RELIEF EFFORT
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RELIEF EFFORT

A charity d20 product in support of the
victims of the Southeast Asian Earthquake

SAR Techs in the Canadian Forces
by Brad Clark

SAR Techs are the Canadian Forces elite search and rescue technicians. They are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. They can conduct their trade in any weather, but usually find themselves in the worse that Mother Nature can dish out. Whether you are a lost hunter in Newfoundland or a plane crash survivor in Arctic Canada, SAR Techs are usually the ones that will bring you home safely.

SAR Techs are not direct entry trades; they gain their candidates through remusters after these members have served time in another military occupation. SAR Techs are all non-commissioned members and are in top physical and mental shape. These airmen (nominally part of the air force) can be easily identified on bases by their orange flight suits and the orange berets signifying international rescue. They are accomplished parachutists, medics, swimmers and mountain climbers. SAR Techs are skilled in small boat use, rappelling, survival, scuba diving and spotting survivors or debris from the air.

The Canadian Air Force uses the following aircraft in the search and rescue role. The CH149 Cormorant helicopter (EH101 variant), the CC115 Buffalo (STOL twin engine transport plane) and the CC130 Hercules (the venerable and reliable tactical transport). The CF is embarking on a project to replace the CC115 Buffalo with 15 new Fixed Wing Search and Rescue aircraft (FWSAR). Main contenders include the C27J Spartan, the C295 and in a distant 3rd a Bombardier variant of the DASH8 configured for SAR missions.

The CF SAR Tech trade can be found in air bases across Canada. The following bases play host to SAR Techs:

Base/Province	Unit	Equipment
CFB Comox/BC	19 Wing/442 Transport&Rescue Sqn	5 X CH149 6 X CC115
CFB Gander/NL	9 Wing/103 Search & Rescue Squadron	3 X CH149
CFB Greenwood/NS	14 Wing/413 Transport and Rescue Sqn	4 X CH149 4 X CC130
CFB Trenton/ON	8 Wing/424 Search&Rescue/Transport Sqn	3 X CH149
CFB Winnipeg/MN	17 Wing/435 Transport&Rescue Sqn	6 X CC130

Photo courtesy of AgustaWestland.

The SAR Tech
by Brad Clark

There are elite, special operations combat units, and they tend to get all the glory. The SAR Tech, masters of search and rescue, are elites as well, and their expertise is recognized and appreciated by the military and civilian alike.

The best path to the SAR Tech class would be the Dedicated Hero Basic Character Class (Healing Talent Tree) with a Starting Occupation of Military. The Field Medic advanced class is also a good route to the SAR Tech class.

Requirements
To qualify to become a SAR Tech, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Spot 6 ranks, Treat Injury 6 ranks.

Feat: Endurance.

Class Information
The following information pertains to the SAR Tech advanced class.

Hit Die: 1d8

Action Points: SAR Techs gain a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the SAR Tech attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The SAR Tech's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows: Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Concentrate (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (behavioral sciences, current events, earth and life sciences) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int) Profession (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Class Features
The following features pertain to the SAR Tech advanced class.

Hawkeye
The SAR Tech halves range penalties for Spot checks and may Take 10 without spending extra time when looking for debris and survivors.

Expert Healer
At 2nd level and higher, the SAR Tech ability to restore hit points with a medical kit or surgery kit and a successful use of the Treat Injury skill improves. In addition to the normal hit point recovery rate (1d4 for a medical kit, 1d6 per patient's character level for surgery), the SAR Tech restores 1 hit point for every level he or she has in this advanced class.

Bonus Feats
At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the SAR Tech gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the SAR Tech must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Armor Proficiency (light), Defensive Martial Arts, Educated, Endurance, Focused, Improved Initiative, Medical Expert, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation, Surgery, Toughness, and Trustworthy.

Medical Mastery
When making a Treat Injury skill check, a SAR Tech of 4th level or higher may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him or her from doing so.

Minor Medical Miracle
At 7th level or higher, a SAR Tech can save a character reduced to −10 hit points or lower. If the SAR Tech is able to administer aid within 3 rounds of the character's death, he or she can make a Treat Injury check. The DC for this check is 30, and the SAR Tech can't take 10 or take 20. If the check succeeds, the dead character can make a Fortitude save (DC 15) to stabilize and be restored to 0 hit points.

If the SAR Tech fails the skill check or the patient fails the save, the dead character can't be saved.

Survival God
A SAR Tech doubles all bonuses when making Survival skill checks. Those accompanying the SAR Tech gain a +2 bonus

Table: SAR Tech

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fortitude Save	Reflex Save	Willpower Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+2	+0	+1	Hawkeye	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+2	Expert Healer	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+3	+1	+2	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+2	+4	+1	+2	Medical Mastery	+2	+2
5th	+2	+4	+1	+3	Survival God	+3	+2
6th	+3	+5	+2	+3	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+3	+5	+2	+4	Minor Medical Miracle	+4	+3
8th	+4	+6	+2	+4	Lucky Day	+4	+3
9th	+4	+6	+3	+4	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+5	+7	+3	+5	Medical Miracle	+5	+4

when making Survival skill checks.

Lucky Day
Once per day a SAR Tech may reroll any failure, keeping the final result.

