

MUTANT CHRONICLES



MÖDIPHÜS™
ENTERTAINMENT

3RD EDITION
WHITESTAR
SOURCE BOOK

FFFO™



Whitestar

Frozen Arctic Ocean

Pacific Ocean

Zones of Corruption

Tsarina's Wall

• Yakutsk

• Perdita Rivero

• Novozvezda

• Irkutsk

Vostnor

East Asian
Exclusion Area





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INTRODUCTION

A CULTURE OF SURVIVAL

Long hidden from view beneath the surface of the storm-wracked Earth, the people of Whitestar have carved out a life for themselves on a planet the so-called great and good of humanity left for dead. Whitestar territory stretches as far west as the overgrown remains of Europe, south to the Poison Sea and the irradiated deserts that fringe it, and eastward to the frozen, ice-bound coasts of the northern Pacific.

That territory is sparsely populated. Most Whitestar settlements are extremely isolated, linked to the outside world by fragile rail or road connections. An individual settlement is called a Stronghold, regardless of its size. Outside the major population centres, which are built among subterranean tunnel networks that link one pre-Exodus bunker to another, most Strongholds are in regular contact with only one or two neighbours, which may be hundreds of kilometres distant across hostile terrain. The central tenet of the Whitestar nation is that they will always come to one another's aid. However, rescue often comes too late, forcing each Stronghold—and indeed each person—to do their utmost to be self-sufficient.

The most populated parts of the Whitestar territories run in a broad band that arcs from the Baltic Sea eastward to the Ural Mountains. At its north-western extremity lie the twin subterranean cities of Nova Zembla, and in the east is the Tsarina's capital, Zlogora, hollowed out from the core of an impregnable mountain. East of the Urals, the Strongholds are small, scattered, and armed to the teeth against the mutant creatures that rove between the Arctic Circle and the irradiated remains of East Asia. The largest Stronghold east of Zlogora is the port of Vostmor, from where Whitestar's missions of exploration set forth to rediscover the lost treasures of Earth.

In the wreckage of Europe, Whitestar's isolated research outposts were once the only bastion of civilisation, but in recent years new and powerful tribal cultures have taken over. Even where Whitestar is the only human presence in this region, the outposts are garrisons, not settlements. The shattered cities are nests for the most fearsome abominations and the countryside grows wild and toxic with gargantuan creepers and lichens that recall a prehistoric era.



A Night Witch scouts ahead.

SOLIDARITY

This is the hostile environment in which Whitestar culture developed. When the orbital rockets rained down, a diverse array of peoples from across two continents and beyond fled to the safety of the shelters. While the nuclear storms and monsters tore apart the surface world, that is where they remained, crammed together in an underground world of their own making in a high-pressure amalgam of cultures and traditions. The society that emerged from these years was one of survival and solidarity. The Whitestar culture has no time for the frivolities of the colonies' consumer culture. Having survived decades of hardship, with food and resources constantly in short supply, they know that self-discipline and cooperation are vital to progress, and to defeating the menace of the Dark Legion.

STOICISM

The Whitestar character is often painted as being predominantly an attitude of grim stoicism. There is truth in this. Whitestar citizens consider it a waste of time to fret about what might have been, though they do enjoy a grumble about things as they are. Their outlook is markedly fatalistic, but it has a lighter side, too. The concept of avos describes an attitude to life that not only accepts the things life throws at you but takes them on with completely unfounded optimism. From the avos point of view, the world is unpredictable, so all you can do is rely on luck.

FOLLOWERS OF THE TSARINA – 22ND CENTURY

Across a vast, hostile landscape of devastated beauty, the people of Whitestar are scattered far and wide but united by the bonds of brotherhood and solidarity. They are united also by the leadership of the Tsarina, the charismatic figure who has protected them and shaped their destiny for decades, her beauty and vitality undimmed by the passing of the years, as if sustained by the adoration and devotion of her people.

After Whitestar retreated to the massive network of underground bunkers and redoubts that had been constructed during those last, chaotic years before the corporations departed, a new leader emerged from the ancient nuclear weapons complex at Zlogora, in the Ural Mountains.

Her name was Alexandra Romanova, and she claimed descent from the Tsars of old Russia. More than that, she united the long-separated communities of Whitestar through force of personality and an outstanding ability as a leader, both in military and civilian matters.

Key elements of the remnant Russian military and the Orthodox church supported her when she proclaimed herself Tsarina, which helped her to establish her authority and unite Whitestar under her banner. The Siberia Legion, forerunners of today's Streltsy, rallied

to her cause. Their support gave the Tsarina direct authority over the Strongholds—hardened underground structures constructed beneath the Siberian tundra in the final days before the complete destabilisation of Earth's atmosphere and the collapse of the Russian state apparatus. The Siberia Legion were the descendants of the soldiers and their families who took refuge in the Strongholds as the world collapsed, sealing themselves off until it was safe to emerge. The military resources of the Strongholds and, more importantly, their advanced techniques in hydroponic agriculture, became the foundation of the modern Whitestar.

WHO IS THE TSARINA?

This was all a long time ago, back in the 23rd century, while the corporations expanded their influence in the off-world colonies and enjoyed what they now call mankind's golden age. Amid Whitestar's fervent devotion to its Tsarina, a major question hangs in the air, rarely spoken aloud: how is she still alive?

A range of theories enjoy common currency, from the idea that the Tsarina is no mortal descendant of the Tsars but an alien, or perhaps angelic being, who does not age, maybe even a descendant of the Russian soil itself, brought into being by the psychic gestalt of the Whitestar people and their yearning for a leader in the dark times of the nuclear winter. For a time, many wondered if the Tsarina really existed, but enough people have met and spoken to the Tsarina to prove that she cannot be merely a propaganda creation. A more recent development of this idea, though, is the most common theory: that the Tsarina of today is not the same Alexandra Romanova who brought forth the Whitestar rallying cry from the dark mountain at Zlogora, but another, younger woman, perhaps already the nineteenth or twentieth successor to play the role of the Tsarina

STABILITY & EXPANSION – 23RD CENTURY & 24TH CENTURY

For decades, the surface world was a no-go area. If you could survive the monsters, the fatal levels of radiation or the violently unpredictable weather would get you instead. So Whitestar remained underground, and expanded its living spaces by tunnelling outwards. Maintaining a fleet of earth-boring vehicles is a high priority for every Stronghold, not only for the construction of new chambers and tunnels, but also for escape or rescue if there should be a cave-in, fire, or other emergency that means the usual exits are cut off.

In the years that followed, more and more bunkers were recontacted and brought into the Whitestar alliance. Whitestar continued to expand its underground facilities, joining up distant Strongholds with

a long-distance tunnel network of incredible scale, and establishing new sites in the shattered remains of Europe and beneath the frozen waters of the Arctic Ocean. Expeditions set out to map the changed surface of the world, to explore what was left of cities such as Jakarta, Berlin, and Jerusalem. This mission to rediscover the Earth continues to the present day. Even as new, more organised tribal societies emerge and make contact, and the skies begin to clear enough for satellites to capture images of the world beneath them, there is still much to learn.

Up until the Dark Symmetry era, the Whitestar Strongholds remained almost entirely underground, building the great tunnel network that connects the Whitestar holdings to one another, building and expanding the bunkers, and constructing the Tsarina's powerful space fleet and ground forces, hidden from the view of the corporations lurking above on Luna. Only small groups of scavengers and scouts ventured above ground, easily discounted by any corporation observers as a handful of hapless survivors of the cursed Earth, not members of a huge and united force, biding its time.

THE CORPORATIONS RETURN... BRIEFLY—25TH CENTURY TO THE FALL

It was perhaps this apparent lack of any extant civilisation that, in the early 25th century, convinced Bauhaus and its allies in Capitol and Imperial that an expedition to lay the groundwork to re-terraform Earth would face little difficulty. Of course, regardless of whether their low opinion of Earth's remaining human inhabitants was accurate, it was the planet's new and terrifying wildlife that did in the unfortunate corporate employees who took ship from Luna to the Earth that day in 2453.

The three corporations' expeditionary force, equipped with a map of Bauhaus holdings from 200 years earlier, landed east of Prague, close to a still-functioning Bauhaus ID beacon, with the intention of resuming control of Bauhaus's facilities in old Europe. At first, exploring the abandoned manufactories and repairing and reactivating dormant machinery seemed to be going swimmingly. But within days of the landing, all contact with the expedition was lost.

On Luna, Bauhaus corporate headquarters received a single short, tight-beam transmission from an apparently uninhabited location in the Caucasus, which briefly took control of the corporation's internal communications system to broadcast a simple message throughout the building: "You chose to abandon the Motherland. You shall not return."

Bauhaus and its allies presumed that the transmission came from whoever had killed or captured the expeditionary force. But this was not the case. At that time, and for many years before and after, the region around Prague was blanketed in a thick, choking fog that reduced visibility to no more than a few metres. It is also, for most of the year, thoroughly infested with all manner of mutant

monsters—which was precisely why no Whitestar expedition had yet ventured there to strip the Bauhaus facilities of their valuables.

Quite what happened, and why the beasts of Prague held back from attacking the expedition for as long as they did, remains a mystery. Seeing that the expeditionary force had landed in a dangerous area, Whitestar forces moved in to lend assistance but arrived too late. Bauhaus mission control, on board the space station *Berlioz*, received only one last desperate audio transmission, which described "hideous creatures" emerging from the mists, before all communications with the expedition were lost.

Investigating the remains of the corporate team, the Whitestar relief force discovered the plan to re-terraform Earth, a process that would destroy life on the planet. The Tsarina ordered that any future incursion from off-world would be met with deadly force, and transmitted a message to that effect to Luna, warning the corporations that Earth was now under the dominion of Whitestar. This was the first time anyone in the corporations heard the name 'Whitestar'.

Dismayed by the destruction of their terraforming expedition and in the mood for revenge, Bauhaus, Capitol, and Imperial moved a massive armada into orbit around the Earth in preparation for an invasion of the planet below. The Tsarina's message, they reasoned, could be nothing more than a bluff on the part of whatever pathetic remnants of humanity had managed to get a transmitter working down there. This new armada launched dropships to the Earth's surface, where they met no initial resistance. Confident in their military might, they quickly established firebases in the ruins and swirling fogs of Berlin, Washington, and London.

Reconnaissance missions from the newly established firebases at first found no sign of human resistance, but stragglers from patrols started to go missing, and each base came under sniper attacks from a hidden enemy lurking in the mist. Whitestar command, detecting the fleet assembling above, began to reactivate the long-dormant nuclear arsenal of the former Russian Federation.

The corporation outposts were captured by means of a daring surprise attack. It began by crippling their support fleet: a single missile streaked into orbit from a hidden silo in the Ural Mountains, detonating in the stratosphere and crippling the remaining orbital armada with a massive EM pulse. Simultaneously, Whitestar forces launched a coordinated subterranean assault on the corporate firebases, overwhelming them with thousands of troops who burst through the ground in great burrowing war machines.

Surrounded and outnumbered, their reinforcements unable to land, the corporate forces had no choice but to surrender to Marshall Kirov of Whitestar. Kirov issued the Tsarina's ultimatum: Withdraw from Earth orbit and make no further attempt to approach the planet's surface, or a full nuclear launch would be initiated against Luna.

With their fleet unable to retaliate and their ground forces captured, the corporations were forced to capitulate. Negotiations began to repatriate the soldiers captured during the assault, and a series of unarmed transports were permitted to land and retrieve them, albeit stripped of their equipment and vehicles. Still afraid of what retaliation Whitestar might have in store, the corporations enacted a blockade around the planet, though the attack they feared from the Earth never came.

After more than 40 years of silent stalemate, the orbital blockade was ripped apart by the emergence of the Dark Symmetry. Whitestar technology was largely unaffected, in part because of its less sophisticated design—although Whitestar diplomats on Luna have alluded to some other kind of protection that keeps its equipment, vehicles, and weaponry untainted by the pernicious effects of the Symmetry. With no more prying eyes up above, Whitestar took advantage of the opportunity to begin expanding upwards and reclaim the surface. During this time, Whitestar's major surface settlements were established, including Vostmor, Novozvezda, and the Kosmograd spaceport.

WHITESTAR ACCEPTS AN UNDISCLOSED INVITATION—MID 1ST CENTURY YC

How the arrangement came about, or even who it was led by, is a complete mystery, but at some point around the middle of the 1st century following the Year of the Cardinal, the Whitestar Bunker on Luna sprang up seemingly overnight. The Cartel barely raised an eyebrow, so someone must have known, but tight-lipped agents refused to discuss the specifics of the arrangement. The Brotherhood was certainly involved, yet it also declined to reveal exactly how and why a new major power had established a foothold on humanity's seat of power.

Regardless of the specifics, Whitestar was on Luna to stay. The Tsarina honoured the union's commitment to attend Cartel meetings and sanctioned the use of her

people in joint ventures dedicated to the opposition of the Dark Legion. Mollified slightly by the fact that Whitestar agents could only attend joint meetings with observer status, the other corporations rapidly became absorbed in their own political agendas in an attempt to unveil exactly who had backed Whitestar's establishment of a foothold. Divided rather than united, as is so often the case, the corporations could mount little opposition to the steady trickle of Whitestar personnel that began to wend their way outward into the solar system.

STRENGTH IN ADVERSITY

Whitestar is presently in the midst of a period of sustained growth, hard-fought though it has been. Two years ago, the Kosmograd spaceport was officially opened to travellers from the off-world colonies, bringing a new wave of visitors, trade, and technology to Whitestar, while opening the gates for Whitestar people to explore the solar system. But it has not all been smooth sailing.

The chief threat to Whitestar has been the rise of new and aggressive tribal societies on its borders to the south and west—and even more seriously, within its frontiers. Almost a decade ago, a group calling itself the Sons of Rasputin emerged—literally—onto the scene. Once part of Whitestar, the Sons had lived in Great Shelters in eastern Europe for centuries, waiting until the time appointed by their long-held prophecies came to pass, and their leaders deemed it time to return.

When they did so, their promises of land and conquest drew many of the surface tribes and even many of the western Whitestar Strongholds to join them. The Sons claimed all of 'Prussia', and all the lands stretching east as far as the Urals, as rightfully theirs. Needless to say, these territorial claims did not sit well with the Tsarina, who declared Whitestar land inviolable, to be defended to the last drop of blood. Nonetheless, the Sons of Rasputin extended their territory eastwards, gaining ground every year. Now the front lines are within the very tunnels of Petropol, the north-western city of Nova Zembla.

Beset on multiple fronts on their own soil by rogue bandits, mutant tribes, and insidious Heretics, Whitestar nevertheless so far refuses to consider allowing the corporations the opportunity to establish a foothold on Earth, even were it only to establish a means by which the mounting attacks by its numerous enemies could be alleviated. The Earth was abandoned to Whitestar alone; and it is alone that Whitestar will protect it. With the very last drop of blood, if needs be.

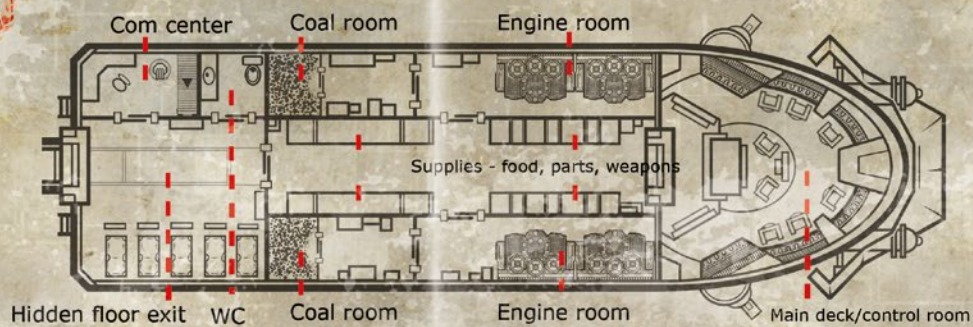


Bone Hussars 'exercise' with a Praetorian Stalker."

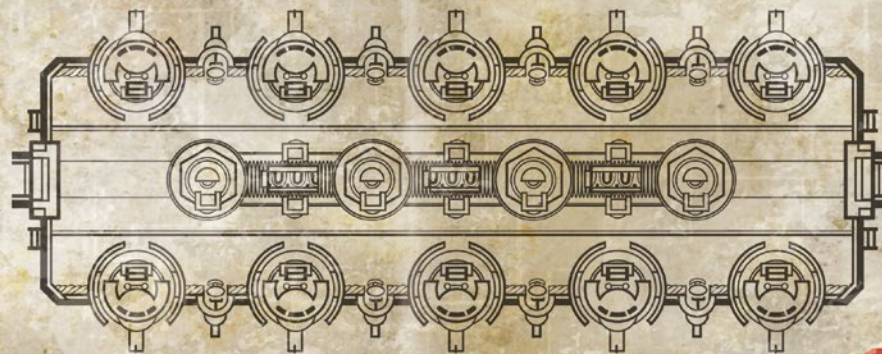
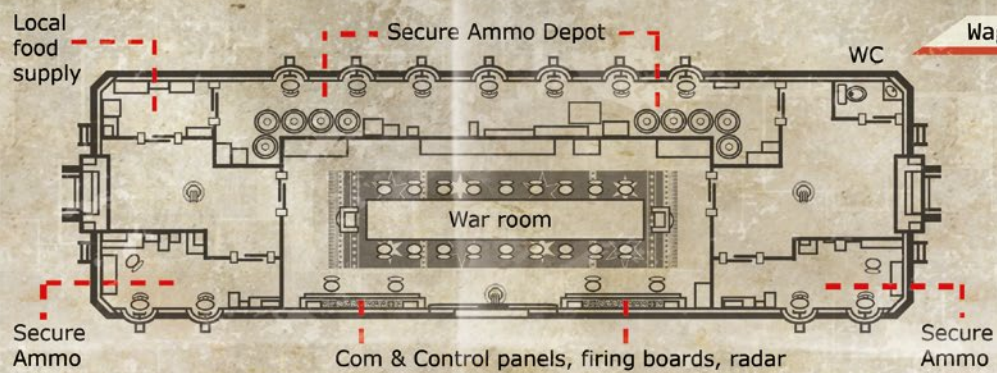


ZOLOTOY GLAZ

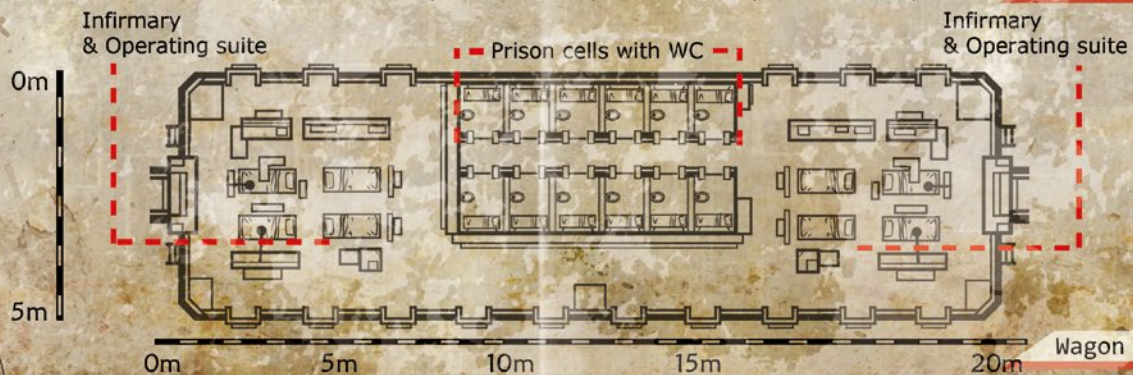
Wagon 1



Wagon 2

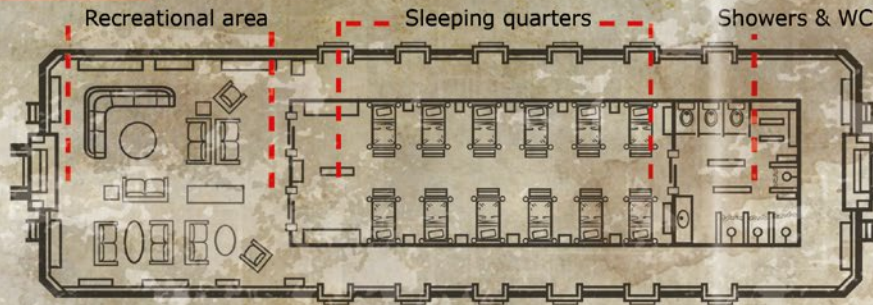


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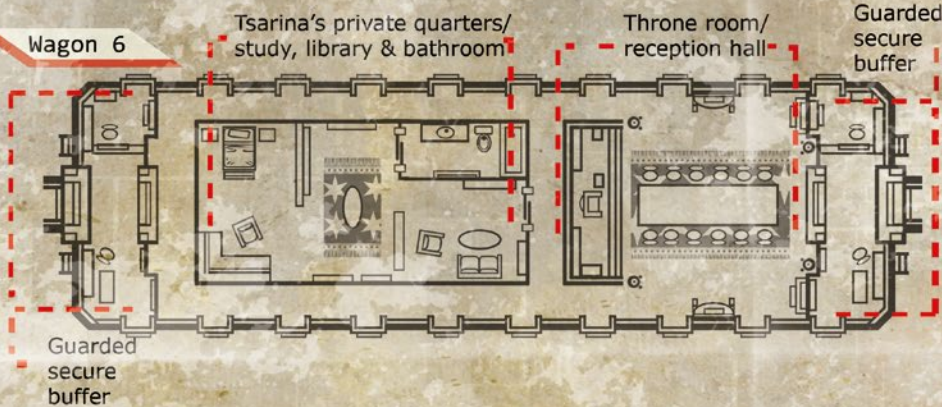


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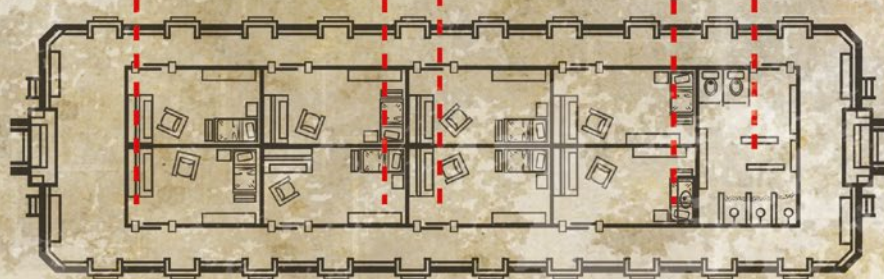
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Wagon 6

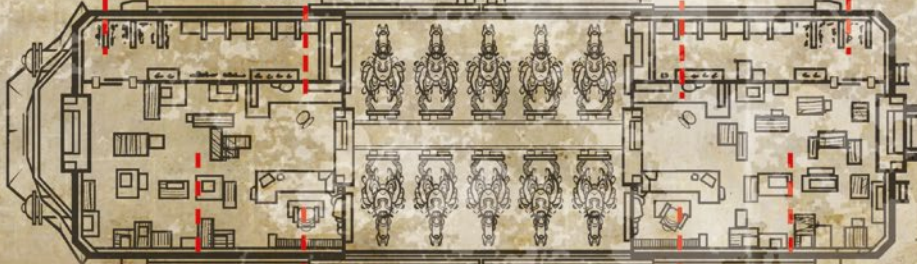


Officer's room Officer's room Showers & WC



Wagon 7












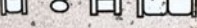
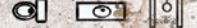
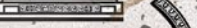
Weapon cache Requisition desk Jetwing docking bay Requisition desk Weapon cache



Wagon 8

Supply center Jetwing command desk Supply center

Key

- 1- Shooting hatch 
- 2- Manual turrets 
- 3- Radar target coordinator 
- 4- Spotter seat periscope 
- 5- Auto-cannon w/ rocket launcher 
- 6- HMG Gunner 
- 7- Jetwing 
- 8- Periscope 
- 9- Cots 
- 10- Beds 
- 11- Bunk beds 
- 12- Chairs & sofa 
- 13- Toilet, sink & shower 
- 14- Radar & control boards 



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FAO: Gavrel Filipov, Tsarina's Nachalnik Shtaba

Report Compiled by: Shtabs-kapitan Aglaya Mihaylov

Dated: 317th Day of the 433rd Year of the Federation Calendar

FOREWORD

General-pokovnik Gavrel, you have asked for a report on the specifics and capabilities of our beloved Tsarina's flagship rail transport, and so here it is. Apologies for the delay, but records on the construction of this behemoth are virtually non-existent, which meant that I had to request a complete and detailed survey of the engines and carriages. Attached are the reports of Ilari Parov, Glavniy Inzhener for the Zolotoy Glaz, and Grigor Koslov, Mazhordom to the Tsarina. I must again offer my apologies, for despite being exceedingly efficient with the Tsarina's affairs, the Mazhordom's report can be rather rambling.

GLAVNIY INZHENER'S REPORT

COMMON DESIGN FEATURES:

Each car contains a delicate and complicated hydraulic lift system that allows each one to be lifted clear of its axles and rotated, meaning that the cars can travel in either direction. A section of deployable track is also underslung on each car which, when used in combination with the hydraulic platform above, allows the train to continue to travel at reduced speeds across damaged sections of the railway infrastructure. The emergency track may also be used to lift the Zolotoy Glaz clear of the normal running rails so that she may make headway cross country by rolling across her own deployable track. This is to only be used in an extreme emergency however (i.e. terrorist incident or megacorporate assault), as the hydraulic system is not only irreplaceable, but also difficult

to maintain. There are simply no spares available as, despite best efforts, the military have not yet been able to penetrate the old train and ship yards in Rostovbla. Warning: Train speed is not to exceed 30 kph under emergency travel.

FRONT AND REAR ENGINE CAR DIMENSIONS:

Length: 20m Width: 5m Height: 6m Traction motors: Each has 1x HF-12 Nuclear reactor

Max speed: 80 kph Power output: Approx. 120 MW Armament: 2x Nova Vesna HMG

Design notes: The first floor of both cars is entirely given over to the nuclear reactors that power the Zolotoy Glaz and her armaments. So far as I can tell, the power cars are refitted variants of older models recovered from a defunct former Bauhaus holding. The engineering plates are imprinted with the name Novochoerkassk. In addition to housing the power transfer couplings, the second floor houses the driver's cockpit and enough living space/bunks to ensure that the Tsarina's train is operational 24/7.

TURRET CAR DIMENSIONS:

Length: 20m Width: 5m Height: 6.8m (including rail gun turret) Armament: 1x Kulkov rail gun turret, 10x ZM-15 Autocannon turrets (single barrelled variant)

Design notes: There are five such carriages interspersed throughout the train. Warning: DO NOT allow the use of every rail gun at once. The resultant power demand would overload circuitry and could potentially bring the Zolotoy Glaz to a stand. Not something the Tsarina would wish. I have provided the warning and divested my responsibility, be it on your head now. The first floor houses the circuitry necessary to power the systems of the carriage, the second the personnel and mechanics that are required to operate the turrets.

BRIG/HOSPITAL CAR DIMENSIONS:

Length: 20m Width: 5m Height: 6m Armament: None (armoured slits provided for small arms)

Design notes: Three such carriages spread evenly throughout the train. The first floor houses secure rooms and functions as the brig. The second floor, although identical in layout to the first, is entirely given over to surgery and care of the wounded or infirm. Access between the two is provided by multiple ladders or patient harnesses.

BARRACKS CAR DIMENSIONS:

Length: 20m Width: 5m Height: 6m Armament: 2x Pushkin, 4x Nova Vesna HMG, plus armoured slits

Design notes: There are seven of these carriages at regular intervals. Combined, they accommodate one thousand of her Tsarina's Streltsy. Two identical floors each contain ablution facilities, recreational areas, and twelve sets of four-high bunk beds (totalling forty-eight beds per floor). Clearly there are not enough beds per soldier, so a complex system of rotational hot-bedding occurs, as at least five hundred of the Streltsy are expected to be performing duties at any one time.

SUPPLY/MOTOR POOL CAR DIMENSIONS:

Length: 20m Width: 5m Height: 6m Armament: 4x Nova Vesna HMG, plus armoured slits

Design notes: Four of these interspersed throughout the train provide two identical floors of housing for ten Jightwings (twenty per carriage) and enough supplies and munitions to last the entire crew of the Zolotoy Glaz for one month of travel. The Jetwings can be rapidly deployed via armoured doors that retract along the outside of the car.

OFFICER/COUNCIL CAR DIMENSIONS:

Length: 20m Width: 5m Height: 6m Armament: 6x Nova Vesna HMG, plus armoured slits

Design notes: Four such cars divided evenly amongst the train. The two floors are identical in design and provides separation from the junior officers and non-comm's for the senior officers, travelling dignitaries, and members of the Tsarina's retinue. Communal ablutions are provided.

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WAR/DIPLOMACY ROOM DIMENSIONS:

Length: 20m Width: 5m Height: 6m Armament: 4x Pushkin, 7x Nova Vesna HMG, armoured slits

Design notes: One carriage, kept centrally to the train. The first floor is a fully functioning command and control centre for operations. The second floor provides the armament housing for the carriage, in addition to reception facilities for dignitaries.

T SARINA'S CAR DIMENSIONS:

Length: 20m Width: 5m Height: 6m Armament: 4x Pushkin, 7x Nova Vesna HMG, armoured slits

Design notes: One car, whose placement is constantly adjusted. The Tsarina has extensive chambers for herself and her hand maid on the first floor. The second floor is entirely given over to her personal defence.

MAZHORDOM'S REPORT

A review of the safety and personnel requirements of the Tsarina's personage when travelling aboard the Zolotoy Glaz. On request from Shtabs-kapitan Aglaya Mihaylov.

Taking care of our beloved Tsarina's personal affairs and safety when travelling on her cardinal mode of conveyance across Whitestar's territories can be something of a delicate balance, not to mention an oft-times Murometsian task. Aside from the fact that I am required to sign off on all personnel requirements—from the complicated rotational system employed by the Streltsy to ensure that half of their number are always on duty, to the particular requirements of any dignitaries that may be travelling as guests for the journey—there is also the itinerary to consider—length of journey, number of stops required, safety implications, changes of personnel; the list is endless.

Summarising the numbers, there are one thousand Streltsy (non-commissioned and officer ranks), twenty-five Night Witch pilots (including command personnel), eight doctors, twenty staff nurses, three drivers, twenty inzheners, twelve support personnel, and anywhere from upwards of seven higher ranking officers or visiting dignitaries. I know you have not asked for such, but I have attached a report of the normal daily activities aboard the Zolotoy Glaz, plus personal files for all of the staff currently seconded to our Tsarina's glorious transport. I hope you find these to be insightful reading.

SOCIETY AND LIFEPATH

WHITESTAR SOCIETY

"Your forebears left because they predicted that our world would die. Unfortunately for you, we survived."

—Marshall Kirov addressing the assembled Combined Homeworld Intercontinental Expeditionary Force.

THOSE WHO ABIDE

On the surface, the Whitestar Federation would appear to be a dysfunctional autocratic society, but nothing could be further from the truth. The Tsarina is indeed the titular head of Whitestar, and her word is certainly law where relations with the other corporations are concerned, but the large network of Strongholds that collectively form the Federation that is Whitestar effectively govern themselves. Whitestar communities work not just for themselves, but also for the benefit of everyone; every single member understands that meaningful contribution will benefit the entire Stronghold. Every single boon that the Stronghold receives from the community increases the prosperity for all, as a prosperous Stronghold will, in return, support and nurture every member that provides a contribution. Whitestar as a whole will then benefit from effective contribution, as surplus produce can be sent to support adjacent communities, which will in turn allow them to prosper; and so the cycle perpetuates.

Most Strongholds are administered by an appointed Council of Elders or respected leader, with the choice usually having been established in the long period of darkness when the remnants of humanity hid itself from the tortured skies above. The system of community support and involvement works largely because it had to. Trapped below ground, eking an existence from bedrock, and struggling to find order from the remains of so-called civilisation, most Strongholds quickly understood that they could only survive if every member of the populace contributed to their continuing existence in a meaningful and beneficial manner. Those Strongholds that were ruled by dictatorship or tyranny either withered and died, or became a battleground for a bloody coup by those who wished to engender a more balanced society. Consequently, almost every Stronghold that emerged from below-ground—once it was safe to do so—lacked a distinct class system. The cleansing fires of the corporate bombardment following the Exodus truly paved the way for a free and functioning society; a Federation of survivors that found itself more than capable of coping with the severe hardships that became a daily norm.

Despite the lack of a formal agreement between the Tsarina and the Strongholds that she serves, there is an understanding between the parties that her leadership is to be respected; so long as it remains deserving of respect, of course. Most Strongholds agree to be counselled by an advisor of the Tsarina, though whether they actually institute the advice or abide by the guidance is entirely their decision, which is just one reason amongst many for the healthy respect, love even, shown to the Lady Romanova by the people who choose to be part of the Whitestar family.

In broad terms, each community supports a system whereby each member performs a responsibility within a particular function or role, which can range from scavenging, renewal, or preservation, to general governance and administration. As inheritors of the Earth, Whitestar has shouldered responsibility for the past and future with extreme solemnity, which has been transcribed into the functions that are performed to support community interests across the entire network of Strongholds, Orbital Monitoring Stations, and the Luna Bunker.

GUARDIANS OF THE PAST

Not only did the corporations flee to the stars from a world that had been ruined by their greed, but they then sought to drive the final nail into the coffin of those left behind by enacting a nuclear holocaust. This is the truth as taught to each successive generation of the survivors who hid from the firestorms and radioactive fallout:

The giants among the stars decimated their very birthplace. They scoured it with nuclear fire, and then left the charred corpse to rot as they focussed their attention outward to the solar system. They sat in the glass towers of their shining city and gave not a thought to the genocide they had just committed. Earth was the birthplace of humanity no more, it had become merely an anchor to the new seat of power; an eyesore that unfortunately they could never manage to escape, though they surely would have if their 'Golden Age' tech had been capable of repositioning a moon.

