero Tech
Handgun
Programming
Athletics
Interrogation
System Knowledge
AV Tech
Leadership
Weaponsmith
Basic Tech
Martial Arts (choose)
Demolitions
Water vehicles
Driving
Pilot (choose)
Electronics
Expert: Tactics

Again, the character should try to choose skills that make sense, considering his branch of the service.

Medtechs have a special AIT list: Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Cryotank Operation, Cybertech, Diagnose Illness, Pharmaceuticals. Marine Medtechs can also choose any skill in normal Marine AIT.

Final training uses the remaining Career skills (40 - [Basic + AIT skills used]). These skills can be spent on any skills from the Basic and AIT lists.

■ SEE THE WORLD (WHAT'S LEFT OF IT)! ■

The Navy has the same requirements as the Army: Minimum INT 3, REF 3, and BODY 3. Once accepted into the Navy, the character undergoes BIT & AIT. This training uses the standard 40 Career skill points.

Basic Training gives all sailors:
Special Ability* +2
Awareness/Notice +2
Handgun +1
Brawling +1
First Aid +1

Swimming +1
Basic Tech +1
Water Vehicles +1

***S**pecial Ability as per the sailor's specialty. Normal sailors are Techs. The Navy also has Solos (pilots), Medtechs, Cops (Military Police), Netrunners, and Fixers.

Water Vehicles skill gives the ability to crew and pilot most forms of water vessels up to medium motor craft. To direct large seagoing ships requires *Pilot* (ship).

Navy Basic Training uses up 10 of the soldier's Career skill points. 30 are left.

In Advanced Individual Training, the sailor must spend at least 20 of the remaining Career skill points on the skills below. No more than 5 points can be added to any one skill. The character may spend all of the remaining Career skill points here, if desired.

AIT SKILLS

Aero Tech
SMG
System Knowledge
Athletics
Interrogation
Weaponsmith
AV Tech
Leadership
Heavy Weapons
Martial Arts (choose)
Demolitions
Pilot (choose)
Driving
Programming
Electronics
Expert: Naval Tactics

The character should try to choose skills that make sense, considering his branch of the service.

Medtechs have the standard special AIT list: Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Cryotank Operation, Cybertech, Diagnose Illness, Pharmaceuticals. Navy Medtechs can also choose any skill in normal Navy AIT.

Final training uses the remaining Career skills (40 - [Basic + AIT skills used]). These skills can be spent on any skills from the Basic and AIT lists.

■ SPACE: THE FINAL FRONTIER ■

Joining the USAF is fairly easy. Minimum stats are INT 5, REF 4. Once accepted into the Aerospace Force, the character undergoes BIT & AIT. This training uses the standard 40 Career skill points. Basic Training gives all soldiers:

Special Ability* +2
Awareness/Notice +2
Handgun +1
Basic Tech +1
Athletics +1
Electronics +1
First Aid +1
Zero-G Maneuver +1

***S**pecial Ability as per the soldier's specialty. Soldiers and pilots are Solos. The USAF also has Techs, Medtechs, Cops (Military Police), Netrunners, and Fixers.

USAF Basic Training uses up 10 of the soldier's Career skill points. 30 are left.

In Advanced Individual Training, the soldier must spend at least 20 of the remaining Career skill points on the skills below. No more than 5 points can be added to any one skill. The character may spend all of the remaining Career skill points here, if desired.

AIT SKILLS

Leadership
Interrogation
Astrogation
Space Survival
Programming
System Knowledge
Basic Tech
AV Tech
Aero Tech
Electronics
Weaponsmith
Handgun
Martial Arts (choose)
Demolitions
Driving
Pilot (choose)
Expert: Zero-G Tactics

The character should try to choose skills that make sense.

Medtechs are limited to the following skills for AIT: Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Cryotank Operation, Cybertech, Diagnose Illness, Pharmaceuticals.

Final training uses the remaining Career skills (40 - [Basic + AIT skills used]). These skills can be spent on any skills from the Basic and AIT lists.

■ PROMOTION ■

A character can increase in rank and command responsibility throughout his military career. This activity requires that the character test skills against set difficulties; if successful, the character rises one rank and gains the skill training as appropriate. Any character in any service can test for rank, once every two years for noncom position and once every four years for officer promotion. LUCK points cannot be added to these die rolls.

RANK TEST

Noncom Leadership Difficulty +10
Officer Leadership Difficulty +20*

*Officer test rolls may use the character's heretofore-unspent Pickup skills as pluses to the test die roll. For instance, an officer wanting to rise in rank who has EMP 5 and Leadership +4 has a base skill of 9; if he wished to improve his chances, he could spend any number (up to his maximum) of his Pickup skills to improve the D10 roll. If he has INT 8 and REF 6 and has not already spent pickup skills before, he has 14 available Pickup skills to use—spending 3 skills would get him a +3 on the D10 roll, giving him a 30% chance of promotion.

Once spent, Pickup skills are lost! So spend them carefully.

The benefits of rising in rank are as follows: Noncoms have command over (and responsibility for) a squad, and get leadership training (Leadership +1, Expert: Tactics—type as appropriate—+1). A noncom never takes the noncom test again; further promotions must be tested to reach officer status. Each time the officer test is passed, the officer gets further Leadership training (Handgun +1, Leadership +2, Expert: Appropriate Tactics +1) and goes up in rank.

RANK TABLE				
RANK	ARMY	MARINE	NAVY	AEROSPACE FORCE
NONCOM	SERGEANT	SERGEANT	PETTYOFFICER	SERGEANT
OFFICER 1	LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT	ENSIGN	LIEUTENANT
OFFICER 2	CAPTAIN	CAPTAIN	LIEUTENANT	CAPTAIN
OFFICER 3	MAJOR	FORCE COMMANDER	COMMANDER	MAJOR
OFFICER 4	COLONEL	COLONEL	CAPTAIN	COLONEL
OFFICER 5	GENERAL	NA	ADMIRAL	GENERAL

OFFICER COMMANDS

OFFICER 1	PLATOON/FLIGHT
OFFICER 2	COMPANY/SQUADRON
OFFICER 3	BATTALION/GROUP
OFFICER 4	REGIMENT/WING
OFFICER 5	COG

■ SPECIAL FORCES ■

Every branch of the service has its own Special Forces units, elite groups of highly-trained people to do tough and nasty jobs. For all their differences, their training is pretty much the same. Because of that, any character from any service (except the USAF) who wants to train in Special Forces uses the table below.

A character is eligible to train in Special Forces once every four years. The test is just like the officer's test, except that it is a BODY or INT test against Difficulty +20. Like the officer's test, the unspent Pickup skills can be used to add to the D10 roll.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Once a character has been through Special Forces training, even once, subtract 2 from all rolls on the Life Events table thereafter. Special Forces soldiers do not lead boring lives!

Special Forces Skills: Select 10 points of skill from the following skills; no more than 5 points in any one skill.

- Leadership
- Awareness/Notice
- Interrogation
- Electronics
- Stealth
- Hide/Evade
- Martial Arts (choose)
- Demolitions
- Melee
- Rifle
- Handgun

- Heavy Weapons
- Submachinegun
- Dodge & Escape
- Pilot (choose)
- Driving
- Swimming
- Resist Torture/Drugs
- Endurance
- Wilderness Survival

USAF Special Forces are the EVAT's (EVA Troops). They receive 10 skill points to be divided among the following skills (no more than 5 points in any one skill): EVA Actions, Awareness/Notice, Heavy Weapons, Zero-G Combat, Melee, Pilot (choose), Rifle, SMG, Handgun, Zero-G Maneuvering.

■ PAYDAY ■

Well, at least the military is steady work. Soldiers are paid every month. They're not too well paid, but they do get free room, board, medical care, and equipment.

RANK PAY

Regular Soldier	250 eb./month
Noncom	400 eb./month
Officer 1	1,500 eb./month
Officer 2	2,000 eb./month
Officer 3	4,000 eb./month
Officer 4	5,000 eb./month
Officer 5	7,500 eb./month

■ IN OR OUT? ■

If the character is going to remain in the military during play, then choose remaining Pickup skills now. The character has 1D10% of the money he's earned over his time in service (soldiers always find ways to waste their cash—with Smash 100 eb. a six-pack, you can see how), and has his rank and responsibilities, if any. Please note that the character is in the military, and is therefore subject to military discipline and duties—roleplay it!

If a character is going to be out of the military during play, choose the character's remaining Pickup skills now. The character has 1D10% of the money he's earned during his time in service, plus 1D10 times his normal monthly salary as a discharge bonus. The character is out of the military, and can do as he pleases, but he still retains his military contacts and friends, if any.

■ STANDARD MILITARY NPC'S ■

TYPICAL ARMY INFANTRY SOLDIER

INT 4	REF 6	TECH 4
COOL 6	ATTR 5	LUCK 5
MA 5	BODY 6	EMP 5/5

Skills: Combat Sense 3, Awareness/Notice 2, Brawling 1, Driving 1, Endurance 1, First Aid 1, Heavy Weapons 2, Melee 2, Rifle 4, Stealth 2.

Cyber: None.

Equipment: Standard Field Armor, standard field kit, Militech Mk IV Assault Weapon, 4 hand grenades, LAW or M-205 Grenade Launcher (A special weapons trooper has Heavy Weapons 4 and uses an M-232 SAW, M-60D, M-12 CAW, or M-212 Grenade Launcher).

TYPICAL MARINE

INT 4	REF 8	TECH 5
COOL 8	ATTR 4	LUCK 5
MA 6	BODY 8	EMP 4/4

Skills: Combat Sense 5, Awareness/Notice 4, Brawling 5, Endurance 3, First Aid 1, Heavy Weapons 4, Melee 3, Rifle 5, Stealth 3.

Cyber: None.

Equipment: Standard Field Armor, standard field kit, Militech Mk IV Assault Weapon, 4 hand grenades, LAW or M-205 Grenade Launcher (A special weapons trooper has Heavy Weapons 5 and uses an M-232 SAW, M-60D, M-12 CAW, or M-212 Grenade Launcher).

TYPICAL SERGEANT (ANY)

INT 6	REF 8	TECH 5
COOL 8	ATTR 5	LUCK 5
MA 6	BODY 8	EMP 5/4

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Skills: Combat Sense 6, Awareness/Notice 5, Brawling 4, Endurance 3, Expert: Tactics 1, First Aid 2, Handgun 2, Heavy Weapons 4, Leadership 2, Martial Arts 2, Melee 3, Rifle 5, Stealth 4.

Cyber: Cyberaudio with radio, scrambler, frequency changer; cybereye with thermograph.

Equipment: Standard Field Armor, standard field kit, Militech Mk IV Assault Weapon, 4 hand grenades, Colt AMT 2000 pistol, LAW or M-205 Grenade Launcher.

COMBAT SPECIALIST (VEHICLE CREW, ENGINEER, ETC.):

INT 6	REF 7	TECH 6
COOL 6	ATTR 5	LUCK 5
MA 5	BODY 6	EMP 5/4

Humanity13

Skills: Combat Sense (Vehicle) 5, Awareness/Notice 4, Brawling 1, Rifle 2, Specialist Skills (Heavy Weapons, Demolitions or other engineering skills, Driving, Operate Heavy Machinery) at level 4.

Cyber: Neural processor with chip socket and vehicle link, 2 sets of plugs.

Equipment: Standard Field Armor, standard field kit, Mk IV Assault Weapon or Militech Dragon carbine.

FIELD OFFICER

INT 7	REF 6	TECH 5
COOL 7	ATTR 6	LUCK 5
MA 6	BODY 7	EMP 8/6

Humanity28

Skills: Combat Sense 5, Awareness/Notice 5, Brawling 3, Endurance 2, Expert: Tactics 4, First Aid 2, Handgun 4, Heavy Weapons 3, Leadership 3, Melee 2, Rifle 4, Stealth 3.

Cyber: Cyberaudio with radio, scrambler, frequency changer; neural processor with chip socket; cybereye with thermograph and Times Square.

Equipment: Standard Field Armor, standard field kit, Militech Mk IV Assault Weapon, Colt AMT 2000 or Alpha-Omega pistol, 4 hand grenades.



STANDARD EQUIPMENT

- 1] Infantry Loadbearing Equipment
- 2] M-60D General-Purpose Machine Gun
- 3] Field Clothing
- 4] PASGT Kevlar Vest
- 5] Sleeping Bag
- 6] Colt AMT 2000
- 7] M1987 Fieldpack
- 8] Combat/Utility Knife
- 9] Small Tent Half
- 10] Canteen and Utilities
- 11] Militech MK IV Assault Rifle
- 12] M19A3 Gas Mask
- 13] Variable Low-Lite Goggles
- 14] PASGT Kevlar Helmet
- 15] Mess Kit
- 16] MRE Rations
- 17] "Rough Out" Service Boots
- 18] Cotton/Poly BDU's
- 19] M205 Grenade Launcher beneath MK IV Rifle
- 20] Watch and optional Biomonitor
- 21] Shooting Glasses
- 22] Field Cap
- 23] Entrenching Tool
- 24] Militech Hotshot Light ATGM



SPECIAL FORCES TROOPER

INT 6	REF 9	TECH 5
COOL 9	ATTR 5	LUCK 5
MA 7	BODY 9	EMP 7/4

Humanity31

Skills: Combat Sense 7, Awareness/Notice 5, Brawling 2, Endurance 5, First Aid 2, Handgun 3, Heavy Weapons 6, Martial Arts 4, Melee 4, Rifle 6, Stealth 5. (alternative package): Combat Sense 6, Awareness/Notice 5, Brawling 2, Endurance 4, First Aid 2, Heavy Weapons 2, Martial Arts 3, Melee 3, Rifle 4, Stealth 4, Wilderness Survival 4, Interrogation 4.

Cyber: Neural processor with Kerenzikov +2, Smartgun link, chip socket, 1 set/plugs; cybereye with thermograph, targeting scope and anti-dazzle; cyberaudio with amplified hearing, radio link, scrambler, frequency changer, level damper.

Equipment: Standard Field Armor, modified/personalized field kit, Sternmeyer CG-13 or M-31a1 AICW or Militech Mk. IV w/Mini-GL, 4 hand grenades, LAW or HLAW. May have additional heavy weapons or special weapons.

■ MILITARY EQUIPMENT ■

Contrary to popular belief, the average soldier is not as well-armed as the common street samurai. Considering that the well-armed street thug carries one or two pistols, a submachine-gun, rifle or assault rifle, at least one melee weapon, and perhaps several grenades, the average soldier is under-armed. In addition, the average soldier isn't as skilled in the arts of combat as the freelance street samurai. (But he knows more about the BIG weapons that streetpunks only dream about...)

The deadliness of the military soldier derives from the combination of training and teamwork. You never see just one armed soldier; you see a whole team.

The soldier's equipment is designed to enhance his function as part of the team. His armament is complementary to the team, his armor is made to protect him so that he can continue to function as a part of the team, and the equipment he carries is part his and part the team's.

This rule tends to apply to other military equipment as well. Even vehicles are designed with this idea in mind—the Army's M-11 Main Battle Tank, formidable though it is, is supposed to be supported by M-15 IFVs with infantry squads in equal numbers. Likewise, AV-6 transports depend upon AV-8 gunships for fire support and LZ suppression.

The equipment of the American military in 2020 is far more workmanlike than the material of thirty years ago. Reduced military budgets have curtailed development of equipment requiring \$200 nuts and bolts, and \$1,000 toilet seats. Instead, modern military equipment is designed with long life, simplicity, durability, ease of maintenance, and functional elegance in mind. Civilian goods are often more "modern", more sleek and stylish, while military gear has taken a step backwards to the clunky look of 50-70 years ago. This lack of styling often arises from the insistence on uninterrupted function rather than a lack of design. Form follows function.

■ EQUIPMENT ■

EXPLOSIVES

Plastique, per kilo	100 eb.
Antitank mine	400 eb.
Remote Antivehicle mine	600 eb.
Antipersonnel mine	350 eb.
Claymore mine	500 eb.
Explosives Field Kit	1500 eb.

GENERAL

Canteen	10 eb.
Field Pack	50 eb.
Portable Laser Rangefinder	50 eb.
Flashlight	20 eb.
Inertial Compass	100 eb.
IR Poncho	300 eb.
Gyro Mount	250 eb.
Mine Detector	100 eb.
Portable Painting Laser	1000 eb.
Port. Artillery Computer	1500 eb.
Power Exo-Mount	5000 eb.
Portable Radar	250 eb.
Portable Sonar	150 eb.
Sleeping Bag	25 eb.

MEDICAL

Automedic	12000 eb.
Medkit	100 eb.
Spray Skin, per can	50 eb.

TOOLS

Sonic Sensors	1500 eb.
Plasma Arc Torch	250 eb.
Tent, large	100 eb.
Cutting Torch	40 eb.
Tent, small	50 eb.
Electronics Tool Kit	100 eb.
Vision Goggles	Var.
Tech Tool Kit	100 eb.
Image Intensifier	+250 eb.
Techscanner	600 eb.
Thermograph	+200 eb.
Smartlink Target	+200 eb.
25x Magnification	+200 eb.

■ EXPLOSIVES ■

Antitank Mine: Most antitank mines weigh 15 kg and go off when 150+ kilograms of pressure are applied to them. They can be detonated by wire, using the

detonation wire supplied in the Explosives Field Kit. Antitank mines do 6D10AP damage to the *target* that sets them off, and do 6D6 damage to all other targets in a 10 meter radius. Setting an antitank mine takes 5 minutes; concealing it takes another 5 minutes.

There are also anti-vehicle mines that are essentially remote-sensor fired LAWs or HLAWs, attacking the rear or flank of their targets.

Explosives Field Kit: Necessary to work with most explosives. It weighs 30 kg, and contains 100 blasting caps (50 electric, 50 non-electric), demolitions tools (wire cutters, pliers, knives, etc.), 200 meters of electrical wire, 500 meters of trip wire, an electrical plunger, 5 digital timers, 5 pull-release "trap" detonators for booby traps, and hundreds of meters of various fusing cords.

■ MEDICAL ■

Automedic: A highly-sophisticated, self-contained, semi-robotic medic, this device combines a Medscanner, drug analyzer, dermal stapler, and airhypo with a battery of first aid and medical drugs. In order to use it, the automedic is placed on or next to the subject (who must remain immobile; the consequences of moving while under the ministrations of an automedic are painful at the very least). The automedic goes to work, diagnosing what's wrong with the patient (in gross terms; the machine is nowhere near as smart as a human specialist), then goes to work to attempt to assist the patient, with a First Aid +15 and MedTech +10 skill. The first priority is stabilizing the patient, then removing threats to life, and last treating non-mortal wounds. For example, if a man is shot and under the ministrations of an automedic, the machine will first stabilize him, then (with human help) perform minor surgery to alleviate threats to life (removing the bullet if possible, draining lungs filling with fluid, performing tracheotomies, etc.), then bandaging abrasions, minor punctures, etc. The automedic works at

the same speed as a human doctor. It is not a total substitute for a good medic, but it's better than nothing at all (and can be used by a non-medical person). The device is the size of a double-sized briefcase and weighs a good 30 kg.

Medkit: Standard military corpsman's bag, with drugs, bandages, instruments, dressings, toxin antidotes, medicines, etc.

Spray Skin: A common first aid tool in the military. The military version is stronger, and forms an adhesive pressure barrier to stop bleeding, assisted by a coagulant in the formula.

■ GENERAL ■

Canteen: A 1-liter plastic canteen.

Field Pack: A pack that carries up to 30 kg of materials.

Flashlight: A military spec flashlight, with a variable beam (1' to 120') and 24 hours of continuous use.

Gyro Mount: A stabilization mount for long weapons (rifles, machineguns, etc.), this is a harness that fits over the shoulder and back and negates penalties for firing a shoulder weapon from the hip and for firing while moving. This works best with a smart gun and target scope, to allow accurate firing.

Inertial Compass: A compass that can be programmed to keep track of your changes in direction and movement from a fixed point.

IR Poncho: A poncho that fits over a person, scattering and diffusing that person's infra-red signature to make IR and thermograph spotting difficult. Awareness rolls using IR or thermograph are at +2 Difficulty when attempting to spot someone wearing an IR poncho. This poncho is also waterproof and helps trap body warmth in cold climates. Available in all camouflage colors and patterns; also available in Hunter Orange.

Mine Detector: A magnetic anomaly detector, this familiar device has a 70% of detecting a normal mine if it passes over or within 1 meter of it. It will not detect non-metallic mines.

Portable Laser Rangefinder: A cigarette-lighter-sized item that determines exact range to target with a laser beam. This can be installed on weapons, and is sometimes built into scopesights.

Portable Painting Laser: It looks rather like a long-barreled pistol, and is fired like one. This device "paints" a target with a laser beam to attract laser-guided ordnance. PIST +3 J P No Damage (although looking directly into the beam has a 90% chance of blinding a target; anti-dazzle reduces this to a 10% chance, and biological eyes blinded by a laser are permanently blinded) - 1 VR.

Portable Artillery Computer: This little (1 kg.) device has a laser rangefinder that measures the range to the target, then the built-in computer calculates the hang time, weapon azimuth, etc., to aim artillery fire indirectly or directly. HVY Weapons skill is required to use it, and it adds +3 bonus to any artillery to-hit roll used by a spotter. For an additional 500 eb., the laser rangefinder can be made into a painting laser as well.

Power Exo-Mount: A special exo-skeleton mount, resembling a Sigma-class linear frame worn over the body. It includes a swing-arm for mounting a heavy weapon, enabling the wearer to carry and fire a weapon that he could not normally lift and operate. The mount compensates for the weapon's recoil and mass, and provides power assist to aiming. 50-cal HMGs, 40mm Auto-GLs, and 20mm autocannon can be carried. When worn, this harness gives a -2 REF, -1 MA, and a -1 WA penalty.

Portable Radar: A unit the size of a book, this radar sensor has a range of 250 meters, and is 90% effective.

Portable Sonar: A motion detector and underwater detection unit, this sonar detects movement out to 100 meters, and scans for objects underwater at three times that range.

Sleeping Bag: A military-style waterproof sleeping bag.

Sonic Sensors: Not sonar, but a passive listening system that enables the listener to detect subsonic vibrations in the ground, allowing him to detect movement. The heavier the moving item, the farther away that it can be detected.

Tent, large: A tent that comfortably sleeps four. It is waterproof, and insulated down to -50 degrees Celsius.

Tent, small: A tent that sleeps two; waterproof and insulated as the large tent.

Vision Goggles: These basic units are electronic goggles that are small enough to be worn under a combat helmet. They can be bought with image intensifiers (+2 to visual Awareness rolls), thermograph (see heat patterns), smartlink targeting scope, and variable magnification (25x maximum). Any of these options may be combined.

■ TOOLS ■

Plasma Arc Torch: A back-pack cutting torch that slices through 5mm of steel a second! It has 30 seconds of power.

Electronics Tool Kit: A belted set of miniaturized electronics tools (welding gun, magnifiers, pliers, circuit testers, etc.).

Tech Tool Kit: A belt-carried set of miniaturized mechanical tools (screwdrivers, wrenches, pliers, etc.).

Techscanner: A military spec techscanner, a handheld diagnostic computer for assisting technical repairs.

■ SMALL ARMS ■

Most of the small arms in the U.S. military are rifles, since most of the gun-carrying soldiers are riflemen. There are a significant amount of pistols, though, due to the fact that technicians, support crew, and officers are not usually issued rifles.

MILITECH ARMS AVENGER 9mm

Since 2005, the Militech Avenger 9mm pistol has been the standard sidearm of the U.S. military machine. It's a good, solid pistol with a proven record. Issued mainly to rear-area officers and MPs due to its lack of body armor-penetrating ability.

	P	O	J	E
2D6+1(9mm)	10	2	VR	
Cost	250 eb.			

COLT AMT 2000

This workhorse has served for over twenty years, but it still has a solid knock-down capability vs. the newer, heavier personal armors. As of 2019, field officers and vehicle crews are being given a choice of issue sidearms—either the AMT 2000 or the quicker and more accurate Alpha-Omega in 10mm. Either has greater punch than the old 9mm Parabellum used in the Avenger.

	P	O	J	C
4D6+1(12mm)	8	1	VR	
Cost	500 eb.			

MILITECH ARMS RONIN M-20 ASSAULT RIFLE

The Ronin was the standard U.S. assault rifle for over two decades. Old-fashioned, with a serviceable bull-pup design, firing caseless 5.56mm ammunition, it became a bench-mark against which other assault rifles are measured. Like the M16 before it, there were arguably better guns on the market (the Federated Arms Light Assault 15 being the latest entry into this market), but the U.S. had thousands of them, and couldn't really afford to give them up and re-equip with new rifles (hence the outrageous specifications which have resulted in Militech's prototype M-31A1 Advanced Infantry Weapon) until recently, when the Army and Marine Corps replaced it with the Mk IV Assault Weapon. Guard and reserve units are still largely outfitted with M-20s. The M-20 can be outfitted with the M-205 grenade launcher.

	RIF	+1	N	C
5D6(5.56mm)	35	30	VR	
Cost	450 eb.			

MILITECH ARMS MK IV ASSAULT WEAPON

The Mk IV (pronounced Mark Four) assault rifle was picked up by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps. Although available in the new 6.5mm caseless caliber, the U.S. military uses the weapon in 5.56mm only (a surplus of nearly a billion 5.56mm rounds in military inventory explains this decision). The Mk IV was designed to accept all U.S. military rifle accessories, including the M-205 grenade launcher. It can mount the Militech Mini-Grenade Launcher (pump version) under the barrel instead.

	RIF	+1	N	C
5D6(5.56mm)	35	30	VR	
Cost	600 eb.			

STERNMEYER CG-13 RIFLE

The CG-13 is used by special forces and paratroop units, which need heavy firepower but not the mass that such firepower usually requires. Its plastic-composite design is particularly useful in covert operations, because all metal parts are shrouded, reducing the radar signature. The CG-13's construction is almost entirely plasti-cerimets, making it somewhat expensive to manufacture (Sternmeyer's profit margin on this rifle is low), but allowing a high rate-of-fire with caseless ammunition without overheating problems. The CG-13 is not equipped to be outfitted with standard rifle accessories; units equipped with it carry the M-212 multi-shot grenade launcher for support.

	RIF	+1	N	P
5D6(5.56mm)	90	48	VR	
Cost	700 eb.			

MILITECH M-31A1 ADVANCED INFANTRY WEAPON

This expensive and impressive beast has not yet found its way to real active service; it has appeared sporadically on "field trials." A hybrid weapon using special binary ammunition, it has run into all manner of opposition from all sides. The biggest problem with it as a practical field weapon is that it is related to no other piece of

equipment already in service, and would be fantastically expensive to acquire in bulk. Although each AIW *only* costs 1,700 eb., buying new ammunition and support parts for each would raise the total cost to around 3,000 eb. per gun. Merely equipping the 101st Airborne with it would cost the U.S. Army around 9 million euro. The second line of statistics below covers the integral mini-grenade launcher. The M-31A1 is not equipped to be outfitted with standard rifle accessories.

	RIF	+2	N	R
4D6(4.5mm)	150	30	ST	
Cost	1,695 eb.			
	—	—	—	—
By Grenade	4	2	VR	
	—			

MILITECH VIPER SUBMACHINEGUN

Submachineguns are rare in military service. Their high firepower is matched by low range; an assault rifle does as well, at better ranges. Special forces units operating in close areas have use for them, though, and the Viper is a weapon seemingly designed for special operations units. The Viper is usually found in said units, where it is rarely seen without its normally optional silencer.

	SMG	+0	J	P
2D6+3(10mm)	40	30	VR	
Cost	750 eb.			

MILITECH M-232 SQUAD ASSAULT WEAPON

The M-232 is an early development of the Militech Renegade SAW. A fairly standard light-caliber machinegun, the M-232 is the most common squad support weapon in the U.S. Army. The Marine Corps prefers to use either the M-12 CAW or the M-60D medium machinegun. The M-232 uses either belted rounds fed from a drum or a standard Mk IV clip. It comes with integral bipod, and cannot be fitted with standard rifle accessories.

	RIF	+0	N	P
5D6(5.56mm)	100/35	20	VR	
Cost	1,000 eb.			

M-60D MEDIUM MACHINEGUN

The venerable M-60 soldiers on, its original German feed mechanism (lifted from the MG-42) still intact. It is the standard medium machinegun of the U.S. military, and is virtually identical to Germany's new MG-6; certain internal parts of both guns are interchangeable. The M-60D uses 100-round belts of plastic-cased 7.62mm ammunition. This has only two-thirds the cost of metal-cased ammo. The plastic casings are made of a heat-absorbing and -resistant material which acts as a thermal sink, keeping the air-cooled machinegun from overheating.

RIF	+1	N	P
6D6+2(7.62mm)	100	20	VR
Cost	1,000 eb.		

M-12 CLOSE ASSAULT WEAPON

"Close Assault Weapon" is a military euphemism for shotgun. Formerly outlawed by the now-extinct Geneva Convention, combat shotguns are common sights in 2020. The M-12 is a development of the first combat automatic shotgun, the Colin/H&K CAW of last century. Its differences include a new selector switch (the firer can choose which kind of round he wants to shoot, but this reduces the shotgun's ROF to 1 for that round; otherwise he gets his rounds in predetermined order) and a larger rotary cassette magazine. Due to the large variety of rounds being used in combat shotguns and the M-12's selector switch, the old epithet "Dial-A-Gun" has been resurrected and applied to the M-12, so a soldier armed with an M-12 is a "Dally-Gunner."

RIF	+0	N	P
Var.(12ga)	20	10	VR
Cost	950 eb.		

M-99 EVAW

The M-99 Extra Vehicular Activity Weapon is a specialized weapon employed by the USAF EVAT's, the astronaut troops of the Aerospace Force. The weapon is a cumbersome monstrosity with two barrels, two massive magazines, and a hose connection leading to a

CO2 tank strapped to the EVA Trooper's belt. It fires two kinds of self-propelled rounds, using the compressed gas to eject the rounds from the barrel before their rocket propulsion ignites. The first kind of round is a 12mm seeking slug that homes in on infrared, mirco-radar and visual sensors (it's quite expensive); in addition, there is an IFF reader in the shell to prevent it from tracking on friendly targets. The second round is a standard 25mm high explosive grenade fitted with a small rocket booster and a proximity fuse. Both rounds are equipped with an end-of-range self-destruct charge, which destroys the round when it goes beyond a set range (usually 10% beyond maximum range at velocity).

The advantages of the EVAW are low recoil, no heat emission, low gas ejection (standard rounds produce a cloud of smoke in zero-g/zero-pressure atmosphere), practically no moving parts, and built-in accuracy. Admittedly, it's not as perfect a space weapon as a portable laser, but it's almost as good. Grenade rounds cost 50 eb.; rocket rounds cost 125 eb.

RIF	+5	N	R
6D6AP(12mm rocket)	30	2	ST
Cost	5,000 eb.		

HVY	+0	—	—
2D6+1(25mm HE)	10	1	—

RIFLE ACCESSORIES

Scopelight: 200 eb This simple optical sight provides +2 to shooting at Long and Extreme ranges, and +1 to shooting at Medium range. The user must take an Aiming action to use this scope. Add 100 eb. to make it low-light. Fits on top of rifle.

Computerized Sight: 500 eb This electronic sight provides +3 to shooting at Long and Extreme ranges, and +2 to shooting at Medium range. It provides low-light capability and has a built-in range-finder. For an additional 200 eb, this sight can be made thermographic. Fits on top of rifle.

Bayonet: 15 eb. This works as a knife (1D6 damage); when fitted to the end of a rifle, it does 3D6 damage, and still halves armor like a knife. The bayonet is also equipped as a survival knife, and fits onto the rifle to act as a wire-cutter. Fits on front of rifle.

Bipod: 10 eb. Adds +2 to shooting when the firer remains stationary and braces his weapon on a solid object. Fits under rifle barrel.

Grenade Launcher: Variable cost. Statistics are provided elsewhere. Fits under rifle barrel.

Rifle Grenades: The Grenades section below deals with the capabilities of bullet-launched rifle grenades. Any 5.56mm or larger bore military rifle is equipped to fire bullet-driven rifle grenades.

SUPPORT WEAPONS

Except for the M-205 Grenade launcher and LAW's, support weapons are usually limited to the two support men in a squad. Special forces units are more individually equipped, and may have more weapons of this sort in a squad makeup.

New Rule: Heavy weapons with shaped-charge (HEAT) warheads are automatically armor-piercing. However, shaped-charge damage that penetrates armor SP is not halved; it is applied at full value past SP. Example: An SP 20 target hit by 22 points of damage from a 20mm AP slug only takes 6 points of damage (20/2 = 10; 22 damage points - SP 10 = 12/2 = 6). The same target hit by 22 points of shaped charge damage takes 12 points of damage.

M-205 GRENADE LAUNCHER

The M-205 is the military's 40mm grenade launcher. The M-205 is usable as an under-barrel weapon, attached to a rifle. It is also usable as a weapon on its own. It is a single-shot, breech-loading grenade launcher, made out of polymers

and composites. Other than that, it is not notably different from the launchers in existence 45 years ago.

HVY	+1	L	P
Varies(40mm)	1	1	VR
Cost 250 eb.	Range 200 meters.		

M-212 GRENADE LAUNCHER

The M-212 launcher is a bulky, rifle-sized weapon, with a 8-round revolving cylinder. The firer can select which round he wants to fire that combat round, but this slows ROF to 1.

HVY	+1	N	P
Varies(40mm)	8	2	VR
Cost 500 eb.	Range 200 meters.		

BARRETT-ARASAKA LIGHT 20mm

The commercially-available Barrett-Arasaka hyper-velocity sub-caliber rifle is used to handle light vehicles, and as a sort of short-ranged, extremely heavy sniper rifle.

HVY	+0	N	R
4D10AP(20/9mm APFSDS)	10	1	
VR	Cost 2,000 eb.		

BARRETT M-90 SNIPER RIFLE

One of the world's heaviest sniper rifles, this is a development of the old Barrett BMG rifle. It fires accurized .50 caliber rounds, and is useless without a scope. A cyber-linked version is available for 2,500 eb.

RIF	+3	N	R
6D10(12.7mm)	10	1	VR
Cost 1,500 eb.	Range 1,000 meters.		

HUGHES ROCKET RIFLE

The Hughes rocket rifle is the military monster that motivated Remington to make their Gyro Sniper rifle (*Protect & Serve*, pg.33). Where the Remington uses the space in its 18mm shell for extra fuel and guidance, the Hughes uses a shell almost twice the length for added war-head power. It is a light-weight alternative to the Barrett-Arasaka 20mm. While the Remington's API round is not a fully-efficient armor-piercing round in game terms (the extra 1D6 damage

merely affects through the armor), the Hughes rifle round uses a shaped-charge, and is truly armor-piercing. Like all other shaped-charge, D10 rounds, damage penetrating armor is not halved. Ammunition costs 20 eb per round. Note: any gyrojet round will leave a heat trail that can easily be followed back to the firer by a Thermograph.