Medical Miracle
At 10th level, a SAR Tech can revive a character reduced to −10 hit points or lower. If the SAR Tech is able to administer aid within 3 minutes of the character's death, he or she can make a Treat Injury check. The DC for this check is 40, and the SAR Tech can't take 10 or take 20. If the check succeeds, the dead character can make a Fortitude save (DC 20) to stabilize and be restored to 1d6 hit points. If the SAR Tech fails the skill check or the patient fails the Fortitude save, the dead character can't be restored.

Table: The Aid Worker

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fortitude Save	Reflex Save	Willpower Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+0	+2	Burn the candle at both ends, Agency Support	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+3	Here to help	+0	+0
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+3	Bonus Feat	+0	+0
4th	+2	+2	+1	+4	Triage	+0	+0
5th	+2	+3	+1	+4	Endure the horror	+1	+1
6th	+3	+3	+2	+5	Bonus Feat	+1	+1
7th	+3	+4	+2	+5	Rebuilder	+1	+1
8th	+4	+4	+2	+6	Expert searcher	+1	+1
9th	+4	+4	+3	+6	Bonus Feat	+2	+2
10th	+5	+5	+3	+7	Hope for the hopeless	+2	+2

Aid Worker
by Peter Martin

Aid workers are the ones sent when a hurricane, a natural disaster, or some other calamity strikes. One part field medic, one part construction worker, and one part logistics expert, they aid the survivors, find those trapped in the rubble, and start the rebuilding process. Aid workers are usually trained by either relief organizations, like the Salvation Army or Red Cross, or by government agencies, like FEMA. Regardless of who trained them, their purposes are the same: restore hope and civilization in places where both are in short supply. The fastest path into the Aid Worker class is through the dedicated hero base class, though other paths are possible.

Requirements
To qualify to become an Aid Worker, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Craft (Structural) 3 ranks, Treat Injury 6 Ranks, Search 3 Ranks

Feat: Endurance

Special: Cannot have an allegiance to Evil or Chaos, must work for a disaster relief agency like FEMA, the Red Cross, etc.

Class Information
The following information pertains to the Aid Worker advanced class.

Hit Die: 1d8

Action points: Aid Workers gain a number of action points equal to 6+1/2 character level, rounded down, every time the Aid Worker attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Aid Worker's class skills(and the key ability for each skill)

are as follows: Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Structural) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Drive (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences, Civics, Current Events, Streetwise) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Treat Injury (Wis).
Skill Points at each level: 7 + Int modifier

Class Features
All of the following are class features of the Aid Worker

Bonus Feat: at levels 3, 6, and 9, the Aid Worker gains a bonus feat from the following list: Alertness, Animal Affinity, Attentive, Builder, Cautious, Educated, Iron Will, Medical Expert, Surgery, Track, and Trustworthy

Burn the candle at both ends: At first level, the Aid Worker has learned to go without sleep or adequate nutrition for days at a time in order to better help those who are truly suffering. All effects that would cause her to become fatigued are negated. All effects that would cause her to become exhausted merely cause her to be fatigued.

Agency support: The Aid Worker can count on her agency to help her out in the field. Any supplies she actually needs to perform her duties (GM's discretion) are provided free of charge for the duration of the relief efforts. This usually takes the form of food and medical supplies. If she is injured in the course of her duties, the agency will also pick up the tab for her medical care.

Here to help: At second level, the Aid Worker gains a +4 to diplomacy checks made with those she is trying to help and other Aid Workers, regardless of their agency.

Triage: The Aid Worker gains some very quick-and-dirty first aid knowledge. Starting at 4th level, she gains a +4 to treat injury checks to revive or stabilize a character.

Endure the horror: The Aid Worker has seen enough human suffering and tragedy that she has better learned to cope with it. She gains a permanent +4 bonus against all fear effects.

Rebuilder: At 7th level, the Aid Worker has been around disaster areas long enough to assist in the rebuilding efforts. She gains a +3 to all craft (structural) checks and can make a craft (structural) check (DC15) to tell if a building is safe to enter.

Expert Searcher: At 8th level, the Aid Worker has become so experienced looking for people buried in rubble that she begins to gain a sixth sense for it. When an Aid worker passes an area of devastation with trapped, still-living victims inside, she is entitled to a search check as though actively searching.

Hope for the hopeless: at 10th level, the Aid Worker's mere presence can give people the will to live. Any non-hostile characters within 30 feet of her who can see the Aid Worker or hear her voice gain a +1 morale bonus on all fortitude saving throws, and a +2 morale bonus against fear effects.

Combat Medic
by Peter Martin

Whenever troops go into the field, there is the very real danger of them being injured, either in minor or grievous ways. To compensate for this, most professional militaries train soldiers as combat medics; able warriors who can both fight and heal in the thick of combat. Combat medics are notoriously both brave and lucky; they run through heavy shellings to get to wounded comrades, brave withering machinegun barrages while administering first aid, and generally disregard their own safety in favor of preserving the safety of those under their care. The fastest way into the Combat Medic class is through the Dedicated and Fast Hero classes, though other routes are certainly possible.