The corporations tried their hardest to ignore the roiling cloudscape that they were forced to orbit on a daily basis, but the promise of the forbidden has ever been a lure to mankind. At the same time as their expansionism began to reach the very boundaries of the solar system, they also sought to return to the scene of their crime in order to unleash an entirely new force of destruction on those that had inherited the tortured remains of Planet Earth. Their plan failed spectacularly at the hands of the very plant life they

sought to re-shape, which allowed us the chance to discover their deadly new plan.

Whitestar has taken up the mantle that had been so easily and readily discarded by the corporations; not only because its situation had required it, but also because the Tsarina has ordered it. We have become the guardians of the past, forgers of the present, and pioneers toward a better future; a future free of capitalistic greed and corporate machination. A world in which each and every inhabitant would be valued for his contribution, as opposed to being viewed as an asset that could be drained and discarded once no longer useful.

SOCIETAL ROLES

The Strongholds that have evolved and expanded from the original Strongholds that spawned them have each developed slightly different, yet remarkably similar social structures in the years since the Exodus. Of course, those that join Whitestar have usually been vetted by the Tsarina or one of her Governors long before they are approached with an offer to enter the Federation, in order to ensure that their community will be receptive to the Federation's structure, or be able to adapt easily enough. Small wonder, then, that the Strongholds are so similar in social structure, despite tracing lineage to distinctly different ancestry.

Provision for the community is divided among a broad set of roles, with most citizens assigned to one of these roles based upon their perceived abilities and capacity to contribute efficiently within the specified role. The roles are loosely described, with lines frequently blurred between the definitions. Still, they provide the citizens who perform them a sense of purpose, an opportunity to contribute, and a connection to the community and Federation. In principle, each function is considered to be equally important, as the whole could not exist without each piece. In reality, however, some are afforded slightly more respect than others, dependent on how senior the position is deemed.

Whitestar analysts have attempted to clearly define the roles, although they differ slightly in name and function between each Stronghold. Official canon lists them as:

THOSE WHO GATHER: Farmers, hunters, scavengers, pilots, and explorers. Those Who Gather are tasked with providing for the community, be it through provisions, lost tech, or information. Citizens who perform this role can often find themselves acting as diplomatic representatives for their Stronghold whilst ferrying goods across the network or establishing contact with tribes and Strongholds that are not yet part of the Federation.

THOSE WHO RENEW: Blacksmiths, technical experts, scientists, doctors, mechanics, and ecological experts. Those Who Renew are asked to provide or repair the means with which Whitestar will

reinvigorate the shattered remains of Earth. This can range from creating or repairing weapons of war, to investigating and advancing methods which will increase food abundance. Angel or reaper, they are entrusted mastery of life or death.

THOSE WHO PRESERVE: Full and part-time Militia (Stronghold Defence Volunteer Cadre or SDVC), Streltsy, Bone Hussars, Corporate Intelligence Agents (CIAs), State Security Agents (SSAs), and most other security functions fall into this bracket. It is the function of this role to preserve everything that has been constructed under the auspice of Whitestar. The security of the Federation can range from assisting in the retrieval of lost tech to ensuring that the ambitions of the corporations is held in check.

THOSE WHO ORGANISE: Administrators, allotment ministers, commissioners, and spaceship crew. It is the function of this role to select the roles for others based upon performance and abilities, to ensure that every community contributor receives a share of the produce, and to maintain the administrative machinery that oversees the vital flow of goods and produce between far flung Strongholds.

THOSE WHO GOVERN: Council elders, Stronghold governors, and military leaders are all considered to be fulfilling a position that provides clear direction and governance to the Strongholds and the military. As a progressive state, the people understand that there is still a requirement for a functioning government to provide a clear direction for both the small and large components that comprise the Federation of Whitestar.

THOSE WHO COUNSEL: Tsarina's Consuls to the Federated Strongholds, Commissars, and members of the Tsarina's Advisory Council (TAC) occupy an ambiguous social tier within Whitestar. All other roles, besides Those Who Govern, are considered to contribute to the whole in as equally an important capacity as each other function. It could be debated (and often has been) that Those Who Counsel provide little to no clear contribution to Whitestar, yet they fulfil a role that is elevated above all others in a social structure that prides itself on being largely classless. Those Who Counsel serve two important functions that make them responsible for the continuation of Whitestar's legacy as a progressive state; in addition to providing advice and guidance on the Tsarina's Will, the counsellors question whether each decision made—including those of the Tsarina herself—are in the best interests of the entirety of Whitestar.

ADVANTAGES FOR THOSE WHO GOVERN

Members of a counsellor's household have their family as an important contact (provided they have not been chastised as neglectful or otherwise disgraced). The exact nature of the help the family can provide is determined by its location within the Federation and corresponding sphere of influence. Assistance can range from providing information or sourcing equipment, to

possibly even labour. Bear in mind, however, that the Investigator will need to justify exactly how his request will provide a benefit to the Whitestar Federation as a whole, and will be expected to return any acquired resources to the state as soon as his requirement has been met.

CREATING A WHITESTAR CHARACTER

Whitestar characters can be created using the variant rules in this chapter rather than those in the core rulebook. Many of the differences are essentially superficial—providing details more appropriate to a Whitestar character—but this section also provides numerous alternative options specific to Whitestar characters, including new education options, new careers, and new event tables.

The process of creating a Whitestar character is essentially the same as creating any character, and follows the same Lifepath Decisions as described in the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook. This chapter will provide additional options for many of the decision points. Obviously, these options are only available to characters who come from Whitestar.

DECISION THREE, STATUS

Whitestar characters should roll on the Whitestar Status Table to determine the position that they have been allocated. Amongst Whitestar, social standing is a direct reflection of community contribution; the more your actions benefit the community, the better you are rewarded, which can seem completely alien to outsiders. So long as he contributes in a manner that is beneficial to his immediate community or the entirety of the family, every member of Whitestar will be rewarded and supported in return. All players begin play with a base Earnings Rating as indicated on the Whitestar Status Table, which can be further adjusted by their environment and adolescent or career events.

TOVARICH OF WHITESTAR (CITIZEN TALENT)

All Whitestar characters automatically receive this talent during character creation. Possessing this talent marks the character as a citizen of Whitestar and contributor to the Federation. The character takes great pride in being part of the mutual support system of the Strongholds that form the Whitestar Federation.

When legally purchasing any item manufactured by Whitestar or any of its communities, he may reduce the Restriction Rating by one and Cost by one. This reduction in Cost increases to two for any item produced by the character's own Stronghold. All Whitestar citizens have endured a near constant struggle for survival and are well aware that help may be days or even weeks away, despite the concord of support between Strongholds; every citizen of Whitestar is expected to contribute meaningfully to his Stronghold, and thereby the larger community, whilst within its walls, as even one freeloader can mean the death of several dependable contributors. Each citizen of Whitestar is entitled to freely offer his offspring to the Tsarina herself for adoption, safe in the knowledge that they will be raised in a role that will contribute to the continuation of Whitestar.

Roll 2d6 and consult the Whitestar Status Table.

A character may pay one Life point to select any result up to and including Those Who Govern. A character may pay two Life points to select Those who Counsel status.

WHITESTAR STATUS TABLE

2D6	SOCIAL STATUS	ATTRIBUTE BONUS	SKILLS	EARNINGS RATING
2	Those Who Gather	Physique and Strength	Survival	1
3-5	Those Who Renew	Physique and Intelligence	Mechanics	1
6-8	Those Who Preserve	Physique and Mental Strength	Close Combat	2
9-10	Those Who Organise	Awareness and Personality	Observation	2
11	Those Who Govern	Intelligence and Personality	Education	2
12	Those Who Counsel	Mental Strength and Personality	Persuade	3

WHITESTAR STARTING EQUIPMENT

COMMUNITY ROLE	ITEMS OF INTEREST (PICK ONE)	APPAREL	ACCOMMODATION
Those Who Gather	A battered deck of cards, a pocket knife (slicer*), several worn paperback novels, a postcard from a relation in another Stronghold, a set of polished army boots.	Basic, hard-wearing clothing, some of which is new.	A bunk and footlocker in a shared worker's dormitory.
Those Who Renew	A mini-torch*, a lighter, a military-issue wristwatch, mementos from your parents' Pilgrimage, a parent's old wrench (cudgel*).	Basic, hard-wearing clothing, some of which is new.	A single room with simple furnishings in a worker's dormitory.
Those Who Preserve	A belt buckle or shoulder pad with your employer's sigil on it, an old video of an ancestor meeting someone important, several sets of military dog-tags, a battered hip flask.	A modest wardrobe of respectable military attire.	A single room with simple furnishings in a military dormitory.
Those Who Organise	Statuette of a famous ancestor or Bishop, Tovarich of the Month cup, well-used sword that pre-dates the holocaust, a family portrait.	A modest wardrobe of respectable clothing.	A single room with simple furnishings in an administration dormitory.
Those Who Govern	An heirloom rifle hung over the fireplace, a well-thumbed book full of the misdeeds of Stronghold inhabitants, a mismatched set of keys recovered from the Wasteland, an elaborate stein that belonged to your grandfather.	A modest wardrobe of respectable clothing.	A small apartment with moderate furnishings in a quiet part of the Stronghold.
Those Who Counsel	A bottle of very ancient brandy, a gilded holy icon, a globe of the Earth from pre-Exodus, a photo of an ancestor dining with the Tsarina on the Zolotoy Glaz.	A modest wardrobe of respectable clothing.	A large apartment with moderate furnishings in the centre of the city.



ENVIRONMENT TABLE

D6	RESULT	WHITESTAR
1	Luna City	Whitestar Bunker on Luna
2	Heritage World	Motherland
3	Heritage Foothold	Central Europe
4	Heritage Hotspot	Western Europe, Scandinavia, or the Urals: roll again on the relevant column of the Heritage Table
5	Orbital / Minor Heritage Location	Luna Monitoring Station, Asteroid Belt, or Reclamation Vessel: roll again on the relevant column of the Heritage Table
6	Sequestered	Core Bunker: roll again on the relevant column of the second table

HERITAGE TABLE

D6	HERITAGE HOTSPOT	ORBITAL/MINOR HERITAGE LOCATION	CORE BUNKER
1	Western Europe	Asteroid Belt	Nova Zembla–Petropol
2	Western Europe	Asteroid Belt	Nova Zembla–Belokamen
3	Scandinavia	Luna Monitoring Station	Novozvedza
4	Scandinavia	Luna Monitoring Station	Urgamal
5	Urals	Reclamation Vessel	Vostmor
6	Urals	Reclamation Vessel	Zlogora

Based on the player's roll, he receives items from the Starting Equipment Table. Whether the character maintains this standard of living or moves up in the world is dependent upon the campaign being played and the achievements of that character. See **Chapter 24: Belongings** in the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook.

DECISION FOUR, ENVIRONMENT

The character's environment can be determined normally. Alternatively, the Environment Table and Heritage Table introduce regions that are more suitable to a Whitestar character.

THE STRONGHOLDS AND REGIONS

The number of Strongholds that make up the totality of Whitestar's sphere of influence on Earth are varied, and each has its own quirks, nuances, and peculiarities. The character's starting environment plays an important part in his definition, not only by helping to decide how he has developed before beginning his careers and what equipment he may have inherited, but also by providing information on variance in local customs between the regions or environments.

WHITESTAR BUNKER–LUNA CITY

Finding the safety afforded belowground to be an old friend that is difficult to ignore, Whitestar has excavated, re-designed, and expanded upon the discarded remnants that its bunker has been built upon. Already an insular people to varying degrees, the personnel that are stationed on Luna rarely leave the complex that has been gifted to them. They have crafted their own slice of home out of the foundations, which includes habitation zones separated by role, in which they seem happy to remain cloistered away. Despite every effort to maintain a similar lifestyle to that of the hardships below, some of the opulence afforded to citizens of the other corporations—such as tabloids, confectioneries, and stylish clothing—has spawned a well-intentioned but potentially revolutionary black market for the goods.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Mental Strength or Personality (choose one)

SKILL: Education or Thievery (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: The staff that maintain the Luna Bunker are well provisioned by the Tsarina, which may be enhanced by the trickle of wares seeping into the bunker through the cracks. Roll one **↑** to determine if the character's Earnings Rating is affected. Rolling a Dark Symmetry Icon will also increase the character's Earnings Rating by one, though this may cause trouble in the future as it is due to black market connections within the Bunker.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): A portfolio of schematics and engineering designs, several tattered tabloid magazines from various corporations, a collection of letters from a distant relative on Earth, a jar of sticky confectionaries.

MOTHERLAND

The people of the Motherland consider themselves to be the foundation upon which the Whitestar family has evolved. The heritage of the Core Bunkers has become watered down over the years due to the multi-national influence of their occupants, whilst the Strongholds that dot the Motherland have remained pure and strong. They consider themselves to be true descendants of the Russian lineage and are fanatically dedicated to their Tsarina, the one true heir to the Tsars of old. Her goals and ideals are matched to her people so far as they are concerned: sustaining, consolidating, preserving, and recovering. Over time, the Strongholds of the Motherland have managed to forge an underground link that connects them all; re-opening the veins that sustain the pulsing heart of the Motherland, the beat of which has never been stilled, not even though the sky were burned and the earth were scoured. They live a far from opulent lifestyle, but the free trade between communities ensures that even the smallest of Strongholds will benefit from the hard work of all.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Mental Strength or Physique (choose one)

SKILL: Athletics or Survival (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: The people of the Motherland work hard to sustain not only themselves, but also the Whitestar family as a whole. The local community will benefit from surplus yield, but this will more often than not be redistributed. Roll one d6 with the following results: 1-3 no effect, 4-6 increase Earnings Rating by one.


ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): A rough map detailing an underground route that connects several Strongholds, a basic survival kit for travel underground, an ancestor's recipe book of various mushroom dishes.

CENTRAL EUROPE

A minority group, Central Europeans consider themselves lucky to be part of the Whitestar Federation and work hard to absolve the sins of their ancestors Abandoned and then attacked by their own corporation during the Exodus, many Central Europeans believe that they must work harder than most to assist in the recovery of Earth's poisoned ecosystems. They constantly push the boundaries of exploration in their efforts to recover lost tech, which also often brings them into first contact with undiscovered Strongholds. They tend to live a pioneering lifestyle in search of the next discovery that will help to atone for the crimes of their forebears; whether this be through scientific breakthrough, explorative rediscovery, or information that ensures the security of Whitestar.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Intelligence or Physique (choose one)

SKILL: Mechanics or Survival (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: The descendants of the Central Europeans have retained or recovered the largest amount of pre-Exodus tech of all the other regions. Although the benefits of the technology are distributed amongst the Federation as a whole, Central Europeans profit directly from the tech at their disposal by nature of its proximity. Roll one  to determine if the character's Earnings Rating is affected. Rolling a Dark Symmetry Icon will also increase the character's Earnings Rating by one, though this may cause trouble in the future as it is due to an item of technology or production facility that has not yet been disclosed to Whitestar.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): A charred and barely legible map of pre-Exodus Europe, a basic survival kit for travel through the Wastelands, a chipped statuette of a pre-Exodus cult icon.

WESTERN EUROPE

The frontier of Western Europe is one of the harshest climates that Whitestar citizens must constantly endure. The Pyrenees protect those to the east from the worst of the storms that rage inland from the roiling seas of the North Atlantic, yet the landscape that formerly comprised France, Switzerland, and Italy is still almost constantly lashed by acid rains, lightning storms, and red winds. Considered to

be the most detached from the centre of the Federation, and very much the minority, Western Europeans present themselves as stoic isolationists who do what they can to defend Whitestar from both the environment and the mutants that roam the frontier.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Physique or Strength (choose one)

SKILL: Survival or Willpower (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: Western Europeans strive against the harsh, toxic elements to sustain their small pockets of civilisation, which often bears little fruit. The Whitestar Federation, however, frequently redistributes economic produce to support their citizens that eke an existence out of the frontier. Roll one d6 with the following results: 1-3 no effect, 4-6 increase Earnings Rating by one.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): Whitestar handgun, passage booked on an underground transport circuit to Kosmograd, a pock-marked respirator.

SCANDINAVIA

Barely any form of civilisation has survived amongst the frozen wastelands of Scandinavia. Those Strongholds that did not succumb to the extreme temperature were mostly laid waste by mutant abominations or the ravages of the Dark Symmetry when it was inadvertently released. Small remnants of humanity that managed to endure the elements have been rediscovered by exploration teams, with most readily agreeing to the benefits that membership of the Whitestar Federation offers. Hardy, ingenious, and unflinching are the attributes most associated with the people of the frozen frontier.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Awareness or Physique (choose one)

SKILL: Survival or Treatment (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: Scandinavians chip away at the frozen earth to sustain their small pockets of civilisation, which often bears little fruit. The Whitestar Federation, however, frequently redistributes economic produce to support their citizens that eke an existence out of the frontier. Roll one d6 with the following results: 1-3 no effect, 4-6 increase Earnings Rating by one.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): Whitestar handgun, a basic medical kit with hypothermia treatment medicine, a military compass.

URALS

The Urals represent the spine of civilisation for the Federation. The frozen frontier to the east is claimed in the Tsarina's name and harbours two major centres of population, but is sparsely inhabited and in constant flux outside of these. The people from this region have become as hard and enduring as the mountains that have sheltered their Strongholds through the dark years. The residents

have maintained the traditions of their ancestors, although these traditions vary wildly due to the influx of Mongolians and Chinese that sought shelter here during the Exodus; most Strongholds are a diverse mix of all three cultures, although there are one or two that consist of only a single race. The Urals shelter the capital city of Zlogora, the home of the Tsarina, and her delicate touch has created an interwoven network of staunch supporters of the Federation. The people of the Urals consider themselves to be the guardians of the life-nurturing steppe and champions of progress in the battle to tame the mutant-infested RadZones and frozen wastelands beyond the peaks of their homes.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Agility or Physique (choose one)

SKILL: Observation or Survival (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: The production techniques and technology of the pre-Exodus civilisations that populated the Strongholds below the Urals ensured that they were well equipped to weather the devastation that followed. Many of these facilities are still available and form an extremely important part of Whitestar's capacity to supply its citizens. Roll one **↑** to determine if the character's Earnings Rating is affected. Rolling a Dark Symmetry Icon will also increase the character's Earnings Rating by one, though this may cause trouble in the future as it is due to a black market in items illegally recovered from the rad zones.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): A basic set of climbing gear, battered textbooks that are a heritage of your family's ancestry, a Whitestar handgun.

LUNA MONITORING STATION

The corporations built hundreds of monitoring stations over the centuries as their plans to expand into the solar system gathered pace. Most were designed to look outwards toward the stars, although some faced toward Earth or Luna; never to spy on the other corporations of course, merely to record geographical data. Many of these were abandoned or destroyed during the Exodus, or fell into disuse as interest in Earth declined. Any that remained active following this died a fiery death when the Dark Symmetry struck. Whitestar has made a concerted effort to reclaim any monitoring station that can be brought back into service. The intention had been to rotate entire families through active service on the stations, although in reality entire generations have made them their home. As a result, people from the Federation that are born amongst the stars tend to be more open-minded and outwardly focussed.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Agility or Personality (choose one)

SKILL: Mechanics or Pilot (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: Despite being in an isolated and often unrewarding location, the inhabitants that populate the monitoring stations are resupplied often by Whitestar. The Tsarina realises that this role leaves her people in a vulnerable position and seeks to ensure that they do not feel abandoned by the Federation. Roll one d6 with the following results: 1-3 no effect, 4-6 increase Earnings Rating by one.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): Your dad's old wrench (cudgel*), a shiny belt buckle imprinted with an old version of another faction's logo, travel pass to Earth aboard a Whitestar transport, a chipped miniature telescope.

ASTEROID BELT

No strangers to the hardships of a frontier lifestyle, a slow but steady trickle of Whitestar citizenry have migrated outward from Earth over the last few hundred years with their eyes fixed firmly on the Asteroid Belt. "It is almost as if they are seeking a new piece of rock with which to compound the misery that history has exposed them to," is a classic quote from the boardrooms of the other corporations. In truth, the teams and families sent here are seeking either old and unclaimed tech, or new ways to produce foodstuffs in exacting environments that do not carry the inherent dangers associated with mutant tribes or lethal ecological hazards. Whitestar denizens from the far reaches tend towards manic brilliance.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Coordination or Intelligence (choose one)

SKILL: Resistance or Sciencew (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: Research teams sometimes stumble upon pre-Fall tech, or unlock a new method that will benefit production capacity on Earth. Roll one **↑** to determine if the character's Earnings Rating is affected. Rolling a Dark Symmetry Icon will also increase the character's Earnings Rating by one, though this may cause trouble in the future as it is due to an item of technology or production facility that has not yet been disclosed to Whitestar.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): A cabin class ticket to Luna—fifty percent paid, a globe of the asteroid made from semi-precious metals, a colonial survival kit, a single handheld short wave radio with an expired battery.

RECLAMATION VESSEL

At a much slower rate than the steady stream of citizens that ship to Luna and beyond, chartered vessels will leave Earth's atmosphere carrying papers sanctioned by the Tsarina with orders to explore the solar system. Ostensibly, the Reclamation Vessels serve as a link between the far-flung communities that are becoming established throughout the know space of the other corporations, with a remit to recover any lost tech found during their journey. Regardless of the real function behind their expeditions, the families and individuals



Petropol: Under siege by the Sons of Rasputin.

that form each ship's compliment have begun to view themselves as a form of spacefaring Stronghold; they explore, reclaim, and trade for the benefit of Whitestar. Often exposed to the cultures of the other corporations, the crews aboard ship gain a broad perspective and understanding beyond that taught by the Whitestar education program.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Awareness or Personality (choose one)

SKILL: Education or Persuade (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: Reclamation Vessels provide ample opportunity to benefit from trade, but this also foments and enables a black market that supposedly does not exist. Roll one **↑** to determine if the character's Earnings Rating is affected. Rolling a Dark Symmetry Icon will also increase the character's Earnings Rating by one, though this may cause trouble in the future as it is due to Black Market connections that deal in contraband and unsanctioned goods.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): A piece of battered pre-Fall tech that no longer functions, several letters from a minor acquaintance made within another faction, a well-worn vacuum suit.

NOVA ZEMBLA-PETROPOL

At the eastern most limit of the Baltic Seas, beneath the ruins of the glories of Bauhaus of old, sits the besieged enclave of Petropol. The outlandish city forms one half of the extensive network of tunnels that bring together the underground metropolis called Nova Zembla, but is certainly a distinct entity when compared with her twin sister, Belokamen. Petropol was originally forged from a union of territorial and bloodthirsty metro gangs, and its descendants proudly respect their ancestry by maintaining the colloquial customs that have been handed down to

them. This has made the city one of the few places where the citizens wear anything other than functional grey or brown; former inhabitants of Petropol can be easily distinguished by the riotous mismatch of colours that they wear. The usual gaiety of the city is somewhat muted however, due to a prolonged siege by the Sons of Rasputin

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Mental Strength or Personality (choose one)

SKILL: Lifestyle or Thievery (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: The metro gangs of old lived life on the edge of a machete war and quickly learned to enjoy each day lest it be their last. This tradition has passed on to their descendants, who are generally considered to be a collection of wastrels by the rest of the Federation. Still, you can certainly say that the Petropolians know how to live well, particularly as most of the black market goods that find their way into the Federation from the Wastelands usually travel via the city. Roll one **↑** to determine if the character's Earnings Rating is affected. Rolling a Dark Symmetry Icon will also increase the character's Earnings Rating by one, though this may cause trouble in the future as it is due to Black Market connections that deal in contraband and unsanctioned goods.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): A badge or pin proclaiming loyalty to a metro faction, a notched and worn heirloom machete, a basic medkit.

NOVA ZEMBLA-BELOKAMEN

Belokamen lies hidden beneath the streets of the desiccated and acid-scarred ruin of Moscow. The City of White Stone forms the other half of the sprawling municipality that is Nova Zembla, though its sterile corridors and fluorescently lit chambers are a polar opposite of the

chaotic and rambling tunnels of its sister city. Belokamites consider themselves to be the epitome of Whitestar's ethos; their multitudinous bureaucracies run smoothly, waste is minimised, distribution is equalised, every citizen has a voice, and functional overalls are the fashion wear of choice. Still, despite the fact that they have brought a splash of colour to the white-washed halls, the recent influx of refugees from Petropol is threatening to upset the carefully ordered status quo.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Intelligence or Physique (choose one)

SKILL: Education or Lifestyle

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: As the largest Stronghold in the Federation, with the wealthiest and most influential market sheltered at its core, there is plenty of opportunity to share the wealth and relative abundance—by Whitestar standards—that steadily flows through Belokamen. The city prides itself on being the central hub of the many spokes of the wheel, and most consider it to be the centre of the Federation, regardless of the fact that Zlogora is the named capital. Roll one **↑** to determine if the character's Earnings Rating is affected. Rolling a Dark Symmetry Icon will also increase the character's Earnings Rating by one, though this may cause trouble in the future as it is due to a criminal activity that supposedly should not exist inside the white halls.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): A badge or pin connecting you to one of the many committees or bureaus, a minor religious artefact recovered from the Cathedral of Dormition, a protective suit that is proof against light acid storms.

NOVOZVEDZA

The rooftop dwellings of the Skyscraper City are a source of fearsome pride for the citizens of Whitestar. The sheer tenacity and bravado of the residents, along with their staunch support of the Federation, ensures that travellers from the city are well received amongst their confederates. It is also why there is no shortage of volunteers for the frequent and dangerous resupply runs to the beleaguered city. If any one community of the Federation were to be chosen as an example of triumph over adversity, then Novozvedza would surely be it. As a consequence of this, the citizens of the various neighbourhoods have a real penchant for extreme adrenaline activities and an inexhaustible zest for life; some of the best pilots and Resectors that Whitestar can offer hail from the haunted towers of Novozvedza.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Coordination or Physique (choose one)

SKILL: Pilot or Survival (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: The city relies almost solely upon resupply from the Federation, due to the fact that it is extremely limited in the types of goods that it can produce. Consequently, there is little opportunity for the residents to be able to increase their

own personal wealth by any means. Roll one d6 with the following results: 1-3 no effect, 4-6 increase Earnings Rating by one.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): A well-used grappling hook and rope, heirloom pilot goggles, a basic survival kit.

URGAMAL

The residents of Urgamal pride themselves on being the first representatives of the Federation that off-worlders will meet. As such, they ensure that they present a productive and unified front that exemplifies all of the qualities that have come to be expected of the average Whitestar citizen. Stoic determination goes hand-in-hand with a fastidious loyalty to the Tsarina and the Federation, which can ironically make the residents of the spaceport seem surly and overly zealous to interplanetary visitors. Urgamal is also a vital trade hub for the Strongholds, a place where surplus goods and wares can be exchanged for essential components and equipment; though never items of extravagance of course.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Strength or Personality (choose one)

SKILL: Mechanics or Persuade (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: Despite the fact that it is the only off-world trade hub, the opportunities to generate a large profit are surprisingly sparse. The few representatives of the corporations that have been provided with clearance to trade within Urgamal are at the top of their game and consequently drive hard bargains, whilst the presence of two Streltsy regiments ensures that contraband is dealt with in less scrutinised locales. Roll one d6 with the following results: 1-3 no effect, 4-6 increase Earnings Rating by one.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): An expired traders pass, a much-thumbed photograph of a visiting corporate celebrity, a basic mechanic's toolbox.

VOSTMOR

The frigid waters and environs of Vostmor are home to a fierce, ocean-battling group of survivors who, despite being far beyond the safety of the Urals and at the extreme eastern edge of Whitestar's reach, are some of the staunchest supporters of the Federation. Originally an amalgamation of several bandit factions that were welded together by overwhelming Whitestar resilience, the area remained fairly isolated until the recent influx of personnel and materiel that have been commissioned and requisitioned for the task, providing a respectable ocean-going fleet. The expanded link to the core of the Federation and creation of new employment opportunities have brought a welcome boost to both morale and economy. Once again, like the tales of old, the inhabitants of the Gateway to the Oceans dream of distant shores.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Agility or Physique (choose one)

SKILL: Acrobatics or Survival (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: Vostmor is only just beginning to benefit from the expanded rail link to the west, which means that the local populace have had little time to benefit from a slowly increasing influx of goods and services. There are plenty of opportunities for employment and advancement at the Gorky Naval Base. Roll one d6 with the following results: 1-3 no effect, 4-6 increase Earnings Rating by one.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): An old, pre-Exodus naval chart, a flare gun with two Reloads, an engraved telescope heirloom.

ZLOGORA

The capital city of Whitestar could be nothing else but a shining example of the principles and values that the descendants of the holocaust survivors value most. A strong central government—led by none other than the Tsarina herself—a robust education and welfare system, immediate proximity to the centre of the Zlogorian Orthodox Church, and the presence of thousands of elite military troops ensure that the citizens of the capital are well cared for. The residents of the capital do not languish on their laurels however, nor frivolously waste the opportunities that they are able to enjoy by dint of residing within the seat of power. Every citizen works doubly hard in the hope that he can provide some form of respite or hope to those that face the hourly travails inherent to living on the extremities of the Federation.

ATTRIBUTE BONUS: Intelligence or Physique

SKILL: Education or Medicine (choose one)

EARNINGS RATING ADJUSTMENT: Not only the government, but the people themselves work to ensure that any surplus produced is redistributed to those parts of the Federation that need it most. Zlogora is an efficient hive of activity that harbours precious little time or opportunity to enhance one's own fortunes. Roll one d6 with the following results: 1-3 no effect, 4-6 increase Earnings Rating by one.

ITEM OF INTEREST (PICK ONE): A letter from the Tsarina inviting an ancestor to an honorary dinner, the uniform of a Streltsy officer bequeathed by a relative, a favour owed by an important member of staff within Mertruksa Base.

DECISION FIVE, EDUCATION

For the most part, the Education results in the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook are used for Whitestar characters, though there are a number of small differences, which are described below. Whitestar characters should roll on the table on page 42 of the core rulebook.

As normal, you may pay one Life point to pick (or roll) from Column A or Column B, or two Life points to pick or roll from Column C.

THE STATE SPONSORED WHITESTAR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Whitestar places an enormous emphasis on the importance of educating its citizenry on the horrors of the past, the struggle to overcome, and the benefits of a society in which contribution reaps reward for everyone involved. At its simplest, the education program teaches that the corporations are megalomaniac entities that spurned Earth and left its inhabitants to die. The survivors of the holocaust did not succumb to the extinction event however, they survived despite the odds and forged a new society; a society that could provide for all and had eliminated class. No longer would any one individual be looked down upon by others.

To maintain this equilibrium for society requires that every member contribute. The harshness of reality, as history has shown, is that carrying even one work-shy lackey can result in the death of several other competent citizens. Even those who refuse to contribute are still offered one last choice however; becoming one of the Nameless is preferable to becoming a mutant meal, or experiencing the torment of a slow death through rad poisoning whilst wandering the Wastelands.

Consequently, Whitestar characters that are reduced to an Earnings Rating of zero are considered to have somehow crossed the line between contribution and negligence of duty. Whether they actually have or not is unimportant; Whitestar will only support those that support union. The character is walking a fine line between expulsion and redemption, and may freely choose the Nameless Iconic Career, regardless of prerequisites.

STRONGHOLD DEFENCE VOLUNTEER CADRE (SDVC)

Denizens of the Federation may supplement their careers with voluntary service in their Stronghold's militia unit. They will be trained and equipped as befitting of their environment and role, but will be expected to perform their duties in defence of both their Stronghold and Whitestar.

All characters with an Earnings Rating of one or more may select the Ranged Weapons skill as one of the Elective Skills for his education, unless Ranged Weapons is provided by that education. If he does this, then he has trained as a member of his Stronghold Defence Volunteer Cadre, and he is given routine leave from his work to attend training (normally one day a week, or one weekend a month, depending on where he lives) and inter-Stronghold support exercises (a week each year). He can be called up to serve as a soldier in any time of emergency. For these purposes, the character receives a Zhivotnoye infantry weapon, a combat helmet, a bullet-proof vest, and a pair of light military shoulder pads. These items are to remain locked in a cabinet in the character's home unless he is training or has been called up, and every use of these items must be reported. It is considered criminal negligence to allow a firearm discharge to go unreported.

If a character functions as one of Those Who Govern, he may instead select the Command or Ranged Weapons skill (choose one) as one of his Elective Skills for his education, unless that skill is already provided. If he does this, then he is an officer in the militia and is provided with similar equipment to that above, though an Ironhand Autopistol may be chosen in place of the Zhiivotnoye.

In either case, once a character has chosen to enter the SDVC, he may continue to count the associated skill (Ranged Weapons for ordinary ranks, or a choice of Command or Ranged Weapons for officers) as an Elective Skill for every career he enters that does not already provide that skill. This represents the character's continued training and state of readiness. A character who is in the SDVC may always choose to enter the Military Primary Career when entering a new career.

ADOLESCENT EVENT TABLE

The Whitestar Adolescent Event Table replaces the normal Adolescent Event Table for Whitestar characters, but functions in the same way. The player may spend one Life point to re-roll or, with GM approval, pick the result. Some of the results provide suggested character Traits, which can be triggered to gain Chronicle points (See **Chapter 09: Chronicles Points**, in the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook). There are many more Traits he could have, so he can also use these as inspiration and pick his own based on the Adolescent Event. In addition, each event can trigger optional effects that allow him to customise his character further.