RIF	-1	N	R
3D10AP(18mm HEAT)	3	1	
Cost 750 eb.	Range 500 meters.		

LIGHT ANTITANK WEAPONS

Single-shot light anti-tank weapons have been around since the German Panzerfaust. They still dominate the infantry-carried antitank scene to this day. The difference between the LAW and the Heavy LAW (known as the HLAW) is the mass and size of the round: The LAW is 60-70mm and weighs 2 kg; the HLAW is 85-105mm and weighs 5 kg. These weapons are built as disposable weapons. Once fired, they are discarded. These weapons use compressed air or some other recoilless non-backblast system for initial rocket launch, and are safe to use indoors!

LAW			
HVY	-2	L	P
4D10AP HEAT	1	1	VR
Cost 300 eb.	Range 100 meters.		
	2 meter burst radius.		

HLAW			
HVY	-2	N	P
11D10AP HEAT	1	1	VR
Cost 800 eb.	Range 100 meters.		
	4 meter burst radius.		

MILITECH HOTSHOT LATGM

The Hotshot is a wire-guided light anti-tank missile. The launcher is a tube that boosts the missile onto the battlefield with a recoilless-rifle-style blast of compressed air, to avoid tell-tale heat signature. The Hotshot is typically thermograph-equipped, but can be made laser-guided or even outfitted with simple optical guidance. Each missile costs 1,500 eb.

HVY	+2	N	P
12D10APHEAT	1	1	VR
Cost 2,500 eb.	Range 500 meters. 4 meter burst radius.		

MILITECH SCORPION 16 SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE

The Scorpion is a standard heat-seeking active surface-to-air missile with optical memory guidance backups. It's a "fire and forget" missile, automatically tracking the target once it is locked on.

HVY	-1	N	P
7D10	1	1	VR
Cost 1,000 eb.	Range 500 meters. 6 meter burst radius.		

M-32 AUTOMATIC GRENADE LAUNCHER

The auto-GL is a tripod or vehicle-mounted weapon that spits out grenades at a ferocious rate of fire. It has all but replaced the old 60mm mortar (the new 60mm mortar is coming close to replacing the old 81mm mortar) as a fire-support weapon. It can use normal 40mm grenades, but only in single-shot mode. Normal 40mm grenade launchers cannot use the high-velocity grenades used in the auto-GL, since these high-velocity rounds are half again the length of a normal 40mm grenade.

HVY	0	N	R
Varies(40mm grenade)	50	20	VR
Range 1,600 meters.			

60mm LIGHT MORTAR

A crew-served mortar, this weapon weighs 15 kg and comes in two pieces (mortar and base-plate). It takes at least two men to operate efficiently; one man can operate it, but ROF slows to 1 per two combat turns. Shells cost 50 eb and weigh 1 kg apiece. The round listed is HE; other common rounds include smoke, illumination, and white phosphorus.

HVY	+0	N	P
8D10(60mm)	1	2	VR
Cost 750 eb	Range 1,000 meters.		
	5 meter burst radius.		

M2A5HB BROWNING .50cal MACHINEGUN

The immortal Browning .50 caliber machinegun still rules the battlefield of heavy machineguns, with its relatively light ammunition mass, proven reliability, massive hitting power, and the huge ammo supply still in stock. The A5 model is lighter than its predecessors, built with plasti-cerimets and composites rather than the old-fashioned steel used in previous models: It only weighs 20 kilograms, a real improvement over the 36+ kg of former makes. With a power exo-mount, a normal soldier can carry and fire an M2 on the move.

HVY	+0	N	P
6D10(12.7mm)	100	10	VR
Cost 2,000 eb.	Range 600 meters.		

MILITECH 20L

The Militech 20L is a tripod-mounted light-weight 20mm autocannon. It is exclusively a crew-served support weapon, because its size and ammunition weight require a vehicle for transport. A single belt of ammunition weighs 20 kg!

HVY	+0	N	R
8D10(20mm)	100	10	VR
Cost 3,000 eb.	Range 500 meters.		

■ SHOTGUNS AND GRENADE LAUNCHERS ■

With the wide variety of shotgun rounds developed and on the market, the shotgun has become a sort of short-ranged grenade launcher for urban use, and the grenade launcher has become the all-round multi-role tactical weapon. Both shotguns and 40mm grenade launchers are in common military use. The 25mm mini-grenades recently pioneered by Militech are still being "evaluated", which means that while not in regular service, special forces units are already using them.

The grenade launcher concept is useful because a grenade launcher can fire rounds of different types, with different missions and effects, ranging from anti-personnel to incendiary, illumina-

tion, concealment, and even anti-tank. These rounds are relatively light when compared to other specialty tools and weapons used to produce the same effect.

Where the environment is too close for use of a grenade launcher, a standard 12 ga. shotgun will do, loaded with specialty rounds. The Militech 25mm grenade still has to prove itself, since it lacks the range of a 40mm grenade but has a longer arming radius than a shotgun shell. However, it does have more firepower than a shotgun shell, and is smaller than a 40mm GL.

And, as always, the hand-thrown grenade will remain a valuable part of a soldier's offensive equipment.

HAND GRENADES

High Explosive: This grenade does 7D6 fragmentation damage to all targets within 5 meters, and 3D6 fragmentation damage to all targets within 6-10 meters.

Anti-Tank: This grenade does 5D10AP HEAT damage to any target directly hit by the grenade, and 3D6 fragmentation damage to any target within 5 meters. Normally only encountered in former East Bloc armies and some Third World nations. The drogue streamers needed to ensure proper impact cut the throwing range in half.

Chemical: This grenade carries gas, smoke, or paint, and has a radius of 10 meters.

White Phosphorous/Incendiary: This grenade does 4D6 damage for 3 turns to all targets within 5 meters, and sets fires very well. Damage is done by fragments of white phosphorous.

Flash-Bang: All people within 5 meters of the blast (15 meters if indoors) must make a Stun/Shock Save at -2 to avoid being stunned and deafened for 4 turns and a Difficulty +20 REF test to avoid being blinded for 2 turns. Anti-dazzle protection negates the flash effect and makes the REF test unnecessary.

Flash: All people within 10 meters of the grenade's flash must make a Difficulty

+20 REF test to avoid being blinded for 4 turns. Anti-dazzle protection negates the flash effect and makes the REF test unnecessary.

SHOTGUN ROUNDS

Shotshell: The standard shotgun round, spraying a load of shot into an area. Rules as per *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.*, pages 98-99.

Slug: A solid shotgun round, using one large, rigid-core bullet instead of shot. The slug does 4D6+2 damage at all ranges, and has no area effect. The round is AP, any damage that penetrates hard armor is **not** halved.

APFSDS: Armor-Piercing Fin-Stabilized Discarding Sabot is a sub-caliber round, firing a 5.5mm projectile from a 12 or 10ga shotgun. This sub-munition moves at accelerated velocities and easily punches through armor. It costs 10eb per round, and does 6D6AP damage. It has an effective range of 25 meters.

HE: High Explosive rounds turn the shotgun into a mini-cannon. HE does 4D6 damage in a 1/2m radius, *per shell fired*. So a barrage of 10 shells would do 4D6 damage to everything in a 5 meter radius of the point of impact. HE shells cost 5eb apiece.

HEAT: A shaped-charge shell that does 4D6AP damage, but any damage that surpasses target SP is passed on to the target at full value, just like any other shaped-charge munition.

Non-Lethal: A non-lethal gel or rubber round that does concussion damage to the target. Concussion damage (otherwise known as bruising) takes the form of a Stun/Shock Save. If a target is hit by a gel round, roll 4D6 for damage. Subtract armor SP from the damage, up to half the damage total—that's right, *at least* half the damage goes through any armor except hard armors (i.e., Metalgear™, powered armor, full medieval armor). Then the target must make a Stun/Shock Save as if it was damaged by the concussion damage that went through.

The concussion damage is not entered on the character sheet as damage points! Rigid armor prevents any concussion damage from hitting the target; Skinweave has no effect on concussion damage. All targets, whether affected by the concussion or not, must make a Difficulty 10 REF save or be knocked down by the impact.

Example: Patrolman Casey uses his automatic shotgun to spray an area with gel rounds. Gangers Chipper and Grunt are in the area, and are hit. Chipper is wearing a Medium Armor Jacket and Skinweave; Grunt is wearing Metalgear™. Chipper's gel round does 15 points; his armor jacket would normally subtract 18, but half the damage (8) goes through, leaving him a Stun/Shock Save modifier of -1, just as if he had taken a Serious wound. He's not really hurt, but he fails his save and collapses, clutching his bruised torso. Grunt, wearing his heavy rigid armor, fails to receive any damage, but has to make a +10 REF roll. Encumbered by his armor, he fails and falls backwards, knocked down by the kinetic energy.

Flechettes: This round costs 8eb apiece and works like a regular shotgun shotshell, except that it fires needles instead of shot, doing 4D6AP damage (armor and damage is x1/4).

Gas: This round carries a gas pellet that effects all targets within one meter of the burst. The gas acts like a dose of whatever poison/drug is put into it. Tear and nausea gas rounds cost 5eb apiece, hallucinogen and sleep gas rounds cost 10eb apiece, and biotoxin gas rounds cost the military 25eb apiece (they're unbelievably rare on the civilian market).

Flash-Bang: A small time-delay charge of blasting explosive and flash-powder, the flash-bang round acts as a small flash-bang grenade. All people within two meters of the blast (5 meters if indoors) must make a Stun/Shock Save and a Difficulty +20 REF test to avoid being stunned for one turn and being blinded for two turns. Anti-dazzle protection negates the flash effect and makes the REF test unnecessary. The flash-bang

round has a maximum range of 25 meters; if it has not impacted something solid (exploding on impact) by that time, it explodes automatically.

Thermite: Thermite rounds shoot a narrow spray (1/2 width of a shotgun pattern) of the burning metal into the target. The material burns into the target at over 3,000 degrees, melting through almost anything. The round does 8D6AP. This damage is healed at 1/3 the normal rate. For every thermite shell (over five) fired through a specific shotgun barrel there is a 1 in 10 additive chance of warping and ruining the barrel. Thermite rounds cost 30eb apiece.

25mm GRENADES

HEP: High-Explosive Penetration is actually a squash-head round, splashing a pat of plastic explosive onto the target before detonating. This round does 5D6 damage; armor has no effect and half of the damage is applied as concussion damage (see Non-lethal shotgun round, above). Armor hit by an HEP round loses 2 points of SP.

Fragmentation: This round does 2D6+1 damage to all targets in a 5 meter diameter.

Flechette: This round does 2-7 (1D6 +1) 1D6AP hits to the target. It covers a 2 meter wide, 25 meter deep pattern.

Chemical: This round carries smoke or gas and has a 5 meter radius. All 25mm grenades cost 30 eb. apiece.

Effective range for all 25mm grenades is 150 meters.

40mm GRENADES

HE: This round does 7D6 damage in a 5 meter radius. It will not detonate until it has traveled 10 meters from the weapon after firing. Available in high-velocity version for auto-GLs.

HEDP: This round does 4D10AP HEAT damage to the target, and 4D6 damage to all other targets within one meter. Available in high-velocity version for auto-GLs.

Illumination: This round is a flare that illuminates everything within 20 meters of the flare. If it hits a person or other target, it does 1D6 damage per round for 6 turns. It will not detonate until it has traveled 10 meters from the weapon after firing.

Chemical: This round carries gas or smoke and covers a 10 meter radius with the appropriate chemical. Available in high-velocity version for auto-GLs.

Bean Bag: This round is a "bean bag" of gel. It has an effective range of 50 meters, and does 2D6 damage to the target (this is actual bruising tissue damage). Armor stops this damage as normal. The target also has to make a Stun/Shock Save at -5, +1 per full 15 SP of armor that the target's wearing. In addition, the target must make a Difficulty 20+ REF roll to remain standing (the Difficulty drops by 1 per full 100 kg of target weight, so a 1,000 kg powered armor suit is much less likely to be knocked down).

WP: This nasty round throws a cloud of burning white phosphorous. Anyone within 10 meters of the explosion takes 4D6 damage for three turns.

Flechette: This round does 1-3 2D6AP hits to all targets in a line of fire that extends from a point three meters in front of the firer to a distance of 25 meters. This line of fire is 3 meters wide. Just like shotgun blasts, this fire cannot be avoided; anyone in the cylinder of flechettes takes damage.

HEP: A 40mm version of the 25mm HEP, it is WA -1, does 7D6 damage (half goes through, half is concussion), and armor is reduced by 5 SP.

Flash-Bang: A time-delay charge of blasting explosive and flash-powder, the flash-bang round acts as a normal flash-bang grenade. All people within 5 meters of the blast (15 meters if indoors) must make a Stun/Shock Save at -2 to avoid being stunned and deafened for 4 turns and a Difficulty 20+ REF test to avoid being blinded for 2 turns. Anti-dazzle

protection negates the flash effect and makes the REF test unnecessary. The flash-bang round has a maximum range of 25 meters; if it has not impacted something solid (exploding on impact) by that time, it explodes automatically.

Grapnel: This round comes in three parts. The propellant charge (5 eb.) is breech-loaded into the launcher. The grappling hook (25 eb.) is loaded into the muzzle of the launcher, and the line (1 eb. per 20 meters) trails from the hook.

The grappling hook and line are so heavy that they cut the effective range in half. The round has a Weapon Accuracy of -2; this is to hit the target. If the target is hit, it takes 1D6 blunt damage and the grapple catches on 50% of the time (lower the percentage for smooth areas and raise it for target areas full of projecting objects that the hook can catch).

Net: This capture round shoots a small (2m) net that wraps around the target. It has a Weapon Accuracy of -5, an effective range of 25 meters, and does 1D6 damage (from the mass of the net weights striking the target at velocity). A hit has a 50% chance of wrapping the net around a man-sized target, immobilizing the target. A Difficulty +25 Strength Feat is necessary to rip free of the net, or the net can be cut off (the netted target has to make a Difficulty +20 REF test to get a cutting tool free; targets with scratchers, rippers or wolvers can start cutting immediately). It takes two combat turns to cut free of the net.

All 40mm grenade rounds are availability R and cost 50 eb. apiece. High-velocity auto-GL grenades cost 100 eb. apiece.

RIFLE GRENADES

Rifle Grenades were phased out of the U.S. Army in the mid-50's, but they're still popular with Euro armies and some U.S.-based Corporate forces. These grenades are fitted on the end of the rifle barrel, and are propelled by firing the rifle—the bullet is trapped at the end of the grenade, and the energy of the bullet striking the grenade propels the grenade.

The rifle cannot be used to shoot any targets with bullets while the grenade is in place. It takes one combat action to fit a rifle grenade to the end of a rifle. All rifle grenades use HVY skill, have a Weapon Accuracy of -3, have an effective range of 100 meters, and cost 50 eb. apiece.

HE: The high-explosive rifle grenade does 8D6 damage in a 5 meter radius.

HEAT: This shaped-charge grenade does 8D10AP damage to the target, and does 4D6 damage to all other targets within 1 meter.

Chemical: This round carries gas or smoke, and covers an area of 10 meters in radius.

■ BODY ARMOR ■

Military soldiers are rarely as heavily armored as the normal street samurai, either. In the field, the soldier has to carry the necessities of his existence (food, shelter, ammunition, water, weapons, etc.) and can't afford to bog himself down with heavy armor. Dedicated airmobile and mechanized groups may have heavier armor, since they don't do that much walking, and of course powered armor squads have their walking machines and don't need more armor.

Standard Field Armor: The standard soldier armor provided to every grunt in the U.S. Army and U.S.M.C. is a uniform jumpsuit of kevlar, liberally supplied with vents for heat dispersal. This suit covers arms, legs, torso, and abdomen with SP 14, EV +0 protection. If the soldier anticipates combat, armor inserts are added to the suit (slipped into slender pockets built for the purpose), bringing the leg, torso and abdomen protection up to SP 20, EV +1. If the inserts are not in place, the armor suit SP is halved by knives and other edged weapons.

An SP 20, EV +0 nylon/composite helmet is provided to protect the soldier's head. This helmet has an SP 20 faceplate, built-in 20-power binoculars, built-in radio (equivalent to a mastoid communicator), built-in anti-dazzle flash

protection and low-light light amplification capability. It also forms an integral part of the suit's NBC capability. For an additional 200eb, the binogoggles can be given the Targeting option, allowing aimed fire. (With the faceplate down, normal aimed fire is impossible.)

The standard field armor and helmet ensemble is also fitted for NBC duty. It can be closed up and made air-tight in two combat turns, the skirting around the helmet zip-locked to the neck of the armor. The helmet has a gas mask, and there is an issue cooling unit (about the size of a large thermos bottle) that attaches to the back of the belt and provides one hour of body-heat regulation. Otherwise, an active soldier would overheat in mere minutes. The suit and helmet cost 1,500 eb. The cooling unit costs 100 eb.

Assault Armor: This armor is worn by troops who anticipate heavy fire and little extended walking. It is essentially highly-sloped Metalgear™. This suit provides SP 28, EV +2 protection, full NBC protection, a helmet with built-in radio, gas mask, low-light and anti-dazzle, thermograph and target scope for a smart-link. Built out of the best light-weight composites and outfitted with a 2-hour cooling unit, this suit also diffuses the soldier's IR signature (-3 to Awareness tests using IR/Thermograph) and reflects poorly on radar (-5 to Awareness tests using radar). It costs the military 3,000 eb., and would cost easily twice that on the street. For an extra EV +2 and 500 eb., the suit can be outfitted with 2-hour air tanks.

Naval Armor is body armor for troops serving in nautical positions. Bulkier than land body armor, it also serves as a flotation device. SP 16 over torso, abdomen, and limbs, and EV +3. This armor is not easily penetrated by knives or other sharp weapons; full SP is applied to attacks by these weapons.

Power Armor is covered in the *Maximum Metal* sourcebook. Stats for the four types of PA used by the armed forces are listed here, but game rules are in the sourcebook; see it for relevant details.

POWERED ARMOR

SUIT NAME: ARMY POWERED GUN UNIT-10D PIGMAN

TOTAL WEIGHT: 1566 KG.

CHASSIS TYPE: TITAN, STR 40

PUNCH: 4D10 **KICK:** 7D10

CRUSH: 5D10 **RUN:** X

LEAP: X **JUMP:** X

MANUFACTURER: MILITECH/GE

SIB/DFB: 0/+2

CHASSIS WEIGHT: 200 KG.

CHASSIS CAP./CARRY: 2000 KG./600 KG.

TOTAL COST: 246,700EB.

TROOPER SIZE: 115 KG

TOUGHNESS MOD.: -10

S HEAD [1]	P R. ARM [2]	A L. ARM [3]	C R. LEG [4-5]	E L. LEG [6-7]	S TORSO [8-0]
SP 40 SDP 10 INTERNAL SDP 1] WIDEBAND HUD 10 REMOTE TARGET LINK 5 2] TELESCOPICS 5 THERM. TARGET 5 IMAGE ENHANCER 5 A/V REC. 5 3] LASER COM 10 VISUAL SPEC. BACK-UP 15 SCRAMBLER 5 EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1] AGAMS 20/20 2] ↓	SP 40 SDP 10 INTERNAL SDP 1] 12.7MM HMG 30 2] ↓ 3] DRAGON FLAMER 10 4] SMOKE CANNISTERS 15 EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1] 30MM RELOAD #1 15/40 2] ↓ 3] LAW III 10	SP 40 SDP 10 INTERNAL SDP 1] 40MM AUTO-GRENADE LAUNCHER 30 2] ↓ 3] PAINTING LASER 10 4] SMOKE CANNISTERS 15 EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1] 30MM RELOAD #2 15/40 2] ↓ 3] LAW III 10	SP 40 SDP 20 INTERNAL SDP 1] SMOKE CANNISTERS 15 2] EXTRA P-CELL 15 EXTRA P-CELL 15 3] RIBBON CANNISTERS 20 4] POWERED SKATE 20 EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1] THRUST JET 20/30 2] THRUST JET 20/30 3] THRUST JET 20/30	SP 40 SDP 20 INTERNAL SDP 1] SMOKE CANNISTERS 15 2] AUTO-GL RELOAD #1 20 3] RIBBON CANNISTERS 20 4] POWERED SKATE 20 EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1] THRUST JET 20/30 2] THRUST JET 20/30 3] THRUST JET 20/30	SP 40 SDP 30 INTERNAL SDP 1] BODY-WEIGHT MEDIC AUTO-DOC 15 2] RADAR 15 LASER DET. 5 MIC-WAVE DET. 5 3] FOOD/FILTRATION UNIT 10 MILITARY RADIO 10 4] MAGNETO-METER 15 5] EMP CAPACITOR 10 EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1] SEE EQUIPMENT CARRIED 2] ↓ 3] ↓ 4] ↓

NOTES:
LOW-BOOST
REF.

EQUIPMENT CARRIED			
ITEM	SP/SDP/WT	ITEM	SP/SDP/WT
1] 30MM AUTOCANNON	30/30/120KG	8] EXTERNAL TORSO WEAPON	
2]		9] IS A 75MM RECOILESS W/2	
3]		10] RELOADS OR AN IFAR	
4]		11] 6-POD OR A LT. ATGM	
5]		12] (RELOADABLE) W/2 RELOADS	
6]		13]	
7]		14]	



POWERED ARMOR

SUIT NAME: **USAF GENERAL EVA UNIT-12NT**
 TOTAL WEIGHT: **824 KG.**
 CHASSIS TYPE: **HIGHWAYMAN, STR 35**
 PUNCH: **4D10** KICK: **6D10**
 CRUSH: **5D10** RUN: **X+3**
 LEAP: **X** JUMP: **X**

MANUFACTURER: **HUGHES/GE**
 SIB/DFB: **+3/+2**
 CHASSIS WEIGHT: **180 KG.**
 CHASSIS CAP./CARRY: **1750 KG./525 KG.**
 TOTAL COST: **211,600 EB.**
 TROOPER SIZE: **115 KG.**
 TOUGHNESS MOD.: **-9**

S	P	A	C	E	S
HEAD [1]	R. ARM [2]	L. ARM [3]	R. LEG [4-5]	L. LEG [6-7]	TORSO [8-0]
SP 40 SDP 9 INTERNAL SDP 1) ECI WIDEBAND HUD 10 TELESCOPICS 5 LASER DET. 5 2) LASER COM 10 SCRAMBLER 5 A/V REC. 10 THERM.TARGETS 3) EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) WHITE/IR. SEARCHLT 10/10 2)	SP 40 SDP 9 INTERNAL SDP 1) SELF-SEALING* COMPRESSION ↓ 2) LIGHT TOLL SUITE 15 ↓ 3) WINCH & GRAPPLE 40 ↓ 4) EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) HEAVY TOOL SUITE 15/40 2) ↓ 3)	SP 40 SDP 9 INTERNAL SDP 1) SELF-SEALING* COMPRESSION ↓ 2) PHOTON LASER CANNON 10 ↓ 3) ↓ 4) *ALL SELF-SEAL HITS AFFECT ONE 50 SDP TOTAL EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) LARGE POWER SAW 20/25 ↓ 2) 5.56MM LMG 25/25 3)	SP 40 SDP 18 INTERNAL SDP 1) SELF-SEALING* COMPRESSION ↓ 2) EXTRA P-CELL 15 STARDUST CANNISTERS 25 3) MANEUVER JETS** ↓ 4) **ALL JETS HITS AFFECT ONE 30 SDP TOTAL. EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) RIBBON CANNISTERS 20/20 ↓ 2) 3)	SP 40 SDP 18 INTERNAL SDP 1) SELF-SEALING* COMPRESSION ↓ 2) EXTRA P-CELL 15 MIC-WAVE DET. 5 3) MANEUVER JETS** ↓ 4) EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) STARDUST CANNISTERS 20/25 2) 3)	SP 40 SDP 26 INTERNAL SDP 1) ORBITAL AIR PRIME AUTO-DOC 20 2) RADAR 15 ↓ VISUAL SPEC. BACKUP 15 3) FOOD/FILTRATION UNIT 10 MILITARY RADIO 10 4) MAGNETO- METER 15 ↓ 5) EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) EVAW RELOAD #1 10 EVAW RELOAD #2 10 2) 3) 4)

NOTES:
 HIGH-BOOST REF.
 1000 RND. FUEL

E Q U I P M E N T C A R R I E D

ITEM	SP/SDP/WT	ITEM	SP/SDP/WT
1) M-99 EVAW	15/10KG	8)	
2)		9)	
3)		10)	
4)		11)	
5)		12)	
6)		13)	
7)		14)	



POWERED ARMOR

SUIT NAME: ARMY GENERAL UNIT-12A2 GRUNT	MANUFACTURER: MILITECH/GE
TOTAL WEIGHT: 885 KG.	SIB/DFB: 0/+2
CHASSIS TYPE: GUNSLINGER, STR 25	CHASSIS WEIGHT: 138 KG.
PUNCH: 3D10 KICK: 5D10	CHASSIS CAP./CARRY: 1250 KG./375 KG.
CRUSH: 4D10 RUN: X	TOTAL COST: 139,400EB
LEAP: X JUMP: X	TROOPER SIZE: 115 KG.
	TOUGHNESS MOD.: -7

S	P	A	C	E	S
HEAD [1]	R. ARM [2]	L. ARM [3]	R. LEG [4-5]	L. LEG [6-7]	TORSO [8-0]
SP 40	SP 40	SP 40	SP 40	SP 40	SP 40
SDP 6	SDP 6	SDP 6	SDP 12	SDP 12	SDP 18
INTERNAL SDP	INTERNAL SDP	INTERNAL SDP	INTERNAL SDP	INTERNAL SDP	INTERNAL SDP
1) WIDEBAND	1) PA MONO-SWORD 15	1) 40MM AUTO GRENADE LAUNCHER 30	1) SMOKE CANNISTERS 15	1) SMOKE CANNISTERS 15	1) BODY-WEIGHT MEDIC AUTO-DOC 15
HUD 10	↓	↓	↓	↓	2) EXTRA P-CELL 15
REMOTE-TRAGET LINK 5	2) 7.62MM LMG 25	2) ↓	2) RIBBON CANNISTERS 20	2) RIBBON CANNISTERS 20	EXTRA P-CELL 15
2) RADAR 15	↓	3) DRAGON FLAMER 10	3) POWERED SKATE 20	3) POWERED SKATE 20	3) FOOD/FILTRATION UNIT 10
AV REC. 10	3) LMG RELOAD #1 10	↓	↓	↓	MILITARY RADIO 10
SCRAMBLER 5	LASER DET. 5	4) ↓	4) ↓	4) ↓	4) MAGNETO-METER 15
	MIC-WAVE DET. 5				
EXTERNAL SP/SDP	EXTERNAL SP/SDP	EXTERNAL SP/SDP	EXTERNAL SP/SDP	EXTERNAL SP/SDP	
1) ↓	1) ↓	1) 25MM RELOAD #1 15/20	1) THRUST JET 20/30	1) THRUST JET 20/30	5) ↓
		↓	↓	↓	EXTERNAL SP/SDP
2) ↓	2) ↓	2) ↓	2) THRUST JET 20/30	2) THRUST JET 20/30	1) LT. ATGM (RELOADABLE) 20/20
		3) ↓	3) ↓	3) ↓	2) ↓
					3) ATGM RELOAD #1 15/20
					↓
					4) ↓

NOTES:
 LOW BOOST REF.
 40 RND.
 JET FUEL

EQUIPMENT CARRIED			
ITEM	SP/SDP/WT	ITEM	SP/SDP/WT
1) 25MM AUTOCANNON	25/30/90kg	8)	
2)		9)	
3)		10)	
4)		11)	
5)		12)	
6)		13)	
7)		14)	



POWERED ARMOR

SUIT NAME: AMPHIB. ARMOR UNIT AAU-3A2 LANDSHARK

TOTAL WEIGHT: 934 KG.

CHASSIS TYPE: HIGHWAYMAN, STR 35

PUNCH: 4D10 **KICK:** 6D10

CRUSH: 5D10 **RUN:** X+1

LEAP: X **JUMP:** X

MANUFACTURER: TRACKER/GE

SIB/DFB: +1/+2

CHASSIS WEIGHT: 180 KG.

CHASSIS CAP./CARRY: 1750 KG./525 KG.

TOTAL COST: 137,000 EB.

TROOPER SIZE: 115 KG

TOUGHNESS MOD.: -9

S HEAD [1]	P R. ARM [2]	A L. ARM [3]	C R. LEG [4-5]	E L. LEG [6-7]	S TORSO [8-0]
SP 65 SDP 9 INTERNAL SDP 1) WIDEBAND HUD 10 REMOTE TARGET. LINK 5 2) 3) EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) 2)	SP 65 SDP 9 INTERNAL SDP 1) SELF-SEAL COMPRESSION* ↓ 2) 7.65MM LMG 25 ↓ 3) * ALL SELF-SEAL HITS AFFECT ONE 50 SDP TOTAL 4) EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) 2) 3)	SP 65 SDP 9 INTERNAL SDP 1) SELF-SEAL COMPRESSION* ↓ 2) 40MM AUTO- GRENADE LAUNCHER 30 3) 4) EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) 25MM RELOAD #1 15/40 ↓ 2) 3)	SP 65 SDP 18 INTERNAL SDP 1) SELF-SEAL COMPRESSION* ↓ 2) EXTRA P-CELL 15 MIC-WAVE DET. 5 3) SMOKE CANNISTERS 20 4) EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) SMOKE CANNISTERS 20/15 ↓ 2) 3)	SP 65 SDP 18 INTERNAL SDP 1) SELF-SEAL COMPRESSION* ↓ 2) EXTRA P-CELL 15 3) RIBBON CANNISTERS 20 4) EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) RIBBON CANNISTERS 20/20 ↓ 2) 3)	SP 65 SDP 26 INTERNAL SDP 1) BODY- WEIGHT MEDIC AUTO-DOC 15 2) RADAR 15 ↓ VISUAL SPEC. BACK-UP 15 3) FOOD/FILTRATION UNIT 10 MILITARY RADIO 10 4) SONAR 10 ↓ 5) EXTERNAL SP/SDP 1) SWIMMER UNIT 25/60 ↓ 2) 3) 4)

NOTES:
HIGH-BOOST
REF.

E Q U I P M E N T C A R R I E D			
ITEM	SP/SDP/WT	ITEM	SP/SDP/WT
1) 25MM AUTOCANNON	25/30/90	8)	
2)		9)	
3)		10)	
4)		11)	
5)		12)	
6)		13)	
7)		14)	





THE STATE OF THE UNION

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ✓ Underground Cities in Appalachia
- ✓ Cotton Dictatorships in Dixie
- ✓ Great Plains Agri-Empires
- ✓ Fast Action in the Free States
- ✓ Revival in the Pac Northwest

There is a new divisiveness among the states. This is readily apparent in the new slang terms being used around the country, derogatory labels applied to a person simply for the state of their residency. In the cities, you'll often hear people being called Oregonads, Massholes, Oklahomelies, Arkansots, Michigoons, Wyners... and, as they say down South, anyone born north of Dallas is a damn Yankee. Of course, to me, the most derogatory brand of all is 'Californian'."

- Warfield Cann, Governor of Nevada

Once again, American perception of the United States is changing. Before the Civil War, it was considered grammatically correct to say, 'the United States are.' After the defeat of the Confederacy demonstrated the insolubility of the Union to the populace, it became proper to say, 'the United States is.' And now, again, after the establishment of the Free States, we see a resurgence of the grammatical structure 'the United States are'. Our language betrays us; we feel the U.S. will not remain intact for long."

- T. Michelle Sarts, Ph.D., *Worlds in Division*

Our country is a house divided against itself. Everyone wants to go it alone, ignoring the maxim 'united we stand'. Personally, I have no problem with that. We're tired of burdening ourselves with the deadwood."

- Curtis Sides, *President of the Republic of Texas*

This section of *Home of the Brave* covers the land itself, in detail. The states are grouped into political regions, which are discussed in the section on the socio-political state of America (pages 48-57). The United States regional system is, of course, based on geography and culture as much as anything, so an overview of the region opens each section.



■ APPALACHIA ■

“We ought to just up and move the capitol to Richmond, Virginia. That’s where the power lies these days. I bet Grant is rolling in his tomb.”

- an anonymous lobbyist

Appalachia, despite the fact that it is comprised of only five states (plus the remora of D.C.), is the most politically powerful of the regions of the United States. The Free State Board could be a more powerful political factor, and might even overwhelm the Appalachian region, but the structure of new U.S. government, added to the fact that the FSB rarely votes in unison, causes their influence to be diminished.

Throughout the Twentieth Century, the Appalachian states remained by and large a backwater. The major metropolitan developments were restricted to the Atlantic coast; large sections of Kentucky,

Tennessee, and the Virginias remained relatively uninhabited, and ignored by followers of pop culture as backwaters and the refuge of the hillbillies. Fortunately, though, these states avoided most of the ecosystem damage caused by the acid rains of the northeast, and the prevalence of forested areas helped the land weather the droughts and global warming in good shape. Overall, the climate in this part of the country has changed little.

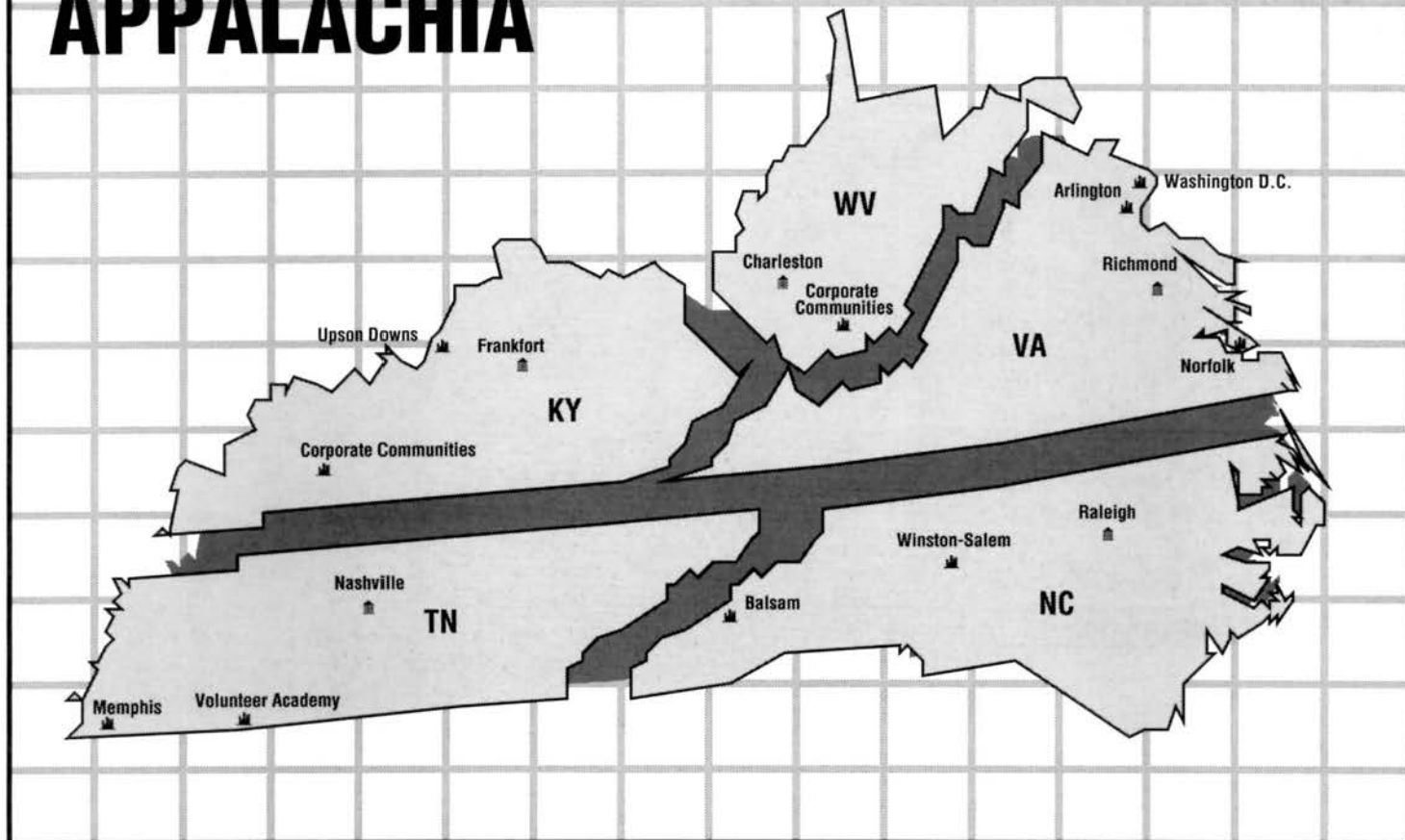
Extremely low land prices combined with ready supplies of workers and raw materials brought industry here around the turn of the millennium, and shortly afterwards Appalachia became the new boom section of the country. TerraTech began extensive underground tunneling and mining activity, then converted their main shafts into superhighways which undercut the winding Appalachian roads. Stoked by the ready supplies of lumber, ore, and self-sufficient construction work-

ers, new towns sprang up quickly, providing homes for the Corporate beavers who flocked here by the thousands.