Requirements
To qualify to become a Combat Medic, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Craft (Pharmaceutical) 3 ranks, Concentration 3 ranks, Treat Injury 4 ranks

Feats: Dodge, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Surgery

Special: Class defense bonus +4 or better, Evasion

Class Information
The following information pertains to the Combat Medic advanced class.

Hit Die: 1d8

Class Skills

The Combat Medic's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows: Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Pharmaceutical) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Dex), Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences, Civics, Current Events, Tactics, Technology) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at each level: 5 + Int modifier

Action points: Combat Medics gain a number of action points equal to 6+1/2 character level, rounded down, every time the Combat Medic attains a new level in this class.

Table: The Combat Medic

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fortitude Save	Reflex Save	Willpower Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+1	+1	My name is "Medic", Utterly Fearless	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+2	Improved Evasion	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+2	+0
4th	+3	+2	+2	+2	Fast Aid	+2	+0
5th	+3	+3	+3	+3	Heartless Aid	+3	+1
6th	+4	+3	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+3	+1
7th	+5	+4	+4	+4	Sneak Attack	+4	+1
8th	+6	+4	+4	+4	Minor Medical Miracle	+4	+1
9th	+6	+4	+4	+4	Bonus Feat	+5	+2
10th	+7	+5	+5	+5	Medical Miracle	+5	+2

Class Features
All of the following are class features of the Combat Medic

Bonus Feat: At levels 3, 6, and 9, the Combat Medic gains a bonus feat from the following list: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Attentive, Combat Expertise, Mobility, Heroic Surge, Medical Expert, Run. If you are using Future rules, add the following feats to the list: Cyber Surgery, Dedicated Plus, Fast Plus, Nerve Pinch, Xenomedic. If you are using the *Modern Player's Companion* by the Game Mechanics, add the following feats to the list: Greater Dodge, Improved Dodge, Lucky, Supreme Dodge. If you are using the *Future Player's Companion* by the Game Mechanics, add the following feats to the list: Helping Hand, Natural Talent, Second Chance

My name is "Medic": At first level, the Combat Medic has become acutely attuned to cries for help, even over the noise of the battlefield. He gains a +10 bonus listen checks to hear cries for help from his comrades.

Utterly Fearless: After pushing your screaming friend's guts back in with one hand while shooting at an enemy trying to kill you with machine guns and artillery a few times, the world gets a whole lot less scary. Combat

medics are immune to any non-supernatural sources of fear and get a +4 morale bonus to saves against supernatural fear effects. Furthermore, fear effects to which they do succumb affect them less intensely than others. Any effect that would cause the Combat Medic to become panicked instead causes him to become frightened. Any effect that would cause him to become frightened instead causes him to become shaken. Any effect that would cause him to become shaken has no effect.

Improved Evasion: At second level, the Combat Medic has gotten especially good at getting out of the way of incoming

artillery fire, hails of bullets and the like. On a successful save against any damaging effect that allows a Reflex save for partial damage, he is unscathed and takes no damage. On a failed save, he merely takes half damage.

Fast Aid: At 4th level the Combat Medic has gotten bandaging and other wound control down to the level of muscle memory. By taking a -5 penalty to treat injury checks, he can halve the time it normally takes to make the check.

Heartless aid: By the time a Combat Medic has reached 5th level, a certain amount of jadedness and cynicism has set in. This allows the medic to ignore the protests of his patients and just do what is necessary to keep them alive, no matter how much it hurts. He gains a +3 to concentration checks and may take 10 on treat injury checks even under stress or pressure. This ability may be combined with Fast Aid.

Sneak Attack: At 7th level, the Combat Medic has learned to put his medical knowledge to use against his enemies. If he can catch an enemy flatfooted or flanks them, he adds 1d6 damage to any melee attack or ranged attack made from a distance of 30 feet or less. This ability does not function against creatures with no discernable anatomy or those immune to critical hits such as constructs, oozes, or undead.

Minor Medical Miracle: At 8th level or higher, a Combat Medic can save a character reduced to –10 hit points or lower. If the Combat Medic is able to administer aid within 3 rounds of the character's death, he can make a Treat Injury check. The DC for this check is 30, and the Combat Medic can't take 10 or take 20. If the check succeeds, the dead character can make a Fortitude save (DC 15) to stabilize and be restored to 0 hit points.

If the Combat Medic fails the skill check or the patient fails the save, the dead character can't be saved.

Medical Miracle: At 10th level, a Combat Medic can revive a character reduced to –10 hit points or lower. If the Combat Medic is able to administer aid within 3 minutes of the character's death, he can make a Treat Injury check. The DC for this check is 40, and the Combat Medic can't take 10 or take 20. If the check succeeds, the dead character can make a Fortitude save (DC 20) to stabilize and be restored to 1d6 hit points.

If the Combat Medic fails the skill check or the patient fails the Fortitude save, the dead character can't be restored.

Sarch And Rescue Aircraft of the Canadian Forces
by Fraser Ronald

AgustaWestland CH149 Cormorant Helicopter
The CH149 Cormorant is a variant of the EH101. With a cruising speed of 170 mp/h, the Cormorant has a range of about 700 miles. While a single pilot can fly the Cormorant, the standard is a crew of five, including SAR Techs. The Cormorant is designed to carry 12 stretchers. In the absence of stretchers, it can carry over 10,000 pounds internally. Due to Canada's climactic conditions, the Cormorant is designed to operate in temperatures from -45 to +50 Celsius.