ADOLESCENT EVENT TABLE

ROLL	ADOLESCENT EVENT	SUGGESTED CHARACTER TRAITS	OPTIONAL EFFECTS
2	Whether through association with others or the simple fact that you are tardy, you have been labelled with one of the worst crimes possible within Whitestar society: freeloading.	Freeloader	You are at odds with the state, and you may only enter the Skiver Primary Career, unless you freely select the Criminal Primary Career or Nameless Iconic Career at the start of your first Career Phase.
3	Your immediate family have somehow discredited themselves with the Federation. Perhaps they withheld some lost tech or took part in some form of production that was never intended to benefit Whitestar. Regardless, just mentioning your surname can cause others to close up.	Considered a Capitalist	You increase the Repercussion range of all Persuade, Lifestyle, and Command tests by one step during social situations with your own faction. However, necessity means that you may re-roll one d20 on any Survival or Thievery test you attempt.
4	There's something odd you can do, nothing much, just... weird. What is it, why are you afraid of showing people what you can do?	Mutant	What strange little thing can you do? It should not provide any Skill benefit and will make Command, Lifestyle, and Persuade tests more difficult by one step if people see you do it. See Mutants & Heretics Sourcebook for expanded rules.
5	Your family gave you up to adoption in accordance with the Tsarina's Will. You have been raised to perform your duty, defend the Federation at all costs, and never question the role that you have been allotted, but shouldn't there be more to life?	Unwanted Heritage	If you do not have the Teenage Draft, Military Academy, or Officer Trained education, you must enter the Stronghold Defence Volunteer Cadre. Further, you may always choose to enter a Military career for free. However, your resentment reduces your Corruption Soak by one.
6	You just don't know when to say no.	Weak Willed	Command and Persuade tests against you receive one bonus Momentum, but your openness to opportunity has paid off. Gain one asset.
7	Something has been handed down through your family for generations, and your ancestors have fought hard to hide it from the state. What is it, why is it so important, and why must it be kept hidden?	Pre-Exodus Possession	You gain a pre-Exodus artefact worth five assets that is coveted by others and unique in some way. Gain an enemy in a random faction who is aware of the artefact.

ROLL	ADOLESCENT EVENT	SUGGESTED CHARACTER TRAITS	OPTIONAL EFFECTS
8	You are scrawny and lacking in strength	You Feel Every Punch	Reduce your Serious Wounds by one and increase your Critical Wounds by one.
9	You were a hard-working citizen who excelled in the requirements of a particular role. Despite this, you were selected for a role that provided you with little to no opportunity to contribute effectively using your natural talents, leaving you with the feeling that the state owes you something for the time lost.	Bitter	One of your Mandatory Skill choices may also be chosen as an Elective Skill choice during your Adolescent Career. Alternatively, gain five assets earned from your early contribution. Social tests with Commissioners are increased by one difficulty; after all, it is they who chose the wrong career path for you.
10	Dim-witted	Slow To React	When you attempt a Willpower test against mental assault, you reduce the difficulty by one (to a minimum of one), but you always act last in action scenes (after all NPCs have acted) unless you pay one Dark Symmetry point.
11	As a young adult you committed a serious crime and spent some years in the Ore Pits of Zlogora.	Criminal Record	Add 1d6 years to your age before your first Career Phase. Gain a Criminal Record*
12	You were raised in a state orphanage. You often wonder who your parents might have been, and why they couldn't take care of you yourselves.	Orphan	Reduce your Earnings Rating by one, to a minimum of one. However, gain 1d6 assets at the age of 20 from gifts bequeathed to you by the Federation.
13	You possess a degree of self-confidence that borders on the unbearably arrogant.	Big Headed	You gain one bonus Momentum on all Willpower tests, but you increase the Repercussion range of all Persuade tests by one.
14	You lost faith at an early age following a personal tragedy in your life. You were chastised for your lack of faith but have never found any reason to accept blind faith.	Agnostic	You constantly question the meaning of life and are always searching for the answers to the cosmos. You gain one bonus Momentum on Insight tests, but your unfocussed will increases the Repercussion of all Willpower tests by one.
15	You are wanted for a minor crime you committed as a youth, for which the authorities have yet to apprehend you.	Wanted	Add one to the Repercussion range of all Persuade tests when dealing with Law Enforcement from Whitestar.
16	You had little contact with your peers as a child. Maybe you were raised in a rural Stronghold or educated at home outside of the state sponsored system.	Cloistered Upbringing	Increase the difficulty of all Persuade tests by one step. However, due to your self-reliance, you gain two bonus Momentum on all Willpower tests.
17	You have an overbearing godparent who constantly cajoles you to perform better.	Annoying Family	You may choose any result from Column A on the Primary Career Table, or roll for free on Column B.
18	You have always suffered from serious reactions to common allergens such as pollen or milk, which has made the polluted environment outside of the Stronghold all the more dangerous.	Industrial Hay Fever	All Resistance tests to resist the effects of artificial substances have their difficulty increased by one step. Coagulant used on the character provides no bonuses.
19	Your family has historic connections with the one crime organisation that is never discussed.	Connected To Criminals	You may freely choose the Criminal Primary Career. You are often a suspect in police enquiries and all Command and Persuade tests that involve police or security services increase in difficulty by one step. You gain a favour in a criminal organisation.

ROLL	ADOLESCENT EVENT	SUGGESTED CHARACTER TRAITS	OPTIONAL EFFECTS
20	Although the state teaches that every citizen labours for the benefit of the entire Federation, and that a buoyant state evenly redistributes its wealth for all to enjoy, you believe that true steps to success can be achieved by currying favour with the right people.	Snob	Your fawning and obsequiousness have gained you a counsellor as an ally. However, your unethical contempt means that you increase the difficulty of all Persuade tests made to deal with anyone not of noble birth (regardless of corporation).
21	You'll believe anything.	Naïve	Illusions seldom cause confusion. You either believe them, or you do not. All tests to deceive you with an illusion increase in difficulty by one step, but if they succeed, they last twice as long.
22	Your free time is spent largely in prayer and contemplation. You regularly attend services at the cathedral and can list the names and deeds of every Primate of the Zoglorian Orthodox Church there has ever been.	Pious	Increase your Corruption Soak by one, and re-roll one d20 on Education tests that pertain to Brotherhood history.
23	Having spent your childhood within the confines of a hospital, you seek always to escape it. You felt weak, vulnerable and powerless, beholden to someone else's care whilst knowing, but not accepting, it was "for your own good".	Childhood Illness	You dislike hospitals, and must attempt an Average D1 Willpower test or suffer one Dread when entering one.
24	During your state schooling you cultivated many interests, but found it hard to concentrate on any particular field of expertise.	Dilettante	Your Signature Skills may only be trained up to four ranks of Expertise and Focus, rather than five. However, you ignore all penalties for being untrained in a skill.
25	You once experienced a sudden trauma, like witnessing a death, or suffering an accident or an assault. It is sometimes difficult to take your mind off it. Sometimes you vividly relive the experience as if it is happening again.	PTSD	If you fail a Willpower test against mental assault, add +12 to the dice rolled to determine mental damage.
26	You are a gifted student, and your theories have brought you to the attention of a leading scientist.	Contention	Gain a conflict with your own faction, as you are perceived to be cheating the system. You have a great contact from an educational institution within one of the Core Strongholds and may freely choose the Academic Primary Career.
27	You have always been naturally good at helping people relate. Throughout your troubled past you've always been able to help people reach a common ground, even if just for that brief moment in time.	Mediator	When attempting to prevent or defuse conflict, you may re-roll one d20 on Command and Persuade tests.
28	Fierce fighting against a mutant tribe found its way onto the streets of your Stronghold. You willingly picked up a weapon once the call went out, though you never quite brought yourself round to handing it back.	Gun Fanatic	You begin play with an Ironhand Autopistol. This weapon has been registered as stolen or missing however, and questions will certainly be asked if it is discovered in your possession by the authorities.
29	Pointing out the flaws in the thinking of others is a passion of yours. It is not always appreciated.	Gadfly	You gain one bonus Momentum on Insight and Observation tests made when attempting to evaluate another person. However, you increase the difficulty of Persuade tests by one step due to your off-putting manner.

ROLL	ADOLESCENT EVENT	SUGGESTED CHARACTER TRAITS	OPTIONAL EFFECTS
30	In life you always get what you want. Period. You have a clear vision and that's about Number One: You. People do what you want, or should fear the consequence if they don't.	Spoiled Brat	You may re-roll one d20 on any Command or Lifestyle test. However, your high expectations and self-important manner increase the repercussion range of all Persuade tests you attempt by two.
31	You spent a lot of time with the wrong people, either due to a rebellious streak or circumstances at home. Or, you could simply not have had a lot of options. Your friends taught you how to survive on the street, how to steal, beg, rob or other 'useful life lessons'. You may or may not have cut your ties with your old associates, but they surely remember you. Even if they don't, the law certainly does.	Bad Company	You are comfortable around low-lives and know how to communicate with them. Gain one bonus Momentum on all Command or Persuade tests when dealing with criminals and black market connections. Alternately, gain a single contact in a criminal organisation.
32	A period of your youth was spent foraging above ground using the domesticated animals that your Stronghold has bred to assist with this task.	Nature's Ally	You no longer suffer the untrained penalty for the Animal Handling and Survival skills. If you are trained in those skills, you may re-roll a single d20 on any test involving them.
33	You have become addicted to the sweets and candies of the corporations, despite the fact that they are categorised as contraband.	Candy Addict	Overindulgence has left you overweight and somewhat unhealthy—increase the Repercussion range of all Acrobatics tests you attempt by one. However, you're seldom without something sweet on your person, which allows you to re-roll one d20 on Persuade tests if you offer someone a sweet.
34	Your body is very resistant to artificial substances and it takes a lot to make you intoxicated.	Extraordinary Chemical Tolerance	All Resistance tests against artificial substances have their difficulty reduced by one step, to a minimum of one.
35	You've been described as mercenary, but to you, money talks. There is always a clarity to any decision you make when money is involved, and few boundaries you are not willing to cross for it.	Greed	When you apply cash to purchasing an acquisition, you may re-roll as few or as many  as you wish.
36	Whether by accident or design, you survived a period of time outside of the Stronghold in your youth. Despite nearly ending your life, the experience has hardened your endurance.	Brush with Purgatory	You may re-roll one d20 when dealing with extremely low temperatures, and gain one extra Momentum from Resistance tests made to resist environmental effects.
37	With a 'glass half empty' approach to life you are simply someone who thrives on being right when things go wrong.	Life is for Living	You're seldom surprised when things go badly, so whenever you generate a Repercussion, the GM only adds one Dark Symmetry point to the pool instead of two.
38	There's something quite cool you can do, though it got you in trouble a few times before you learned to hide it. What is it? Why did your parents tell you never to tell anyone about it? You try not to use it much as you get killer headaches afterwards.	Mutant	Pick the first talent of any skill's talent tree. You may pay a Chronicle point to use this talent for that scene. However, you must take a Challenging D2 Willpower test or suffer a mental assault afterwards from the pain it causes. Describe how your mutant heritage allows you to do this. See the <i>Mutants & Heretics</i> guidebook for expanded rules.

ROLL	ADOLESCENT EVENT	SUGGESTED CHARACTER TRAITS	OPTIONAL EFFECTS
39	Your education was different. It was your parents style of teaching that has given you a perspective and understanding that isn't conventional. You feel educated in most things but on occasions you have a 'way of thinking' that naturally stands you out from the crowd.	Bad Education	You increase the Repercussion range of all Education and Sciences tests by two, due to your unconventional education. However, for each d20 on an Education or Sciences test that rolls a natural 1, you generate one additional success, as your odd approach reaches an insightful conclusion.
40	You are changing, you can feel it. There has been something going on inside your body since you were a kid, you have these odd dreams, and you are afraid people will think you are corrupted or something. What one thing about you is different from other people that you have to hide?	Mutant	Pick the top talent of any skill's talent tree. You can pay a Chronicle point to use this ability. Describe how your mutant heritage allows you to do this. See the <i>Mutants & Heretics</i> guidebook for expanded rules.

*CRIMINAL RECORD

The Strongholds of the Federation vary in both scope and severity when administering justice to criminals, though there are some common sentence guidelines. Smuggling and peddling contraband is generally overlooked by officials outside of the larger cities; even the most judgemental of Ministers would be grateful to receive something as rare and luxurious as candy. Severe crimes, such as freeloading or murder, will result in either expulsion into the Wasteland, or an offer to become Nameless (these are the only career options now available for the character). Lesser crimes will result in either an offer of becoming Nameless (selecting this as a career option), or will involve a spell of hard labour; roll 1d6 and add that many years to the character's age, as they are sent to work in the Ore Pits of Zlogora. In any of these cases, a character with a Criminal Record is Fired (if already in a career) and may only select Primary Careers from Column A or Column B of the Primary Career Table. Characters with a Criminal Record may select Criminal or Military careers for free, otherwise, they are never hindered from choosing a career; to the Commissioners, if someone is the best person for that role, then that is where they should be.

DECISION SIX: PRIMARY CAREERS

For the most part, Whitestar characters use the same Primary Careers as everyone else, and determine their Primary Career in the same way: rolling or choosing from the Primary Career Table, with the option of replacing that result with a free career option from the character's Education (certain Adolescent Events also provide a free career option).

Where the Federation differs, however, is that careers can, and often do, cross multiple boundaries. Whilst Commissioners will always generally attempt to employ a citizen within a role that they are competent with, this is not always possible due to skill or personnel

shortage, with the result that some citizens flirt with a variety of careers throughout their lifetime, but perhaps never focus on one.

Consequently, characters may choose or roll freely for their second and subsequent Career Phases. Whitestar characters, however, who choose to continue in the same Primary Career for a second subsequent Career Phase and those who move into an Iconic Career gain a single **Federation Commendation**. **Federation Commendations** may be used later during Character Creation to gain a number of beneficial effects.

This section provides alternative Primary Careers for several options. Entries on the Primary Career Table marked * have additional options in this section.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Whitestar takes great pride in the fact that it officially records zero unemployment; the entire notion is anathema to the ideals of its society. Of course, this is largely due to the fact that idle hands are given three choices: find something to occupy those hands, take your chances in the Wasteland, or join the ranks of the Nameless.

The Commissioners are swift and ingenious in allocating new tasks when any employee is flagged by the system as approaching the end of his current work list. Consequently, a character may opt to ignore the result if Unemployed is rolled as a Primary Career, and may instead pick any result from Column A or opt to join the Militia, so long as this is his initial Primary Career. If this is his second or subsequent Career Phase, he may instead choose to continue in his current career or again opt to join the Militia.

If the character decides to continue as Unemployed then two **↑** should be rolled. If any Dark Symmetry Icons are generated, the system has caught up with the character; he must either choose the

PRIMARY CAREER TABLE

ROLL	CAREER TABLE A	CAREER TABLE B	CAREER TABLE C	CAREER TABLE D
1	Unemployed*	Preservation (Military)*	Preservation (Medical—First Responder)*	Governance (Corporate Executive)
2	Organisation*	Preservation (Military)*	Preservation (Medical—First Responder)*	Governance (Corporate Executive)
3	Renewal (Technical)*	Preservation (Military)*	Renewal (Academic—Researcher)	Ship Crew
4	Gathering*	Preservation (Politsiya)*	Renewal (Academic—Researcher)	Ship Crew
5	Pick Result from Column A	Preservation (Politsiya)*	Preservation (Media)*	Intelligence (operative)
6	Roll on Table B	Criminal	Preservation (Media)*	Intelligence (operative)

Nameless or Waste Walker Iconic Careers as his next career choice. Alternatively, if this is the result of a second Career Phase, he may instead choose to begin play immediately, though he has been tarnished as a freeloader and is effectively ostracised by Whitestar society until he redeems himself.

When determining a character's age, Unemployment adds only two years, instead of $1d6+1$. In all cases, if a character becomes Unemployed for his first or second Career Phase and avoids being expelled from the Stronghold he regains a single Life point, as described on page 50 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook.



You take rest where you can find it in the Wastes.



ORGANISATION

Maintaining any level of organisation and function within as diverse and disparate an entity as the Whitestar Federation, with its seemingly innumerable number of bureaus, ministries, departments, and offices that differ in form and function between each Stronghold, can be a task that requires both the patience of a saint and apocryphal administrative skills.

If this result is rolled randomly, roll on the Organisation Career Table to determine the character's Primary Career. If this result is picked, such as because a Life point was spent, then pick (or roll) a single choice on the table below.

ORGANISATION CAREER TABLE

ROLL	ORGANISATION CAREER
1–2	Corporate Worker (<i>Mutant Chronicles</i> core rulebook, page 51)
3	Administrator
4	Allotment Minister
5	Facilities Divisor
6	Commissioner

ADMINISTRATOR (ORGANISATION)

Not every Stronghold maintains a system of paperwork or an official means of recording its affairs. Regardless, though, every item of equipment, building, or function requires some form of administration to avoid the resultant chaos. The Administrators work furiously behind the scenes to catalogue, issue, requisition, and redistribute any and all of the goods or services that their Strongholds may require to survive from day to day.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
0	1	1	3
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
1	2	2	1

Mandatory Skills: Education, Lifestyle, Observation.

Elective Skills: Linguistics, Resistance, Willpower.

Signature Skill: Education, Lifestyle, Observation, Willpower.

Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.

Equipment: Functional regional clothing.

Earnings Rating: 2

ALLOTMENT MINISTER (ORGANISATION)

Everyone contributes, everyone receives a share of the contribution. It is the task of the Allotment Ministers to oversee the distribution of the Stronghold's equipment and necessities, such as food and water. In times of surplus, those that contribute the most may receive an extra return on their input in comparison to others. From tallying timesheets, to understanding the quality of contribution, nothing escapes the Allotment Ministers' scrutiny.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
0	1	1	2
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
1	2	2	2

Mandatory Skills: Education, Observation, Persuade.

Elective Skills: Command, Lifestyle, Resistance.

Signature Skill: Education, Observation, Persuade, Resistance.

Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.

Equipment: Functional regional clothing, black notebook and pen.

Earnings Rating: 2

FACILITIES DIVISOR (ORGANISATION)

Juggling the sometimes insurmountable accommodation problems of the larger Strongholds and cities is the nightmare task of the Facilities Divisors. Allocating building space between production, manufacture, and living quarters can be an arduous task when space is limited by the very walls that protect you; there is always a seemingly endless queue of dissatisfied citizens to contend with, and countless torrents of hurled abuse, both physical and verbal, to dodge.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
0	1	2	1
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
1	2	2	2

Mandatory Skills: Acrobatics, Education, Willpower.

Elective Skills: Lifestyle, Persuade, Resistance.

Signature Skill: Acrobatics, Education, Persuade, Willpower.

Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.

Equipment: Functional regional clothing, painkillers.

Earnings Rating: 2

COMMISSIONER (ORGANISATION)

In a vast, complex, and seemingly chaotic machine such as Whitestar, it would normally be an easy task to slip through the cracks. Despite the fact that the notion is anathema to most of the citizens of the Federation, there are those who do attempt to skive at every opportunity. The Commissioners keep idle bodies busy by finding the most suitable work for available hands. It is their task to evaluate an individual's skills and competencies in order to more effectively focus his labour, then issue the appropriate tasks.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
0	1	1	2
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
0	2	2	3

Mandatory Skills: Command, Education, Observation.

Elective Skills: Insight, Persuade, Resistance.

Signature Skill: Command, Education, Observation, Persuade.

Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.

Equipment: Functional regional clothing.

Earnings Rating: 2

RENEWAL (TECHNICAL)

Whitestar has little in the way of automated manufacturing or production facilities to speak of, which means that it must rely upon plentiful amounts of manual labour. This has only been compounded by the fact that replacement components for the rare pieces of Exodus era tech that could be salvaged are non-existent. The Factory Workers and Patchwork Mechanics of Those Who Renew are lauded for performing beyond measure at keeping the Federation's machinery operating.

If this result is rolled randomly, roll on the Renewal Career Table to determine the character's Primary Career. If this result is picked, such as because a Life point was spent, then pick (or roll) a single choice on the table.

RENEWAL CAREER TABLE

ROLL	RENEWAL (TECHNICAL) CAREER
1 -2	Technical (Repairman) (<i>Mutant Chronicles</i> core rulebook, page 51)
3	Technical (Factory Worker)
4	Technical (Patchwork Mekhanik)
5	Technical (Kuznets)
6	Technical (Inzhener)

FACTORY WORKER (RENEWAL)

The Federation depends upon manual labour for any number of tasks, from clothing manufacture to vehicle assembly; there is just not enough functioning pre-Exodus equipment anywhere to perform the vast number of tasks that are commonly automated by the corporations. Some view their task as a dull and tedious repetition that requires concentrated willpower to survive, whilst others enjoy the stability that continuous employment in a structured environment brings, but regardless of their viewpoint, this seemingly modest role is a fairly respected one amongst the citizenry of Whitestar.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
1	1	1	2
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
2	2	2	0

Mandatory Skills: Lifestyle, Mechanics, Willpower.

Elective Skills: Observation, Pilot, Resistance.

Signature Skill: Lifestyle, Mechanics, Pilot, Willpower.

Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.

Equipment: Basic tool kit, hard-wearing work uniform.

Earnings Rating: 1

PATCHWORK MEKHANIK (RENEWAL)

Maintaining and repairing the pre-Exodus equipment and facilities that Whitestar has managed to salvage is often as much a work of art as it is technical ability. From the huge tunnelling machines to the delicate nuclear fusion reactors that power some of the larger Strongholds, the sheer range of technology that mechanics repair means that they must quickly master various technical competencies and perform heroics on equipment that should have been decommissioned centuries ago. The life of a Patchwork Mekhanik can be extremely dangerous, but it is one that is greatly respected in every walk of life throughout the Federation.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
1	2	1	2
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
1	2	2	0

Mandatory Skills: Education, Mechanics, Observation.

Elective Skills: Pilot, Resistance, Sciences.

Signature Skill: Education, Mechanics, Observation, Pilot.

Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.

Equipment: Survival Kit (any one environment), mini-torch, advanced repair kit.

Earnings Rating: 1

KUZNETS (RENEWAL)

The ramshackle buildings and rust-covered vehicles of the Federation are usually forged anew or welded together from several other sources. The blacksmiths of Whitestar learn the ancient arts of their forebears from several fields of expertise in order to become true masters of bricolage. A truly intensive labour that requires infinite patience, an eye for impurity, and excellent coordination also means that not only the metal they work upon, but also body and mind, are hardened at the forge.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
3	2	0	1
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
2	1	2	0

Mandatory Skills: Athletics, Mechanics, Resistance.

Elective Skills: Education, Observation, Willpower.

Signature Skill: Athletics, Mechanics, Resistance, Willpower.

Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.

Equipment: Blacksmith's hammer (cudgel*), hard-wearing work uniform and apron, blast visor.

Earnings Rating: 1

INZHENER (RENEWAL)

Repurposing equipment and components is a different matter to fixing machinery. Teams of multi-discipline and specialist engineers pore over ancient blueprints, damaged circuitry, recovered tech, and defunct machinery in the hopes of rediscovering old secrets or recreating lost marvels from the pre-Exodus days. Transformation and metamorphosis are the buzz words of the Whitestar Inzhener, rather than new concept or innovative design.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
0	1	1	2
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
2	2	1	2

Mandatory Skills: Education, Mechanics, Sciences.
Elective Skills: Observation, Persuade, Willpower.
Signature Skill: Education, Mechanics, Persuade, Sciences.
Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.
Equipment: Hard-wearing work uniform, workshop.
Earnings Rating: 2

GATHERING

Supporting the basic nutritional requirements of the millions of citizens that are housed across multiple Strongholds is a task shared by the entire Federation, as if this were not the case then starvation and death would once again become a common daily occurrence. Much of Whitestar's farming is performed underground in excavated hydroponic gardens, although the Federation is beginning to experience some success on the fertile piece of land called the Steppe.

If this result is rolled randomly, roll on the Gathering Career Table to determine the character's Primary Career. If this result is picked, such as because a Life point was spent, then pick (or roll) a single choice on the table below.

GATHERING CAREER TABLE

ROLL	GATHERING CAREER
1-3	Farmer/Frontiersman (<i>Mutant Chronicles</i> core rulebook, page 52)
4	Okhotnik
5	Razvedchik
6	Pilot

OKHOTNIK (GATHERER)

Finding food or game in the acid-scarred Wasteland would seem like a fool's errand or impossible task, yet there are those who manage to do so. The Okhotniki of the more remote Strongholds are true masters of foraging and gathering, often finding prey or abandoned foodstuffs in the unlikeliest of places. Of course, the question as to whether it will be edible varies wildly from hunter to hunter.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
1	2	1	2
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
2	2	0	1

Mandatory Skills: Observation, Ranged Weapons, Survival.
Elective Skills: Athletics, Animal Handling, Resistance.
Signature Skill: Animal Handling, Observation, Ranged Weapons, Survival.

Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.
Equipment: Okhotnik 778 sniper rifle, survival kit (choose one environment).
Earnings Rating: 1

RAZVEDCHIK (GATHERER)

Scouts exist in every community, always pushing the envelope in search of new pathways between Strongholds, or constantly seeking a new discovery that will allow them to take up the mantle of Resector. Most Razvedchiki also volunteer within their local Milita, where they help to patrol the tunnels and immediate surroundings of their home in order to prevent mutant attacks or tribal incursions. They often operate alone and on foot in extremely hostile territory, which means that the average scout is easily capable of stealthily navigating tricky ground, but will be less than comfortable toasting kvass with strangers.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
2	2	2	2
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
1	1	1	0

Mandatory Skills: Athletics, Observation, Survival.
Elective Skills: Ranged Weapons, Resistance, Stealth.
Signature Skill: Athletics, Observation, Stealth, Survival.
Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.
Equipment: Iron Hand autopistol, survival kit (choose one environment), binoculars, Pioneer's Saw-Back.
Earnings Rating: 1

PILOT (GATHERER)

The pilots are the people who transport the personnel and materials of the Federation from Stronghold to Stronghold. Most pilots learn to master a particular vehicle that then evolves into a trusted companion for the rest of their career, whilst a few ensure that they vary their competencies across a broad range of categories (or 'tooling up the garage' as the popular saying goes); from spacecraft that range across the Solar System to trains that crawl the Sub-Siberian tunnels, some pilots just want it all.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
1	2	1	2
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
2	2	1	0

Mandatory Skills: Mechanics, Pilot, Resistance.
Elective Skills: Gunnery, Space, Willpower.
Signature Skill: Mechanics, Pilot, Resistance, Willpower.
Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.
Equipment: Enviro-suit, survival kit (choose one environment).
Earnings Rating: 2

MILITARY

The military might of the Federation relies greatly upon the citizenry of the Strongholds that choose to bear arms in defence of their homes. Those who join the SDVC, both full-time and part-time, receive the respect and admiration of their community, meaning that most who are accepted into the ranks of the volunteer army regard it as an honour. The Streltsy are, if anything, afforded an even deeper respect than the members of the SVDC, as the stern and reserved members of their combat units are mostly career soldiers who are willing to sacrifice their lives in glorious battle against the enemies of the Federation and their beloved Tsarina.

If this result is rolled randomly, roll on the Military Career Table to determine the character's Primary Career. If this result is picked, such as because a Life point was spent, then pick (or roll) a single choice on the Military Career Table.

Streltsy characters have an additional consideration, due to their time-honoured belief that an officer should have served in the trenches with his comrades and earned their respect before being given the opportunity to command them. Any character who has completed at least one Primary Career Phase as an ordinary rank, or who has served as a full-time Militia officer, may choose to continue with, or enter into, the Streltsy career as an officer, and thus uses a different set of Elective Skills, marked in the career entries as Officer Elective Skills. On rare occasions, a promising recruit has shown a natural flair for command and tactics that has precluded the requirement to serve alongside the junior ranks. Any character who is leaving the Education phase with Command Expertise 1 may pay one Life point, which is additional to any other Life points that may need to be spent for selecting the career, to begin their initial Streltsy Primary Career phase as an officer, and immediately gains access to the Officer Elective Skills.

MILITARY CAREER TABLE

ROLL	MILITARY CAREER
1-3	Militia Regular (Preservation)
4	Militia Officer (Preservation)
5	Streltsy Gorodskiye (Preservation)
6	Streltsy Vyborniye (Preservation)

MILITIA REGULAR (PRESERVATION)

The soldiers of the Militia are the citizens of the Stronghold who have been chosen to be the first line of defence in the provision of security to the other residents. This life is not for everybody. Duties can range from tunnel patrols to hydroponic garden security duty, which means that volunteers for the role are few.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
2	2	1	1
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
2	0	2	1

Mandatory Skills: Athletics, Ranged Weapons, Resistance.

Elective Skills: Close Combat, Survival, Willpower.

Signature Skill: Athletics, Close Combat, Ranged Weapons, Resistance.

Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.

Equipment: Bulletproof vest, medium military shoulder pads, combat helmet, Zhivotnoye infantry weapon.

Earnings Rating: 2

MILITIA OFFICER (PRESERVATION)

The officers of the militia have been chosen to lead the defence of the Stronghold, which places a large burden of responsibility on their shoulders. The officers are taught the nuances of command, in addition to the diplomatic skills that will be necessary when dealing with the Tsarina's representatives in matters martial; the convoluted internal politics of the military structure can often be as confusing as the countless bureaucracies that keep Whitestar functioning as a Federation.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
2	1	1	1
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
2	0	2	2

Mandatory Skills: Command, Ranged Weapons, Resistance.

Elective Skills: Persuade, Survival, Willpower.

Signature Skill: Command, Persuade, Ranged Weapons, Resistance.

Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.

Equipment: Bulletproof vest, medium military shoulder pads, combat helmet, Iron Hand autopistol.

Earnings Rating: 2

STRELTSY GORODSKIYE (PRESERVATION)

The Gorodskiye is the principal defence force of the capital, Zlogora. All Streltsy begin the same punishing training regime upon their induction, it is only when they are chosen to wear the red or blue plume that their skill sets diversify; the Gorodskiye focus more on tunnel fighting and stubborn defence, whereas the Vyborniye train to defy the many environments they may face.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
2	2	1	2
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
2	1	1	0

Mandatory Skills: Close Combat, Ranged Weapons, Willpower.
Elective Skills: Gunnery, Heavy Weapons, Resistance.
Officer Elective Skills: Command, Observation, Persuade.
Signature Skill: Close Combat, Ranged Weapons, Resistance, Willpower.
Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.
Equipment: WF-01 Streltsy armour, Zhivotnoye infantry weapon.
Earnings Rating: 2

STRELTSY VYBORNIYE (PRESERVATION)

The Vyborniye of the Streltsy are the exterior presence of the Tsarina's personal guard. They man the outposts and garrisons that protect the weakest points of the Federation, including those on the far extremes of Whitestar's planetary reach. Well trained, loyal to their last breath, and often serving as military diplomats, they command respect from the armed forces of all the corporations.

ATTRIBUTE IMPROVEMENTS			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
2	2	0	2
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
2	1	1	1

Mandatory Skills: Ranged Weapons, Resistance, Willpower.
Elective Skills: Athletics, Close Combat, Survival.
Officer Elective Skills: Command, Insight, Persuade.
Signature Skill: Ranged Weapons, Resistance, Willpower.
Talents: Select one talent from Mandatory Skills.
Equipment: WF-01 Streltsy armour, Zhivotnoye infantry weapon.
Earnings Rating: 2

CAREER EVENTS

As with normal character creation, roll to determine career events after each Primary or Iconic Career phase. The Whitestar Career Events Table provides a range of career events more suitable to Whitestar characters.

FEDERATION COMMENDATION FOR CONTRIBUTION (FCC)

Federation Commendations are an important resource for Whitestar characters, representing the people's recognition of the character's invaluable contribution to both local and regional prosperity. A Whitestar character may use the Federation Commendations he has accrued in the following ways:

CAREER EVENT TABLE

ROLL	CAREER EVENT	GAME EFFECT
2	Disabling Disease.	You contract a wasting disease. The treatment will cost fifty assets and until then you count as having wounds equal to one level lower on the Starting Wounds Table (page 71 of the <i>Mutant Chronicles</i> Core Rulebook).
3	Somewhere, somehow, you've gained a significant amount of attention for the wrong reason. You can't prove it, but someone is harbouring an intent against you and this makes you nervous.	You gain a Commissar or Consul as an enemy. You also gain the Trait: Hidden Enemy.
4	You're on the run. Who's after you, and why?	Gain an enemy in a Heretic cult, or the Brotherhood, or the GUFB.
5	Barred from a Stronghold—due to some regrettable foolishness on your part, a Stronghold that you once belonged to made the decision to bar you. Members of the organisation that led to your expulsion regard you as a disgrace.	Gain an enemy in an organisation related to your career. You lose a single Federation Commendation (if you possess any).
6	You once unwittingly assisted forgers to duplicate products bearing the white star. The Homeland Department of the GUFB would very much like to subject you to torturous interrogations in regard to this crime.	Gain a trait: Subject to Unkind Inquiries.
7	You were once accused of a serious crime. Fortunately for you, the Magistrate involved in the subsequent investigation did not deem you worthy of conviction. However, it did throw your career into chaos.	You are Fired: You may spend a Federation Commendation to avoid this.