Over the next ten years, Appalachia underwent a renaissance the likes of which have not been seen in America since the Old West was opened up. Entire small towns were bought, leveled, and rebuilt as planned communities. Industry of every sort moved in, providing an ease of networking found nowhere else in the states. Of the Fortune 1000 companies of 2020, each has a major corporate office in these states.

The heartbeat of the nation can now be felt here. In fact, these states would also have fought for Free State status, except that individually they didn’t have enough power. As a collective block, though, they wield a lot of authority in the new governmental structure, and, thanks to the Free States’ disorganized political position, they can decide the policies of the country.

APPALACHIA



KENTUCKY (KY)

Capital: Frankfurt

New Cities: several small corporate recreational communities

Industries: chemical production, dairy, electronics, food crops, horse breeding, horse racing, hydro-electrics, light industry, livestock, logging, manual labor, mining, resorts

Kentucky was hard hit during the Collapse, as thousands of homeless, Nomads, and other refugees from Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois swamped the cities in search of any refuge. Hungry mobs raided and devoured many prime horses, which in turn led to serious violence as wealthy landowners hired guards ('will shoot

Nomads for food') to protect their property. The end result was that Kentucky endured more damage than by rights it should have.

Today, Kentucky is the worst off of the Appalachian states, which, in the grand scheme of things, still puts it above most of the rest of the U.S.. Too near to the polluted Midwest for its own good, the Bluegrass State has turned in part into the 'brown grass' state as some of the midwestern acid rain fronts sweep the northern portions of the state. Furthermore, the new tunnel turnpikes in the Virginias, along with the Balsam Tunnel in North Carolina, have completely bypassed Kentucky as a way station for shipments to the rest of the country.

Curiously, it is just this economic situation that has made Kentucky a favored summer home for many of America's Corporate elite. The land prices are still relatively cheap for one of the upwardly-mobile Appalachian states, and corporate recreational communities have sprung up

here and there, with homes being awarded as perks and incentives to executives.

In addition, Kentucky has a claim as one of the few areas in the world where horses are still bred, let alone raced. In this wealthy part of the country, even middle class people are able to purchase a horse of their own, if they're willing to make the sacrifice. Races are common, especially among the Corporate sectors, where the newly-inaugurated SiliCrown Sweepstakes has become as popular an event as the Triple Crown and the Kentucky Derby. (The Iron Crown, sponsored by the mining corporations operating in the mountainous areas of the state, did not fare so well, and has been canceled.)

HOT SPOTS:

Upson Downs: The biggest, newest, and most lavish of the Kentucky racetracks, Upson Downs is located near Louisville. It was built through grants and loans

from Arasaka, EBM, TerraTech, and many other corporations. Net54 has also given a major contribution in exchange for exclusive media rights.

Upson Downs is a meeting place for all the vacationing rich, most of them corporates. Here they mix and socialize, wagering thousands and occasionally millions of dollars on races. It is here that vacationing EBM corps can find that 'little bit of eurostyle in the states.'



An EBM vice-president has lost a briefcase at Upson Downs, with a very expensive cargo. A nervous man approaches the players and offers 25,000EB for its return. All the players have to do is find it.

NORTH CAROLINA (NC)

Capital: Raleigh

New Cities: Balsam, several small corporate communities

Industries: chemical production, dairy, electronics, financial markets, food crops, medium and heavy industry, livestock, mining, tobacco

"Thank God tobacco has never been legalized. It ensures we'll always have a good balance of trade in our state."

- Senator Marla Burroughs, R-NC

During the Collapse, North Carolina suffered hard. Rising sea levels brought on by global warming inundated the coast, devouring the many Carolina swamps and causing many more acres to sink into a quagmire. Without effective countermeasures from either the state or national government, mosquitoes and other vermin rose to epidemic proportions, spreading a variety of diseases among the coastal populations, including the notorious Wasting

Plague. In a belated effort to escape contagion, the coastal populace fled to the big cities, where overcrowding and poor sanitation further spread these illnesses through the unprepared metropoli. Between disease and evacuation, even Jacksonville and Wilmington were wiped off the map. To this day, North Carolina has no ports. No one wants to go back to the coastal swamps.

There have been rumors of coastal pirates operating from bases in North Carolina, but most consider these rumors to be fanciful; there's nothing nearby for them to raid.

Thanks to tobacco and the intervention of some international corporations, North Carolina was able to get back to its feet relatively quickly. Huge tracts of land were bought wholesale by a variety of Corps, because many investors were panicked that the entirety of North Carolina was going to sink into the sea. Lots of new factories, training centers, and warehouses opened up, filling in the gaps in the Winston-Salem-Raleigh urban axis. Without governmental price supports, the price of tobacco would have dropped, but the agricorps deliberately kept the price high, then gave cigarettes as perks to underpaid lower-class workers to get them hooked. There's never been proof that the agricorps added unusual chemicals to these cigarettes.

For at least a decade, nicotine addiction and low pay were the hallmarks of North Carolina industry, for those who didn't care for cigarettes moved elsewhere in search of better-paying jobs in nicer-looking cities. This has earned North Carolina a reputation for being a low-brow state, despite its more recent upscale turn.

The advent of inexpensive designer drugs and artificial tobacco broke the hold the agricorps (and their subsidiaries) had over the workers, and to stay in business they had to offer better pay and fund civic improvements. This has catapulted North Carolina back into the pack with the rest of the Appalachian states, and the entire length of the WSR urban axis is now a showcase of urban development. Nevertheless, tobacco remains on the market, lingering like a cloud of smoke.

NEW CITIES:

Balsam: Balsam is the unusual result of the massive tunneling done in the Appalachian Mountains. An ambitious tunnel project ran from west of Asheville (near the I-40/US-23 interchange) under the Great Smoky Mountains to Knoxville (coming out near the US-441/US-411 interchange). After doing extensive mining in the vicinity of the tunnel, the shaft was renovated and opened as a new highway with a speed limit of 75 miles per hour (minimum speed 60). This new road, dubbed I-440, greatly facilitated trucking from the coast across the mountains, and several firms started running regular land train routes through the tunnel.

Balsam was built into the rock by the state government, and has the distinction of being the world's first underground city. Taking full advantage of geothermal power and the stable temperature underground, Balsam has become a major production center, with several corporations leasing area from the state at rates beneficial to all. The layout of the city is truly three-dimensional, which is confusing to most people at first.

Balsam is a new city in every sense of the word, and is run by a state-appointed mayor with a city council made up of the corporations leasing factory area (votes determined by corporate rent). There is little violent crime, but with so many corporations in such a small area, there's plenty of covert operations taking place all the time. It should be noted that the EBM branch in Balsam has recently fallen into dispute with the head office over certain management policies. This is the first time an American branch of a foreign Corp has had such a management dispute.



The EBM plant in Balsam is considering going independent from its mother in Europe. In order to do this, Karen Valez, the regional manager is looking for a few good Solos. The pay is good, but do you really want to be in the middle of the next Corporate war?

TENNESSEE (TN)

Capital: Nashville

New Cities: Volunteer Academy, several small company towns.

Industries: chemical production, communications, cybertech, electronics, entertainment, light industry, logging, military hardware & training, mining, music

Tennessee is one of the few states without a metropolitan axis anywhere, the urban environments being restricted to a few large cities. The major towns are Memphis, Jackson, Clarksville, Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Johnson City. The rest of the state is pretty much a wilderness with more than a few small towns and homesteads clinging like lichens to their old-fashioned lifestyle.

Tennessee is a major trucking thoroughfare for all sorts of Appalachian goods passing through here to all points west. As such, the state has made every effort to keep the main interstates in good condition and free of Nomads and scavengers. Unfortunately for the state (and the truckers), there's plenty of woods along the interstate routes for the marauders to use for cover, so important shipments are convoyed with heavily armed escorts. Private truckers must take their own risks, and often provide down-on-their-luck solos with free ammunition and transportation.

Since the Mississippi is too silted for most shipping, there have been recent developments for upgrading river shipping along the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. As yet these have a far way to go before they can rival the Mississippi at its peak, but the commerce raiders don't seem to have caught on yet that the waterways are highways in their own right.

The cities in Tennessee are pretty much as they've always been, with the additions of new, glamorous developments, more citizens, and better transportation networks.

NEW CITIES:

Volunteer Academy: In 2011, Militech chose to break the Arasaka stranglehold on the global security market. Located at the Shiloh battlefield (near the Tennessee/Mississippi border), Militech's Volunteer Academy plays hard on the American heritage and the fame that Tennessee has earned as the Volunteer State.

The Academy covers 20,000 acres along the Tennessee River, and has become a very successful training school, resulting in a major media war between Militech and Arasaka. Also, the Academy is currently under investigation for smuggling. Militech disavows any culpability, while Arasaka claims that Militech can't even secure the land they use for maneuvers. Arasaka has recently requested the government audit the Academy's armory records.

Whatever the real story may be, it seems that a lot of heavy weapons captured on felons may have originated here...it's hard to tell when the serial numbers have been filed off.

HOT SPOTS:

Nashville: Having grown to twice its size at the turn of the millennium, the home of country music has become the home of the country's music. With the disasters in New York and the nightmare that Los Angeles has become, prosperous Nashville has become a new musical Mecca. Boasting the headquarters of several major recording companies and lots of studios with cutting-edge technology, Nashville now produces more discs and audiochips than any other American city.

Nashville is an active, twenty-four-hour town, and the night life pulses around the clock. Bars and stages are constantly packed with country, chromatic, and minimalist rockers, and every street corner has another vagrant troubadour hoping to get a contract position at a small club. Kerry Eurodyne has opened his version of Silverhand Studios in this city, although the few Night City rockers who've been there claim the Silverhand concept has been institutionalized and stripped of its creativity.

Just as Nashville sports many different styles of music, the city has many styles of architecture. The city has maintained its oldest mansions, dating back to the 1700's, yet the northwest portion of the city (where most of the growth has occurred) is an ultra-modern metropolis built primarily with money from the music businesses.

Many cyberpunks (Johnny Silverhand among them) feel that to record in Nashville is to sell out to the muzakcorps, and prefer to do their recording in grungier environments like Night City, Detroit, or Baton Rouge. Silverhand Studios seeks out new, 'artistically-inspiring' locations like these (with their typically low land prices) to build new facilities, and the studios invariably get filled with like-minded independents.

Graceland: Memphis has not grown as much as other cities in the state, but is still the largest city in Tennessee. At the western periphery of the Appalachian region, it has not fared as well as the other towns, but it is still better off than most cities in the U.S.. Although the Mississippi river has become so silted as to be unnavigable, Memphis still serves as a port of sorts, being a way station for Appalachian trucking heading to the Western region and the Free States.

By far the most infamous landmark in Memphis is Graceland, the home of the Elvii. Yes, that's right; there is an Elvis Presley posergang. During the Collapse, many Elvis fans flocked to Graceland for lack of any better structure to their lives. Kept from their idol by guards, the crowd rapidly grew unruly and overwhelmed the mansion.

During this time of chaotic upheavals, the story of Elvis was deliberately twisted by an exploitive power-hungry man named Jackston. He molded the legend of Elvis Presley into a mutant religion, a sick parody of Christianity which 'proves' that Elvis was foretold in the Gospels, complete with resurrection, signs, appearances in shopping malls and the like. Jackston himself was a cosmetic surgeon who had been forbidden to practice due to certain indiscretions, but he molded the followers into the likeness of Elvis in return for their support and obedience. After a few years,

Jackston disappeared under mysterious circumstances, which further added to the mystery of the new religion.

Now the Elvii are going full steam ahead, and boast several hundred members living in and around Graceland. They are a sort of psychotic commune, and their continuous loud music has caused nearby neighborhoods to be abandoned. Their major source of income appears to be fencing stolen goods, prostitution, drug trafficking, and selling 'authentic holy items'.

VIRGINIA (VA)

Capital: Richmond

New Cities: several small corporate communities

Industries: bioengineering tech, chemical production, communications, cybertech, electronics, entertainment, financial markets, fishing, food crops, livestock, logging, medium industry, mining, shipyards, software

Virginia is the leader of the new Appalachia, having weathered the storms of the '90's and early 2000's in good shape. When the worst of the Collapse hit, the state made every effort to keep people employed, creating new jobs (and new Hooverilles) across the state. Most pronounced was the port expansion of the Norfolk area, which shortly became the port of choice for most European ships. This increase in trade kept Virginia out of the worst of the collapse, and brought added productivity to the rest of the state.

This extra wealth of course brought more migrants (some ferried there by West Virginian public transportation - a fact most Virginians will never forget), who in turn added to the inexpensive work base. These provided the manpower necessary to begin the Appalachian tunnels connecting Virginia directly with West Virginia, which would subsequently ease the difficulty of trucking imported goods out of the state.

Overall, the state's intention of keeping people employed kept the economy's heart pumping throughout the Collapse, and by the time America was back on its feet, Virginia stood out as the rising star of the East Coast. Industry moved into Virginia as well as its neighboring Appalachian states, bringing prosperity to the entire area and setting the place for Appalachia at the head of the governmental table.

Richmond-Petersburg is the major city of the east coast, being a megalopolis apparently aspiring to the infamy of Los Angeles. Further north, Arlington and Alexandria have received the fallout of all the civilians who don't want to live in the District of Columbia Military Base. And, of course, to the east, the Chesapeake bay is filled with leisure and commercial shipping, as well as the occasional toxic spill. And that's about as good as it gets for those who haven't quite reached Free State status.

HOT SPOTS:

Richmond Regional Governmental Plaza: The showpiece regional headquarters in the U.S., Richmond Plaza is a dedicated, carefully-designed development which holds the six 'state embassies' and all the bureaucratic machinery of the Appalachian Region. Security is tight as a drum, and every board, bureau, department, and committee in the region has its contacts here.

Mind you, they won't let in just anyone. You've got to have a purpose, a job, or a verifiable appointment. Even if a cyberpunk does have a legitimate reason to be here, there's a dress code to be followed. This code is not rigidly defined, but is more a matter of wardrobe and style. Sloppily-dressed characters or those really 'punked out' must have a whole lot of pull to get in here; an unlikely proposition at best.



The Players are offered a job: to extract Hector Dallen from the Regional center. This would be the first time a person was extracted from the Government by a Corp. Do your characters want to make history?

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (DC)

With all the struggles that have occurred over the last years, the District of Columbia has been militarized. The entire area is one large base, although tourists are still allowed to visit the monuments (under close supervision by MP's) and museums.

The majority of residents are still civilians, but they are subject to the orders of the military governor, and when they dial 911, they get the Military Police. The feeling of D.C. these days is a lot colder and harder than it was before, but at least with the removal of the office of the mayor, the drug problem has been wiped out.

Incidentally, D.C. was annexed into the Appalachian regional board instead of the Northeast board so as to provide the illusion that the national capitol still wielded a lot of control in the country. After all, D.C. is in the region that has the most influence...

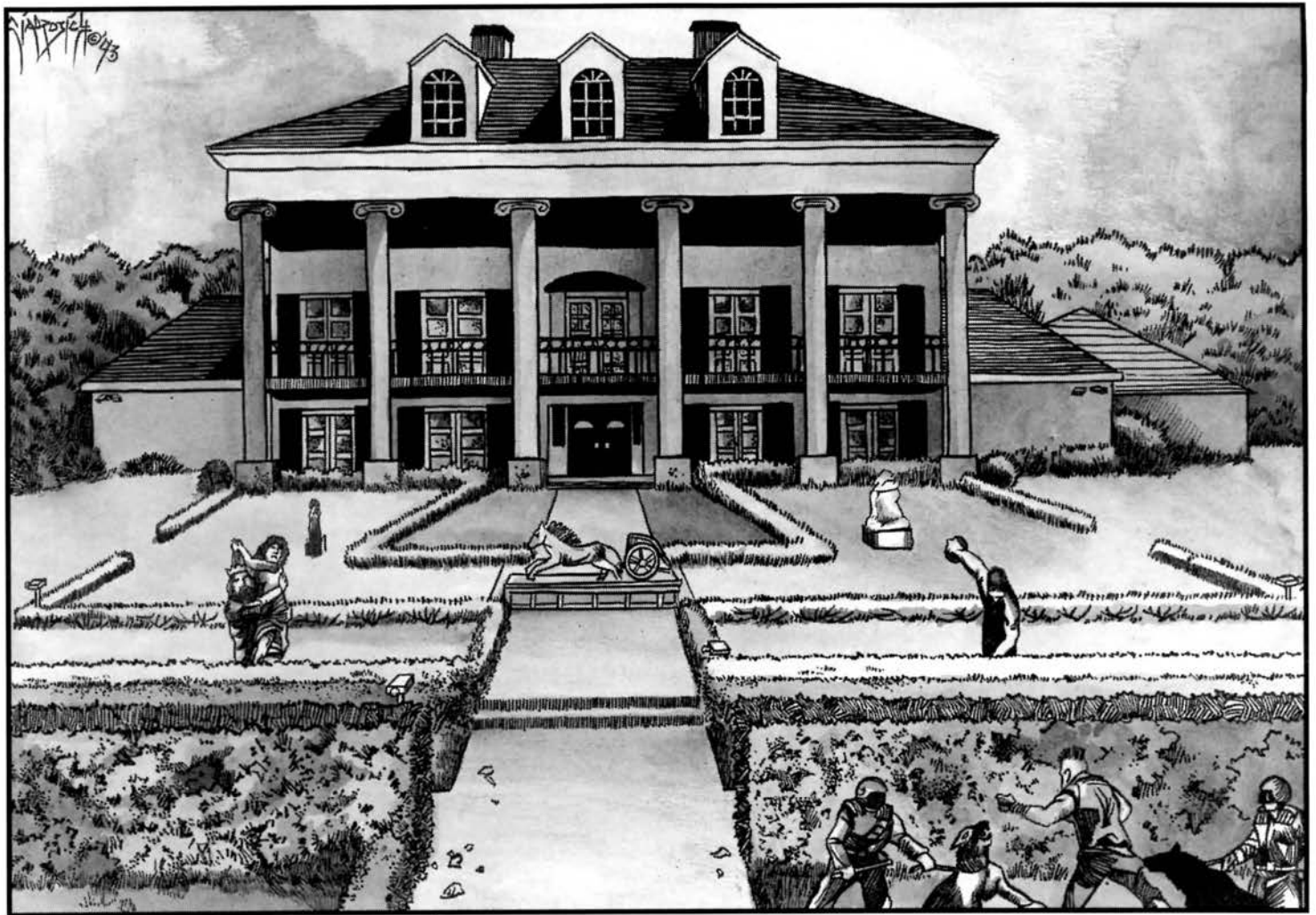
WEST VIRGINIA (WV)

Capital: Charleston

New Cities: several small corporate communities, new cities based on Balsam, NC being built

Industries: food crops, light industry, livestock, logging, manual labor, mining

Since 1863, when it seceded from the Confederate States back into the Union, West Virginia has been an intermediate between the North and the South. These days, West Virginia acts as the voice of reason in the powerful Appalachian region, with the West Virginian senators mixing freely with those from the other states. This is partly due to a genuine desire to maintain interstate amity, and partly due to design by the Appalachian board as a whole, seeking to manipulate the rest of the country with the age-old good cop/bad cop routine. The West Virginian senators are able to acquire a significant amount of intelligence with their methods.



During the dark days of the Collapse, West Virginia was left relatively untouched by marauding Nomads and desperate mobs of refugees. Everyone felt that there were greener pastures elsewhere, in any of the several neighboring states. West Virginia did as much as possible to encourage this opinion, even occasionally providing free transportation for migrants from one end of the state to the other.

Since the Appalachian states recovered, West Virginia has been the site of extensive tunneling/mining operations, which have resulted in new expressways boring through the Appalachian Mountains between the Virginias. The largest of these is I-581 (which directly connects Charlottesville, VA to Clarksboro), which has become a main trucking axis for Appalachian shipments to the Midwest.

HOT SPOTS:

Allegheny Mountains and vicinity: In the winding mountain roads in the eastern portion of the state (as well as the western portion of Virginia) live those people who can't afford the tunnel tolls or who don't want to pay them. Smaller trucking companies and independent rig operators must also ply the roadways here as they try to claw a decent wage in competition with the major corporations' road trains running under the mountains. The folks who live up here are disaffected and violent, as they do not share the wealth of the tunnel corporations, but must deal with the pollution. They take their violence out on the truckers who try to run the gauntlet from the coast to the interior. The net result is a sort of world above filled with poverty and violence, and a world below where wealth and social graces reign. With a twisted sort

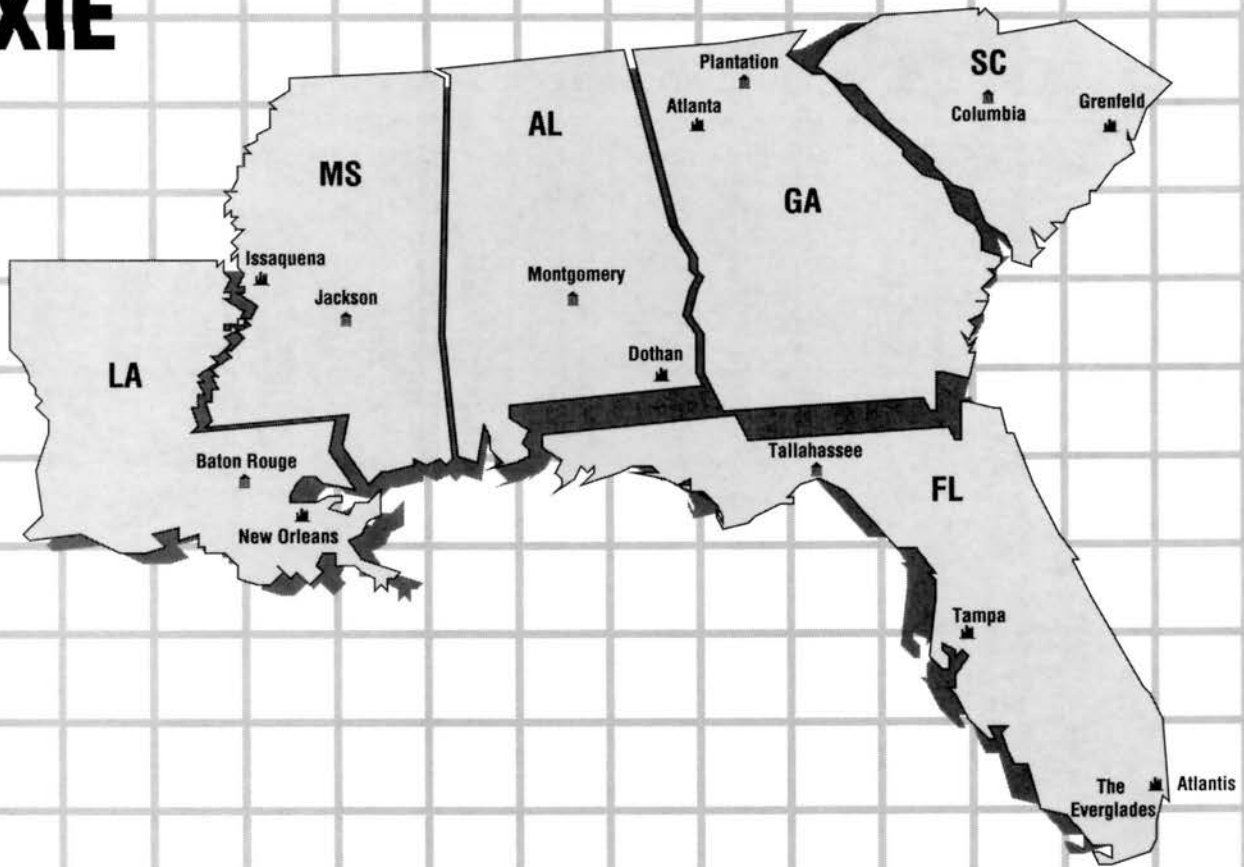
of humor (in reference to an ancient novel, *The Time Machine*), the trucking route across the Allegheny has become known as "the Wells Run."

■ DIXIE ■

Tragedically, the Deep South was hard hit during the Collapse and the years after. Only the Northeast suffered worse, but the Southerners don't mind being down as long as them damn Yankees are still beneath them in the pig pile.

Nowhere has global warming and the concurrent rising sea levels caused more change than in the Deep South. Florida and Louisiana were hardest hit, losing incredible amounts of land. Mobile, Alabama also suffered, although its plight is nowhere near as well-known as that of New Orleans.

DIXIE



Ever since the arrival of Union troops and carpet-baggers a century and a half prior, the Deep South has never been known for its open-armed reception of poor northerners in search of work, and this was never more true than during the Collapse. Countless people, seeking to get away from the sandstorms of the West, the rotting metropolises of New England, or the droughts of the Midwest, flocked to the South in search of jobs, water, a nicer climate, or just someone they could kill for some ready cash.

This massive influx caused incredible stresses in the social structure of the South. Interstate shipping fell apart, causing widespread hunger. Atlanta, by then a very large city, felt the lack of shipping quite acutely, and was the scene of the first food riots. Soon food riots were taking place in many cities, where the 'haves' were overwhelmed by the 'have-nots'. Soon, throughout the impoverished South, life became a war of

'us' versus 'them'. Just who 'they' were depended on the speaker, but after a while the dominant side became the poor native southerners, and the primary target became 'them damn Yankees', defined as anyone born north of South Carolina.

Over the next several years there were occasional riots and a lot of civil unrest, as well as untold murders, some of them cannibalistic. The wealthy who did not have the foresight or resources to move north soon found themselves under attack, and had their belongings stolen, confiscated, or burned.

Major industries moved their main plants out of the South during this time. Once the wealthy and the Yankees were eliminated, corporations became the next target of popular attack. A few smaller plants were overrun by mobs, one such plant providing a large portion of Jackson, Mississippi with new cars. Other plants were hit by wildcat strikes as workers demanded more pay for their work in an attempt to keep up

with the skyrocketing food prices. Faced with these problems, most corporate executives chose to cut their losses and pulled their plants out with the help of foreign or scab labor. This industrial exodus left the South in even worse straits, as the unemployment statistics reached staggering highs.

Eventually, the unrest in the South started to be molded into a sort of grassroots rebellion. Under the leadership of several unscrupulous opportunists (all of whom knew each other), the mob anger so prevalent in the southern cities began to be channeled into a political force like cattle being driven in to slaughter. This eventually led, between 1998 and 2000, to the reformation of the state governments of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, putting the ringleaders in power. In the words of Harv Paulson, famed political commentator, these governments are little more than "legitimized hate groups, thriving in the South like tapeworms in a dog."

South Carolina and Florida managed to keep the reactionaries from gaining control, and have politically moderate—though ineffectual—state governments. This of course leads to conflict within the southern states when voting on national issues, and since the states usually can't come to a consensus, the Dixie region does not exert much influence on national politics. This problem is only exacerbated by the grudges held by the gulf coast state governments, as they try to browbeat Florida and South Carolina into taking orders properly by voting against any federal program that might benefit these two states.

THE SOCIAL SITUATION

"They can have my gun when they saw my cold, dead cyberhand from it. If I could afford a cyberhand, that is."
- Dixie joke

Dixie is poor, dirt poor. Only South Carolina has some modicum of economic wealth, and that's primarily because they tax all shipments that cross their state to the rest of Dixie. The wealthy and the landowners of the South have all been killed, robbed, or forced to move to other, calmer states. All that remains are the poor and a few of the lower middle class who are trying to rebuild the southern economy.

The state governments of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia are powerful, corrupt, and arbitrary, earning the four states the nickname 'cotton republics'. The governments are cronyist, handing out concessions like party favors and passing laws to keep the rest of the citizens repressed. Collectively, these four tinhorns have been satirized by political cartoonists as the Marx brothers of the mid-20th Century comedy movies or the *Ménage à Quatre* of the early 21st snuff-sex film industry.

Part of the way the cotton republics keep their citizenry down is through the Uniform Dixie Manufacturer's List Code, a region-wide control system for items and substances the powers that be want to keep out of the hands of John Q. Pub-

lic. Among the restrictions of the Code are several laws which are anathema to most cyberpunks.

For example, Dixie (Florida excepted) has the strictest gun control regulations anywhere in the states. The only weapons legal for the citizenry to carry are shotguns and .22 caliber hunting rifles, and these must be registered at an exorbitant fee. Those with registered firearms also get a bar-code tattoo on the back of their neck for identification purposes. Punishments for illegal weapons or tampering with the tattoo are extreme. Despite their efforts, though, there are still a lot of unregistered weapons in Dixie. No poor southerner ever intends on giving up his ability to shoot possum when he needs to. Citizens are just careful to keep their weapons hidden, and they only use their rifles on the police when they're certain they'll never be caught. In response, the police forces perform regular sweeps, searching house-to-house for unregistered weapons.

Drugs, music, ammo, cyberware, and many other common items are also prohibited or restricted. This is a real problem when one considers that Dixie cops don't need a warrant or even probable cause to give you a full search.

The governments are all networked to a greater or lesser degree, with the ties between the cotton republics being very tight. The other two state governments are weak, as they are plagued with backstabbing infiltrators and cronyist sympathizers who hamstringing any socially useful programs they attempt to create.

For most of the United States, public opinion does not go past Dixie's poverty and arrogant governments. Sadly, it should, for despite their low economic position and governmental repression, the typical southerner is still gregarious, social, and generous. The rioting crowds that dominated the American media were an aggressive minority, and their sweeping path to power was in large part a media circus and a study in mob psychology. Most southerners can't believe it happened to them, but all they can do is shake their heads while they till their desolate fields, and look the other way when the sheriff drives by in his old-fashioned hovercar.

ALABAMA (AL)

Capital: Montgomery

New Cities: Dothan

Industries: fishing, food crops, logging, manual labor, rice

The state of Alabama is run by the Populist Advisory Council headed by the notorious Braxton Lowndes. Although Lowndes has little interest (and therefore little sway) in national issues, he has made a name for himself in regional politics. Uncouth, unsubtle, and unremitting, he has forged the Alabama State Police into an effective totalitarian police force, even going so far as giving them uniforms modeled after the fascist Italian blackshirts.

Not only is the Alabama State Police made up of harsh and crooked thugs, but they are well-armed and the government approves of any brutality they indulge in for the repression of civil rights. The Alabama State Police also regularly patrols the length and breadth of the Florida panhandle, although they have found that they must bring their own CHOOH2 when they do so; several Alabama cruisers had their fuel sabotaged during a fill-up in Florida.

But nowhere is the focus of Lowndes' government more obvious than in his urban development system, specifically between the cities of Birmingham and Dothan.

Birmingham was the scene of some bad food rioting, and Lowndes' henchmen were there fanning the flames. Then, shortly after food rationing was cut back, a small quake struck Birmingham, damaging the city's water system and cracking the walls of two of the food rationing warehouses. Looters seized the opportunity, and troops tried to stop them. Shooting started, followed by firebombing. Looters with armloads of food from the government shelters were ripped apart by mobs wanting the meals for themselves. As the frenzy spread, so did the fires. With the streets in chaos and the water system down, the firefighters were unable to stop the flames. By midnight, several areas of Birmingham were

effectively blast furnaces, with thermal convection whipping the flames higher and higher. Within a week, the largest urban fire in U.S. history had reduced Birmingham, Bessemer, and most of the other suburbs to blackened hulks and ash.

Faced with this catastrophe, Lowndes did not attempt to rebuild the city. Instead, he arrested as many of the looters as he could, and set them to work making Dothan into Alabama's "Criminal Justice City." Whether the selection of Dothan was foresightful or lucky is not certain, but the town has become the springboard for the Florida sweeps so common among the Alabama Police.

NEW CITIES:

Dothan: Technically speaking, Dothan is not a new city, but a renewed city. The Alabama Supreme Court now holds session here, as does the Alabama Special Court for suspects extradited from Florida and elsewhere. The entire city has been razed, and is now laid out in a monolithic grid, built to impose and depress the human mind. To further darken the ambience, it sports many severe prisons. Across the U.S., Dothan is known as Alabama's Graveyard. It was built with 'convict labor,' a term disturbingly reminiscent of many previous dictators. The exact number of criminals who died from the abuses they bore during the project may never be known.

FLORIDA (FL)

Capital: Tallahassee

New Cities: Atlantis

Industries: citrus foods, entertainment, financial markets, fishing, light industry, software, sugar

These days Florida is a state in name only. Much of the state has been lost to coastal flooding, and there is little tourism revenue left for the state since New Galveston and Havana became the new hot resorts for North American vacationers.

While Florida still has a lot of rich people in Miami and Atlantis (these being too far out of the way for most of the food rioters to attack), these people ignore the state government, neither paying taxes nor demanding services. An extreme example of this mentality is Atlantis, which independently contracted for the construction of its own highway, and which supports its own police force. Atlantis doesn't even have a zip code, receiving mail via drop boxes on the Florida mainland. Florida has been able to tax the use of the mainland (where Atlantis keeps some transit facilities) at an exorbitant rate, but this tax is a pittance for the Atlantean residents.