The Cormorant is 8 squares long and 7 squares wide (rotor diameter). The fuselage is 6 squares long and 2 squares wide. This craft provides 3/4 cover to crew and full cover to passengers when doors are closed.

DeHavilland CC115 Buffalo
Designed as a transport aircraft, the CC115 Buffalo has been redesigned for search and rescue missions. It has a Short Take-Off and Landing (STOL) capabilities, which is important for its SAR role, allowing it to use a wide variety of airfields. An all-weather aircraft, the Buffalo is assigned to the busiest SAR area in Canada, the West Coast and the Rockies. While the Buffalo can be flown with a crew of two, the standard complement is six, including two pilots, a navigator, a flight engineer and two SAR Techs. Due to the inclusion of SAR equipment, the lift capacity of the Buffalo has been restricted.

The Buffalo is 16 squares long and 4 squares wide with a wingspan of 20 squares. This craft provides full cover to crew and passengers.

Lockheed-Martin CC130 Hercules
The CC130 Hercules is based on the tactical lift aircraft. The search and rescue version of the Hercules has space for 74 stretchers. Its rugged design allows for landings on unimproved airstrips and its rear cargo ramp allows quick loading and unloading. When operating as an SAR aircraft, the crew includes two pilots, one navigator, one flight engineer, and three SAR Techs.

The Hercules is 20 squares long and 6 squares wide with a wingspan of 27 squares. This craft provides full cover to crew and passengers.

Table: Rescue Aircraft in the Canadian Forces

Name	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Man	Top Speed	Def	Hard	HP	Size	Purchase DC	Res
CC115	2 (6)	0	6,000	-4	-4	485 (48)	6	10	50	G	45	Mil
CC130	2 (7)	(74)	(40,000)	-4	-4	675 (67)	6	12	50	G	50	Mil
CH149	1 (5)	10	10,000	-4	-4	310 (31)	7	5	50	G	36	Mil

Pele's Revenge
By Nathanael Christen

Pele's Revenge is an adventure for use with the *D20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. It is designed for a party of third-level characters, but can easily be scaled for more or less powerful parties. The main focus of the adventure is a desperate rescue attempt undertaken by the heroes during a volcanic eruption in Hawaii.

Shaded text is to be read aloud to the players. All other text is for the use of the GM.

BACKGROUND
Volcanic eruptions are nothing new to the Hawaiian Islands. After all, the islands themselves were coughed up out of the sea by the ceaseless eruption of underwater volcanoes. This time, however, a group of tourists find themselves in the wrong place at a very wrong time.

INTRODUCTION
It all starts out as a lovely evening on a small island in Hawaii. The heroes, for whatever reasons, happen to be gathered in a particular ocean-side bar and restaurant, the Kahuna Club. The music is good, the food is great, and the drinks are flowing freely. Just as everyone is beginning to feel really relaxed, however, trouble erupts.

The first sign of a problem almost passes unnoticed. A faint tremor reverberates through the ground, causing the bottles behind the bar to tinkle noisily. The band members cease playing for a moment, and people throughout the bar glance about at each other to confirm that they didn't imagine it. Then a second tremor strikes, notably more forceful than the first, and there can be no doubt about it—a nearby volcano is erupting.

While the tourists seem uneasy at first, Mr. Selkirk—the proprietor—is quick to calm their fears. "It is okay, everyone; this kind of thing happens all the time. There's nothing to worry about, I assure you. We're well away from any danger that the volcano might present. With this reassurance, people return their attention to their food, drinks and conversation. The band resumes its performance, and the event is forgotten.

Should anyone think to ask, a Sense Motive check can confirm that Mr. Selkirk honestly believes what he has said. Due to the lay of the land, the Kahuna Club is well away from the area that could be affected by the eruption. Grant each of the heroes a Spot check, however, to notice that he slips into the back room behind the bar with a worried expression on his face. Although he pushes the door closed behind him, it

remains open a crack; those who are interested could sally up to the bar to eavesdrop. Those who succeed at a DC 18 check can catch a snatch of his conversation.

> "Oh, dear." From his tone of voice, Mr. Selkirk's worry is apparent. "I'm sorry, but you didn't come through clearly. Did you say that your vehicle is completely disabled?"

Whether or not they managed to overhear any of the conversation, everyone in the bar sees Selkirk emerge from the back room and survey the gathered guests. With a mixture of embarrassment, he announces: "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm looking for a few volunteers." For those who are interested he can provide the following details:

- One of the tour buses that he organizes, on an excursion to the scenic overlook on the volcano, has suffered some sort of breakdown.
- He has lost radio contact with the bus.
- It is loaded with thirty-seven tourists.
- The scenic overlook is located in an area that could be in danger from the effects of the eruption.
- He does have another bus, however, and would like to organize a rescue party to head up the mountain and evacuate the tourists.

Now, there are always some individuals who don't care to risk their own necks unless they're promised some kind of reward. If this should be the case, feel free to make veiled references or outright offerings of rewards.