ROLL	CAREER EVENT	GAME EFFECT
8	Big business means you get to make big decisions that have big consequences. For the CEOs of one particular corporation, your decisions and influence prove a little too hard to swallow, gaining you a lifelong enemy and threat.	You have a powerful enemy within another faction (roll a d6: 1-Cybertronic, 2-Capitol, 3-Imperial, 4-Mishima, 5-Bauhaus, 6-Cartel) with whom you have a conflict.
9	Somebody that you treated poorly in the past, an ex-lover or someone who depended on your friendship, has recently had a streak of good fortune, and may be out for revenge.	Gain an enemy—the person you’ve treated poorly. You can try to repair your relationship, but it won’t be easy.
10	You were called in for questioning by the authorities, what did they want to know? They let you go, but on what condition?	You owe a favour to someone in the GUFB or the Brotherhood.
11	Your name was mentioned in connection with a criminal act and recorded with the GUFB and security databases. You are redeployed as a result.	You are Fired, and may not continue in this Primary Career. Gain a Criminal Record*.
12	You have been approached by corporate intelligence during one of your careers, who sought to buy Federation secrets from you. You must make the decision as to whether you took up this offer, and what it involved if so. Regardless as to whether you did or not, the contact has always remained approachable, though usually at a cost.	You have a covert contact within another faction (roll a d6: 1-Cybertronic, 2-Capitol, 3-Imperial, 4-Mishima, 5-Bauhaus, 6-Cartel). Receive a Federation Commendation if you refused their offer. Gain one asset and the contact owes you a favour if you accepted his offer.
13	Someone has been keeping an eye on you, they always seem to be there when you look around. What do you think they’re interested in? Who are they?	Gain a trait: Under Surveillance..
14	Your ancestors have traced a lineage that can claim shares in the Bauhaus Fieldhausen holdings. The board have honoured your family’s claim, and while the shares are not worth much, your family have managed to live more comfortably; though much to the chagrin of your fellow citizens of course.	At the end of each adventure (or after a period of time chosen by your GM), roll a number of  equal to your earnings rating; for each Dark Symmetry Icon rolled, you gain one asset, as the shares pay dividends. Social test with members of your own faction are one step more difficult due to your family’s flamboyance.
15	ou’re obsessed with one of the beautiful prodavets or prodavshchitsa, the poster girls and boys used to entice citizens into joining the militia. You dream about them all the time. Oh it’ll never happen, you move in different worlds, but you just can’t stop thinking about them.	Gain a trait: Impossible Infatuation. Further, your obsession leads to easy temptation, reducing your Corruption Soak by one.
16	You don’t like it, but a Heretic (or Criminal) has a hold over you. What choices do you have to overthrow their control?	Gain a trait: Blackmailed.
17	You have had a number of dealings with Cybertronic. This had led to you networking to positive effect with a number of people in the corporation. However, it has also alienated you from the more pious citizens of Whitestar.	You have an ally in Cybertronic. However, you also have an enemy in either the Zlogorian Orthodox Church or the Brotherhood.
18	Lost in the Wastelands—you were one of the few survivors when an expedition into the Wastelands encountered difficulties and lost its way before being rescued.	Add one year to your age, and gain a trait: Wasteland Terrors.
19	You’re increasingly suffering from an unrelenting fury and moody outbursts. The secret experiments in Sector Black at Mertruca Base didn’t just change you physically. Questioning your own reasons for volunteering, you struggle to control the new you.	You gain one additional Serious Wound and one additional Critical Wound. However, you reduce your maximum Mental Wounds by two.

ROLL	CAREER EVENT	GAME EFFECT
20	You got fired!	You are Fired. You may not continue in this Primary Career.
21	Your lover yearns for a higher social class. They hoard wealth and are considered flamboyant; you know that fellow citizens will soon turn on them, provided your lover doesn't leave you first whilst seeking to improve their lot.	Increase Earnings Rating by one (to a maximum of five) whilst they are still in love with you, but they are very demanding or vulnerable (gain the Vulnerable Lover trait).
22	You foiled a Heretic (or criminal) plot on your own, or with some friends. Why didn't you call in the Brotherhood (or Authorities)?	Gain an enemy in a Heretic cult. Gain five assets in 'liberated equipment'.
23	Spending your time working spreading the message of the Brotherhood in their mission to gain a stronger presence on Earth has proven more beneficial than expected. Some contacts within the Brotherhood are a lot more friendly now than before.	You have an ally in the Brotherhood, and gain one Federation Commendation.
24	You gained employment on the Zolotoy Glaz for a season of external visits. While you rarely met the Tsarina, you still have contacts within her immediate workforce. Your friends can find your constant name-dropping tedious.	You have an ally who is employed on the Zolotoy Glaz and gain three assets. Also, you gain the Trait: Annoying Name-Dropping.
25	A Council Elder or Leader once publicly chastised you for being workshy. You have never forgiven them, and your reputation is still somewhat tarnished.	Gain an enemy from within your Stronghold's leadership. Further, you lose one Federation Commendation (if you have any).
26	You'd hoped to gain opportunities by volunteering to undertake special duties in the local Reserve forces. It worked. Regrettably it didn't work as planned, and your current role comes at a cost.	Gain a Federation Commendation. However, also choose one of the following: Reduce your Serious Wounds by one, gain an enemy in a random corporation, reduce your Mental Wounds by one.
27	You are a strong believer in the Cartel cause. This has won you regard with some members of other corporations, at the cost of a degree of trust from your fellow citizens.	Randomly select one corporation using the Heritage Table (page 36 of the <i>Mutant Chronicles</i> Core Rulebook). You have a contact in that corporation who owes you a favour. However, you also gain a rival within Whitestar.
28	A colleague was exposed as a Heretic and you were given a one-way ticket to the nearest Brotherhood outpost by the authorities, who then turned you over to the Inquisition for questioning. You decided not to tell them that you had kept your own suspicions about the man quiet. This has left you feeling paranoid about the possibility of the Brotherhood finding out.	Gain a favour from someone in a Heretic or rebel group.
29	You were implicated in a Heretic plot, though you were exonerated by the authorities. Why were you involved? Why were you not delivered to the Brotherhood?	Gain a contact in the Streltsy, or the Zlogorian Orthodox Church. The contact owes you a favour.
30	You helped the Streltsy to repel a mutant incursion. A number of the creatures escaped, but most were killed or executed. You were rewarded for your help by the garrison commander.	Gain a Federation Commendation and two assets for your trouble. You also gain the trait: Valiant.
31	During the course of your career you accompanied a team into the depths of a Heretic temple. Against your better judgement you took a small metal object, some token of the Dark Legion, as a souvenir of your expedition. You still keep it, believing it to bring you good fortune.	Gain an enemy in a Heretic cult. Further, the 'souvenir' grants you one additional Chronicle point. Whenever you use a Chronicle point, roll a ↑ – if a Dark Symmetry icon is rolled, the character suffers a ↑3 Corruption Roll.

ROLL	CAREER EVENT	GAME EFFECT
32	A GUFB agent once tasked you with assisting a black market operation. You feel uneasy about the nature of the work you helped perform, though you did gain a reliable contact.	Gain a Federation Commendation and a contact with the GUFB. However, your doubts leave you vulnerable; reduce your Corruption Soak by one.
33	You struck gold in meeting the expectations of a corporate purchaser. Either the work you carried out or product you provided resulted in a very happy customer. Despite sharing the profits with your community, you have still been left feeling flush.	Gain five assets and a Federation Commendation.
34	During the course of your work you have been asked to keep an eye out for certain Heretical activities, and to make a regular report of them to an anonymous contact. You think you are working for the GUFB, but your contacts are actually members of another insidious Heretical cult.	Gain an ally. You believe this ally is from the GUFB, but they're actually a Heretic. In addition, gain five assets as a 'reward' for your information.
35	You are a reluctant spy involved in counter-espionage. The GUFB runs the Homeland Department. For reasons that you hardly understand they have contacted you in order to report on any activity you notice that might be linked to the Foreign Department of the GUFB.	Periodically during play, you will be contacted by your handler in the Foreign Department with an assignment to observe and report upon a particular individual, or to obtain particular documents. If you succeed at this assignment, you will gain an additional 100xp during that session.
36	You became a minor star through the Whitestar propaganda machine for a minor deed that had been blown out of proportion. People occasionally recognise you, but your career isn't set to take off in a big way.	You gain one free Momentum on successful Command, Lifestyle, and Persuade tests, but all Stealth tests increase their difficulty by one step where being recognised would cause you a problem.
37	You were disabled in a serious accident.	All movement related skill tests are one difficulty harder, but you have gained a strong will. All Mental Strength tests are one difficulty lower (minimum of one).
38	Good Negotiator—whether it's in the council chambers, doing a deal on the streets, or talking down an armed tribesman, you're gifted at negotiating.	All Lifestyle and Persuade tests made to negotiate reduce their difficulty by one step (minimum of zero).
39	You're harbouring an AI system, perhaps in a childhood toy. The AI is strongly degraded. You grew up with it and can't bear to part with it.	Gain an item worth five assets that houses the AI. The AI provides one Momentum to Education tests so long as the characters can freely converse with it.
40	Major Career success	You have been incredibly successful in this career path. Increase your Earnings Rating by one, and gain two Federation Commendation.

- ◆ When rolling on the Career Events Table, each Federation Commendation spent allows the character to roll one additional d20, and choose which two he wishes to count for the result.
- ◆ When attempting to enter an Iconic Career, each Federation Commendation spent allows the character to roll one additional d20 on the skill test to enter the career.
- ◆ Upon taking his third or fourth Career Phase, a character may spend two Federation Commendation to replace one of his existing Signature Skills with one of the Signature Skills for his current career. He may not replace a Signature Skill that already has four or more ranks of Expertise or Focus training.
- ◆ After the character has taken as many Career Phases as he wishes, he may spend Federation Commendations to increase his Earnings Rating. It costs a number of Federation Commendations equal to his current Earnings Rating to increase it by one, and each increase must be obtained separately.
- ◆ At the end of character creation, when purchasing bonus skill ranks, any remaining Federation Commendations may be spent to obtain Expertise 1 or Focus 1 in any skill.

DECISION SEVEN, ICONIC CAREER

The following iconic careers are specific to Whitestar characters, and represent particular elite groups, noteworthy archetypes, and powerful organisations within the Federation. They function in all ways as all Iconic Careers do, though they are all restricted purely to Whitestar characters.

BLACK MARKET RACKETEER



The smugglers, thieves, and contraband peddlers that maintain the black market are often popular figures amongst the citizenry of the Federation, largely due to the fact that they flaunt Whitestar's corporate sanctions in order to provide the wares that help to alleviate the drudgery of life underground. Consequently, the Tsarina and her officials often turn a blind eye to the trade, provided the Black Market Racketeers do not overstep their limits of course. Smuggling routes frequently cross the Wastelands in order to avoid tunnel patrols, so survival skills become essential.

Prerequisites: Whitestar, Persuade Expertise 1, Thievery 2.

Difficulty: 3

Mandatory Skills: Observation, Persuade, Thievery.

Elective Skills: Close Combat, Survival, Stealth.

Signature Skill: Observation, Persuade, Stealth, Thievery.

Talents: Two talents from Observation, Persuade, Stealth, or Thievery.

Equipment: Pistolet Gyutka, Pioneer's Saw-Back, excellent Fake ID, survival kit (any one environment).

Earnings Rating: 4

COMMISSAR



The Commissars have earned their position by proving to have both a fearless demeanour and a fanatical devotion to the Tsarina. A citizen must apply for a Commissarial appointment and attend stringent training inside Mertruca Base itself, whereupon successful students are deployed to serve with Stronghold militias as appointed military representatives of Whitestar's interests. Commissars aim to lead by example, and thereby inspire love and respect for both the Federation and its Tsarina.

Prerequisites: Whitestar, Command Expertise 2, Willpower Expertise 1.

Difficulty: 4

Mandatory Skills: Command, Ranged Weapons, Willpower.

Elective Skills: Education, Persuade, Resistance.

Signature Skill: Command, Education, Ranged Weapons, or Willpower.

Talents: One talent from Command, one from Command, Education, Ranged Weapons, or Willpower.

Equipment: Iron Hand autopistol, Commissar's ballistic nylon uniform.

Earnings Rating: 2

Special: Commissars are trained to lead from the front and are

expected to inspire devotion to the Tsarina in those that they lead. A Commissar gains the trait: **Foolhardy**. Reduce the difficulty for all Command and Willpower tests by one whenever a Commissar is acting upon this trait (by playing the trait to regain a Chronicle Point for instance).

GUFB FOREIGN DEPARTMENT



The Main Directorate for Federation Security (Glavnoe Upravlenie Federalnoy Bezopasnosti, or GUFB) is the official body that protects the Federation from acts of espionage, treason, and terror—both internal and external. The Foreign Department, or INO to themselves, was formed in the wake of Whitestar's expansion beyond Earth's atmosphere, as it quickly became a prudent necessity to both gather intelligence against the corporations and curtail their schemes and initiatives. Although a fledgling outfit in comparison to other intelligence agencies, the agents of the Foreign Department are easily capable of matching their counterparts from the corporations.

Prerequisites: Whitestar, Persuade Expertise 1, Stealth Expertise 1, Thievery Expertise 1.

Difficulty: 3

Mandatory Skills: Persuade, Stealth, Willpower.

Elective Skills: Education, Resistance, Thievery.

Signature Skill: Education, Persuade, Stealth, or Willpower

Talents: One talent from Persuade, one from Education, Persuade, Stealth, or Willpower.

Equipment: Piranha handgun, disguise kit, flawless Fake ID, tape recorder.

Earnings Rating: 3

Special: The Tsarina has garnered a contract with the Cartel for a supply of Piranha handguns. Without exception, all of them find their way into the hands of Foreign Department agents.

DEACON OF THE ORTHODOX HOLY ORDERS



The Deacons of the Zlogorian Orthodox Church are of the lowest degree of the Orthodox Holy Orders, yet despite this they undertake perhaps some of the most important functions, and are provided with the most freedom—in terms of roaming Whitestar's territories at least—of any of the orders. Deacons can be tasked with any number of important spiritual projects, such as leading educational programs and youth groups, undertaking missionary work, and conducting social welfare projects; from liaising with the Brotherhood to undertaking a lifetime pilgrimage around the Federation, Deacons are tasked with spreading the words of the Scriptures through both prayer and deed.

Prerequisites: Whitestar, Insight Expertise 1, Persuade Expertise 2.

Difficulty: 2

Mandatory Skills: Education, Observation, Persuade.

Elective Skills: Insight, Mysticism, Willpower.

Signature Skill: Education, Insight, Observation, or Persuade.

Talents: Two talents from Education, Insight, Observation, or Persuade.

Equipment: Armoured robes, Zlogorian Orthodox Scriptures, religious icon worth five assets.

Earnings Rating: 3

Special: The character is a respected member of the Zlogorian Orthodox Church, and as such can be expected to be asked to perform any number of the official religious functions contained within the Zlogorian Scriptures. Increase the character's Corruption Soak by one. Deacons may be trained in the Art.

NAMELESS



Joining the ranks of the Nameless is a decision that few take, and one that even fewer survive. Recruits are drawn to the Suicide Brigades through criminal conviction, critical illness, or often just sheer desperation, which means that those who survive the mutational effects of the gene altering injection at the culmination of their rite of initiation are hardened individuals who now only have two things to live for: the defence of the Whitestar Federation, and the provision of the Tsarina's Gold to a nominated dependent upon their death.

Prerequisites: Whitestar, willing to give up one's name, contract for the Tsarina's Gold.

Difficulty: 2

Mandatory Skills: Athletics, Close Combat, Survival.

Elective Skills: Heavy Weapons, Observation, Ranged Weapons.

Signature Skill: Athletics, Close Combat, Ranged Weapons, or Survival.

Talents: One talent from Close Combat, two from Athletics, Close Combat, Ranged Weapons, or Survival.

Equipment: Harmont-IV treatment set, blue coveralls, a military service number.

Earnings Rating: 0

Special: Injecting the Harmont-IV treatment set initiates a mutational change in the recipient; refer to Chapter 5: The Nameless and Chapter 6: Tools for Survival to determine the effects.

RECLAMATION CORPS SPECIALIST



The Reclamation Corps was the precursor to the Exploration & Defence Fleet, and has since been absorbed into its functions as an independent branch. It has been tasked with reclaiming the numerous satellites, orbital stations, and research facilities that slumber at the edge of Earth's atmosphere; a mission that can often lead to a clash with those spacefaring Resectors who are looking to make a fast ruble by breaking up the very same equipment. Considered to be some of the best spacefaring mechanics available in Whitestar, a Reclamation Corps Specialist's skills and experience can often mean that his services are in high demand across the fleet.

Prerequisites: Whitestar, Mechanics Expertise 2, Space Expertise 1.

Difficulty: 2

Mandatory Skills: Mechanic, Resistance, Vacuum.

Elective Skills: Gunnery, Pilot, Space.

Signature Skill: Mechanic, Pilot, Resistance, or Space.

Talents: Two talents from Mechanic, Pilot, Resistance, or Space.

Equipment: Vac suit, Pistolet Gyutka, basic repair kit.

Earnings Rating: 2

STRELSY 2ND SPECNAZ REGIMENT



The 2nd Specnaz refer to themselves as the Domoviye, a name that roughly translates as 'house ghosts', due to the fact that they are entrusted with internal anti-terrorist duties. The elite members of this Special Force train extensively in stealth insertion, tunnel fighting, urban combat, and house clearance in order to hone their skills to a keen edge. The Domoviye also study anti-Heretic tactics, part of which includes close combat training from the legendary Bone Hussars, for the all too frequent occasions that they are tasked with cleansing a den of Heresy.

Prerequisites: Whitestar, Close Combat Expertise 1, Ranged Weapons Expertise 1, Stealth 1.

Difficulty: 3

Mandatory Skills: Close Combat, Ranged Weapons, Stealth.

Elective Skills: Mysticism, Observation, Resistance.

Signature Skill: Close Combat, Ranged Weapons, Resistance, Stealth.



Talents: Two talents from Close Combat, Ranged Weapons, Resistance, Stealth.

Equipment: Grey ballistic nylon overalls*, bullet proof vest, black combat helmet, medium military shoulder pads, respirator*, Iron Hand autopistol, one submachine gun or assault rifle from another faction (character's choice)*, either a laser sight, telescopic sight, or night vision scope (choose one)*, three stun grenades*.

Earnings Rating: 2

Special: Equipment marked with a * is only gained if the character does not already own it.

GUFB HOMELAND DEPARTMENT



The Homeland Department of the Main Directorate for Federation Security, often also called the Rodina, acts as the internal secret police force of the Federation. It reports directly to the Tsarina through the Interior Minister, currently Vasilav von Kultz, and was initially formed to seek out and undermine revolutionary organisations and political opponents, although part of its remit now also involves reporting signs of Heretical activity as the two often go hand-in-hand. Rodina agents also often file reports on black market activity as a means to ensure that any operation does not grow out of control.



Prerequisites:

Whitestar, Insight Expertise 1, Persuade Expertise 1, Stealth Expertise 1.

Difficulty: 3

Mandatory Skills: Observation, Persuade, Stealth.

Elective Skills: Insight, Resistance, Willpower.

Signature Skill: Insight, Observation, Persuade, or Stealth.

Talents: One talent from Insight, one from Insight, Observation, Persuade, or Stealth.

Equipment: Pistol Gyutka, disguise kit, basic media kit, parabolic microphone.

Earnings Rating: 3

TSARINA'S CONSUL TO THE FEDERATED STRONGHOLDS



To become a Consul for the Tsarina is to occupy an honoured position within the Federation. Members of this unique social tier are hand chosen by the Tsarina and her Advisory Council based on both their diplomatic skills and loyalty to Whitestar. It is their task to provide advice to the leadership of the Strongholds when they are undertaking far-reaching decisions that can affect the prosperity of the Federation as a whole. Without legal recourse to back their counsel, however, the Consuls must rely solely upon their diplomatic skills to influence events. Consuls can often act as representatives for Whitestar in negotiations with the corporations.

Prerequisites: Whitestar, Lifestyle Expertise 2, Persuade Expertise 1.

Difficulty: 4

Mandatory Skills: Education, Lifestyle, Persuade.

Elective Skills: Insight, Observation, Resistance.

Signature Skill: Education, Insight, Lifestyle, or Persuade.

Talents: Two talents from Education, Insight, Lifestyle, or Persuade.

Equipment: Functional ballistic nylon faction suit, small personal office.

Earnings Rating: 3

Special: The renown and prestige attached to this role provide one bonus Momentum to all Persuade tests made against citizens of Whitestar.

WASTE WALKER



Opting for a life of hardship and ignominy amongst the desolate and barren Wastelands is preferable to some when weighed against becoming one of the Nameless. Either option often means death, but there are those who choose to become Waste Walkers in the hopes that they may be welcomed by one of the tribes, or perhaps they believe it possible to find a Stronghold that is not yet part of the Federation. Most people who are expelled into the Wastelands rarely survive more than a day or two, yet there are the rare hermits who manage to eke out an existence among the ruins of the old world, despite the inherent dangers now present. Some are even welcomed back if they return with a large enough prize.

Prerequisites: Whitestar, Resistance Expertise 1, Survival Expertise 2

Difficulty: 2

Mandatory Skills: Resistance, Stealth, Survival.

Elective Skills: Athletics, Observation, Willpower.

Signature Skill: Observation, Resistance, Stealth, or Survival.

Talents: One talent from Survival, one from Observation, Resistance, Stealth, or Survival.

Equipment: Survival kit (any one environment)*, respirator*, chemical detection kit or radiation meter (choose one)*, knife.

Earnings Rating: 0

Special: Equipment marked with a * is only gained if the character does not already own it.

THE ACID STORM

Romana Svechami Novel

This month we are proud to bring our readers an exclusive excerpt from THE ACID STORM, the latest novel from celebrated mystery writer Romana Svechami!

There was a heavy acid storm that night, blowing in on a red wind. It had formed somewhere up in the Great White Waste, gathering pace and growing in size as it swept southwards. By the time the curfew alarms sounded at Belokamen and the first drops began to fizz on the ground outside, the storm front was a towering wall of cloud, roiling with menace and blocking out the sky.

It was the kind of storm that was heavy enough to hear from inside the tunnels. The downpour above created a constant low thrum at the edge of hearing, and metallic noises echoed in the pipes. It got under people's skins. They flinched at sudden movements. In living quarters across the city, men and women fidgeted restlessly and talked about how maybe they should go out for a walk, and then fell silent and listened to the distant drumming of the rain.

Olga Chuyko was getting lunch in the cafeteria that had just opened across the track from her dorm. What she got in return for her militia token was a thick broth, heavy on the mushrooms. The place was nearly empty, as it had been since it opened. Business would always be slow in that quiet stop on the Red Line. If the broth was anything to go

by, gourmets would not be seeking the place out any time soon either.

Anyway, the tunnels were always empty during an acid storm. If they weren't on damage control, most people preferred to stay at home. There was only one other customer, a white-haired old guy in a faded HPD work suit who was drinking his pension by the shot. He sat at the bar right in front of the cash register and didn't look up from counter.

Olga ordered a beer. "That'll help the broth go down," said the kid behind the bar, an angular teenaged boy. "Have you been in here before, miss? You live at this station?"

"Yeah, I live in Dormitory F, over the line," said Olga, and told him her name.

"I'm Sergei," said the kid, craning his neck to read her collar patch. "You're a Night Witch?"

"That's what the badge says," said Olga.

"You're not on cloud watch?" said Sergei. "Sorry, one moment." The old guy was waving his hand for attention - another shot. The kid went and poured, and left the bottle on the bar, then came back.

"No, right," said Olga. "The whole squadron's out. Except me. I'm on medical leave."

"Breathed in something bad?"

"I got injured on patrol a month back. Smashed my leg up pretty badly."

"A nasty crash, hey?" said Sergei, then caught Olga's irritated expression. "Sorry."

"It's OK," said Olga. "But no. I didn't crash. I don't crash. But I broke Rule Zero: never leave the vehicle. You ever go up top?"

"No," said Sergei, turning down the corners of his mouth. "Only once, when I was in school, for a Pioneers trip."

"Well, next time you're up there, remember that the kleshnya move really quiet."

Sergei smiled. "I will," he said.

Just then the cafeteria got a new visitor. The plastic-ribbon curtain rustled back and a trim, well turned-out kind of fellow stepped through. He scanned the room quickly with flat blue eyes. His overalls were dark with grey piping on the shoulders, looking official but not military. He walked briskly to the bar and addressed Sergei.

"Have you seen a woman in here? Tall, with long hair, dark hair like this lady here," he pointed at Olga, "in a navy blue greatcoat, maybe a hat too - like an ushanka."



"Like an ushanka or actually an ushanka?" asked Sergei. Olga smirked. The man glowered. "No," said Sergei, "I'm sorry, sir. No one like that has been here since we opened."

"All right," said the man. "Give me a vodka while I'm here. You have Lebedinoye?"

Sergei got down the bottle with the mythical white bird on the label and poured it. The man drank it in one gulp, paid, and turned to leave. He stopped suddenly. The old man was sitting up straight now, turned to face him. He had an unpleasant smile on his face and a greasy-looking pistol in his hand.

"Hello, Vasily," the old man said. Then he snapped off two shots from the gun

and the man in the dark overalls slowly slumped to his knees and then sprawled on the floor. The old man pointed the gun at Olga and Sergei.

"Did you bring a gun, honey?" said the old man.

"Didn't think I'd need one to buy soup," Olga replied.

The old man nodded and backed out through the doorway, keeping his eyes and the pistol steady and level on them as he went.

Olga waited a beat and then ran to the doorway. She stuck her head out through the ragged plastic curtain and looked both ways, but the old man was long gone. There was nobody around to

have seen which way he went. Just the tunnel and the track stretching away in each direction.

When Olga came back into the cafeteria, Sergei still hadn't moved. His face was white as the mushrooms in the broth.

The HPD put in an appearance pretty soon, two patrol officers with a sleepy look to them like they'd been expecting a quiet shift back at the station. No civilians had come running. Who runs towards gunfire anyway? But someone must have heard the shots and called HPD without moving away from the TV.

One of them bent down to check Vasily's pulse. "Seems pretty dead," he said. "You two saw it happen?"

COMRADESHIP IN ADVERSITY

REBUILDING FROM THE WRECKAGE

As a survivor culture, Whitestar has little in the way of industry. It is just about able to grow enough food in hydroponic gardens to feed itself, and can produce handcrafted items that are often made with great skill, but at nothing approaching an industrial scale. For this reason, Whitestar is heavily reliant on salvaging everything possible from the remains of the pre-exodus civilisations. Whitestar sees it as its mission to rebuild a new world from the wreckage of old Earth, taking what was good from the world before, and casting aside the worthless things that created a decadent and fundamentally unequal society. Since the beginning, debate has raged among the Whitestar intelligentsia regarding how this should be done, and the subject shows no signs of being resolved any time soon or, in fact, ever.

Whitestar technicians and engineers are highly adept at repairing and repurposing existing structures and devices.

GOVERNMENT

Whitestar has little in the way of formal government structure. At the top is the Tsarina. The Streltsy, her personal army, swears loyalty directly to her, as do the people of Zlogora, the Whitestar capital. The rest of the Whitestar alliance consists of autonomous communities, the **Strongholds**, each of which is governed in the fashion chosen by its inhabitants and maintains its own defences, trade, and other activities. There is little in the way of a formal deal between the Strongholds and the Tsarina. They promise to follow her lead, and she promises to lead them well. Whether or not either party is living up to the spirit of that oath is determined on a case-by-case basis—the ultimate sanction for non-compliance would be the severance of the relationship. The Tsarina's Consuls provide advice and guidance, supposedly with the best interests of the Union in mind, but this is by no means legislative.

There is nothing to compel a Stronghold to remain part of Whitestar if it wants to leave, and from time to time one does so, particularly if it is an isolated outpost where the inhabitants begin to feel like the alliance is not paying attention to their needs.

Strongholds leave Whitestar only rarely, usually when an isolated outpost community has gone out of its way to aid neighbouring Strongholds and then been left to fend for itself against raiders or mutant attacks. Such communities usually return to the fold soon, either from experiencing what happens when you genuinely try to

go it alone, or from the Tsarina's friendly overtures to win them over, including sending supplies or Streltsy reinforcements.

The Tsarina is based in Zlogora but spends two thirds of her time travelling throughout her domain on board the Zolotoy Glaz, the immense armoured train that functions as her fortress and mobile centre of government. A thousand Streltsy troops travel on board the Zolotoy Glaz, as do the members of the State Council, an advisory group selected from the wisest heads of the Whitestar Strongholds.

The power to broker treaties that apply to all of Whitestar is reserved to the Tsarina and her government in Zlogora. Individual Strongholds frequently come to local accommodations among themselves and with nearby tribes and raiding bands.

STRONGHOLDS

Strongholds are ruled by either a single powerful leader or by a council of the community's senior figures. In most cases, these leaders are simply socially acknowledged and followed without formal voting, and their influence ebbs and flows with their popularity.

The power of any Stronghold chief or council rests on the respect they are able to win from the people they lead. Some are populist leaders, succeeding by getting others to buy into their vision of the way forward for the Stronghold. Others set themselves up as local warlords, their rule backed by a core of enforcers who keep the people in line through force. Though the Tsarina's own regime is relatively enlightened, her central government does not, as a rule, interfere in the Strongholds' internal politics.

Administration usually consists of giving jobs to the people who have the reputation for knowing how to deal with them, rather than having anything approaching the complexity of the offworlders' corporate strata. A notable exception is in Belokamen, one of the twin cities of Nova Zembla, where the citizens have created for themselves a byzantine bureaucracy and an ethos of extensive participatory democracy.

LAW & JUSTICE

Codes of law and their enforcement are the responsibility of each Stronghold. Law is usually customary rather than written down. Trials are as often conducted in the court of public opinion as in a formal courtroom, and justice is, for the most part, harsh and summary.



The Whitestar leaders plan constantly aboard the *Zolotoy Glaz* as it rolls on.

FOOD & DRINK

Whitestar cuisine is based on the hearty foodstuffs that it was traditionally able to produce in the intensive farm units of the bunkers, including mushrooms, potatoes, cabbages, berries, fish, and vat-grown chicken. Cereals are rare, as these take up too much space for efficient hydroponic farming. Vodka and tea are the most common beverages, produced in great variety and consumed in great volumes.

CLOTHING

Most citizens of the Federation believe in individuality and frown on ostentation. The clothes and styles that people wear may seem similar to the unobservant, but it is actually the one place that they make the effort to express themselves. Brown, grey, and black dominate the colours of society, yet look closely and each garment will be cut slightly differently, turn a different collar, bear a distinct sleeve, or be unique in some manner. Extravagance is a bygone word from the time of ruination, used only by the selfish and greedy.

The colour and uniformity of the clothing have, of course, been shaped by the lack of materials and production facilities that plague

Whitestar, though they have also been impacted by the hardships that have been overcome and daily labour routines that dominate most citizens' lives.



HU JING DAY

The descendants of the survivors of the Exodus celebrate the final cataclysm that brought ruination and death to Earth with an orgy of colour and display. Almost every citizen will spend the year between festival dates planning a riotous new costume and scouring markets for exorbitantly priced costume jewellery. The celebration was established as a means to remember the crimes of the past, alongside an attempt to provide a focal point for some levity in the dark days following the calamity, but to most it has become the one day that they can really release their inhibitions and express themselves.

ECONOMY

With little industry to speak of, relying instead on salvage and rebuilding, and few mercantile endeavours, the Whitestar economy is either a relatively straightforward proposition or, if you are a corporation economist, utterly baffling as to how it has possibly lasted so long.

The official currency is the rouble, each rouble subdivided into 100 kopecks. It is used for major transfers of wealth rather than for everyday transactions.

As with the justice system, every Stronghold defines its own economic rules, though the need to deal with neighbouring communities means they must follow the Whitestar cultural norms of reciprocity.

For daily necessities such as food, water, or ammunition, the Stronghold provides each citizen with rations according to availability and personal contribution to the community, whilst ensuring the supply is controlled in order to prevent waste. For non-essential goods and services, the barter economy comes into play. Strongholds usually restrict the rationing system to vital supplies, allowing other goods to be freely traded. Some Strongholds ban private property, though they maintain personal property rights. A tiny minority, influenced by the offworld corporations, have attempted to institute companies as legal entities that exist separately from the Federation, though these are dealt with swiftly and summarily by the Homeland Department of the GUFB. Smaller, isolated Strongholds are able to operate on a gift economy, though this breaks down as population numbers rise, and is not used in any significant Whitestar population centres.

Getting a job in a Whitestar Stronghold is a matter of ability and demand, though this manifests in different ways depending on the policy of the community. Some hand out assignments from a central bureau, but most ask for volunteers and choose those most qualified. The more organised Strongholds retain a wage system, paid in rouble or in food and facilities. Others, particularly those run by a single popularly acclaimed leader, handle rewards informally, dispensing supplies, living space, cash, and luxuries according to the leader's judgement.

As casual as all this may seem to outsiders, social pressure plays an important role. The worst thing one can be in Whitestar society is a freeloader. People who do not pull their weight are ostracised, offered the worst jobs for less reward, and may eventually simply get kicked out of the bunker. It can be a long walk across the Wasteland to the next Stronghold, and by the time you get there, your reputation may well have preceded you, leading to a frosty reception. Common jobs include hydroponic farmer, scavenger, mechanic, engineer, electrician, bar or store operator, quartermaster, Stronghold planner, militia member, and janitor.

ARCHITECTURE

Whitestar has been built using available resources and with functionality as the utmost priority. Buildings have been hacked from the caverns that house them or constructed from the materials that the Strongholds have been able to salvage from the wreckage of the old ruins; most are either functional stone affairs or reconstituted patchwork affairs with little flair or creativity to their design.

Aside from Zlogora and some of the larger cities, the Strongholds themselves follow no particular pattern; they often seem to be chaotic in design and contain a notable lack of practical application or consideration to ergonomic construction.

Despite the oppressive and haphazard construction applied to their habitats, the streets of most Strongholds are surprisingly clean and tidy. Disease and grime were rampant during the traumatic days shortly following the Exodus, but the citizens frown upon idle hands; there is always work to be done, which includes ensuring that the days of dirt and disease do not return.

TRANSPORT

Travel between Strongholds can, and often will, require almost as much time as standard interplanetary travel for the corporations. A combination of rail links, roadways, and footpaths link the numerous communities, with the largest conurbations served by the massive rail fortresses and freight trains, whilst smaller hubs struggle to maintain a secure and established trail.

The Federation has made a valiant effort to connect distant communities through the use of their huge tunnelling machines, though the scheme has been plagued by mechanical breakdown and a lack of spare parts for the ancient machines; the techs and mechanics that operate and repair them enjoy a near legendary status within Whitestar for their efforts in maintaining any kind of momentum with the program.

Colloquially termed as the Long Dark, the tunnels range in size from rough-hewn, metre square passageways that have been excavated by hand, to cavernous subways that act as a transit route for a combination of rail, road, and foot traffic. The entire subterranean network is patrolled by both militia and Streltsy in order to prevent hostile incursion and detect signs of potential collapse, though there is a distinct irregularity to the frequency, particularly within areas that no one claims responsibility for.

Whitestar has become entrenched underground during the centuries since the Exodus. This, when coupled with the Federation's unwillingness to reveal the extent of capabilities and resourcefulness to the corporations, relates to little to no conventional traffic above

ground. Flights between Strongholds are extremely rare, whilst rail journeys are kept to a minimum; aside from the Tsarina's efforts aboard the Zolotoy Glaz of course. Small convoys composed of rugged jeeps, truck, and bikes make short, frantic hops between Strongholds or underground portals, though these journeys are designed to expose them for the minimum length of time possible in order to minimise the risk of mutant attack or environmental hazards. 'God gave you two feet for a reason,' is a popular expression amongst the Orthodox communities of Whitestar.

MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

The main forms of media employed by the Federation revolve around shortwave radio transmission and printed press, with the latter far outweighing the former. The Tsarina and most community leaders realised the importance of maintaining communication between Strongholds, at the very least so that their successes could inspire the citizens and foster a sense of belonging to something.

Conscious of the efforts of the corporations' attempts to detect any signs of life from Earth, Whitestar ensures that radio broadcasts are contained below the surface, which initially posed problems in relation to reception and communicable distance. Considerable efforts were made to strip the old surface cities of cabling and transmission masts, which has solved some of the problem for the Federation. Daily broadcasts are made from Zlogora that reach several of the larger cities, who then disseminate this information to the more distant Strongholds.

Each major settlement also employs some form of archaic printing press that is used to distribute either local news or the Mertruca Pravda, which is the tabloid that comes closest to resembling the Federation's national newspaper, mainly because it originates in Zlogora and is nominally owned by the Tsarina.

Most citizens amuse themselves privately behind closed doors, with families enjoying each other's company over games, dance, music, and homebrew. Some Strongholds have managed to maintain movie theatres and concert halls, although the films struggle to entice an audience as there are only so many times any sane person can enjoy a re-run.

RELIGION

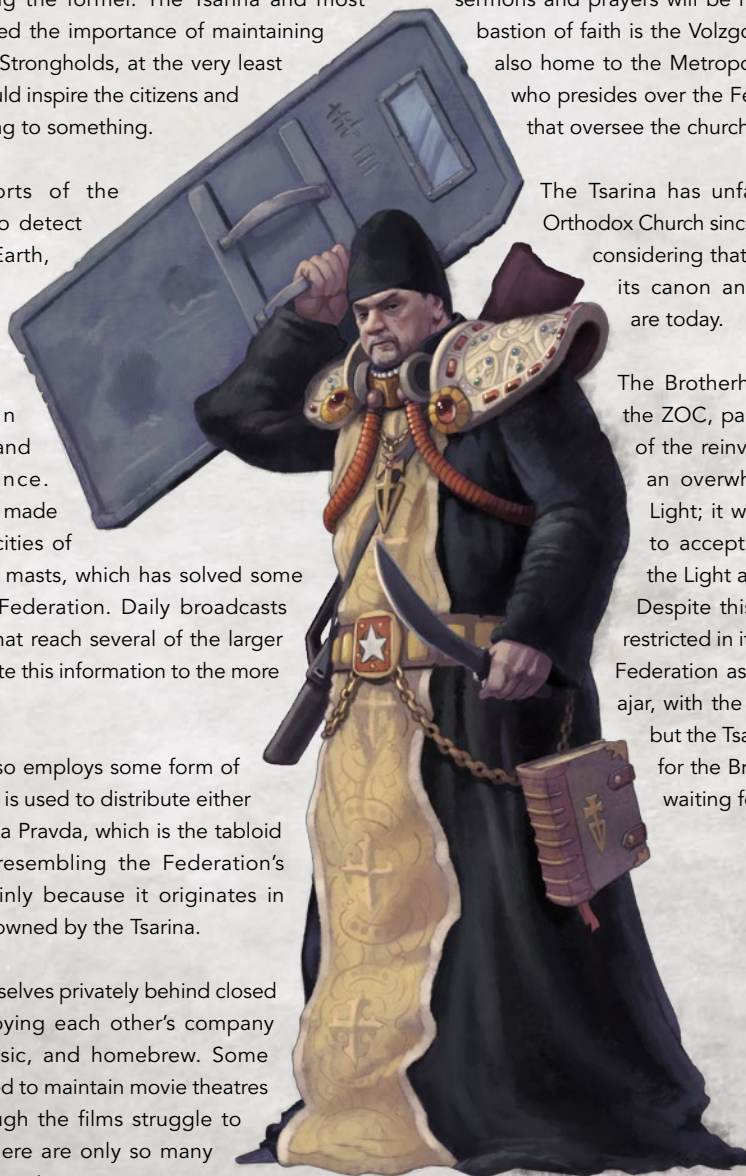
Many citizens of Whitestar follow the diverse and ancient religions of the pre-Exodus days, as most survivors had only their faith to cling to during the chaos and destruction of the planetary death throes that ensued in the aftermath of their abandonment. Despite this, one particular religion has risen to dominance throughout the Federation due to the Tsarina's endorsement: the Zlogorian Orthodox Church, ZOC.

Loosely based upon Eastern Orthodox religions from before the Exodus, the beliefs and canon of the Zlogorian Church have been directly affected and influenced by the apparent apocalypse. A shrine or church is present within every Stronghold, where frequent sermons and prayers will be ministered by a priest. The largest bastion of faith is the Volzgova Monastery in Zlogora, which is also home to the Metropolitan of Zlogora and All Whitestar, who presides over the Federation Council of Metropolitans that oversee the church.

The Tsarina has unfailingly advocated the Zlogorian Orthodox Church since its inception, which is unsurprising considering that she was instrumental in reshaping its canon and belief systems into what they are today.

The Brotherhood has found a staunch ally in the ZOC, particularly as the integral teachings of the reinvented religion make references to an overwhelming Darkness and sheltering Light; it was but a small step for the faithful to accept the Brotherhood as stewards of the Light and guardians against the Darkness. Despite this, however, the Brotherhood is as restricted in its access to Earth and the Whitestar Federation as the corporations are. The door is ajar, with the gap inching open painfully slowly, but the Tsarina has not yet thrown it fully open for the Brothers; almost as though she were waiting for something or someone.

Priests of the ZOC defend their faith in every sense.



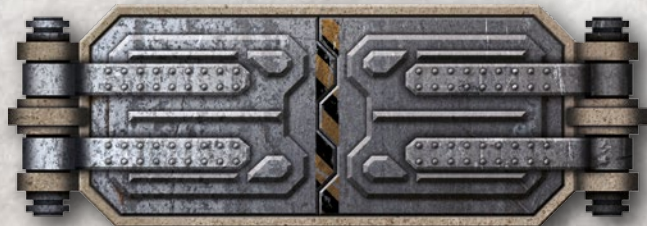
WARDENS OF THE CRADLE

THOSE WHO PRESERVE

Whitestar understands that the hardship and adversity its people have endured since the Exodus have forged a comradeship and dependence on one another that is rarely, if ever, seen amongst the corporations. When combined with the mutual love and respect for their Tsarina, the result is that Whitestar has a tough and tenacious core of seasoned troops to call upon who are ready and willing to fight until their last drop of blood to defend humanity's birthplace and the one true heiress who never forsook it.

The manufactories, training camps, and fledgling shipyards are all bustling hives of activity that work around the clock in order to fulfil production quotas. Space ships and ocean vessels wait silently and patiently at their docks for the crews that are training relentlessly to be able to operate them effectively. The Federation is labouring at a relentless pace to expand its military capability; not because it wishes to directly contend with the corporations, but because it understands that the Dead Hand system will only remain a deterrent for so long. Most certainly sooner rather than later, the corporations' greedy and lascivious natures will lead them along a path that will require direct intervention and retribution. Whitestar will again stand ready to defend its charge on that day.

This is a time of expansion, exploration, and reclamation for Whitestar. It is finally gathering the might and materials that will allow it to reach out across the globe, not only to protect its claim, but also as part of its ultimate objective in restoring some semblance of balance to Earth's shattered biosphere. There are those who counsel caution, however. They question the need for such a hasty expansion of military capability, particularly as the Federation does not yet have enough trained and competent personnel to operate the mighty space vessels or fledgling naval fleet. What, it asks, will the corporations' response be when they finally discover just exactly how much of a rival to their earthly power Whitestar has become? Production continues apace regardless, and most inhabitants are enthused at the opportunity to escape the grim walls of their dour Strongholds.



GROUND FORCES OF THE FEDERATION (GFF)

Each Stronghold maintains a militia, which is responsible for maintaining internal order and security, in addition to providing reinforcements for neighbouring Whitestar communities or for operations in the local area conducted by the Tsarina's personal army.

The Tsarina's imperial guard, the Streltsy, forms the true military ground might of Whitestar. With garrisons across Whitestar lands, as well as observation posts across the known world and units at the ready even in space, these troops stand ready to die for the Tsarina anywhere and at any time. The Tsarina controls the Whitestar space fleet and its nuclear arsenal. Her senior military advisors are the three Army Marshalls who take responsibility for the Motherland and the Urals, Europe and Scandinavia, and the Unclaimed Continents and Exploratory Outposts.

THE MILITIAS (CWR)

Every single Stronghold generally employed some form of trained militia as a defence mechanism prior to joining the Whitestar Federation, it merely became a matter of formalising the procedure once they were taken into the fold. Collectively, the militia have been termed the Combined Whitestar Reserve (CWR).

Each militia continues and upholds the right to its own identity, but must ultimately agree to follow a command structure in line with Whitestar policy, and assent to its function being overseen by a military representative of the Tsarina. This is so that each Stronghold can be effective in providing assistance to the others whilst following clear lines of command and control, thereby eliminating confusion and increasing capability; or so the theory suggests.

The militias are composed of volunteer citizens (Reserves) who offer to add the responsibility for Stronghold security to their own role or function. These volunteers are, in turn, commanded by a select number of permanent positions (Regulars) who are carefully chosen by Those Who Organise to best fulfil the role. At the pinnacle of the hierarchy sits an elected Commissar or appointed representative of the Tsarina.

Because of the various hardships faced by the Federation, some Strongholds gain expertise in dealing with specific hazards that are common to their region. Military officials may request the aid of such environmental specialists when mounting expeditions or military operations within an area that requires such expert knowledge.

THE TSARINA'S GUARD

By oaths of allegiance, the Tsarina Alexandra Romanovna commands the loyalty of the Whitestar strongholds, and by extension the residents of those strongholds. But she also holds direct command over two bodies of the Whitestar Federation, which swear allegiance directly to her: the city of Zlogora, and her personal army, the Streltsy.

ORIGINS

The first Streltsy units were the Tsarina's personal bodyguards, no more than a hundred in number, who accompanied her in her travels across the Whitestar homelands to propagate her message of solidarity and reawakening. That message first took root in Zlogora, and at the culmination of her years-long Grand Embassy, the Tsarina returned to that mountain fastness to make it her capital city. It was at this time that the militia of Zlogora was admitted *en-masse* into the ranks of the Tsarina's personal retinue, becoming the first fully-fledged Streltsy regiment.

ORGANISATION

The Streltsy is divided into two high-level categories: the Gorodskiye regiments, who stand guard over the Tsarina's city of Zlogora, and the Vyborniye, who undertake missions and garrison duties throughout the Whitestar lands, and beyond. Off-planet, the Whitestar embassy on Luna is considered part of the capital zone and so is manned by a Gorodskiye regiment. Any other missions in space or the colonial worlds fall to the Vyborniye.

The Streltsy of Zlogora guard the city, particularly the Central Keep, and undertake patrols and other military actions throughout the surrounding Zlogora Province. They also act as the city's force and emergency response force.

The Vyborniye Streltsy have responsibilities more in line with standard military operations: garrison and border guard duties, reconnaissance, long-range patrols, and so forth.



Blood Giant raiders are a constant danger on the surface.

RECRUITMENT

Streltsy membership is strongly hereditary. The child of a current or former Streltsy soldier is automatically entitled to a place in the Riazanov Military Academy, though such recruits must still pass the same rigorous testing procedures as everyone else once they get there.

The Streltsy recruits from every Whitestar stronghold, with a strong bias toward its home base of Zlogora and the city of Belokamen in Nova Zembla. Recruits are tested not only on their combat abilities but also their ability to act under pressure, dedication, and discipline.

The largest unit of the Streltsy is the regiment. Typically, any given posting, such as a garrison or call for reinforcements from a Whitestar stronghold, will be assigned to a whole regiment, rather than sending smaller task forces away from their parent unit to attend to them.

A standard regimental formation consists, at least on paper, of five centuries of a hundred men, each divided into ten-man squads. A regiment is commanded by a colonel, a century by a captain, and a squad by a sergeant. Those below are mere troopers.

Around eighty percent of Streltsy regiments are peshiye—infantry—with motorised transport consisting of armoured personnel carriers, trucks, or sometimes Molvoyn tunnellers.

The remainder are stremyanniye, mounted brigades. These regiments typically have two or three centuries of infantry, accompanied by armoured units comprising tunnellers, Night Witches, or tank units. Though each century has around a hundred troops, this does not mean that a Night Witch century has one hundred jetwings ready to fly. The units typically have no more than ten to twenty fighting vehicles. Apart from its crew, the majority of the century are command & communications personnel, mechanics, or other support staff.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

The rank-and-file Streltsy infantry trooper is issued with a blue-grey WU-01 hazard suit, which can be worn under his armoured jacket. The jacket itself is quilted for warmth, in addition to providing built-in radiation and chemical threat detectors. Tough-wearing boots and gauntlets seal the suit at the wrists and ankle, so that when the wearer puts on the suit's hood and collapsible respirator mask from inside the jacket, he is provided with as much environmental protection as possible. The distinctive Streltsy helmet with coloured plume—red for Vyborniye, blue for Gorodskiye—completes the ensemble.

The standard armament for infantry troopers is the Zhivotnoye Mat Type 2 assault rifle fitted with a vicious serrated bayonet that detaches for use as a combat knife, with an Iron Hand pistol as a backup firearm.

COMMISSARS

Commissars are politically appointed officers who are attached to Stronghold militia units to provide a direct and intransigent link to the overall military capacity and disposition of Whitestar. With so many militias spread throughout a variety of communities it can be difficult to coordinate them all, or indeed ensure that each militia is acting within the best interests of the Federation. The Commissars are the Tsarina's military equivalent to her Consuls, though they enjoy a level of authority over martial matters that her counsellors lack where politics and social economics are concerned. When attached to a militia that has been entirely assigned on the Stronghold's authority, either Reserve or Regular, they are provided with a military rank that is the equal of the commanding officer of the unit to which they are attached, whereas they are subordinate to commanding officers officially appointed by the Whitestar military.

Commissars are commissioned with engendering a sense of affiliation to the military capability of Whitestar. They often

THE STRELTSY OATH

I swear this sacred oath: that to the leader of the Motherland and all her people, Alexandra Romanova, by the grace of God Tsarina of the White Star, I shall render unconditional obedience, and that as a brave soldier I shall at all times be prepared to give my life for this oath—so help me God.

MILITARY RANKS

The ranks of the Whitestar military are essentially the same across the ground units, aviation arms, and space fleet. Ground units use the ranks provided below, whilst aviation arms will attach the moniker 'of aviation', and the space fleet will attach 'of the fleet'.

ENLISTED RANKS AND NCO'S

- ◆ Private
- ◆ Yefreytor
- ◆ Junior Sergeant
- ◆ Sergeant
- ◆ Senior Sergeant
- ◆ Starshina
- ◆ Warrant Officer
- ◆ Senior Warrant Officer

COMPANY, FIELD, AND GENERAL GRADE OFFICERS

- ◆ Lieutenant
- ◆ Senior Lieutenant
- ◆ Kapitan
- ◆ Major
- ◆ Lieutenant Colonel
- ◆ Colonel
- ◆ Major General
- ◆ Lieutenant General
- ◆ Colonel General
- ◆ Marshall

gain somewhat legendary status amongst their immediate peers by fearlessly leading from the front and inspiring others to heroic action whilst reciting ancient battle hymns and singing praise to the Tsarina. In addition, they are given the authority to countermand a local commander's orders should they be deemed to be in contention with Whitestar's preservationist policies. Rarely is a Commissar called upon to make such a judgement, however, and the few Strongholds that have forced the implementation of this prerogative have historically either expelled their militia leaders or promptly left the Federation.

COMBINED FLEET OF THE FEDERATION (CFF)

The Combined Fleet consists of the space ships of the Exploration & Defence Fleet (often referred to as the Earth Defence Fleet by serving members), and the naval vessels of the fledgling Intercontinental Repatriation Fleet. Both fleets follow a similar command structure to the ground military; they ultimately respond to the orders of a Marshall, both of whom sit upon the military council that advises the Tsarina. The Marshalls have the unenviable duties of providing up to date reports of military capability specific to their branch and instituting any instructions issued by the Tsarina. The space fleet has expanded rapidly almost overnight, with vessels only awaiting crew before they are ready to launch, whilst development of the naval fleet is progressing far too slowly for the Tsarina's liking. Rarely throughout the centuries has she displayed impatience, but something is increasing her tension where global exploration is concerned.

EXPLORATION & DEFENCE FLEET (EDF)

The Tsarina maintains ultimate authority over every spacefaring vessel of the Whitestar Federation, with the main reasons for this being three-fold. First, every crew member, from ultimate commander to lowliest ensign, acknowledges without doubt that he is operating under the Tsarina's orders, which means that he is both hers and the Federation's visible manifestation to the other corporations and should act accordingly or suffer the consequences. Second, it ensures that every piece of lost tech that gets recovered from the far reaches of the solar system is catalogued and repurposed with the benefit of the entire Federation in mind, rather than one specific individual or Stronghold. Third, and perhaps most important, the Tsarina's control of the space fleet ensures that command and control does not get diluted according to the specific whims of the Federation's component Strongholds.

Two-thirds of EDF's vessels currently hibernate within the Spacecraft Construction Facility at Urgamal while they await their crews to take them into active duty, whilst the final fifty or so space ships are already travelling the solar system on missions of exploration or resupply. Marshall of the Fleet, Tsaskia Gyrvlinkov, is an advocate of caution with the unveiling of the fleet, for she rightly fears the ultimate response of the corporations.

INTERCONTINENTAL REPATRIATION FLEET (IRF)

Much like Urgamal has become synonymous with the EDF, the Gorky Naval Base is rapidly becoming intertwined with the birth of Whitestar's naval power. The Avantyura's departure is imminent, whilst several other ships and submarines are also close to being re-commissioned as part of the IRF. The deployment of the fleet is set to be staggered across several years, but with the Tsarina's requests for progress updates becoming an almost weekly factor, it may only be a matter of time before launch dates are brought forward.

SPECIAL FORCES

STRELSY 2ND SPECNAZ REGIMENT

The 2nd Specnaz Regiment of the Streltsy, or Domoviye, is the Tsarina's answer to terrorist threats. Despite the ideology and direct supporting evidence that the people work for the betterment of themselves, the community, and the Federation, there are those who wish undermine the society that has been rebuilt over the centuries. They plot to seize power for themselves through revolution, and strive to return to the dictatorships of old or, worse yet, seek to emulate the capitalist cultures that brought Earth to ruin. Local communities can also become undermined by mutant gangs or Heretic cults, with the result that Whitestar's tumultuous history is speckled with a seemingly unending list of both military and political hostage situations.

The Domoviye is an elite unit that was formed to clean house and rescue the situation. Its members train for a multitude of scenarios and environments, and operate anywhere within Whitestar jurisdiction—which can and does include the entire globe. Missions generally involve a team of five to ten members, sometimes supported by a Bone Hussar or Night Witch if the situation warrants it. More than any other unit, they are undyingly loyal to the Tsarina; orders are never questioned, nor answers required.

The 2nd Specnaz is provided with the best equipment available to ensure it is able to tackle each situation, which often means that it is supplied with cutting edge technology that has been requisitioned from the other corporations. For most anti-terrorist situations, dark grey ballistic nylon overalls are supplemented with black knee pads, balaclavas, goggles, and combat helmets, whilst weaponry is replete with laser sights, silencers, and night-vision scopes.

NIGHT WITCHES

Whitestar has no shortage of swashbucklers and daredevils, velocity addicts and ace pilots. Of them all, few enjoy such a reputation for audacity and skill as the **Night Witches**. These dauntless young women scavenge old jet engines and vehicle parts to build their own custom aircraft called **jetwings**, then take to the skies at terrifying speed to battle the Tsarina's enemies.

Within the Streltsy, a Night Witch squadron takes the place of a century in its Vyborniye regiment, with around fifty personnel, including the support staff as well as the Night Witches themselves, operating between six and ten jetwings. Although they have mechanics to fix their aircraft back at base, Night Witches are uniformly insistent on being in charge of their own maintenance work. The cobbled together nature of the jetwings means that the pilots must constantly be fixing and rebalancing the machinery even as they hurtle through the icy skies, eking every last drop of performance out of their machines. On long-range patrols, especially, these skills are vital, as the Night Witches must travel for weeks at a time in the Wastelands with no one to aid them.

The Tsarina often chooses Night Witches for her space corps. There can be no more intensive training for a pilot than flying a jetwing for a year or more, provided one survives the experience. Those lucky enough to be chosen receive specialised spaceflight training at Kosmograd before being put at the helm of one of the salvaged spacecraft of the Whitestar fleet.

BONE HUSSARS

Two hundred times a year across the Whitestar lands, a young boy is kicked out from his home bunker into the freezing night. On the first night he has to kill a monster with his bare hands, then kill and kill again for seven more days to survive. If he returns victorious, bringing with him two giant bones torn from the body of a monster, he is hailed as a hero and takes on the title of a Bone Hussar. His trophies become the Hussar's signature bonesword, the only weapon he will ever use. He is given the right to wear the Hussar's high fur cap and

cavalry jacket, and he receives a warm welcome, food and drink, and somewhere to sleep wherever he goes. Only one in ten, at most, survive to the seventh day. The rest are killed by the creatures that prowl the Wastelands, or turn tail before the week is out and beg for readmittance to the stronghold—they get it, but they are forever shamed.

When Whitestar attack with its huge landing craft, it is the Bone Hussars who leap first from above into the thick of the enemy to cause carnage. It is their joy to fight for the Tsarina, and in battle each Bone Hussar is a whirling tornado of destruction. They vie for the glory of being among the most terrible enemies, and would rather die fighting ten than be victorious against just one.

Among even the Streltsy, let alone the civilian population of Whitestar, the Bone Hussars are figures of awe and wonderment. After battle is done, they like nothing more than to gather around with their shirts off and boast to one another of their mighty deeds, drinking vodka from the bottle. Others give them a wide berth, lest they attract the ire of one of these human killing machines—and yet they cannot stay away. Every Bone Hussar boast-off attracts an audience of awestruck onlookers, paying rapt attention to their astounding stories, while maintaining a safe distance.

Bone Hussars report to the Central Keep at Zlogora once a year for assignment. Most are posted to a Streltsy regiment, where as few as half a dozen can be considered to stand in for a full century of regular infantry. Those who are too much trouble even for a commander used to dealing with Bone Hussars, or who have an incurable wanderlust, are sent out on a 'roving commission', to travel where they will and slay monsters for the Tsarina.



A Bone Hussar embraces the fight.

RESECTOR

The ladder was ancient, rusty, and looked less than sturdy. More to the point, it was just out of reach. When Ilya stretched upwards as far as he could, his fingertips just about brushed the lowest rung.

He stood his dynamo lamp on the ground and took off his pack. He took out a folded fabric bag, which he stuffed into the pocket of his coat, and tucked the pack away out of sight behind an old fuse box. He could come back for it later. Travelling light was the important thing now. No sense hauling more than he needed to up there. The more weight he took on to that decrepit ladder, the more likely the whole thing would come crashing down with him on it.

He checked the batteries in his goggles—half charged. He stooped to turn off the lamp, but changed his mind. It might be useful to have a light shining on the return trip.

There was a loud report from nearby. A gunshot that echoed along for a seeming age. Ilya tensed. His hand went instinctively to the pick hanging from his tool belt. A single shot meant a robbery, most likely. The gangs had joined the government around here but this was still bandit country. Soon the initial shot was answered with a hail of gunfire, and Ilya relaxed. A full-on gunfight meant he must be close to the front lines. The militia at Sadovaya, holding the line against the Sons of Rasputin.

Ilya stepped up beneath the ladder once more. He adjusted his gloves. He wagged his head from side to side to unkink his neck. He took a deep breath and slowly let it out again. He counted to three, and jumped—grasping the rung tightly, feeling the crinkle of rust flaking away under his fingers. As soon as he had a grip, he hauled himself upwards, trying to get a stable position on the ladder before he lost momentum. The muscles in his arms burned and something went click in his shoulder.



He leaned against the ladder, hooking a rung with his chin. With that first burst of adrenaline he'd managed to get his waist up level with his hands, his arms held straight down, trembling under his weight. Now there was just the small matter of getting up from there.

"You're too old for this", he told himself. "But that's why you're here."

"You need to start being the old, cunning guy that people ask to dispense wisdom," Yelena had said, that night at the canteen. "You're how old now? Thirty five?"

"Thirty five," said Ilya.

"By your age," said Yelena, refilling their shot glasses, "many of the legendary Resectors were dead. Time to be the wise old man, Ilya. The one telling stories about the good old days."

"And what would I do, at home in the Stronghold?" Ilya thought, gritting his teeth as he brought up one knee to rest on the ladder, using its leverage to support himself as he reached for the rung next to his head with his left hand. His lungs heaved.

There was no way he'd be the one back home just sitting waiting for people to bring back scavenged treasures. "Sure, everyone respects the pingzhazhiy, running the rule over the Resectors' finds. That's not for me, though."

Ilya had made his name in Nova Zembla as the one who got what the Stronghold needed. Whatever the emergency, when there was a breakdown or Doctor Borisov needed some rare component for his latest creation, Ilya was the man. He wasn't just agile and fearless—every Resector is. Ilya did the research, too. He went through the old records they found in the Wastelands, so he knew where the ancient stuff was, or was likely to be.

But this job wasn't for the Stronghold. This one Ilya was doing for himself. Buoyed by the thought of what awaited him above, Ilya surged up the rattling ladder, his heart pounding, his muscles burning, until he reached the top. He dragged himself over the lip of the ladder access and lay on the rough-hewn floor to catch his breath. His lamp glowed far below: too far to illuminate the tunnel he was in now. Ilya pulled his goggles up from round his neck and over his eyes, and pressed the button for the night vision.

A green-hued scene appeared before Ilya's eyes. A crudely dug tunnel leading to a low, reinforced door made from what looked like very solid steel.

"The problem is, I only get stuff for the Stronghold," he'd said to Yelena. "Everything is reactive. We need something, I go get it. For once I need to go on a run that's just for me."

"Do you want another duty?" Yelena asked. "We can ask. I'm sure there's something for you in the militia. Patrolling the tunnels with the Soydau Dozor troop or something."

"That's not it. I like my job. I like being a Resector. But... look, Yelena, I'm going to leave the Stronghold."

Yelena opened her mouth to speak but no words came out. She looked hurt.

"I like it here," said Ilya quickly. "But I like being a Resector more. I'm getting older. My stamina is already starting to go. If I stay here, in a few years I have to stop being a Resector."

"So," said Yelena, "nichevo, right? Nothing to be done about it."

"So I decided a little while ago that I need to get into orbit. You don't have to be strong in zero-G, and there's a lifetime of scavenging out there. I'll continue to serve Whitestar doing what I am good at. So... I need something that's mine, and that I can trade for a place on a shuttle."

Yelena drained her glass and put it back down on the metal tabletop with a firm click. "You're serious about this," she said.

The steel door had a rotary combination lock like an old-fashioned safe. Ilya had memorised the combination, found in the records of an ancient ship, wrecked on the rocks where the Wastelands gave way to the sea. Now he thought of ancient hulks in orbit, waiting silently to be prised open, their treasures revealed.

The final number clicked into place. With a creak, the door swung open. And inside, there it was. Ilya's ticket to space.



THE NAMELESS

THOSE WITHOUT NAME

Whitestar is all about pulling together. When you are part of a stronghold, you work with everyone else to get food to grow, to hammer together mechanical parts into working machines, to find valuable stuff that can be put to good use. You barter with others to get a fair deal for your work—and everyone gets fed and clothed. That is the plan, but sometimes it does not work out.

When things get really desperate—maybe you got a big dose of radiation in the Wastelands and do not have long to live, maybe you have got a death sentence hanging over you, or perhaps you just cannot scrape together enough to support your family—the Tsarina is there to help. If you have got nowhere else to go, and no one else can help, maybe she will accept you into her Suicide Brigades, pump you full of experimental mutagenic drugs and ship you off to guard the borders, with a guaranteed pension for the ones you love.

TAKING THE PLUNGE

The decision to become Nameless is a life-changing choice—formally speaking, it is *life-ending*. By Whitestar customary law, the person you were before—the one with a name—ceases to exist. If you owed anybody money, they are out of luck because they are not going to collect it now. All your previous bonds of family, stronghold, and friendship are severed. Your former self is, to all intents and purposes, dead. Just one thread remains linking your old life to the new: the pension that your ‘heirs’ receive, known as **the Tsarina’s Gold**, is linked to your new service number. In the event of your death in service, your beneficiaries will continue to receive the Tsarina’s Gold for the rest of their lives. But if you should desert, or be executed for cowardice or treason, that is the end of the payouts too.

The process of joining the Suicide Brigades is relatively simple. Would-be recruits travel to the Nameless barracks in Petropol or Zlogora, where they present themselves for evaluation. Combat skills are taken into account, though physical capabilities are less important than for most military units. After all, the SBT treatment will transform even the scrawniest weakling into a supersoldier soon enough. Or kill them. One or the other.

If accepted, the recruit is provided with a simple dark blue uniform bearing a temporary code number. Facilities are provided to send any belongings to friends or family. Anything left over is incinerated. The recruit is taken through a series of chemical scrubs and

preparatory procedures before facing the final step. In a cold, steel-walled laboratory room, the recruit receives the injector gun that will mutate him into one of the Nameless. This is the last chance to change one’s mind. Once the recruit has pushed the needle into the vein and plunged the cocktail of mutation agents into the bloodstream, there is no going back.

The Harmont-IV set (detailed in **Chapter 06: Tools for Survival**) is issued to each and every soldier who chooses to give up his name. The potential candidate will also develop mutations based upon the additional chemicals that have been added to the concoction. Players who choose to become Nameless through character creation are assumed to survive the injection, otherwise the combined treatment set is considered to be a poison with the following qualities:

◆ **VECTOR:** Injection

◆ **VIRULENCE:** 5

◆ **INCUBATION PERIOD:** Instantaneous

◆ **SYMPTOMS:** The recipient’s body begins to undergo a rapid and excruciating transformation. Assuming that the gene therapy takes hold following the initial test, the character must collect a further three Resistance test failures to complete his metamorphosis, though these need not be consecutive; resisting the treatment will only prolong the agony! Each failed Resistance test will inflict 1+**↑**2 damage with the Dreadful and Vile qualities that also ignores Soak. Success on a Resistance test, however, will instead inflict 1+**↑**4 damage with the Dreadful and Vile qualities that also ignores Soak as the mutagenic concoction expands in intensity to overcome the body’s defences.

◆ **INTERVAL:** Minutes (Acute 3). The Acute number presented here represents the number of failures that must be collected for the gene therapy to run its course. The only possible way to end the agony is to succumb to the process, or die an excruciatingly painful death as your body attempts to combat the invasive concoction.

Characters who choose to become Nameless during creation, or those who survive the mutagenic injection during play, permanently gain the full benefits of the Harmont-IV treatment set. In addition, they should both roll for one and select one mutation from the following table (resulting in two mutations):

MUTATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

2020	IMPLANT	2020	IMPLANT
2	Debilitating Mutation	22	Body Reinforcement
3	Reflexive Firing	23	Increased Resolve
4	Hardened Core	24	Reflex Enhancement
5	Perfect Balance	25	Exterior Combustion
6	Third Arm	26	Claws
7	Chameleon	27	Sleepless
8	Hibernation	28	Dark Vision
9	Self-Repair	29	Bloodhound
10	Increased Celerity	30	Malleable Face
11	Enhanced Senses	31	Voice Emulator
12	Calming Aura	32	Gravity Manipulation
13	Gelatinous Coating	33	Preternatural Senses
14	Gills	34	Projectile Perception
15	Hyper-fossilised Tendons	35	Unbound Fury
16	Subdermal Armour	36	Indomitable Crusader
17	Skeletal Restructuring	37	Monstrous Proportions
18	Neurological Enhancement	38	Sanctified Touch
19	Explosive Muscular Growth	39	Inner Sanctity
20	Optimised Motor Control	40	Controlled Mutation: You are able to subconsciously guide the changes that manifest; pick one entry from this table, in addition to the one Mutation you are able to select.
21	Mental Bastion		

Characters may pay two Life points to choose the result of the roll during character creation. Alternatively, the GM may allow the expenditure of a Chronicle point in exchange for choosing the result should the character become one of the Nameless during play.

The descriptions that follow provide suggestions to the players on how the Mutation may manifest itself, though they need not be limited by this; players should feel free to be as inventive as possible when describing the effect that the gene therapy has had upon their character's body or mind.

DEBILITATING MUTATION

The chemical concoction fails to take hold effectively, despite the fact that the character has survived the gene therapy intact. Horribly disfigured by the process, all social interaction tests with non-mutants are two steps more difficult and suffer from an increase of two to their Repercussion.

MANIFESTATION: The character bears a terrible disfigurement and horrific scars. Skin visibly hangs in folds from the character's limbs, whilst weeping sores continually ooze nauseating secretions.

REFLEXIVE FIRING

The character's hand-eye coordination and reflexes have been rewired and made even more effective when wielding firearms. When using a firearm, he may take the Exploit Weakness action as a Restricted Action by paying a Dark Symmetry point.

MANIFESTATION: The character's eyes become bloodshot and constantly dart around, searching for a target. At times, they can look at widely different directions.



HARDENED CORE

The recipient's core and soul—the very elements that make him 'human'—are strengthened and reinforced by the gene therapy. Increase the character's Corruption Soak by two.

MANIFESTATION: From iris to cornea, the entirety of each eye of the soldier becomes a jet black orb of granite.

PERFECT BALANCE

The concoction provides perfect control over the recipient's balance. He can run along tightropes, telephone wires, or narrow ledges at full speed without falling, reducing the difficulty of all Acrobatics tests by one step for every rank of Acrobatics Focus he possesses, to a minimum of one. Further, he gains additional Soak against falling damage equal to his number of ranks of Acrobatics Focus.