Disowned by the rich, Florida's government is funded and staffed by the few who have enough money to concern themselves with such luxuries as government, justice, and the betterment of humanity. The largest portion of the Floridian budget goes to the operation of the understaffed Florida Border Patrol, which aggressively prevents (read: destroys) anyone trying to enter the state illegally via the Gulf of Mexico. Despite their best efforts, the Florida border leaks like a sieve, and any professional operator can slip past the thinly-manned defenses with but few problems.

The rest of the government is small and lacks funding. Generally, the only people to hold jobs with the state government are those who can't find work elsewhere, bolstered by a few idealists. The Florida State Police is small and tolerant, and tries to avoid confrontations as back-ups are few and far between. In response to this, the Alabama State Police run rough-shod over the Florida highways, blithely ignoring the state borders and jurisdictional problems. Even the Mississippi Police make a few appearances in the panhandle, keeping the impoverished Florida citizens in line and attacking smuggling operations. Suspects are extradited to Dothan, Alabama for a summary trial in front of a hostile judge.

Overall, there are better places to live. In fact, the only outstanding asset that Florida has over the rest of Dixie is that the changing air currents keep their hot and humid air from getting stagnant as it does in most other parts of the South.

NEW CITIES:

Atlantis: In response to rising sea levels, a group of millionaires and third-party investors sought to salvage their wonderful waterfront homes. They hit upon the idea of Atlantis, a floating city which would carry their homes above the waves no matter how high the sea rose.

Atlantis is a picturesque city, restricted to pedestrian traffic and AV's and helicopters for rooftop commuting. The city is connected to the mainland by a floating causeway, complete with mass transit maglev cars. The causeway connects to I-195, and features a plush terminal station and a large secured parking garage (separate sections for tourists and residents).

Although everything is available for purchase in Atlantis, prices are very high for tourists. Residents of the city get an AtlantaCred charge card, which gives them automatic rebates on everything they buy at local stores. This way residents appear to pay the same inflated prices as the visitors, and there are fewer complaints about price-gouging.



New Atlantis is the perfect stop for a safe, restful vacation, until the characters discover the nocturnal activities of the Petrochem company.

The fish are dying and the people getting sick. What's the average citizen of New Atlantis to do? Buy help! I'm sure the player characters need the cash; they always do.

HOT SPOTS:

Tampa: The city of Tampa has the distinction of being the first city in history to be leveled by an orbital rock strike. (The ESA had considered dropping a rock on Cape Canaveral, but they didn't foresee the injury to the U.S. space program as being economical in the long run.)

The ESA targeted the rock to land at the very edge of Tampa Bay, which was already encroaching on the city thanks to the rise in sea level. No one knows how large the rock was, because the silt from the tidal waves caused by the rock's impact obscured and filled in the crater it made. One thing is certain:

The rock was effective. Between seismic shocks, the pressure wave and the tidal effects, Tampa, already partly flooded, was all but wiped out. St. Petersburg and Clearwater also suffered greatly from seismic and tidal shocks.

These days, Tampa is a ghost town. Unlike Colorado Springs, the weather and environment are relatively hospitable, and there's ready access to St. Petersburg and Clearwater just across the bay, so Tampa is better able to support a shadow society. Many cyberpunks use Tampa as cover for an escape, disappearing among the many abandoned buildings.

Tampa is also a clearing house for smuggled goods bound for the Cotton Republics. Florida's government doesn't really care whether or not any goods meet or fail the Uniform Dixie Manufacturer's List Code, and turns a blind eye to anyone who distributes such items as long as they do so out of the public eye. Pressure from Alabama and the rest of the cotton republics forces Florida's minimal police force to prosecute those brazen enough to trade restricted items publicly.

The Everglades: Although much of the swamp has been inundated with water, more area has been added to the swamp as the sea rose to meet the dry land. The Everglades have become the home of *Los Marineros Rojos*, a Nomad gang of considerable size. The Marineros are heavily influenced by Caribbean voodoo cultism, and respect only fear, power, and witchcraft. Aside from being ruthless opportunists, the Marineros are incredibly destructive, ecologically speaking. They hunt anything that moves, and are by all reports responsible for several species' extinctions.

Moving around in flat-bottomed fan boats and other scavenged vehicles, the Marineros have a wide range for their activities. They have even been known to raid Miami suburbs.

GEORGIA (GA)

Capital: Atlanta

New Cities: Plantation

Industries: communications, dairy, entertainment, fishing, food crops, light and heavy industry, livestock, manual labor, rice

Along with South Carolina, Georgia weathered the Collapse in reasonable shape, especially as compared with the rest of the Dixie region. The governor of Georgia is King Gardener (not his real name), who makes his home in Plantation (see below).

Gardener is universally recognized as the senior member of the Dixie region. He was the ring leader who organized the Dixie dictators and kept the political machine running smoothly. Politically savvy and very charismatic, he keeps an impeccable public image and manages to keep his popularity high through a combination of powerful public speaking, media control, and plants and stooges in every audience.

Of the Cotton Republics, Georgia is the most respectable, as to be otherwise would interfere with Gardener's carefully cultivated image. Georgia troopers make no forays into other Dixie states, and no longer allow Alabama cruisers to cross their border. All public broadcasts are made in carefully designed media areas, where the well-kept buildings and well-screened crowds give the image that Georgia is a lot more up-scale than it really is.

NEW CITIES:

"Hitler was the world's first pop star. It certainly wasn't his politics."

- David Bowie

"We need to build me an image as a rocker."

- King Gardener,
Governor of Georgia

Plantation: The governmental seat of the Dixie region, Plantation is situated in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains at the north end of the state. It is, quite simply, a tinhorn dictator's pipe dream, built to portray a powerful media image of Dixie as a nice and influential region. The press largely falls for it, as the press is

largely controlled by Gardener's machine. Thanks to the efficiency of the press, the Plantation ploy is rather effective, at least within Georgia.

Beyond the view of the press cameras, Plantation is a paranoid's fortress. Minefields, electric barbed wire, and automatic machine guns secure every entrance. Guards and dogs patrol the perimeter. These precautions snare a few cyberpunks each month, desperate southerners seeking to throw down the charismatic spokesman for the oppressive Dixie regimes.

LOUISIANA (LA)

Capital: Baton Rouge

New Cities: New Orleans (sort of)

Industries: fishing, food crops, oil drilling and processing, tourism

Louisiana is second only to Florida in land lost to rising sea levels. Large portions of the Gulf Coast are now unrecoverable, smothered beneath several feet of salt water. New Orleans has also been inundated, and is now a city living on its own second floor.

Louisiana is perhaps the most rural of the states. During the Collapse the Cajuns, with their knowledge of the bayous and survival, kept themselves in good shape. Many other Louisiana natives followed their example, leaving the city-bred folk and the out-of-state migrants to fend for themselves. This had the unfortunate side effect of nearly obliterating the Louisiana ecosystem, as everything that moved (and most things that didn't) became fair game for the dinner plate.

Since then, Louisiana has rebuilt itself slowly. The state government nearly strangles the populace with intolerant and excessive taxing policies, keeping everyone too poor to fight back. With the exception of Interstate 10, the roadways have not been maintained for the last ten years. Fortunately, the people most hampered by this abysmal transportation policy are the police.

The police themselves are typical of the Louisiana lethargic attitude, but are notably intolerant of any 'deviants.' They make up for their mediocre road system by use of radios, deploying roadblocks to catch any fugitives they might be chasing.

NEW CITIES:

New Orleans: While not a new city in the dictionary definition, New Orleans has changed dramatically since the turn of the millennium. At that time, much of New Orleans was actually below sea level, with dikes and pumping stations keeping the ocean at bay. As global warming raised the sea levels, New Orleans was, for a time, able to keep up. Unfortunately, the Collapse stripped New Orleans of its financial support, and soon, despite the best (though inexperienced) attempts of the populace at large, the sea entered into the city. Once done, the salt water rapidly corroded the pumps that tried to keep it out, and the war against the sea was lost.

Nowadays, New Orleans has become a sort of half-hearted New World Venice, with gondolas plying the streets in the worst areas of the city. Everything has moved up a floor or two in the city, and catwalks stretch above the water-filled streets. Some of them on the tenth floor or higher in some parts of town. All of the new construction is durable, but of poor appearance. Generally speaking, the citizens are too poor to worry about anything but functionality.

HOT SPOTS:

Mardi Gras: Louisiana governor André Avoyelle (Grand Poo Bah is his official title of office) has chosen a different way to keep his populace in line: distraction. A firm advocate of the bread-and-circuses school of government, he has turned Mardi Gras into the party of the nation. Every year, the police are officially relieved of duty at the start of Mardi Gras. They remain as 'volunteers,' with their duties strictly bound to serving the public good. Arrests are not made at Mardi Gras except for assaults on public servants in the performance of their duties (firemen putting out a blaze, policemen making a rare arrest, or government officials at any time).

Thus, during Mardi Gras, the entire state population that can make it, along with any brave tourists, goes on an incredible no-holds-barred binge. Adventurous people copulate in the streets, narcotics can be bought on every street corner, and energetic kids brawl and drink until they pass out in the gutter. Violent crimes are difficult to pull off at this time, as the city is overflowing with people looking for a good scrap; any attempts at rough play usually lead to a full-scale brawl.

For locals, Mardi Gras is a massive catharsis of their hostility and depression. For visitors, it's a chance to really cut loose. After all is said and done, the exhausted partiers return to their dismal homes or their city of origin.

It should be noted that the police, despite the fact that they can't make arrests, take careful note of who's a troublemaker. If you're on the list, you'd better leave the state before Mardi Gras ends.



Mardi Gras is the ultimate contact point. It's nearly impossible to tell who everyone is, and it's far too noisy to bug any conversations. Almost anything can happen, and usually does.

MISSISSIPPI (MS)

Capital: Jackson

New Cities: Issaquena

Industries: fishing, food crops, industry, livestock, logging, manual labor, light & medium industry

Mississippi fared as well as any of the Dixie states during the Collapse, which is to say, poorly. Like the rest of Dixie, it is hot, humid, and impoverished, and ruled by a governor-for-life. Yet, while governor Carol Holmes may not have the intelligence and political acumen of her mentor, King Gardener of Georgia, she does have considerable foresight.

Mississippi is the only state in Dixie which has managed to coax some industry back in. Governor Holmes offered prison labor to Dai Lung Armories, the Chinese producer of polymer one-shots, if they would build a factory on Mississippi land just north of Vicksburg. With free land and cheap labor, Dai Lung readily agreed to her terms. After the plant was completed, of course, Holmes passed a new tax bill through her puppet state legislature, siphoning more money out of the Chinese company's profits. Her financial analysts had calculated shrewdly; the taxes were raised to the point where it was still barely profitable for the Chinese to continue plant operations. All products are, of course, shipped out-of-state.

Holmes used a similar ploy to get Arcadiex, one of the larger agricorps, to begin cotton farming again (cotton, as a natural fiber, commands a high price these days). The agricorp agreed to use a certain (state-owned) trucking firm to move their goods, then the Mississippi government raised transportation taxes (and therefore trucking fees). In return, the agricorp deducted the difference from their land taxes. When Holmes threatened to shut down the cotton operation, Arcadiex moved in a platoon of Corporate solos. This has led to a sort of stand-off, with state police keeping the Corporates from leaving the farm, while the corporation threatens to pay even fewer taxes. One time Arcadiex didn't pay their taxes for a quarter, and several truckloads of finished cotton cloth suddenly turned up "missing, presumed hijacked." To be sure, if Arcadiex exerted its full force, it would be able to bring Mississippi to its knees, but the legal precedents are there for one of Arcadiex's competitors to move in and take over the site for defaulting on taxes. With the threat of a U.S.-endorsed hostile takeover looming on the horizon, Arcadiex is having to fight Holmes with kid gloves.

With the increased revenue and decreased prison costs, Holmes and her cronies have been able to begin rebuilding the middle class. Through government jobs with carefully structured pay scales and an advancement system designed to repress those not considered 'politically reliable', the state has begun producing a Holmesian middle class, loyal

to the concept of keeping the governor in power. Mississippi is the only cotton republic to hold elections, but this new middle class ensures that she always wins.

At this time, Mississippi pulls more weight than any other Dixie state, save Georgia. Should Holmes be able to continue her drive to revitalize Mississippi, she might even be able to challenge the Georgian powerhouse.

HOT SPOTS:

Issaquena: This is a modern prison camp of the worst sort. It is located on the banks of The Big Muddy, about 25 miles north of Vicksburg. Run by Communist Chinese, it is the worst fate a Mississippi felon can expect. Political prisoners are also incarcerated here, including (occasionally) some influential people that others might want to have extracted.

SOUTH CAROLINA (SC)

Capital: Columbia

New Cities: Grenfeld

Industries: chemical production, fishing, medium industry, textiles

South Carolina has joined with Florida in the role of a disaffected member of the Dixie region. Ever independent, South Carolina has made sure that Dixie and the rest of the U.S. knows their stance on the cotton republics. Over the years, there have been some attempts by Georgia and Alabama to intimidate South Carolina into toeing the Dixie line, but they have been unsuccessful. Those Georgian and Alabaman patrol cars that saw fit to cross into South Carolina never returned. The cases are still open, but the South Carolina police doubt they will ever be solved. (Alabama recently protested that the task force on one such case consisted of a single officer that had died in a traffic accident six months earlier. South Carolina promises to review the personnel situation soon.)

In a curious twist, South Carolina is as much a police state as the cotton republics.

This does not mean the public is treated poorly—au contraire. The general populace approves, by and large, of the state government. It's just that South Carolina is under a state of martial law as security against possible terrorist activities or assassination attempts by Georgian or Alabaman extremists. For the time being, then, certain civil rights have been suspended in the state; like the right to a fair trial.

Generally, the police don't act like martial law is in effect, but should a situation arise where they feel there's a threat, they'll hammer the miscreants, and hard.

NEW CITIES:

Grenfeld: This is a Corporate town, run by the German Ackermacht agricornp. It finished construction in 2019, and the first crop of cotton is just being harvested. It was built on the heels of Arcadiex's Mississippi farming concern, both to share in the profits and to undercut Arcadiex's price and add heat to their struggle with the Mississippi government. In response to this, Arcadiex has bankrolled several felons whose job it is to infiltrate Grenfeld and cause trouble. Some do this by selling hard-core drugs, others by creative violence, and still others by causing social disruption through seduction, rumor, and the like. Arcadiex isn't particular. For such a new town, though, Grenfeld is a very interesting place to live.

■ FREE STATES ■

There are six states which fall under the broad classification of 'Free States'. These six have a quasi-independent status with respect to the United States government, a position they earned with their strong bargaining position.

Texas was the first free state, although at the time the term had not yet been invented. The Mideast Meltdown of 1997 and the Drought of '98 put Texans atop a pile of riches, what with their offshore oil wells and extensive food production. This caused a lot of the money in the U.S. to flow into Texas as prices for these commodities skyrocketed. This, in turn, caused most Texans' federal tax

burdens to jump by a similar amount, actually leaving Texans with less purchasing power than before. Late in 1998, Sally Ross (the senior Perotista senator), weary of U.S. tax structures, proposed the Ross Bill, which looked to overturn the normal legal precedence of national laws over state laws.

Although the bill was seriously considered by the state government, most thought it would not pass. In early 1999, however, the U.S. passed the Federal Weapons Statute. For the Texans, this was the final straw. The Ross Bill was immediately passed in a special session, and the Federal Weapons Statute was de facto declared invalid within the state's borders. This effectively placed national considerations secondary to local, thereby implying that membership in the Union was a matter of convenience for the state. Such a challenge to the Union had not been issued since 1861, and the government responded with immediate and surprising force.

Unfortunately, the national government ignored the fact that Texas held a lot of economic power. Threatening to secede from the Union, Texas cut off interstate shipments of oil, gas, food, and electronics, and stalled the American space program. Texas banks froze national assets and all electronic communications were subjected to severe scrutiny and censorship. Alaska, seeing a window of opportunity, joined the embargo, passing their own version of the Ross Bill in an emergency meeting of their legislature, and further tightening the national supply of food and fuel.

One state could be dealt with, but two powerful states proved to be too much. Strained by these actions, the government sought to avoid direct conflict. National negotiators quickly met with Texan and Alaskan representatives, and between them they managed to come to a compromise, which was the Free State system.

This compromise kept the U.S. from fighting another civil war, but other states saw this compromise as the capitulation of the national government to states' interests. In the years following,



California (backed by Texan and Alaskan representatives) declared itself a Free State, Nevada bought its free status outright (it is not publicly known how large the price tag was), and Utah was able to declare itself free, mostly because no one really cared whether it did or not.

ALASKA (AK)

Capital: Juneau

Status: Free State in 2000

New Cities: Philogaia, Verdant Forks, and other agribusiness communities

Industries: bioengineering tech, dairy, fishing, food crops, hydroelectrics, livestock, logging, mining, oil drilling and processing,

precious metals, shipyards, software, water.

With the warming of the global climate, Alaska has joined the breadbasket states, providing incredible quantities of grain bioengineered to thrive in their climate. This, along with their continued contribution to the dwindling petroleum supply, has caused their wealth to increase and their population to increase even more. In fact, it is only Alaska's mountainous terrain which has kept it from being overrun by Corporate farm cities.

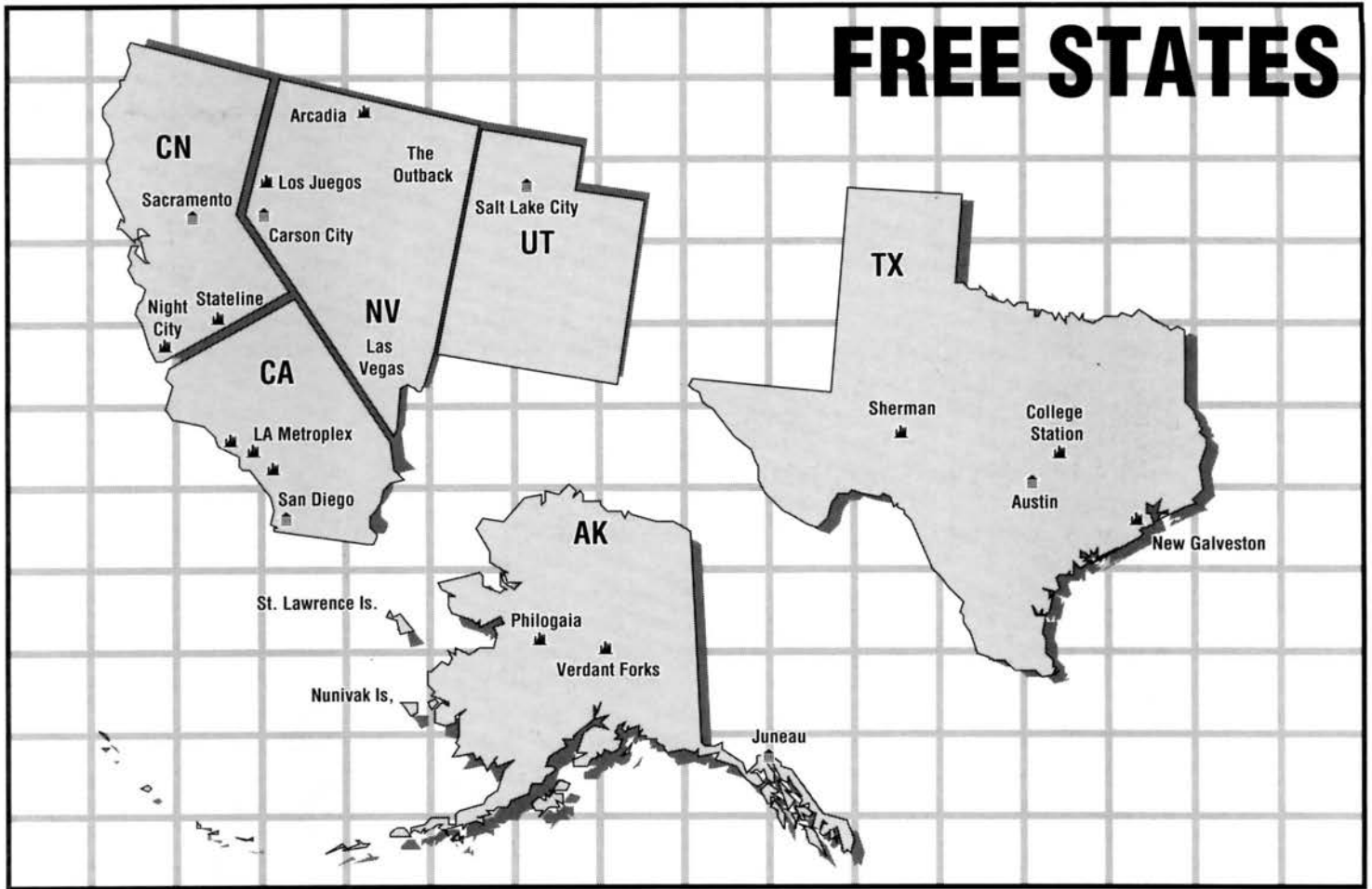
Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka have become new stars in the software industry firmament, as Alaska's lenient corporate taxation policies enticed disaffected Washington software companies to move north. The relatively cheap land and rugged natural beauty of the Alaskan panhandle were added incentives... while they lasted. Now, between rapid population growth, excessive boat traffic, and the fall-

out of economic disasters brought north by the ocean currents, most of the Alaskan panhandle has been ecologically ruined.

Meanwhile, in central Alaska, large farming tracts have sprouted everywhere in the Yukon river valley. Petrochem/Freightrunners even set up a huge agribusiness city, Philogaia, smack in the middle of the Yukon Flats National Monument. This caused a major public outcry, but division of opinion in the Alaskan legislature has prevented any disciplinary actions. This in turn has caused many people to accuse certain representatives of toadyism or taking bribes, but now, even if the Alaskan government does organize countermeasures, it is too late. Life isn't always easy as a Free State.

Being a Free State isn't all bad, though, by any stretch. Many political analysts thought Alaska's government would be hamstrung by the Eskimo lobby, following the example of Canada's Inuit movement, but that has not proved to be the case. The Eskimos by and large feel that they have

FREE STATES



much more say in the Free State government than they did as part of the Union, and racial relations have been congenial. The fact that Eskimos are making a lot of money from the arrival of the Corps may also have had some effect on their attitudes.

Alaska's laws are lenient. They do exercise rigid gun control, though. Handguns smaller (and therefore more concealable) than a Colt .45 auto are not allowed. Large pistols, shotguns, and non-automatic rifles are unrestricted, however, as large parts of the state are still untamed wilderness (including some of the inner cities).

Economically speaking, Alaska has always been rather expensive in comparison with the rest of the states, and that situation has not diminished in the slightest. Most cyberpunks will find their savings evaporating quickly if they try to move up here and find some work. Count on everything costing 25% more in Alaska than elsewhere. Of course, if you

do land a job, the pay is also 25% higher, so it'll all wash.

There used to be some shipping trade across the Bering Strait to the Russians. Alaska even considered using a large floating causeway running across the narrowest point to convey Australian-style road trains, but the concept was later abandoned. The trade has been officially stopped following the seizure by the Russians of two Alaskan islands, but bootlegger cargo ships still make the run.

Alaska has a small state military, but it is very powerful. The military command 'inherited' all the SAC/ADC bases and DEW line equipment, and has scavenged it for their own purposes.

HOT SPOTS

Yukon Valley: The Philogaia plantations are a site for active eco-terrorism. The Alaskan Naturalist Terrorism Enclave (ANTE), the leading eco-terrorist group,

has declared war on Petrochem for the desecration of the Yukon Flats National Monument, and for their leading role in the destruction of the Alaskan ecosystem. ANTE employs widely varying tactics: sowing weeds through the bioengineered grain fields, starting brush fires, dumping thousands of Alaskan mosquitoes into a Petrochem office's ventilation system. Their most notable act has been to somehow smuggle a polar bear into the office of a junior executive named Barker. When the exec entered his office in the morning, he startled the bear, which proved to be his last mistake. Two other workers were also killed. This incident has caused problems for both sides of the ANTE-Petrochem war. Petrochem is in trouble for ruthlessly butchering the bear instead of stunning it per the endangered species regulations, and ANTE for getting the bear in there in the first place. ANTE claims the bear was a domestic pet. Mean-

while, in the streets of Fairbanks, "Eat Petrochem Foods" T-shirts are still a hot item, and one fast food chain continues to sell Barker Burgers (also known as a 'hand on rye') despite pressure from the agricorp.

Bering Sea: The Alaskan islands are another active area. Immediately after Alaska passed its version of the Ross Bill and joined Texas in the economic embargo of the remaining forty-eight states, Russian troops quietly occupied Saint Lawrence Island and Nunivak Island, strengthening the Russian strategic position in the Bering Sea. This makes the Alaska government very nervous, as most of the grain grown in the Yukon valley is shipped down the Yukon to be loaded in super-transporters which pass near these islands en route to Seattle and the consumer markets. As a Free State, Alaska can count on getting no help from the U.S. government in extricating the Russians. With a limited population to draw on (most residents are corporate wage slaves), Alaska has been forced to hire free-lance solos to help get the Russians back on their side of the International Date Line. Lazarus and other, smaller security corporations are vying for the exclusive contract, hoping to be able to build their reputation in a field dominated by Arasaka.



Looks like there's bad blood brewing between Petrochem and SovOil again. Both sides have been sabotaged in recent months, on both sides of

the strait. Each, of course, blames the other. It's possible that neither side is responsible, and that the two Corps are being played off against each other. But who would do that?

NEVADA (NV)

Capital: Carson City

Status: Free State in 2003

New Cities: Arcadia, Los Juegos

Industries: biosculpting, drugs, entertainment, financial markets, gambling, pre-

vious metals, prostitution, anything that's illegal anywhere else

Nevada was hard hit by the Collapse, as suddenly most people in the United States had no money to blow on gambling. Nevada managed to weather the storm by offering incredibly cheap discount vacation packages to European and Asian corporations. Once the business robots were lured in by 10eb-a-night hotel rates and 1eb call drinks, they were easily convinced to part with their money at the gambling tables, as tips for the attentive service folks, or for the comfort of a sexual stranger.

Soon, with the trickle-down effect, the rest of Nevada coattailed on the successes of the gambling casinos, and the state began to turn around. They mounted border patrols to keep Nomads from crossing the state border looking to share the wealth with the residents. Desperate people took demeaning jobs at low wages, just to earn a buck. This in turn, further bolstered the Nevada economy, and, because these workers feared for their new jobs they performed their work above and beyond the call of duty, garnering the casinos quite a reputation overseas.

Soon Nevada became a one-industry state: the service industry. At a time when the U.S. government was struggling with the independence-minded states of Texas, California, and Alaska, they purchased their own Free State status and gave the U.S. financial reserve a much-needed shot in the arm. And, of course, once Nevada (and the rest of the U.S.) was back on its feet, the casinos gradually raised their prices once more. Those with only a little to gamble must stop at one of the plentiful gambling dives built within inches of the Nevada borders.

Since the recovery, Nevada has made every effort to make itself the recreation spot of the world. Extensive developments on Lake Tahoe and elsewhere have attracted a lot of customers, and Nevada's new minimalist constitution (which legalizes just about everything) has attracted all those with jaded tastes and the money to indulge themselves.

At the same time, there is no action at the eastern edge of the state. Few if any of Nevada's customers come from Utah, so Nevada has by and large ignored the area, leaving it to its own devices. Eastern Nevada is one of the few places where small-town America still exists. If ever there was a place to disappear, eastern Nevada is it.

The worst part of the Nevada out-back is the climate. With the global warming of recent years, it has become a rugged area indeed, and most city-bred Cyberpunks will not be able to last without local assistance.

THE LAW

There is effectively no law in Nevada, although murder and assault are still definitely frowned upon, as they upset the clientele. Disputes may be settled in a martial fashion at one of the ubiquitous arenas, where people (yourself included) can bet on the outcome.

The Border Patrol is a different matter. While there are no specific guidelines for who can be where and when, the Border Patrol is empowered to take anyone, at any time, for any reason, and dump him outside state territory.

As there are absolutely no weapons control laws in Nevada, the police and border patrol are exceptionally well-armed.

Direct international flights combine with the lax laws to make smuggling very easy. Anyone can bring anything into the states, as long as it goes through Nevada first. This has caused quite a bit of friction between Nevada and the neighboring states, as these states have been forced to mount aggressive border and customs patrols to stop the influx of drugs, slaves, military weapons, and other contraband. The Californias have taken to forcing down Nevada-bound cargo planes and confiscating any illegal goods, and it seems that this might be turning the tide, at least for large-scale smuggling.

NEW CITIES

Arcadia and Los Juegos: Both were designed expressly by the Nevada government for pure pleasure and nothing else. Arcadia sits very near the Oregon-

Idaho border, just east of U.S. 95 in the Humboldt National Forest. Los Juegos sits on the east shore of Lake Tahoe, spanning the area between the ghost towns of Zephyr Cove and Glenbrook (making it conveniently close to the capital). While Reno and Las Vegas are still the popular regents of gambling, the rich and the pleasure-purists go to Arcadia and Los Juegos. They are very expensive places to visit, but they provide every sort of entertainment imaginable in an entirely pedestrian-only environment. Gambling, designer drugs, expert prostitution, wilderness activities, sensory deprivation, racing and combat sports are available. You name it; they've got it. No waiting, no fuss, and no complaints have ever been registered for poor service.



It seems that a certain number of young ladies have been taking a powder from their companions in the Arcadia area. The thing is they

are never seen again. There are rumors that a new brothel offers the best in biosculpted Joy Girls, and that they are very pliant, almost devoid of free will. But it's still a nice place to visit.

HOT SPOTS

Carson Mint: Carson Mint is a small chain of expert biosculpting parlors that has, thanks to a generous endowment from the Nevada government, been able to eclipse the Californian clinics in skill and service. Count on biosculpt prices being up to ten times as high as normal, but remember that these guys get a discount on their malpractice insurance. Carson Mint clinics can be found in Reno, Arcadia, Las Vegas, and Los Juegos. Some say they do a landslide business in illegal bio-sculpts, no questions asked.

The Outback: With the decline of small-town life and the migration of most Nevadans to the gambling cities in the south and west, northeastern Nevada has become somewhat of a Mecca for the last of the mountain men. Comprised primarily of American Indians, but with a strong contingent of disaffected people

seeking to escape the post-industrial urban decay, these people have formed their own loose social structure.

They do not take kindly to outsiders, and their penchant for ambushing caravans has all but closed Interstate 80 and Highway 50. Some Nomads speculate that the Nevada Border Patrol provides the people of the outback with heavy weapons to make them more of a deterrent. After all, who needs border guards when you have thousands of indigenous people ready and willing to kill trespassers for free?

It should also be noted that due to the spreading influence of the Outbackers, Nevada truckers moving along U.S. 95 (between Las Vegas and Reno) travel in large, heavily-armed convoys. There's always room for another down-on-his-luck solo.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (CN)

Capital: Sacramento

Status: Separated from Southern California in 2012, recognized 2016.

New Cities: Night City, Stateline

Industries: bioengineering tech, cybertech, electronics, entertainment, financial markets, food crops, light industry, logging, software, water, wine.

Northern California is the newest state of the union, and was only officially recognized by the United States government in 2016. The northern counties voted to secede from the state when they grew tired of the increasing control exercised by the Los Angeles Metroplex, and the reoccurring number of pro-urban and anti-rural laws and regulations.

Northern California is comprised of Monterey, Fresno, and Mono counties and points north. San Luis Obispo, Kings, Tulare, and Inyo counties and those further south remained in Southern California.

Most of Northern California has retained its pleasant climate, and it is thanks to the state government that agribusiness has failed to monopolize food production in the state. Granted, the family farm has all but vanished, but smaller, private cooperatives still exist, and many Californians are willing to pay a higher price for 'home-grown' food just to keep the mega-corporations from getting more money.

Tourism is a major industry for Northern California, as Yosemite and Shasta are both located within its borders. Millions of tourists visit these locations every year. Millions more visit the Redwood National Park to see the majestic trees before they get strangled by the incredible amounts of pollution generated by the tourists' cars.

With the split of the Californias, Northern California has become by and large an affluent state. Everyone who could afford to escape the Metroplex lifestyle of Southern California moved north, bringing their cars, espresso bars and tanning salons, and raising prices wherever they went. The cost-of-living increase brought about by these affluent people in turn drove thousands of Northern Californians out of their homes, and they were forced to live on the streets or move to the worse sections of L.A. Few wanted to go south, which is why the Northern California homeless problem is one of the worst in the country.

The Bay Area has become a very busy port for Northern California, as it is more economical for them to do their own international trade than to work through the middleman of the U.S. government. NorthCal had also hoped to be able to act as intermediary for the US's Pacific shipping, but the Port of Seattle was able to shoulder that burden quite effectively, much to the relief of the greater United States.

HOT SPOTS

Stateline: The town of Stateline was built on the border between the Californias on Interstate 5 by Freightrunners, a major trucking company. The town has little to endear it to any but the most business-minded of people, for most of the town is dominated by weigh stations, customs

Q&A

Net 54 has its finger on the pulse of America. We know what you want—because we ask! Every year in the month of July, Net 54 employees hit the streets of every major city and Arcology, with a list of thousands of questions, to try to discover the “Average American” of the post-collapse period. These questions range from income, to marriage, to the firearm of preference. Following are some random questions and answers from the 2020 survey.

Who is your favorite media personality?

Lynea Carlson, SouCal free state, Los Angeles Metroplex

“Well, there was this really cool guy who did a show on DMS called *You are there!* The whole idea was that you get to see firefights as they happened. I think his name was Chuck something or other. One time his camera van got caught in a gang fight in Night City. He blew away four gangers on live TV! Boy he sure is cool. Another time, he took a .45 shot to his jaw, shattered one whole side. But he kept filming. After a year they took him off the air, something about snuff films and too many cybergizmo’s. Too bad, he was really cool!”

What are you having for dinner tonight?

Lyle, New Jersey Arcology

“The last guy who asked me stupid questions like this. Get the hell out of my face!”

Do you have any children?

Patty Somerset, Dayton, Ohio.

“Well, there was this one doctor in the hospital I was in. I was badly burnt in a fire, and well, I can’t prove anything, but I was in there really drugged up for over a year. And this doctor, he *liked* me, if you know what I mean. The hospital and the doctor say I must have dreamed it, but it really hurt at the end, and I’ve got these marks on my belly. I don’t know why they lie to me about it, the doctor was cute and everything. I think his wife might have gotten mad about it, though. It’s not like I was a kid or anything, I was thirteen by the time they released me.”

Have you ever been shot?

Morgan Blackhand, New York, New York

inspections, etc., and Freightrunners’ extensive operation to facilitate rapid deliveries of interstate shipments. However, as it straddles the state line, visitors can meander back and forth between jurisdictions, performing a little small-scale smuggling of their own, provided they are professional enough to avoid the attention of the numerous police from both states.



Stateline is the center for all of the smuggling between the states, and a center for most illegal activity up and down the California coast. If anything is happening, the truckers at Stateline are most likely moving it. **Night City:** Need we say more?

THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS (TX)

Capital: Austin

Status: Free State in 1999, officially recognized in 2000

New Cities: Sherman, New Galveston

Industries: bioengineering tech, chemical production, communications, cybertech, electronics, financial markets, fishing, food crops, light to heavy industry, live-stock, military hardware, mining, oil drilling and processing, rice, sugar, windpower

Always independent-minded, Texas led the Free States to their separation from the national government, and officially changed its name back to the Republic of Texas just to grind some salt in the wound. Since then, the Texas Rangers (highway patrol) and the Texas National Guard have been unified into one peacekeeping command headquartered out of College Station, which is where Texas A&M is located (see Hot Spots, below).

The Texas Rangers are now a paramilitary police organization, and they have a well-deserved reputation as one of the harshest law enforcement agencies in the country. Texas law now differentiates between those with Texas Republic Identification Numbers and those without. Those without have far fewer rights, which is a bad thing when you’re pulled over eighty miles outside of Lubbock and the trooper doesn’t want to have to haul you all the way back to town. But, thanks to Texas’ Free State status, as long as the paperwork’s in order, there’s nothing that you can do about it.

Aside from the typical assortment of cybersoldiers and cops, the Texas National Armed Forces boasts over one hundred state-of-the-art hovercraft which patrol the Rio Grande looking to stop smugglers and illegal aliens. Larger hovercraft and hydrofoils patrol the Gulf Coast, doubling as counter-smuggling patrols and oil rig security. These often operate from large motherships, as their patrol ranges take them far from the Texas coast. The Texas air force is also a group to be reckoned with, as Texas nationalized most of the planes based at Texas airfields during the Ross Bill embargo.

Texas’ climate, never forgiving, has gotten significantly worse as the average temperature rose. Fortunately, most Texan flora and fauna are tough, and they have weathered the change pretty well, especially since Texas is not plagued with acid rain as are many other states.

Several of the large agribusiness corporations bought large tracts of Texas wasteland at inexpensive prices and have, at great expense, developed and installed underground irrigation systems. These systems provide ample water for the plants’ roots without loss by evaporation or sunburn from water droplets on the crops. It has turned out to be a profitable system, and has kept Texas in the pack of food-producing states.

Along the Gulf coast, Texas has turned to windpower, installing huge wind harvesting fields along most of the coast. The only drawback to this system is that it must be shut down every time a hurricane blows through.

Alone among the states, Texas has no social security, no food stamps, no welfare, and no dole of any sort. The official government stance is, "If you can't stand the heat, move back to New York."

NEW CITIES:

Sherman (see SDC's under Hot Spots, below)

New Galveston: Between the rising sea levels and the subtle ministrations of Hurricane David, Galveston ceased to exist for a while. The reconstruction was overseen by Merrill, Asukaga & Finch, who provided financial support in exchange for some choice land (whose owners were listed as missing after the hurricane) and development rights. Since then, although New Galveston is hardly one of MA&F's most profitable investments, it has consistently been in the black.

Merrill, Asukaga & Finch built a large structure a mile and a half out from shore, reached by a causeway from Galveston. At the continental end of the causeway are more MA&F developments. The on-shore facilities include travel agencies, recreational centers of all sorts, charter clubs, and other water-related services. At the far end of the causeway, New Galveston is an attempt to create a resort to rival those in Nevada.

The concept might have succeeded, except that New Galveston does not have the aesthetic appeal of Nevada. There are no fragile electro-gossamer neon displays nor wide and curving hotels with holosigns to gawk at, for the simple reason that occasionally hurricanes plow through the gulf, and MA&F didn't want to have to rebuild the site every few years. Instead, New Galveston is a huge, squat dome resting solidly on top of a thick cement understructure. While the elite and rich don't often come here, the place is nevertheless booked through the summer months, and riding out a hurricane at New Galveston has become a new fad. There are a few dozen deaths every year, as some guests can never accept the fact that the storms are better weathered from inside the shelter of the dome.

New Galveston, located more than a mile from Texas soil, is not subject to Texas law, and is considered United States national territory (yes, the laws and jurisdictions are ugly and draconian, and no one really understands how they work). Gambling is legal here, as are many other vices. New Galveston's location in the gulf also attracts a number of smugglers and other shady operatives, and victimless crime in New Galveston is endemic.

In other words, it's just the place for most cyberpunks.

HOT SPOTS:

Texas A&M University: With the state's newly-regained 'independence,' Texas A&M has been thoroughly revitalized as the 'Texas national military academy'. Boasting a strong tradition of courage and command excellence since the First World War, Texas A&M has become a prestigious institute for solos nationwide. The state expanded the ROTC program to develop and support the Texas National Guard when it was separated from the U.S. National Guard system. Although civilian students are still allowed at the university, Texas A&M has returned to what it once was: a military institution.

The SDC's: The Sherman Disposal Centers are a less-known aspect of the Texas economy. Named for General Sherman (who once said, "If I owned Hell and Texas, I'd rent Texas and live in Hell."), these are high security prisons in the barren West Texas plains. They are simple concrete containers, a mile wide, with walls ten meters high. The concrete of the walls and floor is two meters thick. This is where Texas sends incorrigible felons for incarceration. Texas even imports prisoners from out-of-state, charging the U.S. government for 'disposal of hazardous wastes'. Few know what the SDC's actually are, and those who know don't care.

There is no shelter. The only food or water is dropped once a day by patrolling guards, and there's nowhere near enough to go around. The only sanitary facilities are two-inch wide drain holes scattered

"Bwahahaa! Is this some kinda joke!? Where's that little creep with the hidden camera?"

Have you ever killed anyone, and if so, how many?

Traci Frost, Miami, Florida

"Well, one time the leader of the *Anime* posers in Miami took a liking to my sister Karen. They grabbed her right off the streets and shuttled her off to a ripperdoc they use. They gave her body the works: huge eyes, tiny mouth and really weird hair color. They even put these little weird horns on her head, and made her wear this tiger-skin bikini. It had something to do with some old Pacific Rim export cartoon. She managed to make a break for it, and got over to my apartment one afternoon. Hot on her trail were two enforcers. Huge guys with tiny heads and weird scars on their chests. They smashed open the door yelling something about the 'hundred-fist attack.' Sis and I opened up with two shotguns my boyfriend had given me for Christmas. The guys went down like a sack of bricks. I swear to this day that one said 'I'm already dead.' I wonder what that means? In the end, my sis kept the bio-sculpt and moved to Vegas to be an exotic dancer. Go figure"

Do you run the Net regularly?

Kimi Tara, Albuquerque, New Mexico

"No, but I dated Rache Bartmoss once, does that count?"

Do you own a personal computer?

Richard Franklin, Virginia.

"Yeah! I got this real great deal on this big system when they sold off all the Ft. Meade equipment. The only problem was that there was this file called NORAD 1 on the drive, and I couldn't erase it. I called and called, but no one at Langley could help me. I finally got into it, and found that all it contained was a huge list of 10 string digits. I've still got the list printed out over my desk at work."

Who do you work for?

Kirsten Decker, Night City, NorCal

"None of your damn business."

Who is your favorite musician/Band?

Lisa Hanson, Fargo, North Dakota.

"Well, I kinda still like the Beatles. But don't tell any of my friends."

Continued on page 112

Are you married?

Jason Stalkon, Salt Lake City, Utah

"Hell yes, there isn't a god-fearing man within miles that doesn't have at least two or three good child-bearing women he takes care of. After all, a home without five or six little ladies is no place to live. By the way, what's a nice little thing like you still doing single? My son lives right over the... Owch, what did you hit me for!? If you're going to wear a skirt like that, I think you'd expect a quick feel or two. A girl with spunk, my son would like that!"

What Cyberware do you own?

Jim Hammond, Dallas, Texas

"Well, in addition to this old arm, replacing the one I lost in the SouthAm, I got me a Mr. Studd, at the wife's request. And I stand here now and tell you, never, ever get one. The damn thing never works when you want it to, and it sometimes goes off at the damndest times. Once I was giving a speech to the graduating class of my Alma Mater—there was this cute little thing in the front row with a tiny skirt, and well, the thing just came bursting out of my trousers. Blew the zipper wide open! Damn embarrassing."

Would you ever consider a Cyberooption?

Ken Harker, San Francisco, NorCal

"Sure, if I got something blown off. But you gotta be crazy to go into a docshop and say 'I don't really like my right arm, so why don't we just cut it off and replace it with a mixmaster.' That's just crazy!"

Do you vote?

Karina, Las Vegas, Nevada

"Well, we girls a few years back tried to unionize. I think I voted for that. And once, this guy running for mayor said what I did for him was better than voting. So I guess I don't really have to vote if I keep doing what I do!"

How old are you?

Jeff Barr, Phoenix, Arizona

"Well, about 3000 years actually. I have been Cleopatra, and the Marqis de Sade, and Richard III, and Abraham Lincoln. Most recently, I've been JFK and Whitney Houston..."

Have you ever used Braindance?

Jacob Karls, New Orleans, Louisiana

"Well, once my girl friend got one of the gizmo's

about the floor of the SDC, although occasionally prisoners will be transferred to a holding tank while their SDC is burned clean with old napalm. Needless to say, cannibalism is constant, and rat hunts and gladiatorial events (using femurs as clubs) are the chief amusement. Escapes are rare, because a prisoner must get enough cooperation or stack enough dead bodies to climb over the top of the wall. Those who do escape usually die in the harsh desert countryside before long, but in so doing, they keep the coyotes from extinction.

The only guards are based in the center of the SDC field in the small Corporate fortress-town of Sherman. The town is built and run by Arasaka, and the guards patrol among and around the outside of the SDC's to check for signs of escape. They also have a database on everyone who's been incarcerated. If anyone survives a year in captivity, he or she is pulled out of prison, given a suspended sentence, and provided with intensive therapy. All the prisoner has to do in return is work on Arasaka's black ops team. Think about it.

The only threat to security for the SDC's is by air. Shortly after they were opened, there were a few extractions by chopper. The Arasaka guards had no idea this was going on until during one escape, a group of felons managed to scramble up the chopper's ladder and try to take control. The chopper crashed into the SDC, causing a lot of fatalities. After this incident, Arasaka installed high-tech anti-air missile systems. Minefields were also sown around the periphery of the SDC area to guard against foreseen ground-based extractions. Rumor has it that, thanks to the extraction oversight, the architect of the SDC and his staff are also now residents. Saburo Arasaka hates to lose face.



The job: get a high ranking criminal out of the SDC for trial in the Federal government. The pay: 30,000eb. The government will disavow any knowledge of your existence if caught.

The Mexican Border: Smuggling is a major problem facing the Texas Border Patrol, as they have inadequate manpower to effectively cover their long border. Granted, they have hovercraft and AV's cruising constantly, but drugs, people, and other contraband still get through. Similarly, there are a lot of Texans organizing on their side of the border to run goods across the line to the Corporate-dominated Mexican cities. Whichever side of the border you're on, there's sure to be high-paying employment and a hot time to be had.

CALIFORNIA, A.K.A. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (CA)

- Capital:** San Diego
- Status:** Free State in 2002.
- New Cities:** Stateline
- Industries:** chemical production, entertainment, food crops, military hardware, moderate to heavy industry, oil drilling and processing.

Southern California is comprised of San Luis Obispo, Kings, Tulare, and Inyo counties and those further south. Monterey, Fresno, and Mono counties and points north seceded to become Northern California, an action for which they will forever be reviled by those in the south.

While Southern California is not completely covered by paved roads and skyscrapers, you could never tell otherwise by the state's actions. The Los Angeles Metroplex covers the entire coast from Santa Barbara to San Diego, and stretches as far east as San Bernardino. With the rise in temperatures, the eastern part of the state is all but uninhabitable, and everyone has migrated into the cities, leaving Death Valley, the Devil's Playground, and other such areas as empty wasteland, patrolled only by the occasional Nomad group.

The weather is by far the worst of the hazards in the metroplex. To quote Gary Stafford, L.A. residents must cope with

"dense groundfogs mixing with smog to create an acidic, poisonous soup." Gas masks and air vendors are everywhere, and the Superfan chain of telephone-style air booths can be seen in every mall. Everyone in L.A. owns thin, hooded dusters and knee-high boots, each made of special acid-resistant fabrics. There is, in fact, nothing more dismal than downtown L.A. during an acid drizzle.

Needless to say, policing this mess is more than any cop would want to do. Through a series of threatened strikes, the Southern California Highway Patrol and the urban police departments have garnered some real power from the state government. The Highway Patrol has near-total power in the state. They are tough, mean, and aggressive. They have a covert operations section which amounts to a secret police force rivaling the Gestapo in reputation, though in reality they are not nearly so cruel. Outside of city limits, the CHiPs are effectively lord of all they survey. This power, combined with the lenient urban police regulations, keeps the SoCal government on top of the heap in a state dominated by disgruntled urbanites.

In short, Southern California is not a pleasant place. It is an urban hell, rotten with pollution and acid rain. What the population lacks in education they more than make up for in guns and attitude. In fact, the only thing that keeps the Los Angeles Metroplex from being more violent than it is, is the fact that everyone knows that everyone else carries heavy weaponry and will use it at the drop of a hat.

UTAH (UT)

Capital: Salt Lake City

Status: Free State in 2014

New Cities: none (!)

Industries: little if anything is exported, but the state is self-sufficient

Among the Free States, only Utah has failed to benefit from its status.

While Texas, Alaska, Nevada, and the Californias have become richer and more powerful, Utah has become more isolated and a bit of a backwater. Never an economic powerhouse, Utah has instead become pretty much self-sufficient.

During the years of the Wasting Plague, the AIDS-2 crisis and the famine, the Mormon Church worked overtime. Concerned that the Rapture might be at hand, believers did everything in their power to help others. Thus, during a time when the social fabric of the United States was unraveling, the Mormon Church provided a much-needed centerpiece to Utah life. The Church selflessly provided food and shelter for those who needed it, and found work (often non-paying, but nevertheless of social benefit) for those who wished.

The persistence and compassion of the Mormon Church during these hard times coaxed a lot of dispossessed people out of their cynicism, and the church's ample preparations for just such a nationwide catastrophe caused many more to reconsider their opinion of religion. During the worst of the collapse, Utah was faring pretty well, and the Mormon faith was undergoing a growth spurt unprecedented in modern times. Furthermore, although the Church has not taken over the state, prominent Church leaders gained the public recognition necessary to get voted into office, replacing the professional politicians who had not produced results during their terms in office.

Of course, not everyone in office was a Mormon, but everyone was of like mind, more concerned with rapid results than looking good for the cameras. And what do you know: It worked. Seminal and secular worked side by side to pull Utah through the Collapse. The unreliability of interstate shipping led Utah towards greater self-sufficiency, a goal they reached in amazingly short order.

Finally, after the storm was over, Utah declared itself a Free State in 2014, and stopped supporting the federal load. No one had been paying attention to events in Utah, otherwise there might have been more of a reaction to this declaration. As it was, the standing joke about Utah was 'yeah, so?'

and a slew of black market programs. We were getting pretty high on some Blue Grass, and she had me plug into it. It seemed like a good idea at the time. My girl was a little kinky, and it was a porn vid. However, it was a porn vid from the girl's point of view. I was stuck in this loop for 6 hours until she got straight and unplugged me. Man, I was really screwed up for weeks after that! I haven't touched one since then."

What is your favorite hobby?

Edward Cardal, Houston, Texas

"There's this obnoxious chromer gang called the Silver Ducks that hang out by my conapt. So, I guess you could say I like Duck Hunting! Like to see my trophies?"

Who do you respect?

Maria Falste, Denver, Colorado

"I just think that Jack Entopy is the greatest! He knows what evil the corps are doing in our world, and he fights them. He's just like Superman, always fighting for truth, justice and the American way. Once, I went to a concert, and he even signed one of my breasts! I had it tattooed on so it would never fade away... Wanna see?"

Have you ever been arrested?

William Jones, Stateline, NorCal

"And you haven't!?"

Do you drive?

Karen Wilkes, Portland, Oregon

"Well, I used to, until I parked in a Free Fire zone. When I came back, all that was left of my car was a few scraps of charred steel. I couldn't afford a new one, so I took up an affair with my boss. He lets me sleep in the exec lounge now. Heck, it's roomier than my conapt was! Now his chauffeur takes me anywhere I want to go; what a deal, huh?"



Having isolated itself from the rest of the country, Utah is poorer now than during the Collapse. The state has also fallen behind in technical development over the last six years, but that does not seem to concern the people. They're happy the way they are, thank you very much. They've got their life, most of them have God, and they don't need anything from anyone else. In fact, the overall attitude in Utah is similar to being in the world's largest exclusive community.

HOT SPOTS

Well, the skiing is still good, but to the jaded tastes of the modern American city cyberpunk, there's very little of interest in Utah, at least not on the surface. There are persistent rumors, though, of an anti-Mormon resistance group which considers the rise of the Mormon church to be the first step to a new American Inquisition. Surely your players would not be foolish enough to involve themselves in such a hate group, right?

■ THE GREAT PLAINS STATES ■

The Great Plains States were, by and large, spared from the worst ravages of the past couple of decades. Of course, they didn't come through those dark years smelling like a rose—no one did. But the Great Plains states didn't have the volume of problems that others bore.

In the mid- to late-1990's the Great Plains region was hit with several years of drought, which made life very hard for everyone in the area. Water was strictly rationed and food was scarce, yet most of the residents continued to be able to scrape out a living.

When the Collapse hit, the region was still parched. For that reason, most of the nomads and aimless wanderers avoided the area. No one particularly wanted to cross endless miles of dry, flat plains with no hope of water or a city where jobs might be found. They headed instead to the metropoli, and to places with better

weather. This couldn't have pleased the residents more. They were happy to struggle on their own and let the rest of the nation deal with its problems elsewhere.

There were a few migrants passing through, of course; generally the residents turned a cold shoulder to them, knowing that with towns so few and so small, the migrants would be unlikely to find help elsewhere, either. It is said that even today, abandoned cars can be found on back roads, some with the remains of Nomads still nearby.

During this time, agribusiness corporations began buying up the land of these states, which was being sold at pennies to the dollar. While it was not yet feasible or economic to farm the area on the scale they were envisioning, the agricorps were strengthening their position for the future. Some new agribusiness communities began construction around this time, scheduled to begin full-scale farming around the turn of the millennium. By that time it was pro-

jected that the lingering effects of the drought of '98 would be gone and there would be enough water to go around.

THE BRUSHFIRE

"Sure made for some pretty sunsets, though."

- anonymous
Montana resident

Unfortunately for all, in the early summer of the year 2000, a major catastrophe occurred: The Brushfire. The simplicity of the name cannot convey the raw power it had and the terror it inspired. The Brushfire was a conflagration the like of which has never been seen. It burned huge portions of Montana and North Dakota, and visited other states as well.

Most people believe that The Brushfire was started by a careless Nomad pack somewhere on I-94 in eastern Montana. It is the most likely explanation, and if the Nomads weren't killed in the fire, they certainly aren't going to talk about it.

I-94 is a 250-mile stretch of road leading from Billings to North Dakota. According to the best estimates, the fire started here and fed itself rapidly on the dry brush in the area. Eventually, the smoke plume was spotted in Billings, and Leslie Sanstone, a low-ranking agribusiness corporate, drove out to investigate. She found the fire before she'd gone ninety miles, and it had already leapt across the interstate.

Sanstone's secretary had brought his camcorder and shot some of the most famous footage of the fire. By that time, it had become a firestorm, with thermal convection pulling in oxygen from around the flames and fueling them to blast furnace temperatures. For those with access to the film, note the steady breeze whipping Sanstone's dress as she narrates the video.

The breeze from the thermal convection kept the fire from spreading as fast as it perhaps could have. Since the fire was pulling in air from around itself, it was having to spread upwind in all directions. However, the fire had also burned away all the fuel in the center, taking on a ring shape, and was large enough that it was beginning to affect the weather conditions

in the immediate vicinity. Eventually the fire calved, and, aided by a high-pressure zone which had moved in from the west end of the state, became several fire curtains which swept across the land.

A fire curtain is a terrifying thing. It's a long line of burning fuel, pushed in one direction by prevailing winds. The winds provide plenty of oxygen for the fire to consume, and then carry the heat downwind, where it preheats the brush for the fire to ignite next. The concept had been known for some time, and was even used in the firebombing of Japanese coastal cities, but a fire curtain the size of The Brushfire had never been seen.

The Brushfire found some of the agricorp land—gargantuan fields, untended and dry—awaiting next year's planting. Coaxed by the winds, it consumed countless thousands of acres. Normal fire-fighting tactics were useless before the fire, as its size outweighed anything the enfeebled states could pit against it, especially as they were hamstrung by water shortages.

The U.S. Army was finally called in to cut a dead area in North Dakota, where The Brushfire had finally spread. The Army efficiently destroyed an incredible amount of area, burning wood and grass in controlled fires, digging fire-breaks, and sowing chemicals to further retard the fire.

Finally, the fire found itself trapped between this dead zone and the Missouri river in North Dakota, and, after a long, hard fight, burned itself out. Although the fire jumped the river in a few places, Army troops and Corporate workers managed to keep it in check.

There were also many other fires started by ashes (and entire bushes) carried aloft by The Brushfire, some as far away as Wyoming and South Dakota. All told, there were approximately fifty-seven separate fires in this disaster.

Even once extinguished, The Brushfire still had an effect on Great Plains life. The incredible amounts of heat and smoke generated disrupted the local weather for the rest of the year, and falling ashes hampered the plant life and fouled mechanical devices. Asphalt roads

had bubbled up under the heat and had to be rebuilt. The list goes on and on.

The most dramatic effect of The Brushfire, though, was on the attitude towards Nomads and the like. Nomads were blamed for igniting The Brushfire, perhaps with a cigarette butt or a campfire, and any homeless wandering the Great Plains roadways were all considered to share in the guilt. Vigilantes started attacking Nomad packs and homeless people on the 'ounce of prevention' philosophy, and most of the states passed very strict migrant laws. As word of this spread through the country, the various people roaming the nation's highways found better places to go, and the Great Plains were rarely bothered by Nomads again.

MODERN TIMES

Since then, the Great Plains has rebuilt, and with the warming global climate, it had become the new breadbasket of the United States. Most of the area is dominated by gigantic agribusiness cooperatives, which farm vast open areas from their new city bases.

Of course, just because the countryside looks pastoral doesn't mean there's no fighting going on. The agricorps regularly field small hit teams for select sabotage, although each is careful not to ignite any fires. They also try to harvest each other's fields whenever possible. Similarly, there is constant friction between the agricorps who try to dominate the area and the small farms and city folk (i.e., the natives of the area). Finally, all along the northern border of the U.S., the agricorps have fields planted several miles inside Canada. Although they have no legal right to do this, and no recourse if some Canadians come and try to harvest, the amount of land they get to use and abuse for free is remarkable. Needless to say, the Canadians aren't too keen about this, and there has been some border friction in the area.

IOWA (IA)

Capital: Des Moines

New Cities: Silo

Industries: chemical production, dairy, food crops, light industry, livestock,

Iowa is the strongest of the holdout states. Thanks to the acid rain problem, the agricorps have not invested as heavily here as they have elsewhere, and the family farm and small business survive here in greater numbers than anywhere else in the country.

These farms are not, of course, found in the eastern portion of the state, where acid rain fronts from the Midwest sweep the area often enough to make agriculture uneconomic. Cedar Rapids and Waterloo have both dried up and blown away, with the nonagricultural businesses therein relocating to Davenport and Des Moines. Council Bluffs, across from Omaha, Nebraska, is also a ghost town (see Omaha, page #*). Sioux City and Fort Dodge have picked up most of the displaced farmers, and much of the western portion of the state is still farmed by the small businessmen.

Due to their fear and hatred of the agricorps, Iowans have managed to hold on to the Small-Town-America mentality. People there are genuinely concerned about each other's well-being, as evidenced by the state's new city of Silo. They have a healthy distrust of outsiders and anyone who looks too affluent or Corporate-bred. Some cyberpunks have likened them to the hillbillies of the old two-d film, "Deliverance", but nothing could be further from the truth. They just don't want Corps to feel welcome here, under any circumstances.

NEW CITIES

Silo: Built through state funds and donations from all landowners, Silo is the heart of the state of Iowa. Located in the middle of the major agricultural centers, near the ghost town of Carroll (at the junction of US-71 and US-30), it is the central locus for Iowa industry and agriculture. It is operated as a state-run cooperative, selling the farmers' produce in bulk quantities in direct competition with the biggest agricorps.

In addition to being an agricultural clearing house, Silo is a switchboard for every other service available. Iowans have taken to swapping services and giving each other discounts in an effort to avoid paying high corporate prices. The result of this is a sort of state-wide network where everyone seems to know someone who has a neighbor whose cousin does that sort of work. It functions, and it keeps the Iowa economy going.

Finally, as a little bit of music trivia, Dusty Fields, the social rocker and self-proclaimed voice of the downtrodden, claims Silo as his home town. Sadly, this claim, like everything else about the musician (including his name), is fiction.

MINNESOTA (MN)

Capital: Minneapolis

New Cities: Deadwood, two small agribusiness towns in the southwest corner

Industries: communications, food crops, light industry, logging

Minnesota is, quite simply, a civilian city surrounded by corporate lands. Minneapolis-St. Paul is the only major city left in the state. Duluth survives as a dedicated port, and St. Cloud and Moorhead as transportation byways, but they are tiny in comparison to the Twin Cities.

Most of the north half of the state is uninhabited, as persistent acid rains have accumulated in the lakes and poisoned the ground water. What agriculture there is can be found in the lower, western portion of the state, under the guidance and control of a couple of agribusiness communities.

Meanwhile, agribusiness struggles to increase its power while the civilians and urban corporates try to drive them out of the state, or at least strip them of political strength. Part of the problem lies in that the agricorps have annexed the few enjoyable outdoor vacation spots left in

the state, leaving the urbanite Minnesotans with nowhere to go on the weekends (or to escape the law). Part of it lies in different goals for the state. And part of it is deferred anger at the persistent acid rain from the Midwest. The result is a divided state that fairly well locks itself out of regional politics, leaving the agricorps in the rest of the region to run the show.

NEW CITIES

Deadwood: The city of Deadwood is a disposable Corporate town located in the northeast corner of Minnesota. It was built for the express purpose of clear-cutting the dying Minnesota forests before they were rendered useless by persistent acid rain and pollution from Lake Superior. Since it was not built to last more than about twenty years, it is depressing and utilitarian. It is also overrun by drugs, crime, and other diversions. And, to top everything off, occasionally a group of Minnesotans, enraged by the clearcuts and other environmental depravations, blasts through the town shooting the workers and lobbying Molotov cocktails. All in all, life in Deadwood is like life in Chicago in the 1920's.

MONTANA (MT)

Capital: Helena

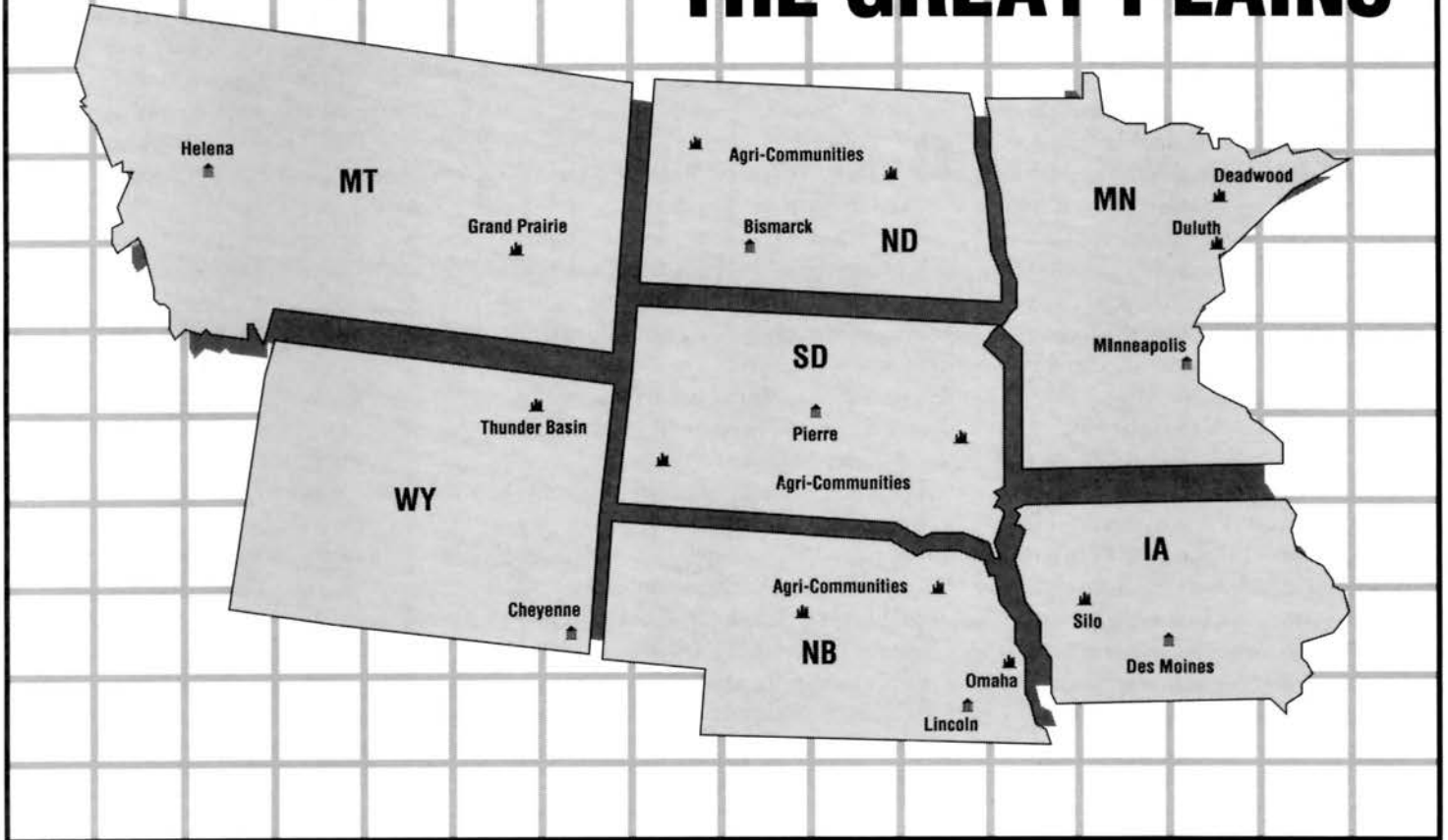
Status: Agribusiness hegemony

New Cities: Grand Prairie, several other agribusiness towns

Industries: dairy, food crops, livestock, logging

Eastern Montana had already suffered under drought before The Brushfire hit. Those who were yet in the area and survived the fire left promptly, heading either for the western part of the state or for the Dakotas, abandoning the millions of blackened acres for the corporations to consume. Thus eastern Montana is now nothing but endless acres of agricorporation fields, while the western part con-

THE GREAT PLAINS



sists of overcrowded old towns and ranches in the Rockies.

Unfortunately (in the opinion of the westerners), agribusiness has attained dominance in Montana politics, especially in the regional arena. This has led to a lot of resentment, which is certainly not uncommon anywhere in the states. There have been several bills put before the state to cede the eastern portions of the state to North Dakota. Aside from being a vehicle for the all-too-common North Dakotan jokes, this would also have the effect of concentrating the strongest agribusiness influence to one state, and returning the rule of Montana back to the original residents. Needless to say, these bills were killed by the agribusiness interests.

NEW CITIES

Grand Prairie: This is a dedicated agribusiness town, built with the intent

of making it the second-largest city in Montana. Every agricorp has a headquarters here, and offers subsidized housing as perks to all their staff. The plan succeeded, and the agricorps therefore acquired a second senator from the state. This brought it into line with the agricorp agenda despite protests from the western portion.

Grand Prairie is located on I-194, a new and modern spur sticking into the center of the Montana plains from the site of the former Miles City. The city itself is what Night City was meant to be: a nice, clean, modern business environment, ringed by pleasant suburbs.

NEBRASKA (NB)

Capital: Lincoln

Status: Agribusiness hegemony

New Cities: several agribusiness towns

Industries: electronics, food crops, medium industry

A long with most of the central U.S., Nebraska suffered greatly during the drought of '98, as well as during less catastrophic droughts in other years. For a while it appeared that Nebraska would be following in the steps of Kansas and the other Western region states, with its topsoil blowing away and the whole countryside turning into a dust bowl. Fortunately, that didn't quite happen, at least not to much of the state.

Nebraska is a junior member of the Great Plains region, limping along thanks to the beneficence of agribusiness. Naturally, the Corps have ensured that they have a voice in state government as compensation for their aid. They

have further consolidated their hold by building several agribusiness towns, the biggest of which is Avalon, at the intersection of US-20 and US-81. These cities have not been any threat to Lincoln or Omaha dominance as yet.

Omaha, however, is but a shadow of its former self. It is still the headquarters of SAC/NORAD, which is exactly why the town had largely been abandoned. When the ESA rock landed on Tampa and on Colorado Springs (taking out the Cheyenne Mountain headquarters), many people thought Omaha, with its strategic headquarters, would be #3 on the ESA hit parade.

Perhaps they were right; only the ESA executives know for sure. But, since no one wanted to take that chance, people left Omaha in droves, each feeling the pressure wave on the back of his neck as they hurriedly drove out of town with their most precious belongings. In the matter of two days, Omaha was largely deserted, and those remaining had developed a furtive habit of glancing skyward. For the next week, there was careful looting by those remaining, as they deliberately cleaned out the hastily-abandoned houses of any forgotten valuables. Some of the former residents returned briefly with trucks to get the rest of their furnishings.

In spite of the years of peace since Colorado Springs ate the big one, few have returned to Omaha. It looked like the city might bounce back, but the U.S. government chose to rebuild its Cheyenne Mountain command center here the year after the strike. Apparently the government thinks it can defend itself from a rock now. The world at large is not so optimistic. The city is now 50% military personnel, who have no choice but to live at their post. The others are those too careless, too shortsighted, or too greedy to mind living on the Big Bull's Eye.

On the other hand, housing's cheap...

NORTH DAKOTA (ND)

Capital: Bismarck

Status: Incorporated State

New Cities: Virtually nothing but

Industries: food crops

Of the Great Plains states, North Dakota is easily recognized as the most Corporate-dominated for one simple fact: it is Corporate-owned. Through a combination of tax scalping, leveraged buyouts, foreclosures, and mortgage sharking, a consortium of three corporations (Petrochem, Arcadiex, and New East Asia Agricultural) managed to buy a majority of the entire state. Some landowner holdouts were forced to sell after the consortium blockaded them from passing through Corporate property, and the remainder were driven out of the state when the Corporate legislature passed some bills to have exactly that effect (minimum state income tax levels, etc.).