Event 1—Preparations
Once Selkirk has been able to gather a rescue team, the biggest question to answer is what supplies are brought along. The proprietor can provide four walkie-talkies, a decent first aid kit, a basic mechanical tool kit, three sets of binoculars, three fire extinguishers, half a dozen flashlights and a map of the area. As he has never done anything like this before, he does not necessarily think to volunteer everything; instead, allow the heroes to ask for the items. Anything that they can provide is gratefully received.

What Is There to Do Aboard the Bus?
Obviously, this scenario should provide a lot of action for the person who drives the bus. There are, however, posts that other heroes could occupy. There could be at least one forward lookout, to watch for trouble. Should anyone think to ask, there could also be a lookout positioned in the center of the bus at the topside escape hatch. A navigator could also prove to be quite useful, particularly when different roads are overrun by the flowing lava. Once the bus has seen a little action, a maintenance team/fire crew could become a necessity.

EVENT 2—OUT OF THE BLUE
For the journey, the heroes begin at the **X** in the lower right corner of the map. Their destination is the **X** on the mountainside.

The first problem that the heroes face in their rescue mission is the battery of rocks the force of the eruption hurled into the air. They are given some warning of this when a second tremor causes the road to tremble. At this point, have all the lookouts make a Spot check; those who are posted at the topside escape hatch should receive a +2 circumstance bonus to the check. The highest result of these checks determines how much warning the driver can be given regarding the incoming volcanic bombs, and therefore how difficult it is to avoid them.

Table: Out of the Blue Spot Checks

LOOKOUTS' RESULTS	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31+
DRIVE CHECK DC	35	33	31	29	27	25	23

For every three points by which the DC exceeds the driver's skill check, the tour bus is hit by one bomb and suffers 3d6 hit points damage. Be sure to play up how these smoking rocks come whistling down out of the sky, slamming into the ground (and perhaps into the bus as well) all around the rescue party.

Hit Locations on the Bus
For an added sense of drama, the GM might want to determine where each of the bombs hits the bus. To do so, roll 1d3 and 1d10 for each impact (and reroll any tens). For the first die, a result of one hits the left side of the bus, a two hits the middle and a three hits the right side. For the second, count back a number of squares from the front equal to the die roll. If any hero is located in the indicated square, that character must make a DC 15 Reflex save or suffer damage equal to that suffered by the bus.

EVENT 3—WHERE THERE'S SMOKE
The next obstacle is a massive cloud of smoke and ash that comes rolling down the mountain. Grant all of the heroes who are on lookout duty a Spot check. This time, their results determine how difficult it is for the abruptly blinded driver to keep control of the bus on roads that are suddenly slippery with fine powdery ash.

Should the driver's ensuing skill check fail, the bus suffers 6d6 damage as it runs off the road and into a tree. Should this happen, the driver must then succeed at a second Drive check at a DC 22 to bring the bus back onto the road.

Inside the ash cloud there is also the problem of finding direction. While affected by the ash cloud, either the driver or another member of the rescue party must succeed at a DC 15 Navigate check at each crossroads in order to select the correct route.

EVENT 4—THERE'S FIRE
Of course, no rescue mission up an erupting volcano would be complete without some red-hot molten rock. A shift in the wind clears away the smoke cloud, leaving the heroes with a

Table Where There's Smoke Spot Checks

LOOKOUTS' RESULTS	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31+
DRIVE CHECK DC	30	28	26	24	22	20	18

clear view of the mountainside and the fires that are slowly spreading across it. At this point a Search check (DC 20) by the lookouts can give the driver a clue as to which roads are passable, although this is subject to change as time passes. To simulate the relentless spread of the lava, refer to the map of the volcano in Appendix 2. If at least one of the heroes succeeds at the Search check, allow the players to see the map and the squares that are covered; they should adjust their route accordingly. Note that two separate streams travel from the caldera in the directions indicated on the map. These begin covering the squares over each of the arrows on the map, then move one square for every four that the heroes cover. Hopefully the heroes recognize that trying to race through a spot that has been overrun by lava is a losing proposition.

In the event that none of the heroes notice the encroaching lava flows, the driver is rudely surprised by a molten roadblock. A DC 20 Drive check is needed to stop the bus in time, or it suffers 8d6 damage and loses all of its tires.

EVENT 5—THE SCENIC OVERLOOK

If the heroes think that the drive up the mountain was the biggest difficulty they'd face this evening, they're in for a nasty surprise. The scenic overlook is a scene of desperation, with numerous problems that call for the heroes' attention and skills.

A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Three individuals have suffered considerable injuries. One lies unconscious from a nasty head wound; although it is probably not possible to bring this character around to consciousness from –8 hit points, a DC 15 Treat Injury check can stabilize him. Similarly, two others have suffered broken legs. Similar skill checks allow a hero to rig splints for these two so that they can travel.

NECESSARY REPAIRS

Depending upon how much damage the heroes' bus has suffered during the trip up the mountain, they may need to take some time to make a few repairs. Of course, with the flow of lava threatening to cut off their escape route, they should maintain a proper sense of urgency throughout this part of the adventure.

CROWD CONTROL

Perhaps the biggest potential difficulty of the situation comes in the form of three dozen tourists who are scared for their very lives. When they see the bus arrive, they immediately press toward it with all their salvaged luggage in hand. Some good roleplaying and/or a DC 20 Diplomacy check is needed to keep everyone in good order.