MANIFESTATION: The character moves with a hunched gait to lower his centre of gravity, and sprouts a tail that acts as a counterbalance. The tail has no other function and may not be used to manipulate objects or attack.



Nameless Enhanced Senses are useful; sometimes Increased Celerity more so.

THIRD ARM

The recipient grows a complete and fully functioning arm below one of his normal arms (decide which randomly). The extra arm provides one bonus Momentum to tasks that require manual dexterity, such as driving a car for instance, or picking a lock. Additionally, although weaker than a normal arm, the appendage is capable of wielding small, one-handed melee weapons, such as knives or daggers. The character may dual-wield a small, one-handed melee weapon even whilst wielding a two-handed, unwieldy, or unbalanced weapon. Characters who triple-wield may use the Swift Strike Momentum spend option for free.

MANIFESTATION: The character's torso and rib cage lengthen to accommodate the new appendage, giving him an odd, distended appearance. A stubby, malformed and useless fourth arm may also be present.

CHAMELEON

This mutation allows the character to become virtually invisible so long as he keeps his movements to a minimum. As a Restricted Action, the character may make an Average D1 Willpower test to blend into his surroundings, gaining two additional d20 on opposed Stealth tests to remain unseen if successful. The character may perform an Adjust Stance action as a Standard Action (usually a Free Action) to move anywhere within his current zone, though this movement in itself provokes an opposed test from any potential observers. Moving in this manner while camouflaged reduces the effectiveness such that only one additional d20 is gained on the Stealth test. Taking any normal movement actions end this effect.

MANIFESTATION: The character is covered in fine scales that constantly seem to ripple and change hue.

HIBERNATION

The recipient gains an extreme psychic awareness of his own metabolic functions, allowing him to enter a state of suspended animation at will. It takes about ten minutes

of meditation to enter this state. While in suspended animation, his metabolic state slows to the point where he can pass for dead, yet he remains completely aware of his surroundings. While hibernating in this way, he can go without food or water for a month before the effects of starvation or dehydration set in, and he need only take a breath every half hour. His breathing and heartbeat are so faint as to be undetectable—A Dire D4 Treatment test or Daunting D3 Medicine test is necessary to determine whether or not he is dead. He awakens at will, fully refreshed as if he had slept for twice as long as he was in hibernation for.

MANIFESTATION: The character's breathing and heart rate become shallow and faint to a state of imperceptibility, even while awake. A medical examination or very close observation are needed to detect these anomalies. It is also quite possible that people that he is intimate with physically might detect these oddities.

SELF-REPAIR

This system of Self-Repair glands is active during times of activity, fuelled by adrenaline and lactic acid. During an action scene or any other period of strenuous physical activity, the character regains one wound at the start of every turn, starting with the most severe (Critical first, then Serious Wounds, then Light Wounds, to the location with the fewest wounds remaining). However, repairing the most severe injuries puts strain upon the Self-Repair system, so he suffers one Dread for each Critical Wound regained in this way.

MANIFESTATION: The areas that have been healed with the Self-Repair system will be horribly malformed. The flesh is scarred and disfigured. Though this will not affect movement in any way, multiple repairs will leave the character crooked and covered by keloid tissue.

INCREASED CELERITY

The character's form and functions become capable of great feats of celerity when his will is focussed to enhance the internal stimulus required to produce the effect. At the start of the character's turn before any other actions are taken, he may attempt an Average D1 Willpower test as a Restricted Action. If successful, Restricted Actions may be performed as though they were Free Actions for the remainder of the turn. Further, two points of Momentum generated by the Willpower test may be spent to perform an additional Standard Action this turn.

MANIFESTATION: The character's legs become misshapen and take on a digitigrade appearance. The character also develops a tendency to sprint using all four limbs.

ENHANCED SENSES

The character's senses become so keen that he does not need to see his target to hit it. When making a melee or ranged attack, he no longer increases the difficulty because of darkness or other

visual impairments such as fog or smoke. This ability does not affect penalties caused by a weapon's range category.

MANIFESTATION: The character's nose and ears collapse, becoming little more than holes or slits. A forked tongue constantly tastes the air for pheromones.

CALMING AURA

The character constantly exudes a psychic aura of calm and tranquility that instantly sets others at ease. When he is within Reach of another person, he gains one bonus Momentum on Persuade tests against that person.

MANIFESTATION: The character suffers from increased sweat production as a by-product of his psychic blanket, which provides a constant oily appearance.

GELATINOUS COATING

The character's skin is coated in a thick, sticky substance that is highly adherent to other materials. While going bare-handed and bare-foot, and not suffering any penalty for encumbrance, the character counts as having the tools necessary to climb, and gains two bonus Momentum on all Athletics tests made to climb. Further, he can climb on sheer walls, windows, and even on ceilings. Finally, the Disarm Momentum option costs one additional Momentum to employ against this character.

MANIFESTATION: The character is constantly coated in a gelatinous substance that causes minor problems when attempting to release items. They must also wear specialised clothing that does not adhere to their skin.

GILLS

Each side of the character's neck bears a visible set of gills. The character can breathe normally underwater, without need for Oxygen Loads or holding his breath.

MANIFESTATION: The gills are always visible, and the character's neck is broadened to accommodate them.

HYPER-FUSED TENDONS

The tendons and bone in a specific location have become hyper-stimulated to the point that they resemble fused and corded yet flexible steel that is capable of withstanding severe punishment. This growth provides three points of Armour Soak to a single location. If a character gains this Mutation again, then it covers an additional location, or it increases the protection of an already-covered location by one.

MANIFESTATION: The growth is revoltingly apparent. The armoured location becomes ridged and darkened. It is cold to the touch and resembles battered leather.

SUBDERMAL ARMOUR

Impact and piercing resistant pads of tough cartilage grow beneath the character's skin, improving his resistance to harm. The mutation provides him with one point of Armour Soak to all locations.

MANIFESTATION: The cartilage is readily apparent via lumps and hardened rock-like boils. These lumps are clearly visible through the skin and form a disturbing ridged pattern.

SKELETAL RESTRUCTURING

The structure and composition of the character's bones becomes altered by the gene therapy, making them far denser and more capable of withstanding trauma. He increases his Serious Wounds and Critical Wounds by one each.

MANIFESTATION: The restructuring makes the character look like some form of Neanderthal. His chest becomes barrel-like, while his brow protrudes, his eyes sink deep into their sockets, and his jaw becomes massive and square. It is plain for all to see that something is horribly wrong.

NEUROLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

New neural pathways and synapses explode into life, unlocking latent neurological potential and significantly enhancing his thought processes. The character increases his Intelligence attribute by one, to a maximum of sixteen. This change is permanent—the changes can never be undone.

MANIFESTATION: The character's cranium distends to accommodate the oddly reshaped brain matter.

EXPLOSIVE MUSCULAR GROWTH

The sinews and muscles in the character's body grow at an astonishing rate until he represents a figure from herculean myth. This massively increases his physical prowess, allowing him to perform astonishing feats of strength. He increases his Strength attribute by one, to a maximum of sixteen. This change is permanent—the changes can never be undone—and it affects all stats that derive from Strength (wounds and melee damage bonus).

MANIFESTATION: The character swells with massive, vein-streaked muscles, becoming bulkier and more grotesque than any steroid-laden body builder could ever imagine. His weight increases by thirty percent.

OPTIMISED MOTOR CONTROL

A series of glands and impulse accelerators are stimulated into growth throughout the character's nervous system. These prime and fine-tune his nerves and joints, optimising his response times and mobility. The character increases his Agility attribute by one, to a maximum of sixteen. This change is permanent—the changes can never be undone.

MANIFESTATION: The character's movements become unnaturally fluid, precise, and graceful. The precision with which he moves goes beyond impressive, and is plain unsettling to those around him.

MENTAL BASTION

The recipient benefits from a hardening of his psychic shielding, such that he is easily able to repel the use of powers used against him. The character may attempt an Average D1 Willpower test as a Response Action any time he is targeted by a supernatural effect. If successful, either the difficulty of the power being used against him is increased by one, or he gains an additional d20 with which to resist the power's effects. For each point of Momentum spent from the initial Willpower roll, the character may gain one Soak to all locations against the damaging effects of supernatural powers. As a further Momentum option that costs two points, the character may increase the difficulty of the power by an additional one, or gain an additional bonus d20 with which to resist the power's effects.

MANIFESTATION: The character becomes completely bald as the skin of the cranium becomes a pale silver in colouration.

BODY REINFORCEMENT

Special enzymes and hormones have been injected into the character's bone marrow, which systematically reinforce and strengthen his internal organs, bones, and muscles. His overall toughness is vastly increased by this process; he increases his Physique attribute by one, to a maximum of sixteen. This change is permanent—the changes can never be undone—and affects all stats that derive from Physique (wounds).

MANIFESTATION: The character suffers a form of atavism and his skin and hair take on a thick, oily quality. He grows more hair all over his body, becoming somewhat apelike.

INCREASED RESOLVE

Numerous hormone regulators flower throughout the character's brain, allowing him to suppress his fears, hone his focus, and heighten his mental resilience. He increases his Mental Strength attribute by one, to a maximum of sixteen. This change is permanent—the changes can never be undone—and affects all stats that derive from Mental Strength (mental wounds).

MANIFESTATION: The character has become stone-faced and unsympathetic. Hardly capable of showing any emotion, the Repercussion of all tests during social encounters is increased by one.

REFLEX ENHANCEMENT

The gene therapy reconstitutes and enhances the character's central nervous system. He is now able to react, decide, and act more quickly than normal humans. He gains an additional Response Action each turn, though this additional Response Action costs a Dark Symmetry point as normal.

MANIFESTATION: The character's movements have become jerky. Between activities, he remains completely still, his only movement the frantic darting of his eyes. His whole movement pattern is like that of a lizard, and is utterly unnatural and frightening to those around him.

EXTERIOR COMBUSTION

The character's glands are capable of producing an ectoplasmic secretion that can be ignited by force of will alone. The flames are incapable of harming corporeal creatures, but prove particularly lethal to dimensional creatures of the Dark Symmetry. By making an Average D1 Willpower test that requires a Restricted Action, the melee attacks of the character are enhanced such that they ignore the Insubstantial quality of creatures that possess it and completely bypass the Soak provided by the ability.

MANIFESTATION: The character constantly exudes a sulphurous odour, in addition to being completely coated in pale, translucent flames when the ability is manifest.

CLAWS

The character's nails become wicked talons that are razor sharp and as strong as steel. A character with claws is considered to be armed with a knife, and cannot be disarmed unless specifically targeted by a special Called Shot attack that, at the cost of two Momentum, targets the claws. The claws of each hand have a Soak of two and become broken when an attack inflicts three damage above and beyond this value (requiring five damage in total to render them useless). Broken claws will regrow within one week.

SLEEPLESS

The character's metabolism and psychic abilities are stimulated to an extremely balanced and efficient state. He never needs to sleep, and never feels any deleterious effects for going without sleep. He automatically succeeds on all Resistance tests made to avoid the effects of sleep deprivation.

MANIFESTATION: Even though the character does not require sleep, he looks like he really needs it. His face becomes drawn, and heavy bags appear under his darkly circled, bloodshot eyes. He has an emaciated and unnaturally gaunt look.

DARK VISION

The character's eyes are augmented by the gene therapy to the point that he is able to see even in absolute darkness. When attempting a sight-related test, he does not increase the difficulty because of any degree of poor lighting or darkness, and he can still see clearly even when there is no light whatsoever.

MANIFESTATION: The character's eyes change dramatically, becoming reptile-like.

BLOODHOUND

The character's olfactory senses are massively heightened, allowing him to discern scent trails that ordinary humans cannot even detect. He can isolate and identify specific scents with ease, and can smell clearly enough to discern the pheromones and body odours of individual people from a considerable distance. He gains two bonus Momentum on all Observation and Insight tests, and may use the Observation skill instead of Survival for tracking people.

MANIFESTATION: The character's nose constantly runs and his eyes tear as if he suffers from some severe allergy. The true reason is that he no longer possesses the ability to dampen his olfactory sensitivity, and it is affecting his mucus membranes.

MALLEABLE FACE

The gene therapy fails to fully take hold, although it has left the recipient with waxy, malleable features that can be altered through concentration. He can take a Standard Action to make an Average D1 Willpower test. If successful, he may reduce the difficulty by one for Stealth or Persuade tests made to disguise himself as someone else.

MANIFESTATION: The mutation is unstable, and the character can only maintain his latest facial mould for 1d6 hours. A couple of minutes before it is about to break down, he feels a warm tingle. His natural face is now a mess, and resembles a horrific mask of melted wax.

VOICE EMULATOR

The character's larynx mutates, forming layers of resonating membrane and bands of adaptive fibres that can take on any configuration he wishes. He has perfect control of his voice, allowing him to mimic any voice he hears flawlessly, and even replicate sounds that no human voice could produce. Any attempts to distinguish a voice he has chosen to emulate from the real voice increase in difficulty by two steps. Further, when attempting to intimidate someone, he may add an unnatural resonance to his voice, which helps unnerve people, gaining one bonus Momentum on the Persuade test.

MANIFESTATION: The character's throat swells up and pulsates when he talks, and his natural voice has an unnatural and inhuman quality to it, which can only be avoided if he focuses and talks slowly. His concentration is noticeable to those around him.

GRAVITY MANIPULATION

The recipient's structural density becomes mutable which, when coupled with an instinctual psychic ability to manipulate the forces of gravity affecting the character, allows him to perform superhuman leaps across vast distances. The character may make an Average D1 Willpower test as a Restricted Action. If successful, he can immediately leap to any adjacent zone, including into Reach of an enemy, even where the zone being entered is above or below his starting point. During this jump, the character leaps over all difficult and dangerous terrain between those points (obstacles that are

enclosing, such as a roof, or airborne, such as toxic gases, cannot be ignored in this way—the GM's discretion applies).

MANIFESTATION: The character's form becomes elastic in appearance, whilst limbs sometimes seem to elongate and draw in by themselves.

PRETERNATURAL SENSES

The character gain an intuitive perception of everyone and everything around him, and will often know something is about to happen shortly before it does. He gains a bonus d20 on all Observation tests and does not need to spend a Dark Symmetry point for his first Response Action of any turn. Any additional Response Actions (from talents or abilities) carry their standard cost.

MANIFESTATION: The character becomes hypersensitive to stimulus and will often visibly flinch or brace himself without apparent need.

PROJECTILE PERCEPTION

The speed of the character's nervous impulses increase in rapidity, and his senses become honed and refined so that he is able to perceive and respond more quickly to atmospheric disturbances. So long as he is able to perceive the attacker clearly, he stands a much better chance of reacting to a ranged attack—if he is not aware of the attack beforehand, this Mutation has no effect. Against any ranged attack that he can perceive, he gains two bonus Momentum on Dodge Response Actions.

MANIFESTATION: The character sprouts extremely fine hair across his body that appears to be constantly waving in a breeze, even when this is an impossibility.

UNBOUND FURY

The adrenal glands of the recipient enlarge and become overactive, whilst serotonin production plummets, which induce a hair-trigger temper in the character that can easily become a towering rage. The character may pay one or more Dark Symmetry points to enter a frenzy that provides two additional Momentum to successful melee attacks. Ranged weapons may not be used whilst raging, though improvised ranged attacks may still be made. Additionally, the character may ignore any status effects and conditions caused by injury or Dread (up to and including death) – both those he already possesses, and those he may suffer while the rage remains in effect. The injuries remain, and the character can still suffer damage as normal, but the penalties and hindrances caused by those injuries are suppressed whilst raging. The adrenaline rush also renders the character immune to any powers or effects that are reliant on pain or other sensation; he is temporarily injured and oblivious to all physical sensation and has no sense of touch. The rage last for a number of rounds equal to twice the number of Dark Symmetry points paid, at which time the character's bodily systems crash, leaving him with

the Dazed status effect for a number of rounds equivalent to those spent raging.

MANIFESTATION: The character is hot to the touch, as though burning up on the inside, whilst patches of skin appear to have been scalded by boiling water.

INDOMITABLE CRUSADER

The psychic awakening of the recipient provides a cathartic insight into the makings of the universe, including the abominable intrusions of the Dark Soul and its minions. This cosmic epiphany, together with an insight into the ties that bind the creatures to the void, allows him to exploit the fundamental weaknesses inherent in any minion of the Dark Legion. Any successful ranged or melee attack against a devotee of the Dark Symmetry will generate one additional point of Momentum. This point must be spent on the Bonus Damage, Called Shot, Devastating Blow, Knockout, or Re-roll Damage Combat Momentum options and cannot be 'banked'.

MANIFESTATION: The character gains a third eye that usually only becomes active during combat against creatures of the Dark Legion. The character is also prone to haunting visions and omens.

MONSTROUS PROPORTIONS

The character experiences sudden and rapid growth that swells his form to huge, distended proportions. He gains the Monstrous Creature common special rule.

MANIFESTATION: The character is a hulking giant that can no longer pass for human.

SANCTIFIED TOUCH

The character's skin and secretions undergo a strange alchemical alteration that makes them painful to creatures of the Dark Legion. Unarmed melee attacks made by the character gain the Pious 1 quality.

MANIFESTATION: The character's skin becomes translucent and pale, so that the veins and organs beneath are visible to the naked eye.

INNER SANCTITY

Enormous psychic potential becomes unlocked by the gene therapy as the cerebral cortex of the recipient becomes enhanced to and modified to an incomprehensible degree. The character gains the Mystic talent, and may pick a single Aspect of the Art in which to specialise. Further talents and abilities may only be chosen from the selected talent tree.

MANIFESTATION: The character's cranium becomes swollen to accommodate the increase in grey matter, whilst pulsating veins provide testimony to the new powers that have been unlocked.

FURTHER MUTATIONS

By dint of their enhanced physiology, further mutation is a difficult proposition to engender at best. The Harmont-IV enhancement ensures that the Nameless remain virtually immune to all but the most potent of toxins, including the chemical concoctions that are designed to induce mutation.

Appropriating a new Treatment Set requires the expenditure of 400 experience points, which represent a character's efforts in maintaining the sanctity of Whitestar against the various dangers that assail the Federation.

Characters who inject themselves with new Treatment Sets once they have survived their initial transformation find that their enhanced metabolism will reject further refinements more often than not. The Virulence of the toxin is reduced to one due to the benefits of the Harmont-IV treatment set. Three Resistance test failures are still required to induce a Mutation, which will allow a single roll on the previous table. This time however, if a total of three successes are recorded at any point then the Mutation fails to manifest correctly; the character should still undertake a single roll on the table, but will only receive the manifestation relevant to the Mutation, as the beneficial effects of the process remain locked inside his genetic code.

At this point, the recruit is assigned to a Suicide Brigade. The unit's number forms the first part of each Nameless service number, with a suffix consisting of another number or one or more letters.



Noch'volki haunt the ruins of deepest Novozvedza.

NAMES & NUMBERS

Officially, each Nameless soldier is referred to only by service number. However, no community can easily get by without names, and that is as true of the troops of the Suicide Brigades as anyone else. When superiors address their soldiers they use number suffixes to give orders. For example, Captain 514-1 addresses Private 514-32 as Thirty two. 514-32 addresses the Captain as sir, but may speak of him as Captain One if he needs to refer to his superior in conversation.

In day-to-day life, the soldiers soon create nicknames for one another, based on physical appearance, particular habits, geographical origin, or mere whimsy.

THE WALL

Whitestar's northern frontier is marked by **the Tsarina's Wall**, a mighty if ramshackle fortification that stretches in an arc thousands of kilometres long on the edge of the Great White Waste, the frozen land from which the mysterious Zones of Corruption apparently emanate.

Standing watch on the Wall is the foremost duty of the Nameless. While they stand as sentinels elsewhere at the fringes of Whitestar lands, such as the soaring watchtower at Solenoye Ozero, which looks out across the irradiated, polychromatic landscape of the East Asian Exclusion Area, and the forlorn observation posts beneath the ruins of London, Paris, and Seville, it is what lies north of the Tsarina's Wall that poses the most direct threat to the continued existence of Whitestar.

Day after day, new supply trains arrive to restock the Nameless garrisons on the Wall with weapons and countless rounds of ammunition. Day and night, the monstrous denizens of the north hurl themselves at one or another of the redoubts that guard the wall, and are driven back by the massed firepower of the Nameless.

Gaps do exist in the wall, where mountainous or swampy terrain make building impossible, and some portions have had to be abandoned as they fell under the penumbra of a Zone of Corruption. But for the most part, the Tsarina's Wall is an uninterrupted defensive curtain keeping out the worst of what lurks in the Great White Waste. The ramparts of the Wall also serve as a roadway, allowing supplies and personnel to be transported rapidly from one end to the other, needing only a few days to complete journey that might otherwise take weeks, and ensuring that reinforcements from neighbouring redoubts are only an hour or two away.

A few denizens of the Great White Waste do manage to sneak past the Wall to wreak mayhem in the territories to the south, where they must be dealt with by the local militias. None have yet slipped by in such numbers that the Tsarina's own military needed to be called in—the Nameless of the Wall are ever vigilant for mutants on the move *en masse*. Should those twisted creatures ever manage to mount a sustained assault on multiple redoubts simultaneously, there is little doubt that the Wall would fall. But that day has not yet come—nor is it likely to. Whitestar zoologists say the creatures they have examined do not have the intelligence necessary to cooperate in such a fashion. The Nameless mutter darkly about “pack alphas”, and share folk tales of wicked monsters that could understand human speech. Needless to say, few put much stock in these fairy tales.

CAMP KORSAKOV

The central bastion of the Wall is Camp Korsakov, built inside the shell of an abandoned Bauhaus megatank from centuries before. The fortress is set some distance back from the Wall, commanding a view of the howling white panorama beyond from a strategic plateau. Though the megatank has not moved in decades, its weapon systems are functional and have been added to. It is armed to the teeth with medium and long-range missile launchers, as well as a panoply of gun turrets for close-in defence. Covered and armoured walkways connect the plateau to the Wall some fifty metres below. This section of the Wall, like Camp Korsakov itself, is garrisoned by Unit 514, the most decorated and senior of the Suicide Brigades. Hundreds of Nameless have served with bravery and distinction in Unit 514, their numbers recorded nowhere but in the campfire tales of the 514 themselves. The present-day Unit 514 numbers around fifty soldiers, all told.

MERTVAYA VODA

On the southwestern edge of Whitestar territory, where the iridescent waters of the Poison Sea lap against the bleak windswept coast, the Nameless of Unit 433 keep watch from the old cargo port of Mertvaya Voda. Thousands of kilometres from the next nearest stronghold, this outpost of the Whitestar alliance is one of the most isolated assignments a soldier can get, and the personnel of Unit 433 are acutely aware that in the event of an emergency at the base, or a sustained attack from any of the barbarian tribes in the region, help would come too late, if ever.

In the nuclear chaos of the civil war and the corporations' flight from the dying Earth, Mertvaya Voda became a graveyard for shipping. Here, the listing decks of hundreds of silt-beached super-tankers and container ships form a hilly landscape of rusting metal as far as the eye can see. Those closest to shore are now solidly wedged into position, while on the edges of the port, the hulks still drift, sometimes clashing together or floating away into the open sea.

CAPTAIN 514-1

“CHIEF” 514-1 is the Captain and commander of Camp Korsakov. Raucous and good-humoured, she is a giant of a woman, with superhuman strength, an immunity to radiation and biological contaminants, and an artificially boosted capacity to heal physical injuries. A side-effect of her SBT injections is the purplish tinge to her skin. This was the result of a mutagen that was intended to give her chameleon-like abilities to blend in with the surrounding terrain, but it did not take. The beneficiary of her Tsarina's Gold is an orphaned daughter in Belokamen.

TROOPER 514-22

“VOSTY” 514-22 is on the Wall because it was that or death. Convicted of murder and banditry in Vostmor, 514-22 decided that life on the Wall was better than hanging, and lived to regret it. He came through the SBT process with lightning reflexes and heat-vision, but he hates life at Camp Korsakov. It is only a matter of time before he tries to make a break for the south to join up with a gang of bandits, or maybe the Sons of Rasputin. The only thing holding him back is that he needs to keep up regular injections of his SBT drugs. Once he can figure out a way around that, he is gone.

The 400 soldiers of Unit 433 occupy the wreck of the battleship *Ustinov*, which sits close to the shore and, crucially, still has working turrets and missile launchers. Their watchfulness is focused mainly inland, for this region is home to numerous warring tribes and bands of raiders, which might one day pose a threat to the southern provinces of Whitestar.

The Poison Sea is thoroughly toxic, and so the Nameless pay it little attention, except for regular long-range patrols to make sure no hostile flotilla is approaching the Whitestar frontier. On land, there are as many hostile monsters as elsewhere in the Whitestar lands, but nothing living can survive in the Poison Sea.



TOOLS FOR SURVIVAL

ARMOURING THE GUARDIANS

WF-01 STRELTSY ARMOUR

The standard issue armour of the Streltsy regiments has been designed to allow them to operate in the dangerous toxic environments that pervade the Wasteland. The hazard suit can be rapidly employed to provide sealed atmospheric protection for a short amount of time, whilst the built-in chemical agent and radiation detection equipment should provide enough warning for the suit to be sealed.

WF-01 STRELTSY ARMOUR

FACTION	SOAK			
	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Whitestar	3	3	2	3
ENCUMBRANCE	RELIABILITY	RESTRICTION	COST	
12	3	4	30	

Streltsy armour contains a respirator, chemical detection kit, and radiation meter. Both the respirator cartridge and chemical detection kit must be replaced after each use, and may be purchased as a single kit with a Restriction of 2, and a Cost of 2. They have negligible encumbrance.

WEAPONS OF THE WHITESTAR

PISTOLET GYUTKA

RESTRICTION: 1 **COST: 4**

The Gyutka is a small, snub-nosed handgun designed for use within the tunnels that connect the Whitestar Federation. It is made from tough wearing, hardened plastics that provide a simple and low cost means to replace parts. Unfortunately, this also means that prolonged use will introduce deficiencies much more rapidly than a metal counterpart. On the upside, the Gyutka is undetectable to security wands and metal detection devices.

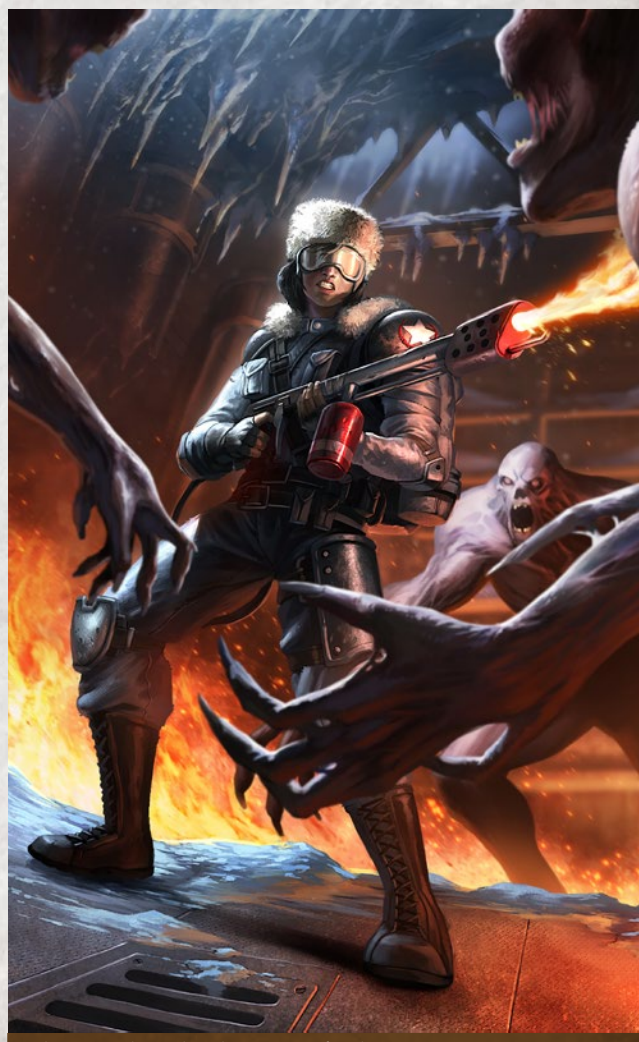
PISTOLET GYUTKA

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
C	1+3	Semi-Automatic	2	1H	3
QUALITIES	Close Quarters, Hidden 1, Perishable				

PERISHABLE: Perishable weapons deteriorate under intense use much more rapidly than their more resilient counterparts.

YOUR FRIEND THE FLAMETHROWER

One of the simpler weapons to cobble together from everyday objects you might find lying around in a post-nuclear blight, flamethrowers are popular with Whitestar militias for their ease of assembly and utility in clearing tunnels and rooms underground. Do turn off the pilot light when not using the weapon, though, as flammable gas pockets are a danger underground.



In the Long Dark, Mr. Flamethrower is your friend.

Following an attack roll with this weapon, if the damage dice generate enough Dark Symmetry Icons to equal its reliability rating, the weapon has degenerated in some fashion. Increase the Repercussion by one for all subsequent tests. This degenerative effect is cumulative until the increase in Repercussion is equal to the Restriction rating of the item, at which point it is no longer an effective weapon and must be repaired. Perishable weapons may be repaired out of combat by making a test with the same skill that would be used to make an attack, with a difficulty equivalent to the current amount of Repercussion adjustment caused by the weapon.

KULKOV RAIL GUN

RESTRICTION: 5 **COST: 20**

Need to hurl a lump of metal at a target at about Mach 10? The hulking Kulkov rail gun is for you! This vehicle-mounted weapon uses the power of electromagnetism to achieve a muzzle velocity of approximately 3,500m/s and can engage both airborne and surface targets as far as the horizon. It uses non-explosive ammunition—it is the sheer speed of the missile that does the damage. The downside is that the Kulkov uses a huge amount of power—most strongholds that have one hook it directly to a nuclear reactor.

The Zhukov Rail Gun uses the Gunnery skill. Reloads for the Kulkov Rail Gun have a Restriction of 1, and a Cost of 2. As a solid ball of metal, they have an Encumbrance of 15.

KULKOV RAIL GUN

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
E	3+6	Munition	0	Mounted	2
QUALITIES Knockdown, Stun, Unforgiving 2					

EXTREME: A rail gun is designed to launch a metal lump across the intervening miles to its target. The basic difficulty of a test to attack with a Kulkov rail gun is Challenging D2. This increases by one step for every range category below Extreme, and it cannot be fired at any target within Reach.

MOUNTED: The weapon is always mounted on a weapon platform or vehicle, and cannot be operated without one.

ZHIVOTNOYE MAT TYPE 15 AUTOCANNON

RESTRICTION: 5 **COST: 12**

As with so many other weapons in its arsenal, Whitestar has made good use of the stockpile of armaments left behind from the Exodus. The twin-barrelled 23mm Zhivotnoye Mat Type 15 autocannon has been repurposed as a platform or vehicle mounted point defence weapon by making use of the parts salvaged from its air defence predecessors.

The ZM-15 uses the Gunnery skill.

ZM-15

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
L	2+6	Automatic	0	Mounted	3
QUALITIES Armour Piercing 1, Split Fire, Spread 1					

MOUNTED: The weapon is always mounted on a weapon platform or vehicle, and cannot be operated without one.

SPLIT FIRE: A character using a weapon with Split Fire can use the Secondary Target Momentum spend (a second target within Reach of the primary target is also affected by the attack and suffers half damage) for one Momentum, instead of the normal two.

GROMOLNIYA LIGHTNING GUN

RESTRICTION: 5 **COST: 15 (WEAPON)**

RESTRICTION: 5 **COST: 2 (RELOAD)**

A metre-long, shoulder-mounted gun that fires bolts of electricity at its target. Immensely powerful, the main drawback of the Gromolniya is its power requirements. Whitestar has three of these weapons in its arsenal at Zlogora, which are powered by three converted tank batteries each, stacked in a heavy backpack carried by the weapon operator. This setup is good for three shots before it must be recharged.

GROMOLNIYA LIGHTNING GUN

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
L	3+6	Munition	30	Unwieldy	2
QUALITIES Armour Piercing 3, Stun, Vicious 3					

POWER-HUNGRY: This weapon uses an exceptional amount of power, which must be stored in bulky batteries. Each Reload for this weapon weighs 15 encumbrance.

PIONEER'S SAW-BACK

RESTRICTION: 2 **COST: 4**

The close confines of the tunnel systems between Strongholds rapidly led to a new form of melee weapon favoured by the militia and Streltsy units that frequently patrol and protect the 'Long Dark'. The Pioneer's Saw-Back is essentially a double-bladed variant of the ancient Shaska that was prevalent among the Cossack regiments of old, although it has been further modified so that one edge of the blade contains razor-sharp teeth, which makes it a perfect stabbing and cutting weapon for use in the close confines of the 'long dark'.

PIONEER'S SAW-BACK

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
-	1+4	-	1	1H	4
QUALITIES Armour Piercing 1, Gruesome 1					

GEAR

BLACK BATTERY

RESTRICTION: 5 **COST: 20**
ENCUMBRANCE: 1 **RELIABILITY: 1**

Perhaps the most generally useful Type 1 Prototype so far brought back from the Zones of Corruption, a black battery provides a steady charge of electrical power without any need for recharging. Since the first black battery was recovered more than 100 years ago, none of these devices has ever run out of energy. Each battery is a stone-coloured cube 10cm wide, with two metallic terminals on one side to access the battery's charge. If you cut one open, which requires a powerful laser cutter, you will find the interior contains no visible components, only a black viscous liquid. Whitestar has yet to determine how the black batteries work, and has no idea how to make new ones.

A black battery can provide equivalent power to a portable generator, without need for fuel or recharging.

ENVIRO-SUIT

RESTRICTION: 2 **COST: 3**
ENCUMBRANCE: 2 **RELIABILITY: 3**

The Wastelands outside the strongholds are a dangerous place, full of deadly radiation, toxic chemicals, and poisonous plant life. The enviro-suit offers some measure of protection from all of these. It is a full-body, one-piece coverall that fits loosely over normal clothing, providing radiation shielding, air filtration, and a built-in chemical analysis kit.