The North Dakota state government at least pays lip service to the idea of a democratic government, although the reality is far from the case. The government, as a consortium of corporations, runs itself similarly to a Corporate executive office, passing laws to cater to the least common denominator. There are fair employment laws, just to keep the three from sharking each others' employees. There are anti-extraction laws, so the three can help each other defend against other corporations. There are price subsidies to keep the employees from getting too rich. Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

North Dakota is, then, a one-industry state. If the U.S. grain industry ever suffers another setback like the Drought of '98, the entire state might dry up and blow away. Everything in the state is controlled by the government. All entertainment is government-sponsored, which makes pirate satellite dishes and the like very valuable. In fact, just about everything is smuggled into North Dakota; it's a dangerous job, as the consortium has a lot of muscle, but the rewards make it worthwhile.



Did you know that North Dakota was literally littered with missile silos during the height of the cold war? Did you also know that during

the collapse those sites were all but forgotten? The government claims that all of the missiles, and silos are accounted for or destroyed. But you never know; there sure is some desolate land out there.

SOUTH DAKOTA (SD)

Capital: Pierre

Status: Limited agribusiness hegemony

New Cities: several agribusiness towns

Industries: food crops, livestock, logging, water

South Dakota did not suffer as greatly as did most of the Great Plains during the Drought of '98, thanks to quick legislation for careful water conservation. Of course, their careful conservation of Lake Oahe caused the Missouri River to be reduced to a mere trickle, which did nothing to help Nebraska's plight. South Dakota's foresight led inevitably to a lot of water poaching, which further soured relations between the state and its neighbors.

As with all the Great Plains states, agriculture came here in a big way as the climate started warming. Soon agribusiness held a large share of the state's economy, but the state government, falling back on anti-trust laws, kept the Corporate bloodhounds from taking over the state as they have elsewhere in the country.

HOT SPOTS

Mount Rushmore: Okay, so it's not a cyberpunk's dream of hot bars and fast business, but it's still an interesting place. As part of a government work project, the sculptures of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt were completed, and additional busts of Franklin Roo-



sevelt, Kennedy, and Seward were added. Naturally, the cyberpunks couldn't leave well enough alone, and someone managed to nail the Kennedy sculpture with a Stinger missile. The sculpture is scheduled to be reconstructed in 2021.

WYOMING (WY)

Capital: Cheyenne

Status: Socialist State in 1997

New Cities: several agribusiness towns

Industries: livestock, tourism

W yoming has always been an unpopular state, and the droughts hit it hard. The state government quietly fell apart over the next few years, cutting

itself back so that it wouldn't collapse entirely. By 1997, the government actually did very little.

Then, shortly after the Mideast Meltdown, in a startling turn of events, a group of socialist radicals managed to get a majority voice in the legislature (through some clever deception), and, taking advantage of several legal loopholes, installed themselves in the government. Once in power, they of course attracted a wide variety of left-wing idealists from across the country, and with this dedicated manpower base, they began to pull the state out of the Collapse.

While most observers point out that getting Wyoming through the Collapse was no big deal, the new socialist government propaganda machine worked overtime gilding their public image. The next major step was that the state de-nationalized the Yellowstone and Grand Teton

National parks, and unified them into one giant recreational area. Then they quintupled the entrance fees and posted armed guards at every entrance (just inside the state borders). Coupled with camping improvements and regular janitorial services, the Wyoming People's Council has managed to turn Yellowstone into an up-scale vacation site for eurocorps and other 'capitalist pigs'.

As a result of the politics, most corporations avoid Wyoming, routing shipments around the state for fear that if they pass through the state the shipment will be 'disfranchised' and turned over 'for the good of the people.' This has happened a few times to small businesses as punishment for minor infractions, and no one else has felt like dealing with the problem. Thus Wyoming has by and large done what the socialists set out to do, which is to cut itself out of the Union in most respects.

THE MIDWEST



HOT SPOTS

Thunder Basin: Rumor persists that the Wyoming People's Guard (a combination of the state patrol and national guard) has built a sort of gulag in the middle of nowhere, towards the northeast corner of the state. Supposedly political prisoners are taken here. Other less reliable rumors say that they're being taken to the mountains and forced to work in mines.

Some people doubt these rumors, pointing out that Wyoming's population, even with the influx of socialists, is not enough to support such ventures. Others argue that hate and fear know no bounds. If a media were to actually find such a place, you can bet a major award would be soon in coming. But then, every media in the western U.S. wants to find it. Most could find no evidence whatsoever. Others never returned.



Net 54 is offering a sizeable reward for the media to confirm the existence of the Thunder Basin Gulag. All you have to do is get film footage from the inside.

■ THE MIDWEST ■

The Midwestern Region's states are near the bottom of the list of livable places in America, being edged out only by those in the Northeast. It's here, in the Midwest, that acid rain has really earned its reputation as an environmental catastrophe. There is no Department of Ecology in any of the Midwestern states, as there is no ecology left for someone to be the department of.

Certainly the Midwest is most famous for Detroit and Cleveland, which

are consistently rated first and third of the Most Dangerous Places to Live, according to Net 54's You Decide! poll. It is only the presence of these two hell-holes that overshadows the difficulties of cities like Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Cincinnati.

These situations are of course underplayed by the state governments. Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio are dominated by business concerns. Wisconsin and Illinois are similarly dominated, although to a lesser extent. These states incorporate a new advisory board made up of the PR people from various corporations. This board controls the dominant portion of the constituency, and therefore can put the governor out of a job on short notice.

The other major feature of the Midwest is the Great Lakes system. Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, while the lifeblood of Midwest industry, are no longer the lifeblood of anything else. The lakes are uniformly polluted

beyond belief. There are no fish in them. They are so acidic that vessels plying their trade in these waters must get their hulls treated once a year to avoid being eaten away. In fact, the only life supported in the lakes are a few noxious strains of algae which cover the surface with a sickly brown color and phosphorescence in the freighters' wakes.

The lakes are so bad that Canada, at its own expense, installed a major lock and water recycling system on the Saint Lawrence waterway to keep the U.S. pollution from contaminating Montreal and the Maritime waters.

The freighters which cruise the lakes transport the Midwest's raw materials and industrial goods out and their food and other necessities in. The vast majority of shipping for the Midwest is done by freighter; trucks are used to ship elsewhere. In fact, 95% of the trucks which run on Midwest highways are heading across the region to other parts of the country. The Midwest, of course, taxes these shipments and uses most of the proceeds to maintain the highway system to the best of their corrupt ability.

Politically speaking, the Midwestern senators are generally considered the 'bad boys' of politics. With its industry, the Midwest has its fair share of power, yet the Midwestern states have, over the last fifteen years, earned reputations as being shortsightedly selfish and dogmatic. Thanks to their influence, any environmental bill put before the national government is sure to acquire at least one firm rejection from among the regions. Likewise, the Midwestern states will not pass any bill that cannot be demonstrated to have an immediate and positive benefit for their region.

It's not that they don't need the help. The Midwest used to be covered with thick pine forests, wide verdant fields of grain, and picturesque rolling hills. Of these, the hills remain, although they are not picturesque any more. The pine forests of Michigan and Wisconsin stand as vast acres of dry, black wooden spires, washed by acid rain and painted by the corrosive smoke from the cities. The ground is covered, at best, by a

scrubby brown crabgrass which, against all odds, continues to survive and spread. Many of the smaller interior lakes are covered with a scum of unknown origin, an agglutination of non-volatile airborne waste accumulated over the years.

Of course, hardly anyone ever sees all this any more, because few people actually leave the cities. The cities are where the jobs are, where money pumps in the heart of the average beaver. With no environment left to worry about, let alone earn a living from, the Midwest has turned to industry to keep itself alive. And since the acid-washed metropolises are the only future for the inhabitants, tempers tend to run a little short.

Do you want to live there? In the words of Net 54, "You Decide!"

ILLINOIS (IL)

Capital: Springfield

New Cities: Chicago Port

Industries: chemical production, light industry, manual labor

For many long years, Illinois was dominated by Chicago. That is no longer the case (see Hot Spots, below), and the change has been for the better for the state as a general rule. Nevertheless, the situation in Illinois is not exactly wonderful.

With the death of their great metropolis, Illinois lost its position as a major contender in the region. Without the population or the financial resources Chicago generated (even after accounting for all the corruption), the state now generally gets overruled in matters of local politics by the other, more powerful Midwest advocates. Several states in the area apparently use Illinois for illegal dumping of wastes, sending waste-laden tankers across the state with carefully engineered pinhole leaks—or worse. Missouri even annexed East St. Louis to get a better hold on interstate traffic through the area.

Overall, Illinois is not populous, is an ecological wasteland, and has poorly maintained roads. They have laws on the

books for taxing interstate shipments, but the Illinois State Patrol is so understaffed that everyone ignores the regulations and plows on through the state. As a result, Illinois does not collect fees so much as impose fines. For the big companies, this is a lesser cost than having everyone operate legitimately, so the practice continues.

NEW CITIES

Chicago Port: Chicago Port is a new, state-sponsored development that covers the coast north of the old city of Chicago. It has taken over much of the shipping of the old city, and with its state-funded housing it has attracted the same sort of criminal element as its late great namesake. Chicago Port is hardly a town in and of itself, for at any time up to 40% of the people in town might be transient (truckers and the like).

HOT SPOTS

Chicago: Since the time of Al Capone, Chicago has been an embarrassment to the state of Illinois. The county roads around the city and its suburbs were worse than anywhere else in the state, and the corruption of the city government was chronic. It was just this corruption which led to Chicago's slow response to the Wasting Plague. This was unfortunately compounded by the fact that the city of Chicago was apparently directly targeted by the operatives of the Arab nations which created the disease, as it was the leading American city after New York got bombed. So, between direct exposure and slow response, the entire city was in the grips of a massive epidemic.

The media, of course, seized the opportunity for yellow 'human interest' journalism, and incredibly graphic stories of Chicago's plight ruled the local airwaves. The city government promoted this effort, figuring media exposure would coax government aid—and money—to help them in their hour of need. The news stories certainly attracted attention, both within the city and beyond. The effect was counter-productive. Panic began to spread.

Fortunately for the good health of the rest of the state, the Illinois National Guard was not as slow to react as the city government had been. The state government in Springfield quarantined the entire city in reaction to what the media was showing of Chicago's plight, and the Guard moved in to seal the area. Troops from Wisconsin sealed the northern end of the city and Indianans sealed off the eastern boundaries, and everywhere along the line volunteers, fearful of their own health, supplemented the troops.

Minefields were sown. Barbed wire was erected, supplemented by automatic infrared-targeting machine guns. The troops were there, carrying out the thankless job of turning back those diseased people with strength enough to drive or stagger out of the infested city.

Not that any of the refugees wanted to go back. Even though there was no cure, they didn't want to die in Chicago, where a cholera outbreak was expected momentarily. But, like it or not, few of the refugees had had the foresight to bring guns, and they were coerced to head back. Thousands who refused were shot and burned to prevent the spread of disease. Occasionally soldiers were not cycled to the rear fast enough and broke down under the strain. But the quarantine held, as fear inspired by the last images to be broadcast from the city kept the desperate pickets on the job.

Eventually Chicago died out, strangled between riot, fear, plague, cholera, and possibly other problems. As near as anyone knows, the entire city is empty; there have been no broadcasts, since. Presumably, the acid rains will have ruined most of the buildings over the years, as there is no one around to repair leaks and perform other maintenance. It could also be that the city is no longer a health threat, and there's no reason not to go back.

But nobody wants to be the first.

“Yeah, sure I've heard the rumors. I've heard it all. I've even heard that Saddam Hussein's brain is being cloned there. But I've never met anyone who's gone to Chicago. It's always a friend of a friend, or some Nomad someone met

once. I dunno. As weak as the Illinois government is, I figure there's bound to be some high-power fixer operating out of there, using it as his warehouse. But I'm not gonna go check.”

- Ed Fillet

Now, that's the popular view. The Army and the CIA, on the other hand, were always interested in active bio-warfare examples. (Especially when used on U.S. citizens!) They ran several recon/research teams through the city in the early 2000's. Rumor is, all the safe areas and major recoverable resources are marked on army maps. Good target for a netrun, hmm? Over the last couple of years, up and comer Storm Technologies has de-coned and rehabed the suburbs and many of the big Corps have slowly returned (some have set up shop at Chicago Port, instead). Storm Tech sponsors and supports a well-paid exploration/salvage expedition into the City every six months or so. A job for a desperate or thrill-seeking Edgerunner.



Another high-risk junk-picking run is in the making. Storm Tech wants your team to find the offices of Frost Vidtech, Inc. and recover the six legendary episodes of the award-winning pirate vidshow, *The Space Guys*, that were lost when the City went to hell. If not there, then possibly at Frost's studios somewhere in the unexplored South Metro area—and that's only the first thing on this trip's shopping list...

INDIANA (IN)

Capital:	Indianapolis
Status:	Industrial Hegemony
New Cities:	state-run checkpoints on all interstates
Industries:	chemical production, electronics, light to heavy industry, steel, transportation

Over the last twenty years, Indiana has changed little. The state was not hit by acid rains as severely as many of the other Midwest states, so there was no mass exodus to fairer climes. There was enough food and work available for the state to be able to deal with refugees and Nomads passing through. Even today there are some small farms in the southern portion of the state.

Indiana and Illinois both sit squarely astride the interstate shipping routes connecting the Great Plains and Appalachia; food goes east and products go west. While Illinois is not strong enough to tax these shipments itself, Indiana, backed by the other Midwest states, can control shipping.

Since the highways leading to Chicago have all been destroyed (minefields and blown bridges wreak havoc on a truck's suspension), Indianapolis has become the major transportation center of the Midwest area. While Indiana doesn't have the industrial power of its fellow states, transportation tax kickbacks ensure that the other states support Indiana's policies on shipping.

Indiana now has severe restrictions on road use, which effectively limit interstate shipments to use Interstate highways. Very small shipments can use U.S. highways, but they have to be local. Of course, some people try to bypass these restrictions, but that's what keeps the Indiana Highway Patrol on the job.

With truckers restricted to interstates, it is not difficult for Indiana to declare every highway a toll road. The tolls are light, but they further augment the taxation Indiana imposes. Tolls, by the way, are also required for all passenger cars with out-of-state plates. To cover road maintenance, don't you know.

NEW CITIES

Indiana State Checkpoints: Small state-run communities have appeared on the Interstates at the state borders. These communities provide CHOOH2, food, lodging, and a few other diversions. Each also has a DOT office to help truckers get their fees and licenses in order before they cross the state. Gee, what considerate guys these Indianans are...

MICHIGAN (MI)

Capital: Lansing

Status: Industrial Hegemony

New Cities: Newtown

Industries: automotive, cybertech, heavy industry, mining & refining, shipyards

Inadvertently, Michigan started the Midwest rolling to becoming the scarred landscape it is today. During the Collapse, Detroit was desperate to keep the automotive industry afloat, and companies accepted losses to keep the assembly lines working. The surplus of workers led to less environmentally-conscious iron mining, as companies hired scabs and Nomads to do their work so they could undercut the competition and sell their iron to the auto manufacturers.

Cheap resources and labor caused some foreign manufacturers to open joint operations with some American companies, leading to the Toyo-Chrysler Omega among others. Venture capitalists also founded New American Motors on the upper peninsula. These kept the iron mines and foundries working and polluting (it was cheaper to bribe EPA officials than to operate conscientiously). It also attracted a large number of homeless and unemployed, much more than could find work. This surplus population has caused Michigan and neighboring urban areas considerable criminal problems ever since.

The pollution and mining took its toll on the Michigan ecosystem. Acid rains caused problems in open pit mines, and the operators simply pumped the water into the surrounding fields. The pollution killed plant life, and erosion started to take its toll. By the time the U.S. recovered from the worst of the Collapse, the Department of Ecology was so corrupt as to be ineffective, and industry was going full bore.

With the destruction of the Michigan ecosystem came the advent of true strip mining. Without ecological consid-

eration (well, not without, just ignoring), Michigan corporations have begun ripping the land up to get at the ores beneath. Incredible amount of toxic runoff and silt found their way into the estuaries and thence into the Great Lakes, polluting them.

The rest of the Midwest followed suit, either voluntarily or not, and industry became the rule of the day in this once-idyllic area.

HOT SPOTS

Detroit: For the true cyberpunk, there's no better place to be than Detroit, the most dangerous city in the Union. With a tacnuke in New York and a bioplague in Chicago, the only competition remaining for Detroit is Los Angeles. The contest was decided in 2019, when Net 54 showed that murders in the two cities were almost tied. Shortly after this hit the press, the murder rate in Detroit jumped markedly, catapulting the sad metropolis into the limelight as the number one murder capital in the states.

Faced with this violence, which only seemed to escalate even after Detroit won its 'honors', the city did the only thing it could think of: It walled off the combat zone. This action led inevitably to the balkanization of Detroit. Some of the higher-class (and therefore lower-compassion) suburbs began building their own walls, and hiring rent-a-guns to patrol their perimeters. Less well-to-do neighborhoods relied on razor wire barricades patrolled by neighborhood volunteers. The term 'subdivision' took on a whole new meaning.

This approach only exacerbated the problems suffered by those living in the combat zones and low-income areas; it made it more difficult to get to work, it made it harder for them to get food and other supplies, and it made them feel like prisoners in their own city. The fights and riots escalated, and in places they began to take on racist, religious, or cultural overtones.

After many years' work, the city of Detroit has finished installing a new wall around the combat zones, and has officially declared the zone a minimum security state prison. The security is tightest along the side facing Detroit, and is only

moderate on the side facing into the blighted countryside. If someone wants to risk an escape that way and make the long walk around back into Detroit, unarmed, they're welcome to it.

Other parts of Detroit, though walled off, are nonetheless nice. These areas are generally inhabited by high-ranking American corporates, top-notch neighborhood security solos, and industrial investors. Behind the secure walls, the luxuries of modern life can be enjoyed without interruption, at least until some boostergang tried to mad-dog the security system and bum rush the inhabitants. For this reason, housing at the edge of a subdivision is much less expensive than the innermost portions.

NEW CITIES

Newtown: The home of New American Motors, Newtown is an automotive showplace. Although NAM vehicles are generally rated very low, they sell well due to incredibly clever marketing and American patriotic reaction. Located in Marquette Bay, Newtown also has a full port, which they use to get their second-rate cars around the globe.

MISSOURI (MO)

Capital: Jefferson City

New Cities: a few agribusiness communities in the north

Industries: chemical production, electronics, food crops, medium industry, transportation

"The New Madrid fault? Yeah, I know about the last one, the Missouri running backwards and stuff like that. One of my ancestors was killed during that quake. It'll go again, I'm sure. It's long overdue. So in a sense, yes, farming in Missouri is like sitting on a powerkeg. But my house is well built, I'm insured, and, to be frank, I'm not living in Detroit."

- anonymous private farm owner

A lone among the Midwest states, Missouri has not suffered greatly from acid rain. Although there are some small agricultural operations in the southern end of Illinois and Indiana, Missouri has more than both. This is not to say that Missouri is an agricultural powerhouse; what the state lacks in acid rain, it tries to make up for in heat and drought.

Nevertheless, Missouri is a relatively powerful state surrounded by weak neighbors. Its roads are better than Arkansas', so a lot of shipping comes through the state, and its broad economic base gives it a stability most states lack these days. Missouri has also extended its territory at the expense of its neighbors, using a combination of politicking, browbeating, and carefully arranged plebiscites to strengthen its position. Kansas City and St. Louis both have been expanded to incorporate their sister cities across the state lines.

Missouri also differs from the rest of the Midwest inasmuch as it has a relatively clean government. While nowhere near as free as a New Parliamentary State, it is not dominated by industry as are the rest of the states in the region.

The silting of the Missouri river caused problems for the state, as the river has become so shallow that it cannot be used for freighters any more. Missouri has begun testing a new style of barge for possible commercial use. There are also rumors of hover freighters to ply the old river. Should either of these prove viable, it would be a boon to the state's economy.

OHIO (OH)

Capital: Columbus

Status: Industrial Hegemony

New Cities: Catawba

Industries: bioengineering tech, chemical production, light industry, mining, shipyards

Ohio is a heavily urbanized state, with Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton,

Toledo, and the Cleveland-Akron Muni-plex. It is also, with the deaths of New York and Chicago, the biggest hotbed of corruption this side of the Appalachian Mountains.

Like most of the region's states, the Ohio government has what is known as an "industrial hegemony" government. However, corruption is so rife in the state that the government itself is unpredictable, causing the state's residents to be edgy almost all the time. The infighting among the corporations is so intense that the state no longer even allows the public to vote. (Sure that's an exaggeration, but would you drive to City Hall in Cincinnati just to vote? It's the only polling station in the town...)

Instead, the populace sullenly goes about their work, and lets those with the knowledge and training deal with the rapidly-changing laws and regulations. Fortunately, the laws which change most frequently have to do with economics, trade, and business practices, and are therefore beyond the concern of most of the people. Would Ohio gather itself together and cooperate instead of try to get the better of itself, it would become the dominant force in the Midwest region. Instead, the corruption keeps taxing its strength.

Ohio is even worse than Michigan for pollution, if only because it has more and larger cities. Most middle income families have a home air purifier/compressor to recharge their breathing flasks for when they go outside. Pollution alerts are an everyday occurrence, and acid rain is frightfully common. The landscape, especially close to either the cities or the lake, is brown, dead, and eroding. Ugly, sure, but it makes the East European immigrants feel right at home.

Ohio lacks the heavy industry of Michigan, instead concentrating more on light manufacturing and chemicals. Cleveland-Akron, for example, continues to produce much of the United States' rubber and polymer products. Other locations produce fertilizers, defoliants, and a hundred other chemicals. You can just guess how the typical chemical plant is cleaned, can't you?

NEW CITIES

Catawba: The state of Ohio bowed rapidly to Corporate pressure for a major port. The Maumee had silted up so badly that Toledo was out of the question, and shoreline Cleveland wasn't built to handle the volume of traffic the Corps wanted. It was finally decided to build a dedicated shipping port. Located northwest of Sandusky on the Lake Erie coast, Catawba covers the long-empty townships of Marblehead and Lakeside.

A giant causeway extends between the mainland and Kelleys Island to the north. This causeway can load any size freighter that passes beneath it, including some that are too big to port anywhere else in the Great Lakes. Ships can likewise be unloaded here, and trucks constantly ply the roads between Catawba and the rest of the state.

WISCONSIN (WI)

Capital: Madison

New Cities: Yelarcot

Industries: dairy, electronics, food crops, logging, medium industry

Wisconsin is a grudging member of the Midwest region. While it is not controlled by the corporations, they have the upper hand in state politics, and have turned Milwaukee and Green Bay into festering semi-industrial towns.

Acid rain has pelted the state for years, destroying the broad agricultural base this Arcadian state used to have. The death of the industry was, however, slow in coming and painful when it happened. Most of the farmers in the industry went down with their farms, leaving a gap in the Wisconsin economy which the corporations were only too happy to fill. Now, most Wisconsin cheese is artificial, and most of the grass grows in indoor golf parks for the Corporate elite.

Although Wisconsin does not condone most of the Corporate policies of the Midwest, they often rubber-stamp their approval on bills just to avoid alien-



ating themselves from the rest of the region. The pro-industrial minority thus seems to have much more control in Wisconsin politics than they should.

There has been talk in western Wisconsin about seceding from the rest of the state, splitting off a primarily agricultural section adjoining the Great Plains region. Whether or not the Chequamegon State Campaign ever gets moving remains to be seen.

NEW CITIES

Yelarcot: Pronounced with a silent T, Yelarcot is an attempt by a group of Wisconsin farmers to stay in the dairy industry. It's a giant arcology north of Eau Claire devoted to raising dairy cattle. It has had mixed success. One of its big problems is that most people don't relish being inside a dome with a bunch of cows. Neither do most cows, for that matter, as Yelarcot has the singular dis-

tinction of being the only arcology ever to have to issue an indoor pollution alert.

■ THE NORTHEAST ■

"Sure, New York City used to be THE place. Nothing else mattered. But then the New York music scene gave birth to the Village People, and the public started to reconsider. Finally, rap left for the West Coast and took hold in California, and people started to forget about the Big Apple. All for the better, in my opinion. The Colombian drug lords did us all a favor by nuking it."

- *Knifeedge, Cutthroat's lead singer and bassist*

For a long time, in fact for most of this country's history, the Northeast has

considered itself the heart and soul of the United States. What was fashionable in New York was fashionable everywhere. If it wasn't New England lobster, it wasn't any good. Everyone watched the New Year roll in at Madison Square Garden.

Sadly, more than fashion was exported from the East Coast. Drugs, crime, pop psychotherapy, gangs, poverty, and a Kitty Jones mentality seeped from the northeastern urban blight like leakage from a toxic waste tank. People got used to, and even claimed to prefer, the mercury-laden atmosphere, the two-hour lemming commutes, and the high-rise closets renting for \$2500 per month. By the time the rest of America realized they didn't want the New England metropolitan heritage, it was too late, and many other cities, like Detroit and Los Angeles, were already spiraling down into their own urban nightmares.

THE NORTHEAST



Although the United States at large was beginning to realize that the northeastern urban lifestyle was nothing to look up to, it wasn't until the Collapse that the country divorced itself from the Manhattan dream and got on with pursuing their own destinies. During the darkest years since the Great Depression, the New England states were cut adrift.

So what did the average New Englander do?

If possible, he left. No surprise, really. By the time of the Collapse in 1996, the entire eastern seaboard had been turned into a battle zone. Hunger, homelessness, civic bankruptcy, public service strikes, and racial tensions had been endemic in the New England cities, and riots and violence had become the rule of the day. When the Collapse hit, the loss of jobs stripped most people of any reason to stay in the region. Those who could moved, bringing one last export from the North-

east to the rest of the country: lots of unemployed and homeless people.

The Collapse also cut down the arcologies in their infancy; they were the Northeast's last gasp at remaining in the van of American culture. Designed as new model cities, the arcologies were an urbanite's dream come true. Giant crystalline domed cities, protected from the acid rains and harsh winter storms, the arcos were designed for accessibility, beauty and comfort, and to ensure that a high standard of living was available to each resident.

"The last good thing that came out of the Northeast was the AV-4. What does that tell you?"

- King Gardener,
governor of Georgia

The Northeast also suffers from acid rain, rampant corruption, industrial

waste, and an urban/rural dichotomy. It has been washed to the wayside by the tides of the last twenty years, and it doesn't look like it will be recovering soon. Although the Northeast is the largest region in terms of number of states, it is, politically speaking, down at the bottom of the power pole, grubbing around in the mud along with Dixie and, to a lesser extent, the West.

THE SEABOARD COOPERATIVE

Since the separation of Northern California from Southern California, there has been a movement in the less urbanized states to separate themselves from the rest of the Northeast Region. Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont have vocal minorities looking for regional repartitioning, or perhaps even secession to Canada. Thus far, the rest of the Northeast Region has been able to prevent their withdrawal.

They have, however, formed a cooperative alliance for mutual support and, not so incidentally, against any possible deprivations by outsiders. This is the Seaboard Cooperative, and this is what many would like to see as a new region. As popular support for the Seaboard Cooperative rises in New York State (the remainder of which is largely rural), regional recognition becomes more and more likely.

Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont are practically the only states left in the nation that are neither polluted, urbanized, nor co-opted by agribusiness. As such, they have an immediate interest in preserving that status, and through strict anti-Corporate legislation, they have managed to do so. This has also had the effect of ostracizing them from the technical revolution, giving the states (by most accounts) the lowest standard of living of any in the union. This does not particularly bother the residents, though, as they'd rather not have the extra money everyone else spends on guns, bikes, cybernetics and security. They'd rather hang out on their porches and watch the sun rise over the Atlantic.

One would think that laid-back rural attitudes like this would be crushed beneath the wheels of the twenty-first century. To obviate that possibility, the Seaboard cooperative has a large, well-armed joint police force. Everyone must serve 6000 hours (equivalent to six years part-time) on the Seaboard Police Corps, for which they receive a nominal pay. The semi-flexible hours allow everyone to keep their own life in order. These police have a vested interest in making sure that Nomads don't come burning through their territory, and they are well known as a hard group to tangle with. What they lack in streetwise experience they make up for in camaraderie; after all, practically every cop in a given area knows every other cop, and they don't take kindly to someone trying to scrag their neighbor.

CONNECTICUT (CT)

Capital: Hartford

Status: Bankrupt

New Cities: Haven Arcology

Industries: essentially none outside of naval shipyards

The coast of Connecticut received a lot of the fallout—environmental, economic, and human—from the late, great city of New York. The coast of the state is desolate, washed by biohazardous materials, medical and petroleum wastes, and raw sewage. The breakdown of the economy and transportation network, coupled with the bitter winters, caused massive deforestation as desperate and unemployed families cut down each others' trees for warmth during the long winters. The state government was slow to act during the destruction of the New York City government, and Connecticut received more than its share of megalopolis refugees.

As a result, the economy of Connecticut was further depressed. There were simply not enough jobs or houses to go around, and many of the New York refugees didn't have the resources to travel any further. Crime spiraled up, the few affluent left, and some industries pulled out. The result was that in 2005, after many years of corruption, mismanagement, and deficit spending, the state government went belly-up.

At first, this caused a bit of a boom in the state, as several small industries moved in to take advantage of the lack of state regulations and taxation. This boom was short-lived, though, because these shortsighted capitalists overlooked the fact that the state government also provided a lot of services, like repairing roads. After a harsh winter, the Connecticut communications and travel networks were a shambles. Reeling from the blow, many of the city governments reorganized themselves as cooperatives. New Haven, under the influence of left-wing Yale students, reorganized as a collective in the worst Stalinist tradition. Nevertheless, many cities in Connecticut continue to get by.

Being bankrupt, Connecticut has no legitimate state government, as a result of

which they have no say in regional politics. The cities continually squabble among themselves as to a fair way to represent themselves, but so far no accord has been reached.

The only organized, well-kept areas in the state are the few military (primarily naval) facilities. You can bet not many cyberpunks hang out here.

HOT SPOTS

Haven Arcology: The Haven arcology (just outside of New Haven) is a prime example of Connecticut's status. Built with the same vision as the rest of the arcologies, it stands nearly completed, but slowly falling apart under the relentless onslaught of time, weather, and careless inhabitants. It is filled with everyone who couldn't find a better dumpster somewhere in the state. It used to be packed with squatters and homeless, but its popularity declined dramatically when a large section of the dome gave way and squashed several hundred inhabitants. Due to a freak of acoustics beneath the parabolic chunk, the moans of survivors could be heard for the next few days, but there was no way to dig them out from their prison between the sandwiched sections of concrete.

The dome collapse also took with it a large chunk of the Batson Pack, a group of strange and eclectic loners who make their homes above the rest of the homeless. The Batson web is a strange, gossamer collection of catwalk, girders, slings, and a few derelict cranes, high above the floor of the arcology. A few of the more Spartan Batsons have homes grafted onto the outside of the nearly-finished dome, huddled like wasp nests against the acid rains. All sorts of rumors abound about the Batsons, including that they are vampires. One thing is sure: If ever you have a need for someone with an incredible sense of balance and no fear of heights, the Batsons are the ones to contact. They have their own subculture slung beneath the dome, but the squatters in the surrogate city of Haven can teach you the passwords and customs you'll need to survive.



The Haven Arcology is said to have been the last resting place for the gold stock of billionaire Franklin Todd. Todd invested heavily in the

Arcology during the early years of the collapse, but he was killed soon after the structure was in place. His attorney claims that he purchased several million dollars worth of gold days before the collapse of '94. Rumor has it that Todd hid the gold in a secret section of the Arcology, known only to him and a few architects.

DELAWARE (DE)

Capital: Dover

New Cities: Dover (rebuilt)

Industries: chemical production, fishing

One of the ESA's rocks was dropped off the Delaware coast. Most observers consider this rock to have been a 'shot across the bow' aimed at Washington D.C., although some maintain that it was a clean miss. The folks in Tampa know better than to think it was a miss. So do those at Colorado Springs. The ESA itself isn't saying anything, and instead maintains an inscrutability on the subject. It is of interest to note that one of the ESA's senior ballistics experts was transferred to the reclamations department shortly after the rock hit.

Although it did not directly strike any residential areas, the rock still did considerable damage to the state. It landed in Delaware Bay, directly east of Washington, D.C., off Delaware's Slaughter Beach and Broadkill Beach. The impact of the rock caused massive tidal waves which smashed into the Delaware coast, flattening large portions of the state. (Evidently, the rock was a lot bigger than the other two that were dropped.) A lot of Delaware's topsoil was washed away or laden with salt, and brackish ponds can still be found.

HOT SPOTS

Dover: The state capital was also heavily damaged by the EuroSpace rock strike. Despite the damage, the state has firmly refused to move the capital, and instead rebuilt the ruined town and got it back on its feet. This reconstruction project caused the size of Dover to grow by quite a bit, as other industries and businesses moved in to support the construction workers hired by the state. Unfortunately, crime also moved in, as the state had made no provisions for the adequate policing of a large number of 'temporary' workers. As a result, the state's capital is a miniature metropolis, with a clean urban center surrounded by a ring of cheap 'temporary' housing riddled with crime. The state has been unable to stamp out this crime, as there are few enough police in Wilmington, and none of them are going to go to the capital to fight crime when there are problems enough in their own back yard. As a result, metro Dover goes about its business as well as it can, and leaves the suburban ring to rot by itself. This has earned Dover the distinction of being "the world's smallest big city."

MAINE (ME)

Capital: Augusta

Status: New Parliamentary State in 2015, Seaboard Cooperative member

New Cities: None

Industries: dairy, fishing, food crops, logging

Of all the states in the union, Maine has the least environmental damage. It's located too far north to have suffered with the droughts and dust bowls, and too far east to have felt the sting of acid rain. Regular Atlantic storms sweep the air clean of what little smog there is. In fact, the only problems Maine has suffered have been due to shipping accidents and spills in the ocean.

Maine's isolated economy depends on wood products and fishing, and fishing has become very difficult. Maine has a carefully-run fisheries program, designed to keep hatchlings flowing steadily back to sea. Meanwhile, out in the ocean, foreign ships set drift nets and other trapping devices in open violation of international conventions. In order to counter this, certain Maine ships have been equipped with torpedoes, and others sport fully-armed boarding parties. So far, through well-rehearsed lightning raids, these privateers have managed to avoid the ear of the international community, and the fleet losses were attributed to 'unknown causes'. Maine-based ships are always looking for new muscle, but those with cybernetics must keep themselves well-maintained, for the sea-going life is hard on delicate electronics and precision machines.

Internally, Maine rigorously patrols its territory, keeping an eye out for those without state visitation permits or valid identification numbers. Maine is a large, rural area, and it's relatively easy for vagrants to slip across the border undetected. Most don't last for long before someone spots them as outsiders and calls the state police.

Politically, Maine (i.e., the Seaboard Cooperative) maintains a separate liaison office with Canada's Atlantic provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. As the expected fragmentation of Canada draws near, it has begun to appear that these provinces will cast their lot with the Seaboard Cooperative. Whether this means the provinces will apply for statehood, or whether the states will secede from the Union, is unclear at this time.