EVENT 6—DOING IT ALL OVER AGAIN

Once everyone has been loaded, the heroes face the task of retracing their route. While this requires no further searching or navigation, this time around there is one added difficulty. By the time they begin their return trip, the lava has spread far enough to destroy the bridge that they crossed on their approach. This leaves them with an open creek bed, and only one option for bypassing the obstacle: jump it. To do so the driver must succeed at a DC 24 Drive check. If this one fails by five or less, the bus comes up short on the far side of the obstacle, but the driver may immediately attempt another such check to use momentum and fight the bus back onto the road. Failure by more than five means that the bus becomes mired in the creek bed, forcing the evacuation of everyone aboard.

CONCLUSION

If the heroes succeed in delivering the tourists to the Kahuna Club, they are celebrated all through the night. Moreover, a steady stream of gifts from the tourists provides each hero with a +2 Wealth bonus. Alternately, the GM might wish to have certain NPC's present heroes with specific gifts,

particularly if a given hero has long been wanting to acquire a special item. This could also be a good opportunity for the GM to introduce NPC's who might be useful in later adventures, ones who can offer services or perhaps additional employment opportunities. Mr. Selkirk, for his part, promises that the heroes will always have a cabin and a table at their disposal whenever they return to the Kahuna Club.
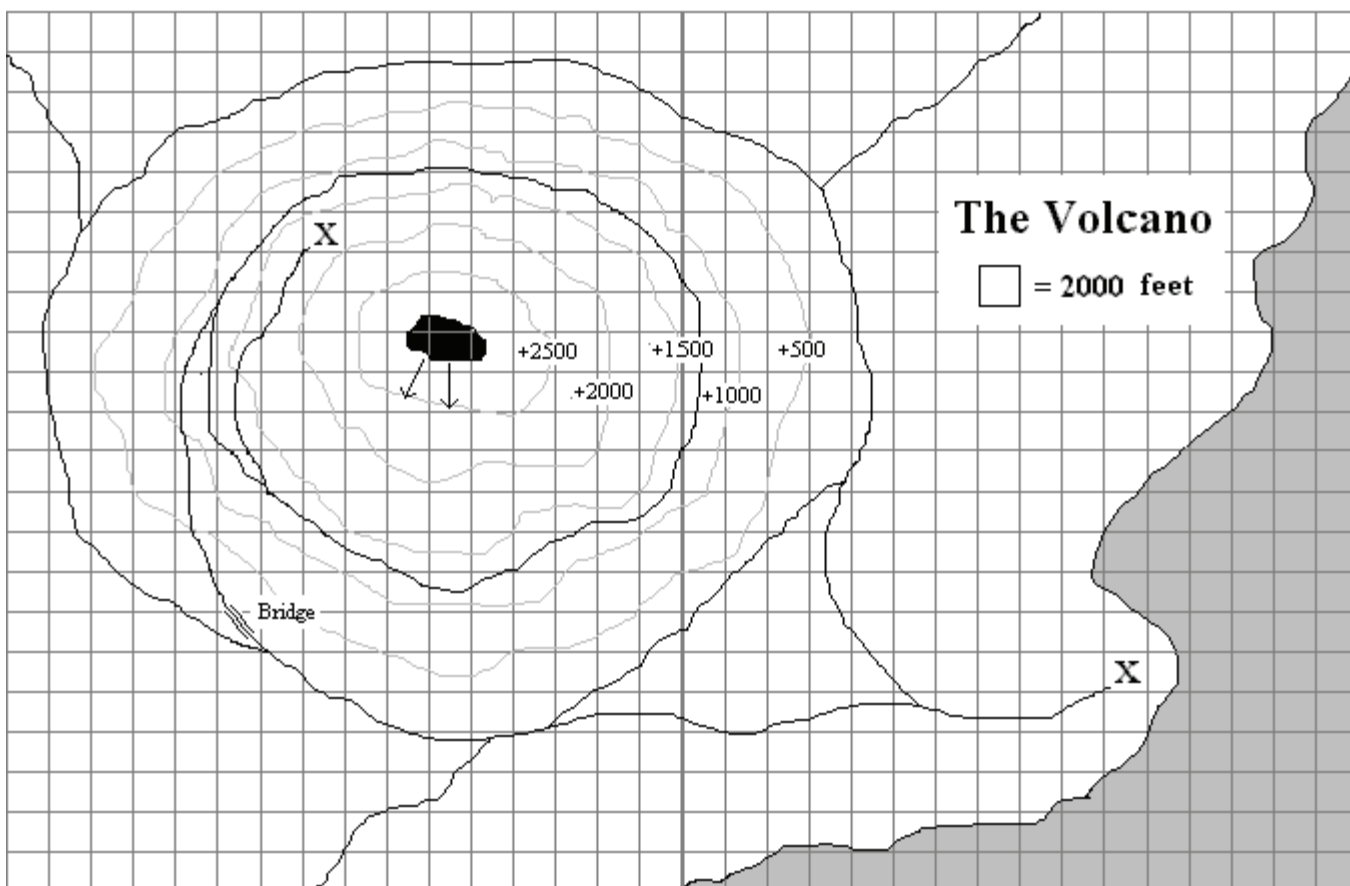
Appendix 1: The Tour Bus