An Enviro-suit reduces the difficulty by two on Resistance tests taken to avoid the effects of toxic environments, gases, radiation, and other chemical hazards. Any damage inflicted to the wearer tears the suit, removing the benefits.

SBT ENHANCEMENTS

RESTRICTION: SPECIAL **COST: ONE'S NAME**

Every soldier inducted into the ranks of the Nameless undergoes genetic mutations commonly referred to as **SBT Enhancements**. The SBT stands for Suicide Brigade Technology—the official term is Lysogenic Enhancement Therapy, but no one ever calls it that.

Every Nameless soldier receives the Harmont-IV Set, which provides complete immunity to the effects of all known bacterial, chemical, and viral agents on Earth, as well as permitting limited cellular regeneration to heal wounds. Aside from this, the Nameless may be injected with a wide range of other mutation sets, each of which interacts with the subject's existing biology to produce side-effects of varying severity.

The Harmont-IV Set reduces the difficulty by four on Resistance tests taken to avoid the effects of the toxic environments, gases, radiation, and other chemical hazards that pervade Earth's atmosphere, to a minimum of zero. Additionally, the character benefits from four bonus Momentum on every Resistance test made when attempting to recover wounds via natural healing.

ALTITUDE SUIT

RESTRICTION: 3 **COST: 6**
ENCUMBRANCE: 2 **RELIABILITY: 3**

Worn by jetwing pilots, the Altitude Suit stops them from freezing to death and protects against debris and chemicals in the air. Glider pilots do not necessarily need one—they do not fly high enough—but they wear them when they can get them.

Altitude Suits function in a similar manner to Enviro-suits; they reduce the difficulty by one on Resistance tests taken to avoid the effects of toxic environments, gases, radiation, and other chemical hazards. Additionally, Altitude Suits reduce the difficulty by one for Resistance tests made to avoid the effects of extreme cold. Any damage inflicted to the wearer tears the suit and removes the protection benefits to toxic environments, though the suit will still protect against freezing temperatures.

VEHICLES

OSA ALL-TERRAIN MOTORBIKE

RESTRICTION: 2 **COST: 6**
MAINTENANCE: 1 **RELIABILITY: 3**

A light off-road motorcycle built in the thousands from sheet metal and industrial spares, following a widely available set of DIY instructions. The build quality of Osa bikes is highly variable, being entirely dependent on the craftsmanship of the individual builder and the materials available.

QUALITIES	Agile, Bike, Rugged			
CRUISING SPEED	100 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	0	
CREW	1 pilot	CARRYING CAPACITY	1 passenger	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	2	3	2	1
MOTIVE SYSTEM	1	2	2	1
IMPACT DAMAGE	1+↑3			
ARMAMENTS	None			

LVOV APC

RESTRICTION: 4 **COST: 20**
MAINTENANCE: 2 **RELIABILITY: 3**

A tracked, armoured personnel carrier used extensively by Whitestar militias. Its blocky, wedge-shaped design comes from a Bauhaus military template, simplified for bulk production with Whitestar's relatively low-tech manufacturing capabilities. Each Lvov accommodates up to ten infantry soldiers in its passenger compartment and has a crew of two—the driver and the navigator, who also operates the pintle-mounted heavy machine gun from the top hatch when needed.

QUALITIES	Enclosed, Rugged, Tracked			
CRUISING SPEED	60 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		1
CREW	1 pilot 1 gunner	CARRYING CAPACITY	10 passengers 400 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	6	12	8	6
MOTIVE SYSTEM	5	8	6	4
WEAPONS	4	6	4	2
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+↑4			
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pintle-mounted Nova Vesna Heavy Machine Gun (ranged): Range M, 2+↑6, Automatic, Spread 1, Vicious 1 			
NOTES	Nova Vesna has six Reloads. Disembarking the vehicle is a Restricted Action.			

OTKATCHIK MEDIUM TRUCK

RESTRICTION: 2 **COST: 15**
MAINTENANCE: 3 **RELIABILITY: 3**

A general purpose goods vehicle. Those used to carry cargoes in the Wastelands are hard-shelled and equipped with more rugged suspension and engines to deal with difficult conditions. Those that ply the tunnel routes between strongholds use smaller, more efficient engines and are soft-covered so that the back can be collapsed to pass through routes with limited headroom.

QUALITIES	Exposed, Rugged, Wheeled			
CRUISING SPEED	65 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		0
CREW	1 pilot	CARRYING CAPACITY	11 passengers 240 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	5	10	6	3
MOTIVE SYSTEM	3	7	5	3
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+↑5			
ARMAMENTS	None			
NOTES	Passengers and crew in Wasteland variants have 4↑ Cover Soak, whilst those in tunnel variants have 2↑ Cover Soak.			

RAILKART

RESTRICTION: 2 **COST: 8**
MAINTENANCE: 2 **RELIABILITY: 3**

A common vehicle in Nova Zembla for personal transport and moving small cargoes around, a Railkart is essentially a go-kart that runs on train tracks. Railkarts are small and usually have only two seats in front, with a luggage rack of modest size in the back.

QUALITIES	Exposed, Wheeled (Tram)			
CRUISING SPEED	25 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		0
CREW	1 pilot	CARRYING CAPACITY	1 passenger 80 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	2	5	3	2
MOTIVE SYSTEM	2	4	3	1
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+↑2			
ARMAMENTS	None			
NOTES	<p><i>Wheeled (Tram):</i> The vehicle's motion and direction of travel is entirely dependent upon the tracks that provide it with traction. A vehicle with this quality may only make movement within its current zone or into adjacent zones if there are rails present to allow this. Vehicles with this quality may not take Evasive Action against ranged attacks.</p>			

SAKHAROV WASTELANDER PATROL JEEP

RESTRICTION: 3 **COST: 12**
MAINTENANCE: 3 **RELIABILITY: 3**

Preserved from pre-Exodus days, Sakharov Wastelanders are rugged, reliable, all-terrain vehicles, though they offer little protection from gunfire or from the elements. The sealed transmission system seems to have a gear for every occasion—whether you face sand, mud, ice, a steep incline, or water up to the windows, the Sakharov will get you through. Maybe not quickly, but it will make it.

QUALITIES	Exposed, Rugged, Wheeled			
CRUISING SPEED	80 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		2
CREW	1 pilot	CARRYING CAPACITY	4 passengers 100 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	3	6	4	2
MOTIVE SYSTEM	2	5	3	2
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+↑4			
ARMAMENTS	None			
NOTES	Passengers and crew have 2↑ Cover Soak			



JETWING

RESTRICTION: 5 **COST: 50**
MAINTENANCE: 4 **RELIABILITY: 3**

The Jetwings and the Night Witches that pilot them provide Whitestar with a distinct edge when patrolling their borders and reacting to incursions. Capable of insane feats of manoeuvrability, the Jetwings howl across the Wastelands to deliver high-velocity death to the Federation's enemies. A Jetwing's service ceiling is limited due to its pilot being completely exposed to the elements.

QUALITIES	Agile, Aircraft (VTOL), Exposed, Rugged			
CRUISING SPEED	1125 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	2	
CREW	1 pilot	CARRYING CAPACITY	10 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	4	8	7	4
MOTIVE SYSTEM	3	7	5	3
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+ \uparrow 5			
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twin Nova Vesna HMG's: Range M, 2+\uparrow6, Automatic, Split Fire, Spread 1, Vicious 1 			
NOTES	ZM-15 autocannon has 3 Reloads <i>Screaming Death</i> : Observation tests made to hear the approach of a Jetwing have their difficulty reduced by one step.			



Bandits feel the LVOV.

TSAREVITCH TROOP TRANSPORT

RESTRICTION: 4 **COST: 42**
MAINTENANCE: 5 **RELIABILITY: 3**

These thundering dropships are the way Whitestar's shock troops plunge into battle from above. Each Tsarevitch transport can carry up to 50 soldiers, cooped up inside the converted shipping containers at the core of the ship—the troops refer to it as being "in the box".

The outer hull is streamlined for rapid descent into a planetary atmosphere, using any parts available from spacecraft wrecked beyond repair.

The Tsarevitch is most used in a stratosphere hop to move rapidly from one place on Earth to another, but is also capable of spaceflight long enough to reach Luna and the other planets.

QUALITIES	Light Craft, Rugged		
INTERPLANETARY RANGE	1 week	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	1
CREW	1 commander 2 gunners	PASSENGERS	50
DAMAGE	SOAK	DAMAGE	
	2	6	
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+ \uparrow 4	FUEL LOAD	3
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ZM-15 autocannon battery (ranged): Range C, 1+\uparrow3, Automatic, Close Quarters, Point Defense 		
NOTES	The autocannon battery has three Reloads <i>Dual-role</i> : A Tsarevitch is considered to be both a vehicle and a spacecraft. They use the LVOV APC hit locations and have the Agile, Aircraft (VTOL), Enclosed, and Rugged vehicle qualities.		

RECONNAISSANCE

North of Novozvezda, the monsters were massing. Beneath towering rain clouds, bands of blood giants stomped southwards from the Wastelands in brawling packs. Yelena raced southwards before them. Fat, dirty raindrops spattered onto Blockhead's fuselage. The jetwing's engines howled.

Underneath Blockhead's engine cowling, slightly off to Yelena's right, something started to rattle. Yelena incautiously peeked over the top of the jetwing's small windshield and was rewarded with a stream of freezing rain right in her flight goggles. It was probably nothing to worry about right now, Yelena thought, wiping the water away with the sleeve of her altitude suit. Time to head home and report.

At ground level the blood giants might have seemed a scuffling, directionless mob. But from the saddle of her jetwing high above, Yelena had perceived a worrying unity and purpose in their movement. Her camera held half an hour's video footage for the analysts at Novozvezda to look over on that score.

Heading south, out of the rain, she flew low through the ancient city streets to save fuel. The mutants weren't so densely packed here at the vanguard. They loped along the ruined roads in wary twos and threes, turning to face the wailing of the jetwing as she approached, roaring and bellowing as she shot past just metres overhead. All of them heading towards Novozvezda. Some took potshots as she passed, but Yelena was gone in the blink of an eye.

Another hundred clicks to go. Fuel in the tank, more than enough. That rattling sound? Now that she had time to think, it sounded like a thrown bearing in the jet intake. It would hold.

On a long avenue between ranks of slab-like towers, she kicked the jetwing into high gear just as a snarling pack of wolf-like creatures bounded across her path and out of sight among the buildings. "I wonder what they're hunting", she thought.

She climbed the jetwing above the rooftops and banked right. The pack was sprinting across the broken paving of an ancient plaza—after human prey. A lone figure clambered onto the rusting remains of a city tram, fending off the beasts with some makeshift weapon as they leapt and harried.

Yelena powered up Blockhead's mini-gun and span the barrel even as she pushed the jetwing into a dive. When she was close

enough to see the hunted man's blue coat she pulled the trigger. The mini-gun whined and rained death. The wolves shuddered and jerked and howled in pain as the bullets struck home. The man on the tram looked up in shock and, it seemed as she thundered past, dismay.

She swung Blockhead around for another pass, pulling the long bullet-nosed machine into a tight, juddering turn. By the time she had turned, the pack had scattered, leaving behind the wounded, dead, and dying. She slowed the jetwing to a crawl and landed close to a broken fountain.

One of the creatures remained, its blood up and too full of battle frenzy to flee. It had gained the tram roof and stood tensed, ready to pounce.

It was only then that she realised. The blue coat. The insane bravery. And the sword... made of bone. "Great", she thought, "one of those lunatics."

There was a moment of utter stillness, and then both man and beast surged into action. For an instant it seemed the man was beaten, his guard too low to fend off the savage snapping jaws. Claws tore through his coat, gouged his chest. But with a roar and a mighty upward swing, the Hussar sliced through the creature's collarbone, his bonesword biting deep across the neck, nearly severing the animal's head. The creature tumbled, dead, to the street below. Without pausing for breath, the Hussar leapt after it to retrieve his sword. Then he approached.

"Oy votsau!" he shouted. "What the hell was that?"

"Give you a lift?" she shouted over the whine of the jetwing engine. His coat streamed behind him in the wind. His red beard positively bristled with anger.

"You think I can't handle a few mangy Wasteland dogs? I'm a Bone Hussar. I eat those things for breakfast." He stood right in front of her now. His last statement seemed like it might be literally true.

Yelena held up her hands in mock surrender. "Sorry, friend, I didn't see your coat from up there."

"Yes, well, no doubt you recognise me now up close, hah?" he said.

"No doubt."

"Boris Krupski, at your service. You owe me a dozen kills," he said.

"I'll get you a Lebedinoye to make up for it," said Yelena. "Back at Novozvezda."

"More like a bottle," said Boris.

"We'll see about that. At any rate, you'd better come with me. There's a whole army of blood giants heading this way."

"Really?" Boris's eyes shone with enthusiasm. "Show me. I haven't killed a blood giant in months."

"There's thousands of them," said Yelena. "You wouldn't last five minutes. Come on, get on the back."

"It's a Bone Hussar's goal to die battling insurmountable odds for the Tsarina," said the Hussar, a growing wildness in his expression.

"Yes, die for the Tsarina," said Yelena, "as in, on the Tsarina's business. Not for no particular reason."

Boris considered this for a moment. "Very well," he said. "Where do we go?"

"To warn the Novozvezda militia."

Boris snorted. "Novozvezda is always full of mutants. That's why the Stronghold is in the tops of their towers."

"True," said the Night Witch. "But there's something weird about these. They look organised in a way I've never seen before."

She held out her spare flight mask, and Boris buckled it on. His beard stuck out in weird tufts either side of the mask. Boris clambered onto the jetwing's pillion seat. Something poked Yelena in the small of the back.

"Sorry!" bellowed Boris. Yelena winced and turned down the intercom volume. "That's my sword hilt!"

"It had better be," said Yelena, and gunned Blockhead's throttle for take-off.

Fifty clicks from Novozvezda, a warning light came on and Blockhead's console started to ping.

"I hear pinging," said Boris. "That's bad, yes?"

"When did you ever hear good pinging?"

The fuel light was on. She could have kicked herself. The rattling hadn't been the intake, it was the mix controller. She'd been so preoccupied by the mutants' odd behaviour she hadn't noticed she was burning the engines hot all this time. She throttled back to economy speed. Unbearably slow.

"No fuel, hah?"

"Not enough. We can walk to Novozvezda from where we stop."

"What if you don't have no passenger?"

That would do it. But she thought about the injuries Boris had. Tough as he was, he was not in top shape. Not the kind of shape he'd need to be to make it to Novozvezda alive.

Boris seemed to read her thoughts. "Don't worry about me, miss," he said. "Get this machine back up to speed. I see monsters ahead."

He was right. A group of perhaps a dozen blood giants had emerged from an old metro station about a hundred metres ahead. Had they been trying to see if they could get to the Stronghold through the ancient transit tunnels? Organised scouting? "They'll have radios next", thought Yelena.

The first of the mutants never saw what hit it. With Blockhead up to a hundred kilometres per hour, flying fifteen metres up, Boris had leapt from the pillion, sword drawn, whooping wildly. The force of the fall and the strength of the bonesword had crushed the brute's skull and cleaved it clean through to the navel. The last Yelena saw of Boris, his whirling blade had dispatched two more, and he stood on guard amid the blood giants, daring them to attack.

As Blockhead rocketed towards Novozvezda, she heard him one last time, over the fading comlink. "Have that bottle waiting when I get there, miss!"



THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE

AEROSPACE FLEET OF THE WHITESTAR FEDERATION

The Exploration and Defence Fleet form one half of the recently established Combined Fleet of the Federation, the entirety of which is directly controlled by the Tsarina. Alexandra has entrusted the daily administration of the vessels to her Marshall of the Fleet, Tsaskia Gyrvlinkov, though she requires a daily report to confirm fleet status and disposition, mission progress, and catalogue of discoveries.

As a fledgling organisation, the Fleet has yet to find a distinction between mercantile or military designations; each ship commander receives exactly the same form and depth of instruction concerning space flight, navigation, command and control, and combat manoeuvres, regardless of whether they will be captaining a space train or a nuclear arsenal. Considering the rapid expansion of the entire space fleet, however, and the fact that more ships and crews are currently commissioned on an almost weekly basis, it will only be a matter of time until more distinct subdivisions are established.

The spacecraft in use by Whitestar are far from state of the art; much like everything else the Federation has managed to salvage from the wreckage of destruction left in the wake of the other corporations, they consist of a patchwork amalgamation of retrofitted parts recovered from any number of defunct, scrapped, or damaged sources. "A scrapheap of rusting wreckage is a goldmine to Whitestar" is an oft quoted phrase amongst the bewildered executives of the corporations, usually muttered in bemusement at the salvage crews clambering over the skeletons of the vessels cluttering the ship graveyard of Luna, or at the freight wagons carting seemingly irreparable components toward the Whitestar bunker.

WHITE STAR, WINTER ORBIT

At the time of the corporate wars that plunged Earth's ecosystem into apparently terminal decline centuries ago, the Bauhaus corporation, from which Whitestar was later to emerge, maintained three key orbital networks: the Zalozhnyi series of science stations, the Elefantenkäfig global intelligence gathering array, and the



The Whitestar Exploration and Defence Fleet may not look like much, but they've got it where it counts.

Kemerovo orbital weapons platforms. All were largely destroyed during the course of the war.

The latter of these was headquartered in the military redoubt at Zlogora, and the few remaining stations are still under Whitestar control today. Barely twenty percent of the Kemerovo satellites are still in operation, leaving Whitestar with an orbital strike capability that can theoretically attack anywhere on the Earth's surface, but may have to wait anywhere from several minutes to several days before one of the Kemerovo particle beam weapons can be moved into position over the target.

The Zalozhniy and Elefantenkäfig command centres were hidden in secret locations somewhere in Europe, and Whitestar has yet to find them despite the best efforts of many Resectors over the years. Up to fifty Elefantenkäfig satellites are in orbit but inactive, while only four of the Zalozhniy space labs remain. Orbital Resectors have been able to locate and scan the Zalozhniy facility and determine that its systems are dormant but ticking over. Whatever is inside would doubtless be invaluable if anybody could get to it. But each of these research stations bristles with lethal anti-intrusion measures that make them deathtraps for would-be looters.

The three Bauhaus orbital networks were served by a fleet of Schumacher-class supply drones. Thousands were built, and hundreds remain in just-about working order, thanks to the diligence of Whitestar's technicians. Now converted to accommodate a human crew rather than operate on autopilot, Schumachers form the backbone of Whitestar's ragtag space fleet.



SPACECRAFT OF THE WHITE STAR

SCHUMACHER CARGO SHIP

The workhorses of the Whitestar space fleet are the Schumacher general transport craft. Originally unmanned supply drones for Bauhaus orbital facilities, these vessels' autopilots are long since defunct. To replace the automated navigators, refitted Schumacher transports use one of the three modular cargo containers to accommodate a crew compartment with life support for anywhere between one to ten personnel.

Unmodified Schumacher drones are still in service, used for long-haul supply missions with their controls slaved to a manned unit to form a so-called 'space train'.

RADOMIR GUNSHIP

A Radomir Gunship is a Schumacher transport that has had its cargo modules removed to make way for weaponry. A typical load-out includes a Rakovski medium torpedo launcher and a payload of up to five Peshtera EMP bombs. Increase the Restriction to 4 and Cost to 60.

RESTRICTION: 3 **COST: 50**
MAINTENANCE: 7 **RELIABILITY: 4**

QUALITIES	Ship, Ponderous, Rugged				
INTERPLANETARY RANGE	7 Days		COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		0
CREW	1 commander (Crew 2), 1 pilot (Crew 1) 1 engineer (Crew 1) Radomir only: Gunner 1 (Crew 2)			PASSENGERS	5
DAMAGE	LOCATION	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURE DAMAGE
	ENGINE	2	3	3	3
	HULL	3	4	4	4
	WEAPON*	1	2	2	2
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+↑4		FUEL LOADS	3	
ARMAMENTS	Radomir only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rakovski Torpedo: Medium, 2+↑6, Munition, Anti-Ship, Armour Piercing 1, Slow Loading 2, Vicious 1 • Peshtera EMP bomb: Close, 2+↑6, Munition, Blast (close), EMP 				
NOTES	<p>A standard Schumacher has a large cargo hold, whilst a Radomir variant has a much smaller cargo capacity. Radomir variants have six Torpedo Reloads and four Peshtera Reloads.</p> <p><i>Emp:</i> Electromagnetic pulse weapons produce an intense magnetic field purposefully designed to disrupt and damage electronic circuitry. EMP weapons roll damage in the same manner as Corruption by rolling against the target item, vehicle, or spacecraft's Reliability Soak. Portable electronic items or equipment cease to function if the Corruption roll exceeds their Reliability Soak. Exceeding a vehicle or spacecraft's Reliability Soak on the damage roll results in one malfunction for each point of Corruption that surpasses the Reliability Soak. The vehicle or spacecraft will shut down if the Corruption roll is enough to beat the Reliability Soak by twice the amount; seven points of Corruption against Reliability three, for instance. EMP Corruption damage is not a Dark Symmetry effect and can never result in Malignancy.</p>				

SWEET HANNAH FAST ATTACK SHIP

The mothballed *Sweet Hannah* was discovered in the hangar of a private space resort once owned by the eccentric pre-exodus tycoon Henri Lafitte.

Sleek and elegant, the *Sweet Hannah* was the most luxurious pleasure craft of a hedonistic era, and one of the most heavily,

though invisibly, armoured—a testament to the fact that Lafitte had been consumed by fears of assassination during his later years. Fears that were, as it turned out, well founded.

Today the yacht's flowing lines are offset by the brutal bulk of a huge engine block attached at the rear, the only salvageable mechanism of a wrecked Bauhaus Eisenstein-class heavy cruiser left floating in orbit after the first corporate war.

Sweet Hannah functions for the Whitestar spaces forces as a fast attack ship. It has relatively light weaponry, but is able to strike deep into enemy territory without warning. The original interior fittings remain, including wood panelling, art deco ornaments, and plush furnishing throughout, as well as the delights of Lafitte's unique gaming deck. Competition for a posting to the *Sweet Hannah* is fierce among Whitestar spacefarers.

RESTRICTION: 5 COST: 80
MAINTENANCE: 8 RELIABILITY: 3

QUALITIES	Agile, Ship				
INTERPLANETARY RANGE	30 Days		COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		2
CREW	1 commander (Crew 3), 1 pilot, 1 Gunner (Crew 1), 1 engineer (Crew 2)			PASSENGERS	12
DAMAGE	LOCATION	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURE DAMAGE
	ENGINE	5	6	4	3
	HULL	5	6	5	4
	WEAPON*	2	3	3	2
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+ \uparrow 6		FUEL LOADS	4	
ARMAMENTS	• Autocannon Battery: Close, 1+ \uparrow 3, Automatic, Point Defence, Close Quarters				
NOTES	Autocannon Battery has six Reloads				



DEROSKY HEAVY CRUISER

The *Derosky* is a typical Shinmin-class heavy cruiser. Its main fuselage is constructed from the economy-class cabin of a pre-Exodus passenger craft that used to fly a low-cost Århus to Luna route. The bridge sits on top of the craft, converted from the radial observation deck of a Bauhaus solar radiation lab that returned from a near-Sun loop to discover its home port had been wiped out by Capitol bombardment.

The *Derosky* comprises parts from countless sources, including main thrusters that once powered an ore hauler to and from the Asteroid Belt, and second-hand tank armour that plates its outer shell.

Like nearly all of Whitestar's mongrel spacecraft, the *Derosky* has no sister ships. Its designation as part of the Shinmin class is based on its payload and characteristics—slow but tough, equipped with heavy torpedoes, and with the capability to launch nuclear warheads.

RESTRICTION: 5 COST: 85
MAINTENANCE: 10 RELIABILITY: 3

QUALITIES	Rugged, Ship				
INTERPLANETARY RANGE	30 Days		COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		1
CREW	1 commander (Crew 3), 1 pilot, 4 gunners (Crew 2), 1 engineer (Crew 2)			PASSENGERS	8
DAMAGE	LOCATION	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURE DAMAGE
	ENGINE	5	6	5	3
	HULL	7	7	6	4
	WEAPON*	4	3	4	3
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+ \uparrow 6		FUEL LOADS	4	
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autocannon Battery: Close, 1+\uparrow3, Automatic, Point Defence, Close Quarters • Vozmezdiye Heavy Torpedoes: Close, Munition, 3+\uparrow6, Anti-Ship, Slow Loading 1, Spread 2, Unforgiving 3 • Nuclear Warhead: Long, Munition, Anti-Ship, Slow Loading 3 				
NOTES	<p>Twelve Reloads for Autocannon Battery. Four Reloads for Vozmezdiye Heavy Torpedoes. Two Reloads for Nuclear Warhead.</p> <p>The Nuclear Warhead has no damage rating listed; it is a weapon of mass destruction purposefully designed to eradicate its target, whether that be an enemy spaceship or planetary location. The statistics provided above are for a guided spaceflight missile that can be launched against planetary locations. The nuclear payload may also be transferred, subject to the Slow Loading Quality, to a Vozmezdiye Heavy Torpedo for use against other spacecraft.</p>				

THE WASTELANDS

LIFE ON THE OUTSIDE

To the Whitestar mind, anywhere outside the Stronghold is in the Wastelands. However, the term usually implies the surface of the Earth within Whitestar territory, encompassing the inhospitable areas, urban and wilderness, where Whitestar does not have any permanent industry or agriculture—which is to say more than ninety five percent of the surface land that Whitestar claims. Earth's many RadZones, the largest being the East Asian Exclusion Area, may be considered part of a broader definition of the Wastelands too, albeit a part that is never visited.

The dangers of the Wastelands are multifarious and often surprising. Within living memory, many of the mutant flora and fauna of the Wastelands have developed new characteristics, their mutation rate accelerated to an unheard of degree by the heady and unpredictable cocktail of radiation and terraforming agents that flooded Earth's atmosphere at the time of the corporations' departure. The Zones of Corruption have spread and multiplied, and are perhaps somehow connected to the changes in behaviour seen in many of the planet's new species.

Regardless of the cause, zoology and botany have never been more exciting or dangerous.

THE WEATHER

Roiling clouds encircle the Earth, twisting, splitting, and merging like protean creatures of some primordial age. This, at least, is some respite from the days of the Dark Symmetry era, when they formed an all-enveloping blanket of oddly-tinged greys and blues that blocked out the sun and cast an eternal pall of gloom on the world below.

The welcome return of the sunlight still leaves travellers in the Whitestar homeland with plenty of meteorological challenges to face. Torrential rain, lightning, blizzards, hurricanes, oversized hail, choking fog, and ice storms are common. The interaction of terraforming agents with the atmosphere has also produced some new weather types that cause their own distinct problems.

ACID STORMS

Particularly common on the plains to the east and north of Belokamen, Acid Storms are acid rain turned up to 11. The burning droplets fall from distinctively yellowish clouds, fizzing and burning through flesh and organic matter, eating away at metal and concrete,

THE JOURNAL OF KSENIYA PAVLYUCHENKO

12 OCTOBER 2488

THE CRASH DESTROYED A GREAT DEAL OF EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING OUR LONG-RANGE COMMUNICATION DEVICES. WE GATHERED WHAT PROVISIONS WE COULD FROM THE WRECK AND CAMPED IN THE EMERGENCY BIVOUPS OVERNIGHT, THOUGH IT WAS BITTERLY COLD. NOW IT IS MORNING, AND WE SET OUT FOR THE SOUTH TO RETRACE OUR STEPS UNTIL OUR PORTABLE RADIOS COME INTO RANGE OF A WHITESTAR STRONGHOLD. I SHALL CONTINUE TO RECORD THIS JOURNAL AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE MAPPING DATA WE TRANSMITTED BEFORE THE CRASH. THE WEATHER IS TERRIBLE, BUT IF GOING IS BAD, STAYING IS WORSE. IF THE ACID STORMS HOLD OFF AS EXPECTED, WE HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF REACHING GAGARINSKAYA WITHIN THE WEEK.

13 OCTOBER 2488

WE DISCUSSED WHETHER WE OUGHT PERHAPS TO REMAIN WITH THE VEHICLE UNTIL RESCUE CAME. A JETWING, FOR INSTANCE, MIGHT EASILY REACH US WITH SOME BASIC PROVISION TO TIDE US OVER UNTIL MORE SUBSTANTIAL RESCUE CAME. HOWEVER, WE DECIDED AGAINST THIS COURSE OF ACTION. THE BASE ONLY KNOWS THE APPROXIMATE POSITION OF THE ACCIDENT AT BEST, AND BECAUSE OF THE PERMANENT CLOUD COVER, ANY JETWINGS SENT OUT WOULD HAVE TO FLY TOO LOW TO BE ABLE TO SPOT US FROM A DISTANCE.

sinking into and poisoning the soil. Exposure to an acid storm may range from being merely painful to gruesomely fatal, depending on the intensity of the storm.

Spotting the signs of an impending acid storm requires a Challenging D2 Survival or Observation test. A Daunting D3 Survival test can then be made to find suitable shelter, such as a cave or crevasse. Momentum from the test made to spot the impending storm may be used to lower the avoidance Survival test, to a minimum of Average D1. The GM should roll one d6 and consult the following Acid Storm Table to determine the strength of the storm:

ACID STORM TABLE

ID6	INTENSITY	EFFECT
1	Weak	Weak acid storms inflict \uparrow 4 damage with the Dreadful and Vicious 1 qualities for every five minutes of exposure.
2-3	Mild	Mild acid storms inflict \uparrow 6 damage with the Dreadful and Vicious 1 qualities for every five minutes of exposure.
4-5	Severe	Severe acid storms inflict \uparrow 8 damage with the Dreadful, Knockdown, Stun, and Vicious (2) qualities for every one minutes of exposure.
6	Fatal	Every minute of exposure to the full force of a fatal acid storm will inflict \uparrow 10 damage with the Dreadful, Knockdown, Stun, and Vile qualities.

14 OCTOBER 2488

WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO TRAVEL TODAY. AN ACID STORM BLEW IN FROM THE NORTH AND WE WERE FORCED TO TAKE SHELTER IN THE SHELL OF WHAT WAS ONCE, I THINK, A THEATRE OF SOME KIND. REBROV WAS THE LAST IN AND HIS HAND WAS BADLY BURNT BY THE RAIN AS HE PULLED THE DOOR CLOSED BEHIND US.

15 OCTOBER 2488

A WARM BREEZE CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN AS WE WALKED, AND RELIEVED THE CHILL IN OUR BONES TO SOME MEASURE. HOWEVER, IT DID LITTLE FOR THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE PARTY. I MUST CONFESS THAT I QUARRELLED BITTERLY WITH REBROV, WHO GRASPED A ROCK IN HIS FURY AND LOOKED AS THOUGH HE MIGHT DASH IT ON MY HEAD. SULEIMAN BROKE US APART AND CALMED US DOWN. OUR ANGER, HE SAID, WAS THE EFFECT OF THE "RED WIND", A SUPERSTITION AMONG HIS PEOPLE.

Rock formations will provide Light Cover and a canyon Heavy Cover, whilst a cave or building will provide complete protection from the effects. A new Challenging D2 Survival or Observation test may be made to find some form of protection for each incidence of exposure damage. Success indicates that Light Cover has been discovered, whilst each additional point of Momentum from the test may be used to upgrade the protection.

RED WINDS

The precise composition of the Red Winds remains unclear. What is known is that some combination of chemical agents from the Earth's toxic clouds becomes detached from the seething cloud mass, under circumstances as yet unknown, and is carried by the wind down to the world below. A red wind is warm and dry, and its effects are largely psychological with some physiological symptoms.

Humans who inhale the air of a red wind feel an itching sensation on their scalps and experience a pervading sense of nervousness. Victims become jumpy. Unshielded communities find that every argument ends in a fight, and the meekest individuals find themselves ready to turn to violence and even murder to lash out against acquaintances, friends, or family with whom they have some unexpressed resentment.

Detecting the imminent arrival of a Red Wind requires a Daunting D3 Survival or Observation test. A successful test will provide a few minutes of preparation time to mitigate exposure, whilst Momentum may be spent to extend this time frame. Exposing characters to Red Wind requires the expenditure of two Dark Symmetry points. Red Wind is a poisonous atmospheric effect with the following qualities:

◀ **VECTOR:** Airborne

◀ **VIRULENCE:** 2

◀ **INCUBATION PERIOD:** One minute

◀ **SYMPTOMS:** Following an unsuccessful initial test to resist the toxin, the patient experiences the first stage symptoms of paranoia and suffers one Dread. Failing subsequent tests signifies that the victim has succumbed to the second stage of the poison as he begins to experience an unfocussed hatred and disgust of anything and everything, to the point that unrestrained violence seems the only possible solution. When a character performs any type of action or interaction, regardless as to whether a test is required, one Dark Symmetry point may be spent to invoke a Challenging D2 Willpower test from anyone under the effects of the second stage. Failure means that they have succumbed to a terrible rage that must be borne out on the focus of their action or interaction. The rage will last for the period of the Interval, at which point another Dark Symmetry point may be spent to again invoke a Willpower test. Passing this test ends the rage, whilst failure means that it continues unabated.

► **INTERVAL:** Minutes (Acute 3). Removal from the Red Wind is the only cure for those who have succumbed. The effects of the insidious toxin will rapidly diminish as the body's metabolism kicks into overdrive to purge its effects from the system.

THE LANDSCAPE

When it comes to describing the lay of the land in the wastes, the two key adjectives are 'cold' and 'barren'. Temperatures are often well below freezing and rise to chilly at best. The low temperatures combined with the acid storms, frequent lack of sunlight for weeks at a time, and drifting clouds of toxic chemicals mean that little grows here.

POISON LAKES

Uncontaminated water is a rare find in the Wastelands. Far more numerous are Poison Lakes, loaded with toxins and mutagenic agents of all kinds. Common short-term effects of contact with the water from the most virulent poison lakes include coughing, severe irritation of the eyes, a feeling of suffocation and burning in the respiratory tract, involuntary rapid twitching in the eyes, breathlessness, stomach pains, and vomiting.