MARYLAND (MD)

Capital: Annapolis

New Cities: New Greenspring

Industries: electronics, light industry, nursery plants

Maryland is almost the home of the nation's capital, for most of the capital workers reside in Maryland and commute. While the country rocked with disasters, Maryland was shaken along with the center. When the nation went to war against the NSA, Maryland suburbs became a battle ground. When terrorists sought to kill congressmen and the like, Maryland suburbs were the place to go.

When the District of Columbia was militarized, many Maryland residents moved into the District's limits, relying on the Military Police to stop the violence and leaving most of the D.C. suburbs as empty tracts of vandalized housing. Later on, when everything started to settle down, Maryland recognized that the residents of D.C. were going to get tired of the military and look for a place to move. The state government incorporated the ghost cities of Bethesda, Rockville, Silver Springs, Wheaton, and other suburbs into the city of New Greenspring.

The state then rebuilt many of the major roads in the area and gave prospective residents land grants, tax breaks, and other incentives to participate in a grand gentrification program. Participants were allowed to select and receive, free of charge, one residential site (complete with what was left of the house). It was the resident's responsibility to rebuild the house, but once that was done, he could apply for the purchase of adjacent lots at inexpensive prices. These additional homes could be later leased or sold.

There followed the last land grab in American history, as residents of Washington D.C. (and other places) left en masse for New Greenspring. As a result of this action, Maryland exerts an inordinate influence on national politics, having most of the law-makers residing within its borders.

Baltimore also continues to thrive, as much as any northeastern city filled with rot, corruption, pollution, crime, and vermin can thrive. Since the state gentrification program, Baltimore and New Greenspring have been reaching urban tendrils towards each other, and by 2018 they created a new metropolitan axis. Baltimore has also spread south to the city limits of

Annapolis. While Baltimore has not grown as fast as the Los Angeles Metroplex, it has continued to keep itself in the forefront of urban problems.

The rest of the state is largely ignored by the state government. The state does not maintain any roads other than the ones passing through Baltimore and New Greenspring and heading for other major areas. A relatively small community still survives at Cumberland, to the west end of the state. It sends no taxes to the state and in return receives no aid of any sort. Cumberland lives an independent life, almost Amish in its tenacity, and the residents of Cumberland are glad to be ignored by the nation at large. Even though nominally they have no independence, the state is more than content to leave them alone to rot. Naturally, without the capable assistance of the corrupt state government, the community is thriving in its own quiet way.

HOT SPOTS

Annapolis: This coastal city is home to the U.S. Naval Academy. While the school has not changed much in the last hundred years, the ships the Navy uses have changed dramatically. Everything is taught here, from how to use a riverine to infiltrate the Amazon basin to the best way to blow up oil-sucking dictators with aging battleships.

MASSACHUSETTS (MA)

Capital: Boston

New Cities: Several new Boston-area suburbs

Industries: bioengineering tech, cybertech, electronics, fishing, medium industry

Massachusetts has been an unstable state since the military relinquished control of the U.S. to the civilian government, so much so that "I live in an unstable state" T-shirts have been hot sellers for the past few years. The Boston metroplex has grown like a cancer, as the influence of the Atlantic Ocean has kept acid rain from

striking this part of the state, and made it a preferable place to live. Acid fronts occasionally sweep the western end of the state, but the ecological damage is light.

The problems Massachusetts has to deal with are corruption and divisiveness. Boston is not so much a city as an aggregation of subdivisions, each separately incorporated. In addition, the Boston area inherited the lion's share of corruption and crime families when New York City went under, and these have become political machines scrapping for the vote, legal or otherwise. The infighting amongst the Boston-area wards makes the gerrymandering of the 20th Century look like infantile one-upsmanship. This means that in Massachusetts, there are two dozen or so cities of roughly comparable size, and whichever cities make the best case for being the largest get the seats in the regional board. As a result, Massachusetts' representatives change at least once a year, although usually someone from Boston proper (typically one of the Schrecklin brothers' family) manages to get a seat.

All of this makes the typical Massachusetts resident very cynical and unlikely to vote. Sadly, this only reinforces the corrupt lobbyists and crime families to do more of the same.

Cape Cod is no longer a popular tourist attraction. The Kosa Maru toxic spill saw to that. As a result, most state tourism focuses on historic areas of Old Boston, and the few historical sites around the state which have been properly preserved.

More than any other police department around the country, the Massachusetts State Patrol is known for being corrupt. The same political machines that get themselves elected staff the police departments, and over the years they have by and large expurgated or co-opted every honest cop in the state. Those remaining on the force are either sadistic, lackadaisical, or easily bribed. Almost every one of them is dishonest in some way. Sometimes this is an advantage to cyberpunks, other times it's not. Just hope that when you get pulled over, the cops don't hate the way you look.

NEW HAMPSHIRE (NH)

Capital: Concord

Status: New Parliamentary State in 2014, Seaboard Cooperative member

Industries: dairy, food crops, logging

New Hampshire, like its Seaboard Cooperative neighbors, is a relatively undamaged wilderness state. It has been almost entirely spared the ravages of acid rain, and has taken pains to keep itself as clean as possible. As a part of the plan, every road which crosses the Massachusetts border has been ripped up, with the exception of U.S. Highway 3 and Interstate 95. These two thoroughfares remain intact to facilitate interstate shipping between the Seaboard Cooperative and the rest of the Northeast region. US-3 runs through Nashua to Manchester, and I-95 runs straight up to Portsmouth (the NH-51 interchange south of Portsmouth has been demolished).

The Seaboard Cooperative will not allow out-of-state truckers into their territory, and it is primarily up to New Hampshire to enforce this. This they do with most of the heavy equipment to be found in the entire cooperative. On each highway concrete bunkers line the road, flanking a Seaboard Cooperative transfer station. Here, under the watchful eyes of veteran SC troopers, out-of-state truckers can come to pick up cargo. These truckers are usually independent operators, and they must pay for the cargo they are hauling, which they can later sell for their own profit. The SC encourages this by giving the independent riggers a cheaper price than they give the big shipping companies.

Truckers from the Seaboard Cooperative states occasionally make runs of their own, but as SC truckers usually get hassled by anyone else they encounter, they normally make these runs in big convoys.

NEW JERSEY (NJ)

Capital: Trenton

Status: Bankrupt

New Cities: several small arcologies in the Jersey City area

Industries: tourism

Wedged as it is between New York and Philadelphia, one would not expect the state of New Jersey to have weathered the Collapse very well. The state caught a lot of refugee and homeless traffic before it got wise and tried to put an end to it, and as a result the highway network is still dilapidated. But to understand the most important cause of New Jersey's failing, one must understand the bedroom community dynamics that drove the state right before the Collapse.

THE ARCOLOGIES

"The vision of the New East Investor's Group was years ahead of its time, which unfortunately placed them on the wrong side of the Collapse. Most consider their legacy to be the rotting arco domes which rape the New Jersey coastline, but I disagree. Granted, the Group was wiped out by the Collapse, but without these investors and developers blazing the trail, we wouldn't have the smaller arcologies and mallplexes of today, and our housing situation would be dire indeed."

- James Bockerlee, Professor Emeritus, Night City University

"Well...it keeps the rain off me head."

- 'Fran', squatter living in the ruins of the Holland Arcology

From the tail end of the twentieth century, there had been an elliptical struggle between the states of New Jersey and New York for the control of the Big Apple's working populace. The poor could not afford to leave New York City and the rich could afford comfortable, secure housing, but the middle class workers opted to

move elsewhere and commute to work. That elsewhere was, for the most part, Jersey City and the surrounding communities. New Jersey was, of course, only too happy to have its people bringing New York money from the office and spending it on New Jersey food and New Jersey rent.

New York was less than pleased, and attempted to apply the state income tax to New York workers who lived out of state. They tried adding massive surcharges to interstate commuting fares. They tried all sorts of solutions, but each was illegal, unenforceable, or neatly sidestepped by imaginative entrepreneurs. Finally, through a convoluted State Economic Sufficiency Bill, the state of New York managed to create a situation where New York City residents got higher pay for equal work. This, combined with housing subsidies, drew a large fraction of the populace back across the state line.

New Jersey floundered temporarily. Then, after closed-doors negotiations with a group of land speculators (the New East Investor's Group), it announced the founding of the New Arcologies. These arcs were to be model living communities, safe, clean, beautiful, and accessible, and they would have free public transportation to the New York state line. Large portions of Jersey City, Linden, Elizabeth, Perth Amboy, Fort Lee and Union City were given over to the developers, who razed all but the most historic of buildings. These last were kept, and the arcologies were designed around them to best accent their beauty (and provide for the best tourism possible).

When the Collapse hit, building on the arcologies was slowed, then ground to a halt. The New East Investor's Group came apart at the seams as each investor tired to get his money out of the state government before the other partners got the last of it. The result was that after a few years, the state of New Jersey, along with most of the venture capitalists of the New East Investor's Group, went bankrupt.

This left New Jersey swinging in the breeze with nothing but a half dozen or so art deco arcologies rotting along the New York coastline. Criminal elements from Philadelphia and New York moved across

the border to New Jersey to take advantage of the lack of police, causing Camden and Trenton to devolve into cesspools of human vermin, and filling the empty Jersey Arcos with addicts, prostitutes, and thugs. The rest of the Jersey City area is occupied by a variety of criminals, survivalists, and people trying not to be found. This is not to say that the entire state is filled with corrupt individuals, just that the residents, on average, are tougher and less honest than the average citizen of any other state. Most inner-city cyberpunks would feel right at home if the locals didn't have those funky accents.

Being bankrupt, New Jersey has no legitimate state government, as a result of which they have no say in regional politics, at least not directly. The crime lords in New Jersey have some pull in New York and Pennsylvania. Like Connecticut, New Jersey will not be represented until it can launch a new state government. Unfortunately, the criminal and fugitive elements want to make sure this never happens. There have been two half-hearted attempts to establish a new state government. The first failed for lack of support, and the second failed when the provisional council was assassinated. There have been no attempts since.

HOT SPOTS

Atlantic City: DMS (Diversified Media Systems) bought this area shortly after the Collapse left the owners deep in debt. Following an aggressive campaign of reconstruction, DMS forced out the organized crime element and rebuilt the city to appeal to the modern European. The rising sea level has forced DMS to build dikes along the beach, but there are stairs and docks to ensure that visitors can still see the ocean. Boats and minisubs can also be rented here, and gambling is, as always, an attraction.

NEW YORK (NY)

Capital: Albany

New Cities: several half-completed arcologies

Industries: bioengineering tech, communications, entertainment, financial markets, light industry, logging

New York state used to have a beautiful rural section, which, more or less, was everything but New York City. In fact, the Adirondack Park dominated upstate New York's geography. Unfortunately, while the park still exists, the beauty doesn't. New York has been washed by years of acid rains from the Pennsylvania steel mills and even some carryover from the Midwest region. The result of this persistent bombardment is a wilderness that's on the edge of collapse. Although rural New York is a far cry from the ecological wasteland of the Midwest, it is obvious that the Adirondack greenery is breathing its last. Most rivers and creeks run brown with erosion, and an oily sheen can be seen on most rural ponds and lakes.

The state of New York cut the Big Apple adrift in the wake of the riots and the N-bombing, designating New York City (the entirety of Long Island, Staten Island and Bronx County, as well as parts of Westchester county) as a probationary territory, to return to political power when it could demonstrate self-governance (by being able to pay taxes to support the state government). They even officially changed the Big Apple's name from New York City to New Angeles, in an attempt to divorce the state from the image the city had acquired in the media. The name has ever really caught on.

NEW CITIES

There are several arcologies that lie, half-completed, across the state. They were ambitious designs all, hoping to become the home of future millions when the Jersey City arcos filled, and as such it is obvious now that none of them will ever be finished. These are: Buffalarco, northwest of Buffalo; Oneida City, near Syracuse; and Lisha Dome, which is between Albany and Schenectady. Lisha Dome, the smallest and most expensive of the three, was to have been the new state capital.

HOT SPOTS

West Point: The United States Army still maintains its traditional academy, and although the buildings have been kept the same, the classes and training haven't. One thing you can bank on here, though, is strict military discipline. The government wants to make sure none of its elite soldiers gets to feeling as independent as the NSA once did.

New York City: The Big Apple is the site of the worst urban decay in the United States. Large portions of the city lie uninhabited (most notably Manhattan) and rotting in the acidic rain. The sad story of the former world-leading metropolis starts in the 1990's, when racial issues began to ferment into violence. The trigger was two back-to-back incidents involving a certain Brooklyn gang.

Gangs had been a part of New York's heritage for many years, and grudges had long formed between the various minorities. Ethnic, religious, and sexual. Blacks against Jews. Rednecks against gays. You name it, they fought it, and each incident fueled two more like it, fanned by a liberal and sensationalist press. It was like Los Angeles after the King verdict, but spread over a larger area with comparatively fewer police.

AV-4's received their first abortive field tests at this time, ineffectually spraying tear gas on a crowd of looters. Many new anti-mob tactics were also developed and tested, meeting with marginal success. Violent crime moved back into the open, and the specter of Kitty Jones rose again. If someone saw a crime in commission, they were less likely to respond, for fear of sparking a new riot. Tensions ran high, and despite New York's strict laws, many people began openly carrying firearms.

Nevertheless, New York managed to hold it together in the face of rising civil violence, and the release of lesser criminals to facilitate the incarceration of more vicious felons. The city continued working, that is, until the Colombian drug lords blew Rockefeller Center.

THE BOMB

New York joined the sad ranks of nuclear-struck cities with startling suddenness in the middle of the work week.

The blast flattened Rockefeller Center, crushed Carnegie Hall, and even gutted the UN Headquarters. This last was apparently the result of a mistake or a miscalculation, for it stripped the drug lords of their Eurocorp backing and turned their former financiers into bitter and unforgiving enemies. On the other hand, most New Yorkers couldn't have cared less about the Europeans' reaction.

For a while, most of a day, there was a stunned silence in New York City, as emergency personnel flocked to the scene. Then the violence of the previous months blew out, unrestrained in an orgy of looting while the authorities were tied up in Manhattan.

Faced with looting and killing in their own neighborhoods, many police and medical workers called in sick, leaving the bomb survivors to fend for themselves. Other citizens, fearful of the violence or radiation, fled from town leaving many of their belongings behind. This easily-plundered loot incited further and bolder robberies, as well as hijackings on the roads.

Within three days, the entirety of New York City was a free-for-all. New Jersey National Guard troops barricaded all six bridges that led to the New York metropolplex, well-armed soldiers given the old standby order to shoot looters on sight. Anyone trying to cross any of the bridges without a white flag was defined as a looter. Troops even moved into New York State and took the Tappan Zee bridge, forcing refugees to move twenty miles upstate before they could cross west of the Hudson River.

Within a week, the New York City government had effectively ceased to exist. New York City's legislators, who had been absent for several days, were ejected from the state government. The Big Apple itself, with all the rich and capable people gone, sank into a city-sized combat zone.

For the next few years, the surviving people eked out a living as best they could, raiding stores of canned goods and tossing the remnants of the slain into the bay. Rats and other vermin had a miniature population boom, and for a while there was a small cholera outbreak. Gradually, as supplies ran out and tempers cooled under the

relentless pressure of hunger, people tried to get back to normal. Unfortunately, by this time New York had all but been struck from the industrial map. No one ran shipments into the city. No one pumped them water or provided them power. They were a city cut adrift.

Gradually, the population declined, and a few managed to get some shipments in. A few stores opened back up, many of them trading in goods looted from other establishments abandoned by their owners. The six bridges leading to New Jersey, while they are still blockaded, have become active trading sites for New York City entrepreneurs. On the whole, the city looks like a city after wartime, and by most standards, it is. There is no government, no utilities, and the population is but a shadow of its former self.

But it survives.



Some say that the Blast in New York wasn't set off by the drug lords. The rumor on the street was that a Euro-backed corp did it to break the U.S. hold on the United Nations. The Media that could break that story would be able to write his own ticket.

PENNSYLVANIA (PA)

Capital: Harrisburg

New Cities: Washington, Beaver Falls

Industries: chemical production, cybertech, electronics, light to heavy industry, mining

Pennsylvania has managed to keep itself more or less afloat all through the Collapse, and the state dominates the Northeast Region politically. It does not have the infighting that plagues Massachusetts, it's not bankrupt like New Jersey, and it hasn't lost a major city as has New York. A standard joke around the state is that the government has moved back to

Philadelphia, where it started. Of course, this joke overlooks the ascendancy of Appalachia, which pulls more weight than the Northeast nine times out of ten.

Pennsylvania also marks the eastern-most reach of the thick acid rains. Most of these are fronts which roam in from the Midwest region, but Pennsylvania's industries also produce their own sulfuric and nitric acid fumes, much to their neighbors' dismay.

By far the worst of the problems that Pennsylvania had to deal with was the Pitt Arco nuclear accident. Pittsburgh was one of the first cities to follow New Jersey's lead in building arcologies. The mayor's thinking was twofold: He could raze a bunch of low-income housing, sending the 'undesirables' elsewhere, and he could use the arco's protection against acid rain as a major selling point to entice new upwardly-mobile residents. Pitt Arco was an ambitious design, and some critics said it was too big to be stable. It was also to have a small nuclear plant to power its incredible array of high-tech, high-energy devices (the so-called 'Star Trek suites' were extreme examples of conspicuous energy consumption). Unfortunately, as the reactor was being brought on-line, there was an accident that killed the reactor testing personnel and many of the arcology construction workers. The accident also poisoned the water table, and fallout caused additional damage. Although most residents evacuated Pittsburgh within two days, cancer deaths soared over the next ten years, in both Pittsburgh and many of the cities downstream of it.

Drawing a lesson from the Russians of 1941, many Pittsburgh industries pulled up their factories, ripping everything apart and shipping it out. Some moved to Washington, others (which required the Ohio River for cooling water) moved to Beaver Falls. In these townships they built new buildings and reconstructed their factories from the carloads of crates. Pittsburgh remains quarantined even today, and were the state government to lift the quarantine, no one would enter it anyway. Everyone likes their hair right where it is, and no one wants to take the risk, no matter how small it may be.

NEW CITIES

Washington and Beaver Falls: These two cities are small towns which were deluged with the sudden arrival of Pittsburgh industry and workers. They are the epitome of all that a 'New City' is not: they are unplanned, underdeveloped sprawling towns with no cohesion and an inadequate transportation net. Built haphazardly around the original towns, the layouts of the various areas shows each corporation's style, and especially demonstrates the haste with which the corporations laid out their areas. Only the sudden influx of finance kept these two towns from being sucked into a black hole. Further, despite constant road work at the behest of the corporations, these cities are known as having the worst and most congested roads within a several hundred mile radius. Part of the problem facing the transportation departments is that the new industrial areas have resisted becoming incorporated into the city limits, and therefore do not financially support the maintenance of the civic roadways. Currently there are several suits and countersuits in court on this situation.

RHODE ISLAND (RI)

Capital: Providence

Status: City State

New Cities: No room for any

Industries: fishing, medium industry, shipyards, transportation

Rhode Island weathered the storms of the last decade pretty well, in part because it was not a transportation axis for the homeless trying to get out of New York City, or the migrants trying to reach other parts of the country. Ecologically, it is fairly well off, as the Massachusetts coastline protected it from the Kosa Maru disaster, and the acid rains don't often reach this far east.

Part of the reason for Rhode Island's success was their aggressive building and marketing scheme, which gained them the lion's share of the shipping when

New York City ceased being a practicable port of call. Now Providence is the busiest port in the Northeast Region, and it rivals other ports on the East Coast.

Politically, Rhode Island is an anomaly. Using the best tactics of old-fashioned American politicking, the representatives from Providence achieved quorum with only themselves present (the rest of the state government having gone home for Christmas). During this hastily-declared special session, the legislature reorganized Rhode Island's government by expanding Providence's city limits out to the state borders, enveloping every other municipality. The other cities were declared wards, and suddenly Rhode Island had become a city state, exclusively controlled by the Providence legislators. Since then, they have made sure they kept the reins of power in their hands or the hands of close associates.

No one else concerns themselves with these little politricks, considering Rhode Island to be too small for concern. They should take note, however, because Rhode Island is a considerable port, and to lose its cooperation would put a severe cramp in what's left of the Northeast's economy.

VERMONT (VT)

Capital: Montpelier

Status: New Parliamentary State in 2013, Seaboard Cooperative member

New Cities: None

Industries: dairy, food crops, logging

Vermont is the third member of the Seaboard Cooperative. Of the three member states, Vermont has taken the most damage from acid rains sweeping over from New York, but the damage is nevertheless light. The Vermont ecosystem has been able to absorb the pollution fairly well.

As part of the Seaboard Cooperative's grand plan to isolate themselves from the rest of the nation, Vermont has destroyed several miles of Interstate 91 (which runs into Massachusetts) and also portions of all

the other roads which lead into the rest of the states. Interstates 89 and 91 leading into Quebec have been left operational, and are flanked with concrete bunkers and international shipping outposts. These outposts prevent Canadian truckers from entering the Seaboard Cooperative, and organize the transfer of goods from Cooperative truckers and warehouses to Canadian shippers. Of course, the rest of the roads crossing the Canadian border have also been ripped up to discourage smuggling.

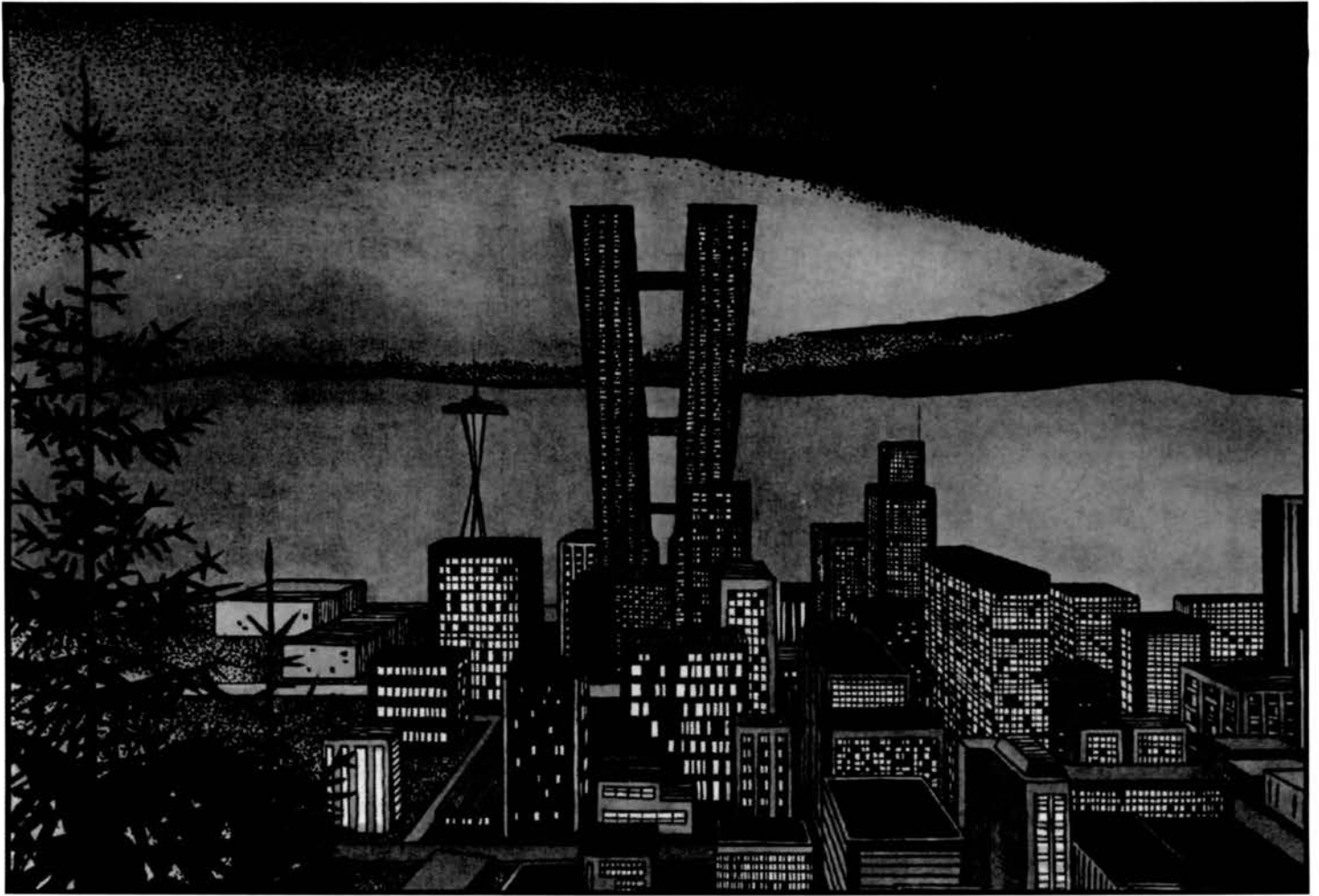
Life in Vermont continues in much the same manner as it has for the last fifty years. Life is calm and quiet, except for the few occasions when cyberpunks cross into Vermont territory for whatever reason.

■ PACIFIC NORTHWEST ■

Politically speaking, the Pacific Northwest region is as powerful as the Great Plains region, and these are the only two real competitors to the Appalachian dominance of national politics. Despite the fact that the region only has four states, it possesses the largest West Coast port (also the only Pacific port not in a Free State) and the Pacific Ocean Military Base. It also still has a large reserve of lumber, and produces a lot of real food, like apples, potatoes, hops, wine grapes, and the few fish that are still safe to eat.

Added to these resources is the fact that these four states take their politics very seriously. The region's senators have the best attendance record in the national government. Furthermore, the Pacific Northwest region is the only region which has always voted as a bloc on every issue. These practices have added clout to what is a relatively small group of states.

Thanks to the port of Seattle, the Pacific Northwest has become somewhat of a thoroughfare for American society. Far from being a backwater relegated to a lonely corner of the continent, the Northwest is towards the front of the American cultural wave, and it's slowly gaining ground on the leaders of the pack, Appalachia and the Free States. Many of the grunge rockers are making pilgrimages to the rebuilt ruins of the



Northwest, hoping to find something of their roots in the new port and the abandoned skyscrapers. Or, as Kerry Eurodyne said, "Well, the Northwest music scene used to be the pits. Now the only thing that stinks is Tacoma."

Despite years of severe ecological damage, the states of the Pacific Northwest region are trying to improve things, recognizing that natural resources are one of their biggest assets. The rugged beauty of the area, though, has been largely destroyed, and it may never return.

HAWAII (HI)

Capital: Honolulu

Status: Military State in 1997

New Cities: Kaena Station

Industries: aeronautics, fishing, military hardware, recreation, shipyards, sugar

During the Mideast Meltdown, the United States military co-opted the entire island of Oahu 'to ensure the security of Hawaii and the rest of the nation.' Since that time, Oahu has remained a military island. Tourism is minimal, although Honolulu Airport serves as a hub for anywhere in the islands, thereby allowing the military to clear everyone through whatever security systems they wish. Nevertheless, Hawaii remains a popular vacation site, especially for those with money enough to purchase Exterritorial Concealed Weapons Permits (known as "e-quip").

Since the military runs the islands, the military police are the enforcers of the law. Gun control in Hawaii is very

strict; to have a gun you must either be a native with a registered permit, or a visitor who has passed the strict requirements and paid the high e-quip fee. Since martial law is still in effect on the islands, those caught with unregistered guns can be summarily shot.

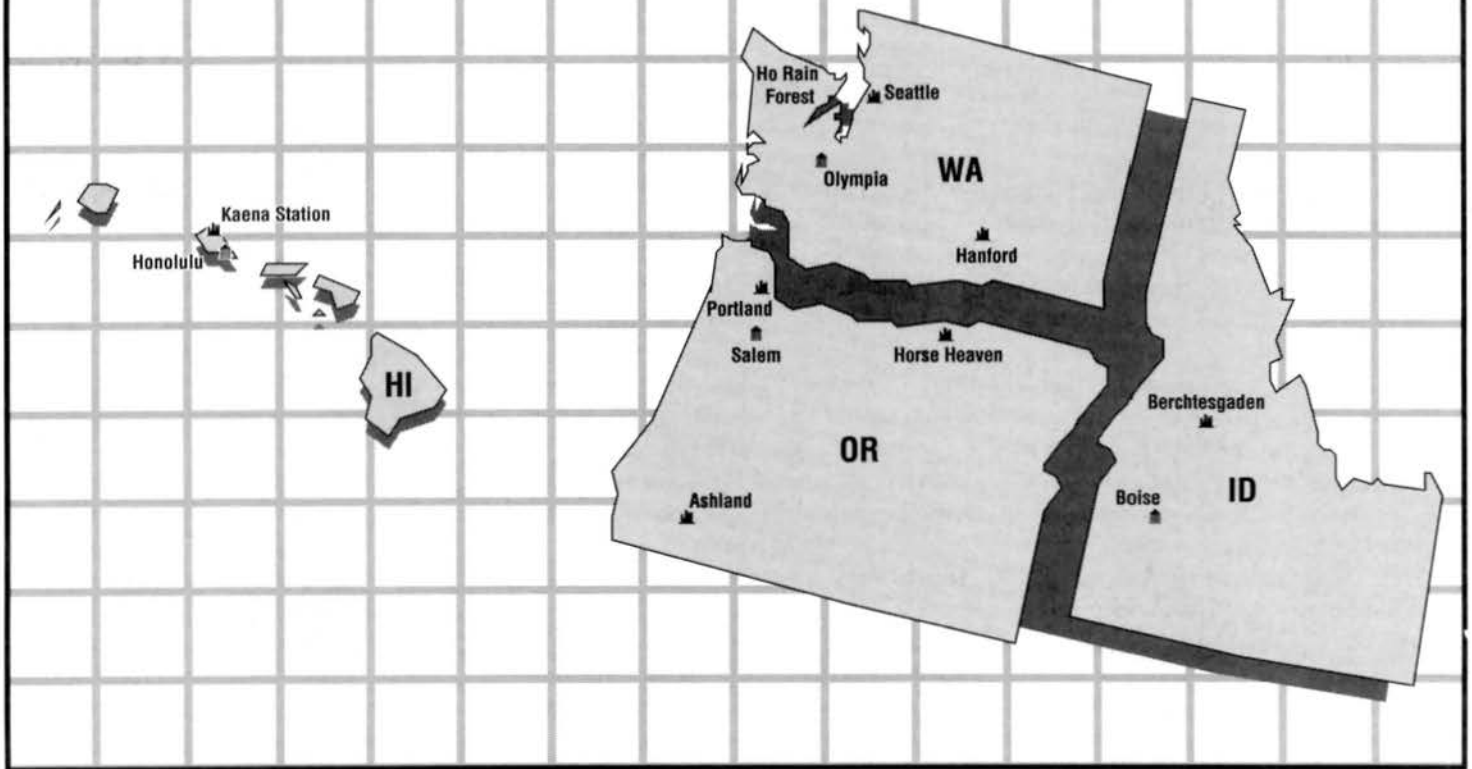
Hawaii is mountainous enough that the rise in sea levels has not affected it much. Most of the problems caused by the rising waters have been dealt with through creative engineering, dredging and landfills.

Overall, with the notable exception of military rule, the character of Hawaii has changed little in the last thirty years. It's still a lush tropical paradise, and the perfect site for a relaxing vacation for beavers, corporates, and drug kingpins alike.

NEW CITIES

Kaena Station: This is the newest and

THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST



largest military COG on the west coast, built on scenic Kaena Point on Oahu. It covers the areas formerly dedicated to the Coast Guard station, the Makua Military Reservation, and Dillingham AFB. Built with typical military utilitarianism instead of architectural imagination, there is really very little interesting about the place, other than it is filled with thousands of trained killers.

Some of the equipment in Kaena, however, is interesting. Pearl Harbor being the last major U.S. base in the Pacific, the military has taken some pains to keep it that way. Fearful of another ESA rock dropping out of the sky and into Pearl, the U.S. has built some Anti-Reentry Kinetic Missile defenses in the area. Also, extending out from the point, there is a long floating causeway that can be used to embark or disembark troops from the Pacific Floating Dock.



Hawaii is still the meeting place of the Pacific Rim. If Arasaka is involved, it's likely that the Fixers here know about it. Their information is expensive, but well worth the price.

HOT SPOTS

Honolulu: Since the military takeover, there have been a large number of dissatisfied citizens. Most just ignored the military rule, awaiting the time when the crisis of the Mideast Meltdown would blow over and state government would pass again into the hands of the civilians. Since this has not yet happened, more and more radicals are getting actively disgruntled, and leftists have actually formed a Hawaii Liberation Front to try to force the military to retire to its bases.

Of course, taking on U.S.-trained solos is pretty foolish as a general rule, so the HLF resorts to a wide variety of nasty stratagems, using ambushes, bombs, Trojan horse ploys, and other tactics to cause pain, injury and death to the troops and their families. In response, military police presence in Honolulu (where most of the violence takes place) is very heavy, and soldiers walk around in groups of three, minimum. Sudden firefights can happen abruptly. All in all, it makes Honolulu night life very interesting, especially for those without guns.

IDAHO (ID)

Capital: Boise

Status: New Parliamentary State in 2006

New Cities: Berchtesgaden

Industries: bioengineering tech, dairy, food crops, light industry, livestock, logging

In the 1990's, one of Idaho's claims to fame was being the involuntary home of several Neo-Nazi white supremacy groups. Unfortunately, this is the facet of Idaho life that took center stage during the Collapse.

As with any hate group, the Neo-Nazis blamed their troubles on the objects of their hate, and they proclaimed a racial jihad for the purification of the United States. That other hate groups were waging war against the anglos (and anyone else who came to hand) only added fuel to the Neo-Nazis' fire. Fortunately, by the time collapse was in full swing, most of the hate groups had faded into oblivion, either too hungry to hate or too violent to survive retribution.

Unfortunately, the white supremacists seized control of Idaho. Renaming Boise to Aryan City (how imaginative), they started a pogrom the like of which America has never seen. Soon the new Idaho state flag (a single white star on a blue field with an encircled swastika in the center) started appearing in cities across the state, and blackshirts, brownshirts, and blueshirts started parading in public, attacking unwanted people, their homes, and their businesses.

Minorities and strong-willed anglos banded together as a resistance in short order, fighting against the Neo-Nazis and instituting a new underground railroad. Most of the population, however, went into denial or ignored the problem as long as it did not bother them directly.

Once the U.S. began pulling itself out of the Collapse, though, more people began to fight back at the New Circle which ran the state. The Neo-Nazis, of course, responded with lots of violence, which only served to alienate more of the Idahoans against them. After a hard ten-month partisan struggle, the supremacists were ousted, and the guerrilla leaders were put in power as a provisional council.

While the new government worked at cleaning up the mess the neo-Nazis had left behind, Washington underwent its renaissance. After a pause to see how the new system of government worked, the Idahoans rebuilt their government in the same fashion, and the provisional council stepped down gracefully.

NEW CITIES

Berchtesgaden: The Neo-Nazis fled into the national forests of central Idaho when they were ousted by the people of Idaho, and founded this 'town' as their lair from which they'd make their bid to retake the state. No one knows where it is, but finding it has become rather important to area residents as the Neo-Nazis continue to lead their hate campaign against the 'inferior races.'