Name: Tour Bus
Passengers: 43

Cargo: 500 lbs.
Initiative: -4
Maneuver: -4
Top Speed: 120 (12)
Defense: 6
Hardness: 5
Hit Points: 48
Size: G
Purchase DC: 39
Restriction: License (+1)
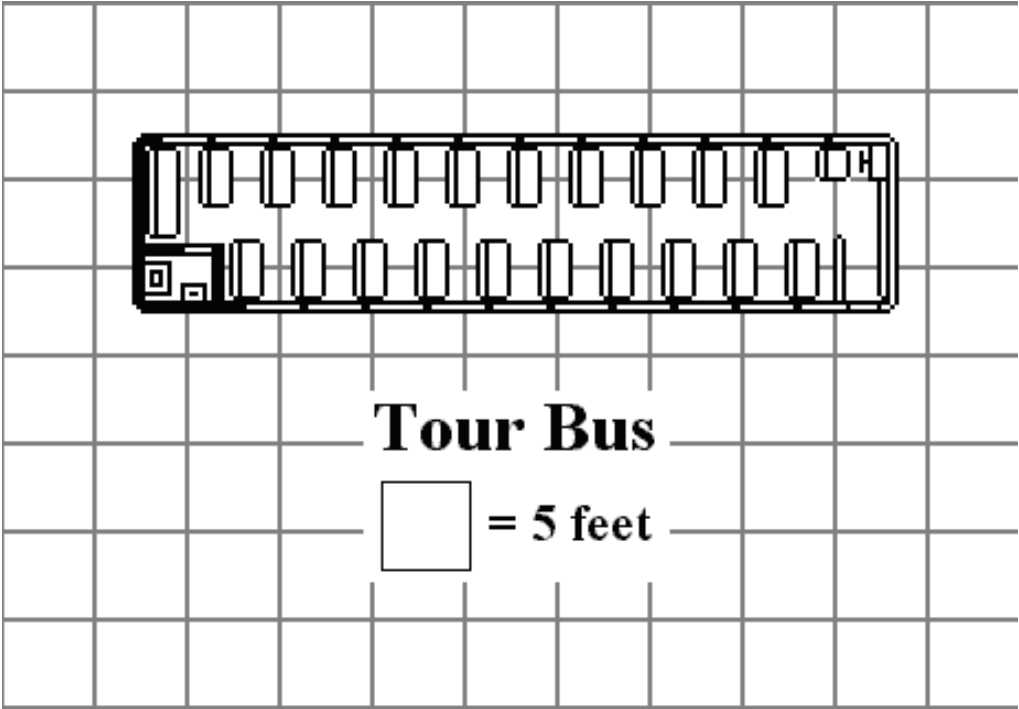
Tour Bus

□ = 5 feet

The Volcano

□ = 2000 feet

X

+2500   +1500   +500

.+2000   +1000

Bridge

X

Role-Playing Disaster
By Fraser Ronald

Most modern role-playing games follow the kinds of plots and adventures found in novels, comics, television programs, or movies. Usually there's adventure, intrigue and some kind of conflict. In most of the games I've seen or heard of, that conflict tends to be of the man vs. man variety. What has been presented here, in *Relief Effort*, is a taste of the man vs. nature type of plot. Humanitarian relief, from disaster aid to search and rescue, has potential for role-playing but people tend to shy away from it. To some, a situation like a natural disaster is far too serious and sad to use for gaming fodder. I would offer that war and crime are also serious and sad, but both provide fodder for many games.

It seems to me, and I could be wrong, that the real opposition to humanitarian relief as game plot is it does not offer excitement. It's true, such a game would be short on violent conflict, but the job of providing relief or saving others from the dangers posed by Mother Nature is not devoid of conflict, it is filled with it.

Natural disasters
We have begun to see natural disasters regularly on the television news. Floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis have all struck recently and mercilessly. These have all offered displays of human drama and heroism. One would think, then, that these scenarios have much to offer role-playing game plots.

Such games will, of course, sideline those characters which are combat focused. They likely get plenty of time in the spotlight for most games, so I think it's okay to shine the light on characters that have focused on skills.

In a natural disaster, there is always a race to extract those people trapped in dangerous areas. As an example, consider the short adventure presented in this very book, *Pele's Revenge*. That adventure offers no combat or man vs. man conflict, just a race against time and man vs. nature.

Characters with ranks in skills such as Climb, Jump, Survival, and Swim would have the advantage. There would be situations in which Spot and Search could save the day. The characters could be sent out into an area to search for survivors or to rescue survivors and return them to safety. In both situations, the characters' skills rather than their firepower will bring about a successful rescue.

For an adventure with the PCs seeking out and rescuing survivors, those characters focused on combat might still have a chance to shine if given the chance to use their skills. Physical skills, like Climb and Jump, can easily come into play, but realistically any kind of skill can have value. Does the combat character have a high Intimidate skill? Well, maybe she bullies her way into getting the characters use of a helicopter or other form of transportation.

Rescue is not the only part of a natural disaster suitable for a game. In fact, one might say rescue is the most straightforward of the post-disaster tasks. Consider the logistics of finding lodgings for all the survivors. What about food? Clean, potable water? All these dilemmas could face the PCs, and they would need to use all their skills and influence to find resources for the survivors of the disaster.

Aid workers also regularly find themselves in the position of negotiator. They negotiate with host governments for camps where refugees may reside. They negotiate with leaders within the survivor community for help in controlling large masses of people in situation of near-anarchy. Often, aid workers find themselves dealing with criminal elements or even opposing armed factions. Victims of disasters, natural or otherwise, regularly become pawns to other forces, and the aid workers are the ones trying to protect them.

Atmosphere

So far, this all sounds pretty depressing. Well, natural disasters are depressing. There are glimmers of heroism and hope, but they are not fun as most people would define it. However, many of the situations used to create adventures in role-playing are likewise less than entertaining in the real world. Depending on the type of game being played, using disasters will not necessarily remove the fun from a game.

It isn't common, but there have been stories in comic books where super heroes are involved in rescue efforts after a natural disaster. If one is playing a super hero or other comic book influenced game, inserting a natural disaster as a change of pace may be welcome. The heroes are always trying to save the public, but maybe this time the players would appreciate fighting Mother Nature rather than the next super villain or criminal gang.

If the group is involved in a game of espionage, inserting a natural disaster becomes more problematic. Mr. Bond might stop a villain from using a terrible science fiction weapon that can create natural disasters, but rarely do we see Mr. Bond helping out during a natural disaster. The thing is, a character like Mr. Bond would be the perfect person to do so. He's a born leader and so could easily bring order from chaos with his commanding presence. He is a generalist, knowing a little bit about everything, and so could direct a rescue effort using that expansive knowledge. He's a very physical person, so when things get messy he'd have no problem rolling up his sleeves and lending a hand.

For espionage-based games, if it is action-adventure oriented, like the movies of Mr. Bond, one could have a villain threaten to use a weapon that can create a natural disaster and then have the heroes involved when the weapon is first used, perhaps even before the villain has revealed his plans. Again, this would be a very different challenge for the characters, so done correctly, the players would likely welcome it.

When one gets into "gritty" campaigns, I honestly can't think of anything grittier than a natural disaster. Faceless, merciless, natural disasters test the very fiber of society. Further, when two-fisted brawling and two-gun bravado are of no use, it might be interesting to see how the characters react. In a campaign in which the character are criminals or at least marginal members of society, a natural disaster will certainly show the truth of their convictions.

A military campaign is the easiest in which to insert a natural disaster. The military is usually called on to assist civilian authorities in a natural disaster. Further, due to their requirement for quick mobility, the military are usually the first representatives of another government to arrive to the scene of an international crisis. SAR Techs—as their name denotes—are trained for search and rescue, and so are invaluable assets for countries struck by a natural disaster. The transport capabilities of the military, also required to respond quickly, are important to the movement of resources and the rescue of survivors.

Groups and Organizations

It is rare, unless they are on scene during a disaster, that a loose collection of civilians would be requested to join in a relief effort. Usually, those people delivering relief belong to groups created and maintained to meet this very need. Such groups are also interesting as they regularly bring together individuals of disparate backgrounds due to their differing skills. Depending on the type of campaign the characters are in, such a group might make an interesting Department 7 for the characters.

Usually the wealthiest and most powerful but least efficient or

trusted are the government organizations. These organizations are set up to respond to emergencies or disasters within the nation's borders, but teams may be sent abroad to help or monitor a crisis elsewhere. Better received in many countries are the international government organizations provided by organizations like the United Nations. Bodies like the World Health Organization or even the Centre for Disease Control have an international reach and are generally respected.

There are many non-governmental relief organizations operating throughout the world. Some are religious, some are simply humanitarian, and some have a specific focus, but all are involved to some degree in providing relief and assistance after a disaster. These groups are usually the most welcome in a region after a disaster, especially those that have no particular affiliation to a government, system of governance, or religion. Religious relief organizations may link their assistance to proselytizing, but many do not.

The NGOs would be a good fit as a parent organization for characters. These organizations are filled with a wide variety of individuals, from career aid workers to young students meeting some self-imposed duty to adventure seekers. The characters might belong to a trouble-shooting team sent out to the most extreme or dangerous situations in advance of major relief organizations. The teams could include negotiators, engineers, medical practitioners, survival or rescue experts, and maybe even a famous personality, like a movie star, helping out her favorite charity with her ex-KGB bodyguard in tow.

There are also NGOs with a very narrow focus. Some organizations are equipped to provide medical assistance

but nothing more. Others are experts at building structures, but have no facility for providing food. These organizations still require individuals with a variety of skills to prepare and oversee operations. Though the focus is much narrower, there is still the opportunity for many types of adventures, as even setting up a base of operations after a natural disaster requires a huge amount of ingenuity and ability.

Conclusions

So, for the most part, natural disasters are not fun events, they are horrible and tragic. However, using a natural disaster in a game may help to educate yourself and your players as to the difficulties and dangers that one may not have considered. In the adventure *the Khorfojan Gambit*, an important area is the internally displaced persons camp. This is a case of offering a bit of information along with an action adventure plot. Disasters can also offer a different sort of challenge, something out of the ordinary which tests skills the characters may rarely use.

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