Berchtesgaden is little more than an armed camp, and its actual location changes from time to time. Sometimes it's a cave, sometimes a meadow in the foothills, sometimes a cabin or lodge appropriated from unfortunate residents. Usually, though, it is in one of the many abandoned hotels, campgrounds, and the like scattered throughout the wilderness.

Unfortunately, the Neo-Nazis have learned a lot from their defeat, and they now train with a rigorous determination unknown in the movement prior to this time. In fact, even the press now refers to some of the raiders, grudgingly, as 'solos.'



The Berchtesgaden raiders have just raised the death toll in their hunt for purity to over 100. Very few Cyberpunks get involved in such things, but occasionally it's nice to have a cause to kill for. Several citizen's groups are forming to deal with the racists once and for all.

OREGON (OR)

Capital: Salem

Status: New Parliamentary State in 2005

New Cities: Horse Heaven

Industries: communications, food crops, hydroelectrics, livestock, logging, shipyards, tourism, water

During the crises in nearby Washington, Oregon hoped to come out as top dog in the area. With major companies leaving their northern neighbor, Oregon tried to persuade them to move south, offering land incentives and the like. Alaska offered better tax breaks, though, so most of the companies moved north, leaving Oregon to its own devices. In fact, the only scrap that Oregon got from the formerly prosperous Evergreen State was that when Washington collapsed, Portland took up some of Seattle's shipping slack. The rest went to the Californias.

The eastern part of the state was deserted early during the Collapse, as Nomad packs and homeless refugees crossed the state in search of better climes, preying on the isolated villages as they wished. Lacking the money to go elsewhere, most went to the Portland area, giving rise to the start of a Portland-Salem metropolitan axis. Eventually, by 2018, the Portland suburbs indeed reached the boundaries of Salem, although the urbanized area extends no more than five miles from the Interstate.

Faced with the Nomad problem, Oregon enacted new, tough migrant laws, and strictly enforced them. As a side benefit, the environment was well-protected by these prosecutions, as Nomads, homeless, and others who lived off the land without concern for consequence were effectively deterred from entering Oregon. Later, this had the happy consequence of making Oregon a popular tourist and vacation spot, as Crater Lake (among others) became one of the very few unsullied natural locations left in the states. The powerful Oregon Environmental Patrol, a specialized adjunct to the state police, ensures that the Oregon state parks remain in their relatively pristine state.

Shortly after Washington's restructuring, Oregonians demanded that their state government restructure itself along the

same parliamentary lines. This became the major issue on the election of 2004, when the entire incumbency was thrown out in favor of new, aspiring radicals promising change. When the new state governor 'changed his mind' about rebuilding the government, his car was bombed. Needless to say, the replacement governor made the switch to the New Parliamentary system in short order. Rewarded for political pressure by quick results, Oregonians have remained politically active since.

The key resource of the Northwest, and in fact the whole West Coast, is water. From the croplands of Washington and Idaho to the Los Angeles Metroplex, everyone wants water. Oregon finds itself in a good situation in this department, receiving far more rain than it uses. This water it exports to its neighbors, charging a good price for the resource. In addition, when the balance of water tips heavily to the north or south, Oregon taxes any water piped from Washington to California, or vice versa.

NEW CITIES

Horse Heaven: Named for the hills just across the Columbia river, Horse Heaven is an experiment in labor-intensive agribusiness. It is located in the Columbia River gorge, west of the ghost town of Pendleton. Sponsored by the Oregon government, it is a privately-held cooperative which employs natural techniques and manpower instead of hormonally-induced growth and robotic machinery. The Horse Heaven fields cover most of Morrow County, as well as parts of Umatilla and Gilliam Counties. Lately there have been rumors circulating that Horse Heaven also grows peyote, poppies, morning glories, hemp, and unusual varieties of mushrooms. As yet there has been no proof, but the incidence of violence, espionage, and meta-legal activities is on the rise on northeast Oregon. Many observers feel that because the state patrol uses Horse Heaven as a base of operations for fully one quarter of the state, they are loathe to investigate any wrong-doings on the part of their erstwhile hosts. The state patrol, of course, denies these allegations.

HOT SPOTS

Rumor has it that a large body of armed survivalists were using the Oregon mountains to survive the coming problems. The problem is that no one has heard from them since, which is probably just as good. They would be too smug at how things turned out.

Ashland: Amazingly enough, there is still an annual Shakespeare festival here. The town is deserted for the rest of the year.



Ever seen a play at Ashland? Check it out, it's pretty cool. True, most punks probably couldn't sit through one act, but it's very popular with the Euro's.

WASHINGTON (WA)

Capital: Olympia

Status: New Parliamentary State in 2002

New Cities: Port of Seattle Floating Annex

Industries: dairy, fishing, food crops, hydroelectrics, international shipping, light industry, livestock, logging, mining, shipyards, water, wine

Washington has suffered a lot over the last few decades. Seattle fell from being the #1 place to live in 1990 to being in the top ten worst places by 2010. Certainly overcrowding had a major effect, but the single biggest cause was a series of ecological disasters compounded by inept governing.

The problems for the state started in 1994, when decreased defense spending, poor management, and unresponsive engineering practices led to Boeing losing its share of the space program and military contracts. The aeronautical company tried to get its civilian air arm to shoulder the financial burden, but

Boeing's increased plane prices (especially the over-built 7007) caused airliner sales to fall. By 1995, the unthinkable had happened: Boeing collapsed, reorganizing as a small commuter AV company.

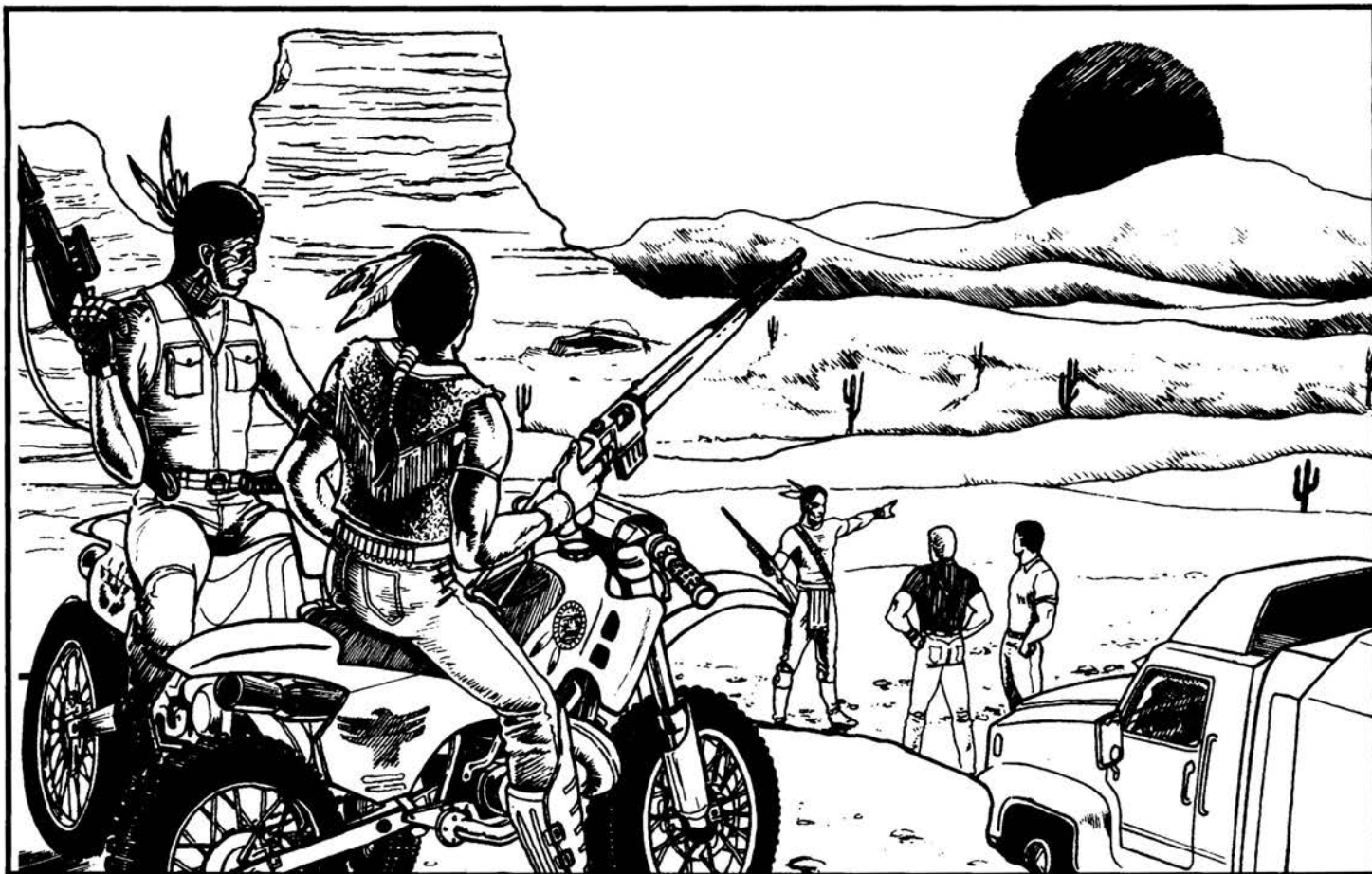
That winter was unseasonably dry, as shifting air currents kept precious snow from the Cascade Mountains. The next year, 1996, saw a massive drought strike the state. The Washington food crops were very small, and several forest fires hampered the lumber industry. Some tracts of younger growth were simply left to burn in order to conserve water.

They say bad things come in threes, which was certainly true for Washington. That fall, just at the start of the salmon spawning season, a Korean tanker which had illegally loaded itself with toxic waste for 'disposal' elsewhere was rammed by a destroyer escort which had suffered control failure. The resulting spill contaminated the entirety of Puget Sound and killed off that year's salmon runs. It was 1997 by the time the majority of the spill had been effectively cleaned up.

By the time the Collapse began, the Washington state government was in dire straits, lacking proceeds from Boeing, logging, farming, and fishing. They attempted to balance their budget by raising corporate income taxes and imposing a state income tax for individuals. Microsoft, Equis, Prototech and Arasaka, rather than face higher taxes, pulled up their roots and moved to southern Alaska. Most of the few left with local jobs also moved out, looking to avoid Washington's new tax.

Washington went belly-up, and the state government was dissolved. A quiet, despairing anarchy reigned for several years.

Everything changed, however, when California declared itself a Free State. The U.S. government was doing a lot of trade with Japan, China, Korea, and India, and the thought of using Free Californian ports for these shipments was unappealing to the President, to say the least. Someone who had read his history pointed out that due to the ocean currents, Seattle was much closer to Asia than California. Figuring they could easily control the downtrodden state, the U.S. government poured what resources



it could spare into rebuilding Seattle as the major West Coast port.

This springboarded Washington back into the limelight. Backed by the government, a group of local citizens rebuilt the state government from the ground up, using the latest in political theory and experience. The state government is now parliamentary in nature, and Washingtonians across the state, tired of lawlessness, have an avid interest in local politics.

NEW CITIES

Port of Seattle Floating Annex: This is an immense floating dry-dock and shipping warehouse facility covering the southern end of Puget Sound. Like all ports everywhere, it is the scene of a lot of crime, smuggling, and other entertaining diversions. The Annex also includes the Bremerton shipyards. Although Bremerton used to be a major naval base, it has since been relegated to support roles for the Kaena COG and the Pacific Floating Dock.

HOT SPOTS

“ *f we continue these practices now, with what we know, our sons will be ashamed that we are their fathers, and our grandsons will drive a hundred miles out of their way to piss on our graves.”*

- *engineer at Hanford (asked to remain anonymous), ca. 1968*

Hanford: Years of short-sighted hazardous waste disposal finally took its toll at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. Hazardous and radioactive wastes had been injected with the attitude that later generations would figure out how to detoxify them. Unfortunately, this messianic generation has yet to arrive, but improper disposal practices led to a small ‘incident’ in 2004. The leakage from this has turned the Hanford area into a toxic wasteland. Wastes have also leached into the Columbia river, poisoning it and

wiping out a large chunk of the northwest fishing industry.

For some reason, Hanford has turned into a perverted Mecca for those who think they’re the children of the new toxic age. Such lunatics come here to settle, and invariably die a few years later, their bodies corrupted with toxins, cancers, and radiation sickness.

Ho Rain Forest: There has been an attempt by a group of naturalists to return to living with the land. These people have chosen to settle in and around the Ho Rain Forest on the Olympic Peninsula. Their experiment would be largely a success if Nomad gangs and other weirdoes didn’t occasionally drive through and use their technological edge to cause as much pain as possible. These folks are straightforward, though, and can provide needy cyberpunks with crash space and food if they’ll pull their weight in chores... and maybe off a few renegades should any show up.

■ THE WEST ■

““The West? What a bunch of drek. They should've just called us 'The Rest.' Lumping us in with losers like Arkansas and Kansas. What a pathetic joke.”

- Pat Satay, senator (R-AZ)

The states of The West have not fared very well in the twenty-first century. Already hot and dry, the droughts and global warming of the last thirty years have taken their toll on these hapless places. Nowhere else is the death of small-town America as evident as here. There are few if any small towns left on the map. If any do survive, they're multi-generation homesteads and the like, places where the residents won't leave the generations of family in the local cemetery. No one cares to know whether these towns are still extant or not. While there are still the diehard or desperate few trying to claw a living from the land, don't count on finding one when you're lost and starving in the desert. Even if you do, they're as likely to shoot you and eat you as to lend a helping hand.

Most of the Western states are dominated by deserted highways carving their way between sun-parched dust-bowl deserts. With the increased heat and decreased rainfall and trade, most of the ranches and farms, like the plant life, dried up and blew away. People moved to the larger cities, which, with their large utility network, were able to irrigate large 'green belts' beyond the suburbs, where the Western states now produce their food.

Skywalks have become commonplace in the West, as most people will avoid leaving their air-conditioned offices if at all possible. In Tucson, for example, it is possible to walk for eight miles across town without once having to face the heat. This has, of course, added to the complexity of building security, especially when corporate executives demand access to their offices twenty-four hours a day. It has also dramatically changed traffic and rush hour patterns.

Economically, the states of the West have no real power. While there are a few excellent companies operating down there (like Phoenix's NetLink Software), the West as a whole does not control a major portion of any industry. There are only two reasons why the United States government pays the West any heed: smuggling and military.

Smuggling is a big problem all along the Mexican border, as private entrepreneurs try to run contraband across the border and major corporations try to avoid high U.S. tariffs. In a partial effort to counteract this, the United States has not maintained any highways except Interstates 10, 25 (in places) and 40, which connect the Californias with the rest of the U.S. This has not slowed down the smugglers much, but, it's as good a reason as any for the federal government to keep the Western states hungry for funds (and therefore loyal to the administration).

The one big asset of the West is their wide open spaces. Miles and miles of empty desert make for excellent training grounds for U.S. pilots and hoverjocks. Military vehicles roam the countryside pretty much at will, because the only people they offend have little or no voice in the state government. As an added bonus, the military presence and free fire laws make smuggling a bit more exciting a profession. But then, if it wasn't exciting, everybody would be doing it, neh?

ARIZONA (AZ)

Capital: Phoenix

New Cities: Alpha

Industries: communications, cybertech, electronics, military training, mining, software

Arizona has surprisingly little problem with smuggling. Goods from Mexico are generally targeted to markets in the Appalachians or the Californias, and Arizona is on a convenient route to neither. As a result, Arizona is not required

by the U.S. government to field a significant border patrol force, and the state therefore has that much more money to spend on internal development.

Phoenix and Tucson both are thriving relatively well, and have extensive green belts around them producing whatever crops can weather the heat, the wind, and the driven sand. Outside of these two cities, however, Arizona is a wasteland, populated in the majority by a few desultory Native American tribes clinging to their rocks like lichens.

Western nomadic culture has survived here, replete with animal heads, saloon doors, and other cowpoke paraphernalia. All Old West bars and hotels are located on the ground floor of buildings, to make it easier for them to cater to passing Nomads.

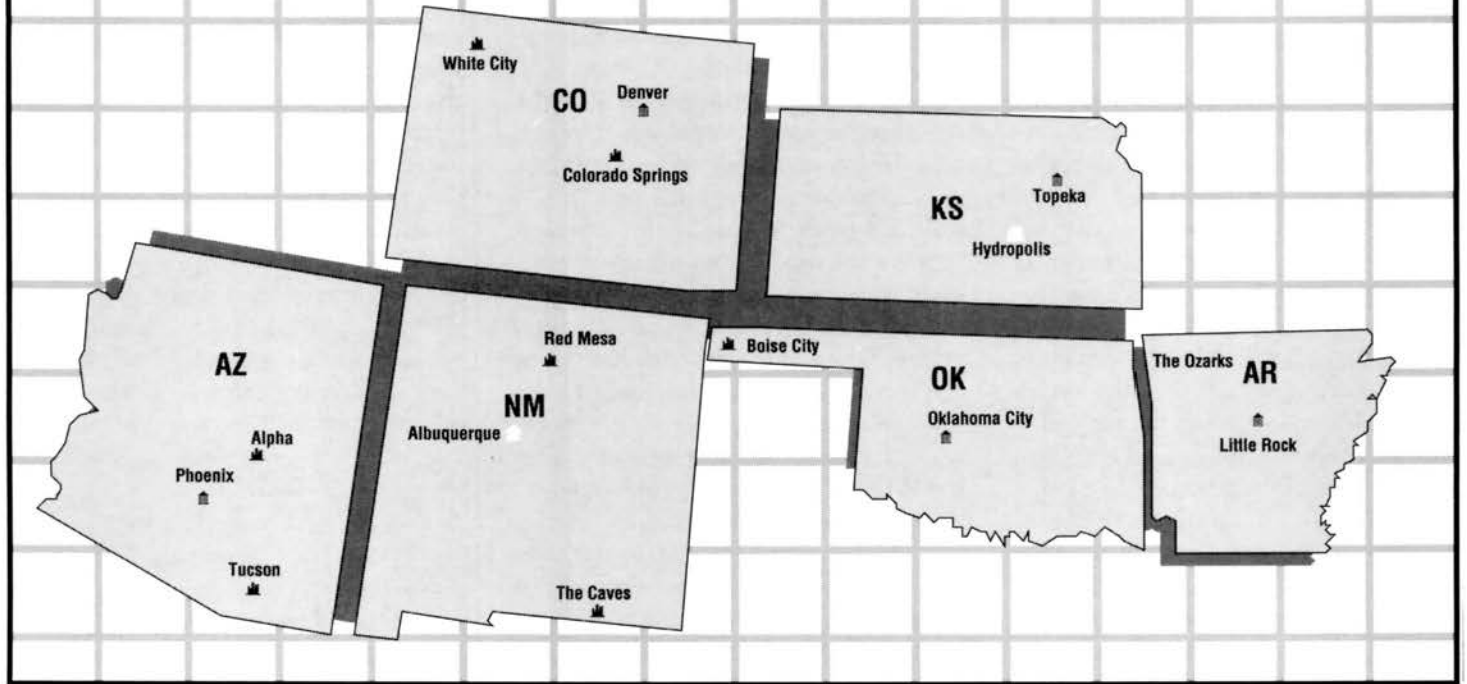
NEW CITIES

Alpha: A domed city which envelops the Horseshoe Dam northeast of Phoenix, Alpha remains a mystery. It is a sealed environment, and no one knows any outsiders who have been inside the enclosure. A few people who might have been representatives or purchasing agents have appeared from time to time, but they've disappeared before they could be interrogated.

Alpha appeared seemingly overnight (during the Collapse, when no one was watching), which indicates that whoever built it has enough money to finance fast and thorough construction, and also engenders enough loyalty to keep such a project secret from the general public. According to the best information, the leader of Alpha is an aging but charismatic African who claims to have visions of the future of the planet.

Observers point out that Alpha has been built on the research of previous self-sustaining colonies, like the Bio 1 experiments. In fact, the only thing Alpha imports (as near as anyone can tell) is hydroelectric power. The state of Arizona would have taken exception to Alpha's appropriation of the Horseshoe Dam, but the Roosevelt Dam and others are adequate to supply power to Phoenix's diminished population, and there is still some power being transmitted to the cities from Horseshoe.

THE WEST



Is Alpha a threat? No one knows. Although several have been tempted to launch a missile at the dome on general principle, in this day and age, if a group of fanatics are not yet your enemies, it's best to let them remain that way.



The invitation simply says "Come to Alpha." with a date and time. No name, no explanation. It could be a trap, or a vital clue. The only

way to know is to go.

HOT SPOTS

Given the temperature, everywhere in Arizona is a hot spot.

ARKANSAS (AR)

Capital: Little Rock

New Cities: none (!)

Industries: food crops, logging, mining, transportation

Arkansas continues to exist mainly because it's a trucking hub between Appalachia and Texas, the West, and the Californias. Little Rock itself is a town whose primary industry lies in accommodating interstate traffic. There are few other towns left in the state, and none of them are worth paying any attention to.

Arkansas was hit particularly hard by the Wasting Plague. By the time the horrid disease started making its rounds in the year 2000, the Arkansas state government was so destitute that their public information program received a mere pittance of funds. The few pamphlets and posters that were made were never distributed. As a result, the Wasting Plague spread through Little Rock, Pine Bluff and the Ozarks like wildfire. The death it brought overtaxed the hapless populace, and the corpses could not be buried fast enough.

This in turn led to an even greater pestilence, as cholera and other diseases competed with the Wasting Plague for the highest body count. For a while, Texas and Tennessee closed off the border at Texarkana and Memphis, respectively, letting the bacterial fire burn itself out within the state's borders. Other states joined this quarantine, but did not prosecute it as actively, to their eventual regret.

By the time the Wasting Plague had run its course, the only thing thriving in Arkansas were the scavengers. Surrounded by the ghosts of their kin, the remaining rural Arkansanders moved to Little Rock, where the state government was offering incentives, namely complete furniture sets from families who were certified to have died. As a result, Little Rock (and the other Arkansas towns) has a false prosperity, as everyone in the place has had their pick of the finest accessories in the city. Sure, it's all out of date, but that's been an Arkansas standard for the last century, hasn't it?

Now, in Little Rock (and the other towns), most of the lawns have been converted into gardens, so they don't have to rely on interstate shipping to feed themselves. Empty houses have been converted into greenhouses, and several Arkansas families have been making good money raising exotic plants. How exotic? Use your imagination. We're talking about a state where then-governor Clinton stopped drug smuggling investigations without explanation.

Overall, Arkansas is effectively a city-state. There is only one town of importance, and Little Rock is so fractured, so independent, that there is little sense of community in the area. Arkansas doesn't even bother sending a senator to Washington.

HOT SPOTS

The Ozarks: Thanks to Arkansas' lack of concern for anything going on beyond their front yards, the entire Ozarks area is open to any refugees who might want to disappear for a while. There's no telling who might be found up here: Arasaka defectors, infamous bank robbers, or even a cyberpsycho or two, making their homes among the hillbilies in the region.

COLORADO (CO)

Capital: Denver

New Cities: White City

Industries: aeronautics, communications, food crops, light and medium industry, livestock, military training, mining

Colorado has managed to survive in spite of hotter, drier summers and colder, harsher winters. Denver remains a hub for coast-to-coast travel, as well as for the remnants of Colorado's failing agricultural industry.

With the general climatic changes, Colorado is able to raise little but genetically-engineered sheep. Fortunately, this caters to the rich Corporate market, and

keeps the Colorado food industry afloat. Some Coloradans also earn money by dragging disaffected urbanites into the wilds for a week and letting them pretend they're cowboys.

Overall, the attitude in Colorado is bitter, made so by the climate, their economic position, and the rock strike on Colorado Springs.

NEW CITIES

White City: Biotechnica bought the northwest corner of the state during the worst of the Collapse, when the entire area was being constantly overrun by Nomads and the like. Once the country began rebuilding itself, Biotechnica asserted its claim (which includes Rio Blanco and Moffat Counties) and began raising cattle. Biotechnica bases itself in White City, a new town built with tourist kitsch galore, yet also having the wherewithal to ship live (or freshly-slaughtered) cattle anywhere in the states. The tax revenues generated by this have helped prop up the Colorado state government, but it has also made many people envious, what with gourmet beef on the hoof out there, just waiting to be stolen...

HOT SPOTS

U.S. Air Force Academy: Unlike West Point and Annapolis, the Air Force Academy has had to change dramatically to keep pace with the times. Everything is different now than it was even at the tail end of the twentieth century, and the trials and discipline the cadets must withstand ensure that they'll be able to hold their own against the ESA for years to come.

COLORADO SPRINGS:

“We could have aimed at Boulder, put personally, I've never liked puns.”

- Jean-Michel Mousseau, ESA

Officially, the city of Colorado Springs no longer exists. The Colorado state

government will spend no time or money on it for any reason. There are still people living there, however, and among these folks their city is now known as 'Colorado Sprung,' after a graffito on one of the few remaining tourist signs in the area.

Colorado Springs has the dubious distinction of being the second target struck by an orbital rock in 2008. The first rock was dropped on Tampa (see page 102), and by the time it hit, U.S. telemetry had tracked the second rock, which was calculated to hit Omaha, Nebraska, home of the SAC headquarters. The government reacted much more swiftly to this threat, mobilizing their defenses and evacuating the city. Then, just as the U.S. began launching nuclear ABMs to break up the rock over Nebraska, the ESA fired a powerful rocket concealed on the blind side of the boulder, pushing it down and southwest to impact Colorado Springs. The city had minimal warning, and the civilians panicked, plugging the escape routes with their vehicles. Traffic became hopelessly snarled once people abandoned their cars in a vain attempt to escape on foot.

The rock landed square on the headquarters of the U.S. Olympic Committee, or close enough to make no difference. The crater itself measures about 3/4 mile in diameter. (The ancient asteroid crater in Arizona measures a full mile in diameter. The survivors of Colorado Springs count themselves lucky.)

There were survivors (including a future president). There were actually a lot: those who'd gone for shelter instead of fleeing in a panic. They found themselves in a city without utilities, service, or support of any sort. Colorado Springs was not declared a disaster area; it was declared a total loss. Now, in the rubble-strewn, half-buried ruins, survivors eke out a living salvaging valuables from their former home town and selling them to passing Nomads in exchange for food, weapons, ammo, and possibly a way out of this hell-hole. The remaining freeways are filled with gutted automobiles, their skeletal occupants stripped of jewelry, cyberware, gold fillings, and other such

items. The gas tanks have all been drained, and many of the cars themselves have been stripped. Now the survivors are pulling copper and fiberoptic cabling from beneath the city, and disassembling the water system for the scrap value of the metal pipes.

One small firm tried to systematically salvage the area. They had cleared about a miles' worth of skeletal cars from the freeway before the residents descended one night and stripped the salvage cranes of their gas, wiring, and precision parts. No attempt has been made since.

Most of the inhabitants live like rats or coyotes, wary of each other and without loyalties beyond the nuclear family. A few families have banded together in small tribal units and carved out territories in the 'richer' sections of town, those places that offer better scavenging. The residents of Colorado Sprung know they're no match for modern weaponry or combat-trained cyberpunks, so they rely on dirty tricks and their encyclopedic knowledge of the ruins. After all, no amount of combat training will help when someone drops a twelve-pound chunk of concrete on your head from a fourth-story window.

Cheyenne Mountain: Although it was designed to withstand a two megaton hit, the engineering of Cheyenne Mountain was apparently not quite up to what was expected. The government sent a recon team and some engineers to check it out. They found that the entrance was completely sealed with rock. Seismologists could not determine accurately whether the base had survived, due to fracture interference underground. Radio operators tried to raise the Cheyenne Mountain personnel on the radio, but they too failed. It was this last bit of information that finally convinced the government to abandon any type of rescue operation; it would be expensive, dangerous, and there was no evidence anyone was still down there. The technology itself was not worth the expense of recovery, and buried as deep as it is, no one else will get hold of it, either.



Studies done between 2019-2020 seem to indicate parts of the NORAD base may well have survived. With the rescue attempts called off after only two weeks, who knows what might be in there. All it would take is some mining equipment and a lot of determination.

KANSAS (KS)

Capital: Topeka

New Cities: Hydropolis

Industries: hydroponics

Kansas, formerly a breadbasket of the American empire, has been devastated by drought and global warming. What used to be verdant fields of corn are now parched dust bowl deserts. In fact, the state must occasionally move giant sweepers down the length of I-70 just to keep the road open through the drifting dirt. The entire western half of the state has been abandoned to its fate, having been designated as a new Indian reservation, and therefore ineligible for any state support. Occasionally some Colorado ranchers will wander through, helping themselves to what few plants are around.

Kansas state troopers are never seen more than about thirty miles west of the I-135/I-70 interchange. Instead, they restrict their activities to the eastern part of the state, where there are still some civilians scratching their life from the parched soil. Kansas state justice is very fast, often arbitrary, and makes minimal provisions for appeals. Often offenders will be jailed without a hearing, to be released without explanation a few days or weeks later.

Kansas seems to be going the way of Arkansas, albeit somewhat slower. The population is small and urban, and the people are unable to concern themselves with more than their own dinner table. In the eastern portion of the state, Missouri

has annexed Kansas City, up to and including US-73, arcing to State 7 and State 150. Kansas of course protested, but the added prosperity and protection brought to the residents by this action provided enough momentum for a plebiscite to make the annexation official.

NEW CITIES

Hydropolis: The few wealthy Kansas natives who survived the Collapse are endeavoring to keep Kansas among the food-producing states. To this end, they built Hydropolis, a town with but one purpose: hydroponics. Situated south of Topeka on I-35, Hydropolis has been successful enough to attract the attention of some lower-echelon executives from Biotechnica.

The corporation has since provided some funding for Hydropolis, allowing the city to do some research, which, with Hydropolis' minimal overhead, is calculated to be cost effective. As a result of Hydropolis' success, other Kansas towns are starting to build hydroponics plants.

NEW MEXICO (NM)

Capital: Albuquerque

New Cities: Red Mesa

Industries: military training, mining, oil drilling and processing, stone and glass

New Mexico has always been primarily desert, and now, with the alterations in the weather patterns, it is entirely so. Most of the state is unlivable, and only Albuquerque and Red Mesa could be considered to be healthy towns. The former capitol, Santa Fe, was abandoned due to both environmental concerns and Native American terrorism. Las Cruces isn't doing badly, though, as a jumping point for smuggling operations heading into Texas.

Since nobody really cares about the New Mexico environment any more, the U.S. military has started weapons testing once again at Alamogordo, trying out their new EMP bombs, cesium bombs, and the like. It's not a healthy place to be.

NEW CITIES

Red Mesa: In the wake of the Collapse, the American Indian tribes reached an understanding under the leadership of the Navajo and the Cherokee. They pinned the fault for the Collapse on the 'invading Americans,' and opted to found their own independent country. They congregated in New Mexico, not because it was a particularly attractive place, but because, desolate and ignored as it was, they'd have more of a head start in their creation of a Unified American Nation, with its capital in Red Mesa, built just north of Santa Fe.

The UAN has claimed independence from the United States in a carefully worded document that never acknowledges the U.S. government's legitimacy. Similarly, they have staked out a territory not by claiming it, but by declaring it "free and unownable land." The land so declared runs from US 64 in the north to the San Felipe Indian Reservation in the south, and from the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation in the west to the edge of the Santa Fe National Forest in the east.

This, of course, has led to conflict, as I-25 runs through this 'free and unownable' land, and the UAN does not appreciate U.S. truckers coming through and polluting the air. There have been numerous ambushes and running gun battles along the highway, and the small New Mexico Militia has even launched some assaults on Red Mesa proper. The Amerindians, however, are using classic guerrilla tactics, and melt into the surrounding hills whenever the Militia organizes a concentrated force.

HOT SPOTS

The Caves: A large group of cyber-enhanced people moved to Carlsbad Caverns to escape the withering New Mexico heat. There they set up their own community, relying on underground and above-ground farming. During the heat of the day, they are protected by Carlsbad's constant cool temperatures, so their power consumption is minimal. Furthermore, the excellent climate control helps them to brew the best beers and wines in this part of the country (as well as some pretty incredible designer drugs).

Everyone in The Caves has cyberoptics to allow them to negotiate the caverns without artificial light. The living areas are carved out of the rock, but have been done so without regard for the natural beauty of the caverns. The main cavern itself (as large as the interior of a domed stadium) is a nightmare cat's cradle of scaffolding, catwalks, ladders, and hammocks.

Overall, the Cavers are a pretty laid-back group of people, and they are very accepting as long as their visitors don't look too normal. At this time, the first generation of native Cavers are just starting to come of age. They have lived almost their entire lives underground, avoiding the withering heat and sharp light of the above world. As a result of their protected lifestyle, they are uniformly pale and tend to get heat exhaustion quite rapidly on the surface. Cavers also have a chronic problem with rickets, which adds to the strange appearance of the children.

"The difficulties the Cavers endure have caused rumors that they are mutants, or are degenerating into blind cave lizards. I visited the Cavers, and gave them all free physical examinations, and find that they are normal people who simply haven't gotten enough sun. They don't care if they're not tan, so they don't go out in the daytime. Rickets is a typical side effect of this lifestyle. As for their heat problems, well, I don't think I'd fare much better if I lived in the Arctic, but spent most of my time in a hot tub."

- Leonard McFadden,
Red Cross volunteer

OKLAHOMA (OK)

- Capital:** Oklahoma City
- New Cities:** several small agribusiness settlements
- Industries:** food crops, transportation

Like the rest of the West region, Oklahoma has suffered greatly over the last twenty years, and the state didn't have nearly enough resources to keep itself viable. Fortunately, the residents were redoubtable people, and held on grimly, painfully rebuilding their state after the worst was over.

Since Texas declared itself independent, Oklahoma has become a thoroughfare for shipments heading to Southern California, and heading from the West Coast to Dixie. Across the panhandle, US-64 and US-270 have been refurbished to provide a quick expressway across the state. When completed, this new route will be renamed I-840.

The only bright spots in Oklahoma these days are a few agribusiness settlements growing food using underground irrigation. These small communities are located along the Red River and the Canadian River, and even pay some taxes to the state government. The state itself has been lenient on them despite the fact that they never bought the land they're using, because these are spin-offs of some of the Texas firms, and if they prove profitable, some more business might move into the state.

The rest of the state is surviving, but not much more than that.

HOT SPOTS

Boise City: From Albuquerque, New Mexico, the main shipping highway is no longer Interstate 40 (which runs through Texas), but Interstate 25 North. In this way, U.S. shipping manages to avoid the high Texas tariffs. This, of course, annoys the Texans, especially since the shipments pass within a mile of the Texas border along the renovated US-56 highway running from the ghost town of Springer, NM. Because of this, and Texans being who they are, there are occasionally raids and hijackings in that portion of the state.

Boise City is nothing but a paramilitary outpost. Here solos and Nomads are hired to guard shipments that someone can't afford to let fall into Texan hands. So while Boise City itself is not a hoppin' place, it's a good place to start. ★

THE STORY CONTINUES...

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