The symptoms are sufficiently rapid and acute that they are immediately noticeable to anyone affected. A more insidious danger from a poison lake is if its waters begin to contaminate the regional watershed. Communities drinking water contaminated by a poison lake experience long-term health problems such as increased infant mortality, kidney failure, widespread respiratory problems, and neurological impairment.

THE GREAT WHITE WASTE

North of the Tsarina's Wall is the Great White Waste. Constantly obscured by raging snow storms, this ice-bound region is the apparent source of the Zones of Corruption and of the most fearsome and dangerous mutant monsters. For as long as anyone can remember, this area has been too dangerous to go near. The construction of the Tsarina's Wall fifty years ago helped to rein in the ravaging monsters from the north and has made the northern reaches of Whitestar territory significantly safer to traverse. Before that, only a fool of a Bone Hussar dared the northern Wastelands without numerous heavily armed companions.

The region was once home to extensive military installations including automated watch towers powered by miniature nuclear reactors. The condition of these installations remains unknown. Whitestar has neither the resources nor inclination to explore the perilous arctic.

16 OCTOBER 2488

VORONIN SAYS A BLIZZARD WILL COME IN FROM THE NORTH TOMORROW MORNING. HE IS USUALLY RIGHT ABOUT SUCH THINGS. WE ARE CLOSE TO THE GREAT WHITE WASTE HERE. I HOPE THE SNOW STORM DOES NOT BRING WITH IT ANY OF THE HIDEOUS CREATURES THAT DWELL THERE.

17 OCTOBER 2488

OUR PROGRESS TODAY HAS BEEN NEGATED BY A LABORIOUS TURNING-BACK. AS WE DESCENDED INTO A BROAD RIVER VALLEY, VORONIN CRIED OUT IN ALARM THAT WE SHOULD ALL LOOK TO OUR RADIATION BADGES. SURE ENOUGH, THEY WERE RAPIDLY TURNING BLACK. WE EXAMINED THE MAPS AGAIN AND REALISED THAT WE MUST HAVE LOST OUR BEARINGS IN THE MORNING'S BLIZZARD. WE HAD STRAYED INTO THE SIKORSKY-2 EXCLUSION AREA.

23 OCTOBER 2488

WATER SUPPLIES ARE RUNNING LOW. WE HAD A BRIEF SURGE OF HOPE TODAY, DASHED AS SOON AS WE PLACED CHEMICAL PROBES INTO THE SMALL BODY OF WATER WE HAD DISCOVERED. IT WAS ANOTHER POISON LAKE. WE HAVE FOOD AND AMMUNITION ENOUGH FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE JOURNEY, BUT IF WE DO NOT FIND UNCONTAMINATED WATER SOON, WE WILL SURELY DIE.

RADZONES

Certain regions of the Earth are still too contaminated by radiation and mutagenic chemical spills to be safe for humans to visit, let alone live in. In Whitestar territory, these places are designated as Exclusion Areas, or RadZones in common parlance.

The largest of these is the East Asian Exclusion Area, covering the majority of what was once China. For this, and all Exclusion Areas, access is strictly controlled from the Whitestar border, and unauthorised entry is a crime punishable by a lengthy prison spell.

The majority of Exclusion Areas are no larger than a few hundred square kilometres. Those close to Whitestar Strongholds are signposted with warning markers, while Exclusion Areas deeper into the Wastelands are only marked on maps.

PLANT LIFE

Little can grow in the harsh climate of the Wastelands, save for a few protected pockets where Whitestar agri-tech researchers strive to create a crop that can yield a decent harvest in a world where

the very atmosphere was once poisoned. South of Zlogora, the Agriculture Bureau has a large research facility in a hollowed-out mountain peak, where it experiments with various forms of artificial lighting in combination with different crop types imported from the colony worlds.

In the wild, anything that grows must either be able to live without sunlight, or be able to withstand the ravages of the acid storms. The former category includes various fungi (not technically plants) and the strange, spindly pale plants that grow in caves lit by bioluminescent lichens. Above ground, the stumpy, thorn-covered trees called dwarf oaks are able to survive thanks to a tough and swiftly regenerating bark, as are various strains of stone moss, which may be pried off and the soft insides scraped away from the hard carapace to provide moisture and nutrients for a desperate Wastelands traveller.

ADSKIY SLIZ

This mysterious gloopy green lichen is readily identifiable by the way it glows with a dull grey-blue radiance in the dark. It is aggressive and fast moving for an organism of its kind, pooling and creeping at a rate that, while still slow, is at times directly observable by the human eye.

Usually found in old urban or industrial areas, the chief danger of the **Adskiy Sliz** are the spores that it emits in sudden bursts at unpredictable intervals. These spores are carried by the wind and begin to form a new pool of the slime wherever it lands.

Inhaling the spores causes respiratory illness and a loss of sensation in the extremities, followed by coma and then death. The first visible sign of infection, shortly after the hacking and coughing begins, is grey-green lines that appear on the skin.

Exposing a character to Adskiy Sliz is an environmental hazard costing five Dark Symmetry points. Adskiy Sliz is considered to be a disease with the following qualities:

- ◀▶ **VECTOR:** Airborne
- ◀▶ **VIRULENCE:** 4
- ◀▶ **INCUBATION PERIOD:** One hour
- ◀▶ **SYMPTOMS:** Patient is Dazed and Perplexed for the period of the Interval. Patient suffers one Serious Wound.
- ◀▶ **INTERVAL:** Twelve hours (Chronic 5). Treatment consists of isolation and quarantine to prevent an epidemic, followed by a combination of blood transfusion, dialysis, and extreme doses of specialised antibiotics. Every major Stronghold maintains at least a single treatment and quarantine cell specifically designed to treat Adskiy Sliz infection, though its use carries a Restriction

Rating of 2 and a cost of 8 to treat one patient; the Federation consider incineration of the corpse from a safe distance a much safer prevention for the deadly sludge.

26 OCTOBER 2488

VORONIN HAS BREATHED IN SOMETHING FROM A STRANGE GLOWING LICHEN WE ENCOUNTERED WHILE SETTING UP CAMP FOR THE NIGHT IN AN ABANDONED VILLAGE. HE HAS BEEN COUGHING UNCONTROLLABLY EVER SINCE AND COMPLAINS OF STOMACH PAINS. I HAVE INSTRUCTED HIM TO SLEEP IN A SEPARATE BUILDING IN CASE IT IS CONTAGIOUS SOMEHOW. WE ARE NOT FAR FROM GAGARINSKAYA NOW, PERHAPS ONE OR TWO DAYS. WE'LL GET HIM MEDICAL ATTENTION THERE.

27 OCTOBER 2488

KEBLER IS DEAD. WE HEARD NOTHING UNTIL THE CREATURE POUNCED. IT WAS A NIGHTMARE OF CLAWS AND TEETH, TRAILING SMOKE AS IT TORE HIS ARM OFF AND DRAGGED HIM AWAY WITH ASTONISHING SWIFTHNESS. I DON'T THINK ONE OF US FIRED A SHOT. IT ALL HAPPENED TOO QUICKLY. WE FOUND HIS BODY, OR AT LEAST HALF OF IT, A MILE DOWNSTREAM. WE MUST PRESS ON.

MUTANT CREATURES

The near destruction of Earth's ecosystem during the corporate exodus caused the extinction of virtually every species of animal then known to man. The beasts that now roam the Whitestar homelands are those species that were able first to survive contact with the mutagenic compounds that exploded into the atmosphere centuries ago, and then to adapt to the harsh new environment.

Animals without the ability to live permanently in shelter from the lethal new weather systems, or flee to safety when they approached, died out. So did those that could not adapt their diet to the hardy plants or wily prey that yet survive on Earth.

KLESHNYA

Perhaps the most ferocious predator of the Wastelands is the kleshnya. This feline carnivore, approximately 2.5 metres long, not including the tail, and weighing around 200kg, used to rely on silence, patience, and a solid hunting instinct in order to catch its favoured prey—wapiti deer, hares, humans, young blood giants and, if the opportunity presented itself, other kleshnya. The hunting range of a single kleshnya may exceed 1000 kilometres.

Its physique appears to exist in a state of flux between solid flesh and gaseous tendrils, with claws, teeth, and joints that resemble corroded steel. The kleshnya's face is a monstrosity, part insect, part concentric circular saw blades.

Over the last decade or so, a new strain of kleshnya has become dominant. This subspecies still has the catlike shape, multifaceted eyes, gaping serrated maw, and hazy semi-solid body of flesh, mist, and rusted metal that Whitestar children learn about in school. But the new breed is also able to alter its colouration to better blend in with the landscape. This new mutation, when combined with the kleshnya's tremendous strength and agility, makes it a creature truly to be feared.

KLESHNYA (ELITE)

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
16 (+1)	16	13 (+1)	13
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
13	6	12	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	-	-	-	-

WOUNDS: 10

SOAK: Fluctuating Steel Hide: (All 3, one point of which is Incorporeal)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Lacerating Jaws (melee):** 2+ \uparrow 6, 1H, Armour Piercing (2), Gruesome, Unforgiving (2)
- ◀ **Mutable Claws (melee):** 2+ \uparrow 5, 1H, Armour Piercing (1)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Incorporeal (1)**
- ◀ **Inured to Cold**
- ◀ **Inured to Poison**
- ◀ **Monstrous Creature**
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Supernatural Agility (1)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Strength (1)**
- ◀ **Evolved Predator:** Kleshnya have extraordinarily keen senses; they never increase the difficulty of Observation or Insight tests for distance and may re-roll one d20 any Observation or Insight test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, a Kleshnya reduces the difficulty of Survival tests by two steps when tracking prey, which may eliminate the need for a test. Finally, Kleshnya reduce the difficulty by four on Resistance tests taken to avoid the effects of the toxic environments, gases, radiation, and other chemical hazards that pervade Earth's atmosphere, which may eliminate the need for a test.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Chameleon:** The most recent evolution of the Kleshnya allows it to alter its colouration to blend in with its surroundings. A Kleshnya may spend one Dark Symmetry point to add two d20 to Stealth tests made to remain unseen.

BLOOD GIANTS

The ruddy-skinned ogres called blood giants are thought to be descended from humans who wandered into a RadZone some time during the nuclear winter. They are the most commonly encountered of the mutants that emanate from the Great White Waste, and some experts suggest that they are a product not only of contact with mutagenic terraforming agents but of the Dark Apostles. Their comparative susceptibility to the weapons of the Bone Hussars would appear to back up this hypothesis. Their thick, scaly hides provide a degree of protection against most guns and other weapons, but a bonesword will cut through them with ease.

An individual blood giant is up to three metres tall and twice as strong as an ordinary human. They live together in quarrelsome nomadic groups of up to twenty, led by a pack alpha who must demonstrate strength and ferocity to continue being the leader. Typical weapons include metal pipes, planks with nails in them, and guns looted from the bodies of fallen enemies. They are not



particularly bright, which makes them fairly easy to outwit. However, they are intelligent enough to haltingly use spoken language and possess a certain low cunning. They have been known to trap the unwary by concealing their true numbers and luring Whitestar militias into what they think will be an easy assault on a small blood giant camp only to turn the tables.

Blood giants can eat pretty much anything a human can, plus they have taste for raw meat of all kinds, particularly humans.

BLOOD GIANTS (ELITE)

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
17 (+1)	16 (+1)	9	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	7	8	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	3	2	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-

Wounds: 11

SOAK: Scaly Hide: (All 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Enormous Improvised Club (melee):** 3+^T9, Unbalanced, Knockdown, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Grasping**
- ◆ **Inured to Cold**
- ◆ **Inured to Poison**
- ◆ **Monstrous Creature**
- ◆ **Supernatural Physique (1)**
- ◆ **Supernatural Strength (1)**
- ◆ **Tainted by Symmetry:** Whether by foul toxins or dark powers, the taint of the Symmetry has seeped into the flesh and bones of the Blood Giants. Weapons with the Pious ability ignore a Blood Giant's Scaly Hide Soak.
- ◆ **Wasteland Monstrosity:** Blood Giant tribes have survived, and even flourished, under the harsh conditions of the Wasteland. They reduce the difficulty by four on Resistance tests taken to avoid the effects of the toxic environments, gases, radiation, and other chemical hazards that pervade Earth's atmosphere, which may eliminate the need for a test. Additionally, they may substitute a Survival test for a Treatment test when attempting to recover Wounds.

COLONY HARES

The **colony hare** was a long, rangy leporid mammal that thrived in the Wastelands during the Dark Symmetry era. A typical specimen grew to about 55cm in length and a mass of 4kg, females being slightly heavier than males. Their coats were various shades of light brown, moulting to white in winter. The tail remained completely white all year round.

The distinctive attribute of colony hare was that they lived together in large groups and exhibited an extraordinary range of cooperative behaviours and intelligence in finding food and shelter, and avoiding predators such as kleshnya, wild cats, and humans.

The tundra territory of their ancestors was no longer survivable due to a lack of vegetation and lack of shelter from killing weather. So colony hares inhabited urban ruins, where they lived on a mixed diet of lichens, mushrooms, and refuse left by humans. No colony hares have been seen in Whitestar lands in the past five years.



1 NOVEMBER 2488

JUST AS WE WERE ABOUT TO MAKE OUR MOVE, WE HEARD ANOTHER OF THE MONSTERS ROARING AND HOOTING FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VALLEY. SOON BOTH OF THEM, THE NEWCOMER AND THE BLOOD GIANT WE HAD INTENDED TO CAPTURE, WERE BELLOWING BACK AND FORTH IN SOME KIND OF CACOPHONOUS COMMUNICATION. THE NEWCOMER WAS QUICKLY JOINED BY SIX OF HIS FELLOWS, AND WE THANKED GOD THAT WE HAD REMAINED HIDDEN. I HAVE SEEN THESE THINGS SHRUG OFF A DIRECT HIT FROM A MACHINE-GUN. WE CERTAINLY COULD NOT HAVE PREVAILED AGAINST ALL OF THEM IN OUR PRESENT CONDITION.

4 NOVEMBER 2488

WE RISKED CROSSING OPEN GROUND THIS AFTERNOON TO POKE AROUND A LOW-RISE COMPLEX OF BUILDINGS AROUND A COVERED PLAZA THAT ZORAN, WHO STUDIES THESE THINGS, SURMISED WAS ONCE A RECHARGING STATION FOR LAND VEHICLES. ITS POCKET REACTOR WAS STILL OPERATIONAL, SO MANY LIGHTS AND SYSTEMS WERE STILL ON. WE FOUND SOME SMALL AMOUNT OF SAFE RAIN WATER, WHICH WE COLLECTED IN OUR CANTEENS, AND SOME FROZEN FOOD. ALL ALONG WE HAD AN EERIE SENSATION OF BEING WATCHED. HEAT SENSORS PICKED UP A LARGE NUMBER OF SMALL MAMMALS THROUGHOUT THE COMPLEX, WHO APPEARED TO BE OBSERVING US WHILE CAREFULLY KEEPING A CONSISTENT DISTANCE. WHEN WE FINALLY SPIED ONE OF THEM, IT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A RABBIT! (REBROV CORRECTS ME - A HARE.) WE THOUGHT TO KILL ONE OR TWO FOR DINNER, BUT AS SOON AS WE READIED OUR GUNS, THE HARES MADE THEMSELVES SCARCE, FLEEING TOWARDS THE CENTRAL FURNACE, WHERE THE WARMTH CAMOUFLAGED THEIR HEAT SIGNATURES. COULD THEY HAVE KNOWN? IT SEEMS PREPOSTEROUS.

PEOPLE OF THE WASTELANDS

Although few in number, non-mutant humans do live in the Wastelands. They are nomads by necessity, moving to stay away from the ebb and flow of mutant movements in the wilderness and to take advantage of the migratory patterns of animals that may be hunted for food and furs. Others are nomads with less pure motives, moving to avoid retaliation for their raids, robberies, and other crimes committed on Stronghold communities.

BANDIT

Banditry is endemic to the Wastelands close to the overland routes between Whitestar Strongholds, and even sometimes in the underground tunnels. In more densely populated areas the Stronghold militias are able to maintain control, but the further you get from a major settlement like Zlogora or Nova Zembla, the greater the danger from bandits.

The typical bandit outfit consists of six to twenty desperadoes armed with revolvers, shotguns, and long knives, the last notoriously used mainly to torture captives. These weapons are chosen for their ruggedness and ease of repair, and bandits also place a premium on survival gear and protective equipment, looting such items first when they raid a place.



Many bandits strike out into the Wastelands after falling out with the leadership of their local Stronghold, and paint themselves as an alternative to Whitestar 'tyranny'. In a few cases, this is a genuine grievance and the Stronghold chief really is a tyrant, but most of the time this posture is transparent self-justification.

Bandits usually travel on foot, and for that reason prefer to hide out in the ruins of large towns or cities, where they can more easily find shelter and evade Whitestar patrols. A bandit group that is able to equip itself with motorcycles and off-road vehicles becomes a serious, highly mobile danger.

BANDIT ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	6	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	2	1	-	2	1	1	-	1	1

WOUNDS: 4

SOAK: Salvaged Scraps and Hide: (All 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Long Knife (melee):** 1+T4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1
- ◆ **Ancient Revolver (ranged):** Close, 1+T3, Semi-Automatic, 1H
- ◆ **Crude Shotgun (ranged):** Close, 1+T4, Knockdown, Perishable, Spread 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Toughened Constitution:** A combination of protective layers, rebreathers, and a hardened physique increase the odds of survival for the bandits of the Wasteland. They may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new results.
- ◆ **Wasteland Survivalist:** Bandits must learn to cope with the harsh conditions and dangers of the Wastelands exceedingly quickly. They may re-roll one d20 when making a Survival test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, any time they are travelling within the Wastelands they may make an Average D1 Survival test to avoid all implicit dangers, such as environmental hazards.

THE CRUSADERS

One of the most famous bandit crews is a biker gang that underwent a most unusual transformation. Riding what remains of the roads between Belokamen and the cities to its east, The Crusaders were

a pretty standard, if fast-moving, bunch of robbers and thugs—until four years ago, when they encountered Brother Kiril, the solitary guardian of the Chapel of the Dormition, on the banks of the River Klyazma.

Just as he was about to execute the placid cleric, gang leader Oleg 'the Dentist' underwent a moment of revelation. He had a vision of the Theotokos, the precise details of which he refuses to reveal. Other members of the gang had similar experiences at that time and over the ensuing days, as the Dentist ordered that all should remain at the chapel in prayer. He was baptised soon afterwards, and now the Crusaders prowl the Wastelands as 'outlaws for God', spreading the Gospel and meting out justice on behalf of isolated Strongholds.

THE RED & BLACK

Allied to Whitestar, but eschewing their project of rediscovery, The Red & Black are a group of 'anarcho-primitivists' who believe that mankind must return to a simpler, pre-civilisation way of life. They live a reconstructed hunter-gatherer lifestyle amid the remains of the old civilisation, making decisions through group consensus, and sometimes splitting into new groups if a consensus cannot be reached. The life is hard, and many do not survive for long, but the group continues to attract people from the Strongholds.

THE TRIBES

Those that live beyond the Whitestar borders are referred to as the Tribes—a name they themselves reject for the most part. Some of these groups are nomadic, moving with the seasons to hunt or maintain herds of animals in different places of shelter. Others have established new societies based on extended clan structures, in the ruined cities of pre-exodus era.

Whitestar maintains cordial, if cautious, relations with many of the Tribes. The Turku clans, who live in sparse settlements beyond the western fringes of Whitestar, often visit Petropol for trade. The mountain people of the south, near the Poison Sea, have little to offer in trade and little they would want in return, but have often cooperated with nearby Whitestar Strongholds to battle bandits who threaten both parties.

Equally, many of the Tribes are hostile and launch raids on Whitestar Strongholds when they can. Chief among these are the so-called Sons of Rasputin, a Whitestar splinter movement who style themselves the true heirs of the Earth. Because of their Whitestar origins, they are better equipped and more fortified than the average Tribe, and control large swathes of territory in Europe.



WELCOME HOME

Earth is not exactly the smoking ruin that the corporations expected it to be in the wake of their exodus and bombardment. The climate has been pushed to the limit, certainly, and the term ecosystem is a relic of a bygone age for now, but the human species did manage to cling to existence thanks to its ingenuity and ability to adapt.

Whitestar emerged from its subterranean tunnels as soon as the scientists deemed it safe to do so, and rapidly set to exploring the wasteland around it in order to reunite with any other survivors of the holocaust. The influence of the union has slowly spread outward from the Motherland until it has absorbed isolated Strongholds between the extremes of the Pyrenees to the west and the Siberian coast to the east, where the natural barriers of a mountain range and a foreboding sea keep the inhabitants of the far-flung Strongholds safe from the worst of the toxic hazards beyond.

Expansion has also continued to the northwest, where survey teams have managed to skirt the reaches of the Great White Waste and struggle across the frozen glaciers that blanket Scandinavia during their search for relics from the distant past. The dangers of traversing the ice sheets are great, though the rewards can be even greater, as many treasures have been perfectly preserved in the sub-zero temperatures. Another boon has been the chance discovery of several Strongholds that had been able to cling to a semblance of civilisation in the freezing conditions, all of whom readily became part of the Federation.

The extent of Whitestar's influence covers but a small portion of the known world, and whilst its influence even there can be described as tenuous at best, it has left none of the corporations in any doubt that it considers the entirety of the globe to be its protectorate; one that it is prepared to risk a second nuclear holocaust to defend.



Not all Earth is ruins.

LANDSCAPE

Because of their huge size, the Whitestar lands can seem monotonous when you venture above ground, with a single type of terrain stretching in all directions to the horizon. But those who have travelled extensively among the Whitestar Strongholds know that the Motherland comprises a multitude of landscapes. Most have been ravaged by the ecological disasters caused by the corporations centuries ago, but pockets of life, and even outstanding beauty, can be found all across Whitestar's vast territory, if you know where to look.

The climate of Whitestar, as with everywhere on Earth now, is punishing—another reason that most Strongholds remain below ground. The land above the majority of Whitestar settlements experiences year-round snow cover over permanently frozen soil. The average temperature is constantly below zero.

The northernmost band of terrain is the treeless, marshy plain called the tundra. This is the location of the Tsarina's Wall and the nexus of the Zones of Corruption. In winter, there are days of total darkness, while summer brings the days of the midnight sun. No plants grow here save the sickly lichens that cling to the permafrost. Once home to herds of migratory reindeer, something deep in the tundra now spawns hideous mutants, perhaps some agent of the Dark Apostles.

South of the tundra, the moist and moderate taiga used to be the most common terrain in the Whitestar homeland. The toxic fogs, acid storms, and deadly blizzards caused by Earth's climactic breakdown made the tundra expand to the south and destroyed the ecosystem of the taiga. The thin band of taiga that remains is a narrow east-west strip of gnarled and stunted trees, inhospitable rocky plains, and misshapen animal life that has adapted to the meagre nutrients that still subsist in the acidic water and poisoned plants or prey. Precipitation is common and snow cover is constant.

Whitestar's great hope for reconstruction lies on the steppe. Bounded to the south by the irradiated East Asian Exclusion Area and the Central Desert, the steppe is a band of grassy plains stretching from Whitestar's westernmost frontiers all the way to eastern Siberia, interrupted by the motherland's great mountain ranges. By the standards of the modern Earth, the climate of the steppe is friendly to human settlement, though deadly storms still frequently sweep across the land. Whitestar's plans to rebuild agriculture on planet Earth are focused here—the soil, though dry, yields good crop. The next stage is to develop techniques that

will counteract the unpredictable storms and droughts that afflict the steppe, in order to increase crop yields and diversity to a sufficient level.

The Ural Mountains are an important, iconic part of Whitestar's geography, for nestled in this imposing mountain range is Zlogora, Whitestar's capital and largest city—and the home of the Tsarina herself. The range extends from the Arctic Ocean to the Central Desert, forming a huge natural barrier, pierced by only a few passes between west and east, and contains an abundance of mineral wealth.

THE TSARINA

How does one describe the Tsarina Alexandra Romanova, Empress of the White Star, in mere words? This is a question that has vexed countless poets, for her aura transcends the merely human to exceed the grasp of even the greatest Muse. She is more than a leader to the people of Whitestar: she is their heroine, rescuer, and solace. Mother of the nation, a living icon.

Even for someone not born into Whitestar's all-pervading reverence for the Tsarina, meeting her is an unforgettable experience. She cuts a striking figure, commanding attention and respect. Though she does not have a particularly imposing physique, years of warfare have made her muscular and assured in her movements. In conversation she is attentive, and makes everyone who speaks to her feel as though they are the centre of attention. She laughs rarely but smiles often.

Tsarina Alexandra spends much of her time travelling through her domain aboard her armoured train, the Zolotoy Glaz. When she is not travelling, she returns to Mertruca Base, where she has a suite of rooms in Sector Blue kept under constant guard. Her rooms are not far from the meeting chamber where she consults with her Army Council, often long into the night.

“Just calling it ‘charisma’ doesn’t do it justice. I mean, TV quiz hosts have charisma. The Tsarina absolutely radiates authority. The room seems to crackle with energy when she walks in. I mean, you just can’t take your eyes off her. It sounds ludicrous, but there it is. I’ve never met anyone like her.”

— Hank Grit, Capitol News TV investigative reporter.

KATARINA OURUMOVA

One of the Tsarina's personal priorities is the advancement of Whitestar's research into human mutation and development—the Nameless are the most visible products of this research programme. Doctor **Katarina Ourumova** heads up the department that conducts these experiments, located in Sector Black. A young woman rapidly promoted to what she feels is too great a position of responsibility, Katarina is a workaholic and in a constant state of stress. Her greatest fear is letting down the Tsarina, who has favoured her with attention and expended considerable political capital to support her research. Colonel Borodin resents Ourumova for usurping his position as the Tsarina's favourite, and misses no opportunity to slight her or talk her down behind her back, though never in front of the Tsarina.



Meeting the Tsarina is an experience.

STEPHAN PONYRYOV

A vigorous, brash military officer in his mid thirties, Captain Stephan Ponyryov sits on the Army Council as the representative of the Streltsy's aerospace wing, though he does not command it. That honour is reserved for Air Chief Marshall Eugenia Berbatova. Ponyryov is a rising star in strategy and intelligence, and it was his reputation as a thinker that got him the nomination for the Army Council. He is desperately in love with Katarina Ourumova, who is too devoted to her work to give him any of her time, though she finds him agreeable enough. He is charming and handsome, and has the intellect to keep up with her, more or less. Indeed, his positive attributes have not gone unnoticed. From the other side of the Army Council conference table, the Tsarina has begun to wonder if she is not a little bit in love with him herself.

BASTIONS OF CIVILISATION

ZLOGORA: THE SUBTERRANEAN CAPITAL

Buried deep within a forbidding mountain in the southern reaches of the Urals, Zlogora is the capital city of Whitestar. Here, ensconced within indestructible walls of rock, the Tsarina's government oversees the defence and development of the Motherland. A thousand tunnels radiate in all directions from the central command bunkers to the rough-hewn caverns scraped out of the mountain, which form the living quarters of Zlogora's million or more citizens. The city is like a rabbit warren, tunnels stretching far and wide, reaching beyond the confines of Zlogora Mountain proper to outer townships nestled beneath the surrounding mountains.

Zlogora was built around a disused nuclear weapons base, formerly the command centre for an entire arsenal of intercontinental ballistic missiles. During the corporate orbital strikes, Zlogora was one of the few targeted military installations that was sufficiently robust to withstand the barrage from space. As the decades of nuclear winter began, thousands of refugees flocked to the redoubt, rallying to the banner of the Tsarina and her new Whitestar regime. That core, now called Mertruca Base, is the headquarters of the Streltsy, the best equipped and maintained fortification on Earth at the present time.

Immured beneath tons of rock, Mertruca Base is impenetrable from the surface to all but the most determined tunnelling assault—and this form of attack would be detected long before excavators could bore deep enough to reach the base, necessitating a huge besieging force to even attempt it. Each entrance leading from the outer city to Mertruca Base is protected by a series of gargantuan reinforced blast doors. The base itself accommodates up to 30,000 personnel at a time, and the soldiers stationed here have the best training and equipment that Whitestar can provide. The low-ceilinged corridors of Mertruca Base are lined with smooth concrete and carefully engineered for defence and emergency control—any given section

of the base can be sealed off by remote control. In cases of fire, all personnel evacuate the sector, and the area is sealed and deprived of oxygen to starve the blaze. No such measures exist in the outer city, where the tangled tunnels, in many cases dug out by hand, were created as needed, without extensive pre-planning.

THE INNER FORTRESS

The inner sanctum of Mertruca Base is the Central Keep, off-limits to non-military personnel without permission granted directly by the Tsarina or a member of the State Council. It houses the State Council Chamber and the headquarters of the Streltsy and the Whitestar Intelligence Commissariat.

Sector Red is the part of Mertruca Base given over to combat training. All new recruits to the Streltsy must pass a rigorous series of tests here under the watchful eye of Captain Anatoly Shamonov, proving themselves on the firing range, in one-on-one close combat training, and in simulated combat exercises.

ZLOGORA CENTRAL TV

Wednesday Evening

*All times shown are ZST

7.30pm The Evening News

The latest major stories and security alerts, presented by Tikhon Antonov.

8.00pm Regional News

Items of interest for your Stronghold, including current updates on mutant attacks, radiation levels and Zones of Corruption.

8.30pm On The Wall

Drama Episode 15

Goran is forced to confront the fact that Kira may be a mutant. Meanwhile, Anatoly makes a surprising discovery at the old lighthouse.

9.00pm Gogol's Overcoat

Quiz

Contestants from all across the Whitestar Federation compete in the classic battle of poetry and aphorisms to win the grand prize: a year's supply of rifle ammunition.

9.30pm Resector Roadshow

This week, the *pingzhazhiy* travel to Vostmor to run the rule over some exciting finds from the Wastelands, including a collection of mutant skeletons and a nearly intact holographic projection unit.

WELCOME HOME

"I have to take these kids and turn them into soldiers ready to be the weapons of the Tsarina. So in other words, I have a hell of a lot of work to do and no time to waste. I mean, look at them."

– Captain Anatoly Shamonov



Sector Blue's Data Archive.

Sector Blue houses the Great Hall and the Streltsy's data archive. The Great Hall serves as a briefing room as well as being the venue for Streltsy social events, on the rare occasions they have time to hold them. The highly formal Tsarina's Midwinter Ball is the fixture of the year, on those years mutant attacks and natural disasters hold off long enough for it to be held. The archives house a wealth of information on past and present Earth, including a comprehensive study of former settlements and technologies that existed before the corporations' exodus from the planet. Adding to the archive through exploratory missions beyond Whitestar's borders is an ongoing project.

The armoury is overseen by the Streltsy's Captain Strauss. She is in charge of maintaining Whitestar's most advanced and deadly infantry weapons. These are in short supply but are sometimes available for sale to individuals who have permission from the Tsarina to conduct trade with the armoury.

Nadya Minakova is a library technician in the Sector Blue archives. Her job is to maintain the archive catalogues and keep all references up to date, but her passion is reading the archive's contents. She is particularly fascinated by the art history of the Earth gone by, and pores over any new information that is submitted to the archive about paintings, music, sculpture, or literature lost and found. She does not always, strictly speaking, have the clearance to do this, but her passion for the subject matter and her facility with breaking security systems undetected combine to push her beyond the boundaries of piffling red tape. Something of an outsider among the library staff, Nadya yearns to find someone with whom to share her love for the Motherland's ancient culture. She rarely leaves Sector Blue. She dreams of travelling to Vostmor to see the museum there, and to explore the ancient Whitestar landmarks. All she needs is the right encouragement, and she will do that.

Sector Green contains the majority of the Zlogora garrison dormitories and the Streltsy's central medical facilities. The latter incorporates medical and biotech research facilities and as advanced a hospital as one can hope to find on Earth, stocked with the latest technology and supplies from the colonies.

Doctor Denis Chernyshev is the chief surgeon at the Zaverskiy Medical Centre in Sector Green, a 45-year-old veteran of countless Streltsy field hospitals in the most beleaguered and lonely outposts. Now one of the key members of staff at a constantly overworked hospital, Doctor Chernyshev cuts a harried figure among the wards and operating theatres of the Centre. He is always on his way to the next meeting or operation. Holding a conversation with him during working hours is impossible for more than a few snatched exchanges of words, and when he is off duty, all he wants to do is sleep. Part of what causes him so much stress is that he is starting to get an idea of the kind of experiments the Tsarina is conducting in Sector Black on the Nameless recruits. He knows few details, but he has learnt that the Tsarina is trying to create new, more rapidly evolved forms of humanity. Correlating this with the resources poured into the unearthly subject areas of Project Undertow, he wonders if the Tsarina has begun to lose her way and maybe, even, to be influenced by the Dark Apostles. He would never divulge this secret fear to anyone, at least not intentionally.

Ever present at the medical centre whenever she's needed, though rarely paid any attention to, is Helena Demidenko, the night-shift orderly. Helena is in her sixties but refuses to even think about retiring. The way she sees it, the patients and staff need her. She went on holiday once for two weeks, and while she was away a reactor leak in the adjoining barracks block caused the whole hospital to be shut down for months. Since then, Helena has been sure that the place would fall apart without her, and she might be right—whenever anyone needs to find a misplaced patient, an obscure piece of medical equipment, or a rumour from years ago, Helena is the one to ask. She remembers everything.

Sector Black is the science wing, where the Tsarina's highly secretive research projects take place. Access to the sector is extremely limited—even personnel with clearance for the Central Keep require additional permissions to get through Sector Black's tight security. The sector consists of a single, six-story block with no external windows, which sits in the middle of a wide courtyard. Armed guard posts ring the courtyard, bristling with machine guns.

Inside the building are workshops, laboratories, and some living quarters for Sector Black staff. Each laboratory has a terminal connecting it to the ARKTOS supercomputer, housed in the basement.

The scientists and analysts of Sector Black conduct research in a wide variety of fields, including environmental engineering, threat assessment, weaponry, and defensive technologies. The largest individual projects are the Tsarina's ongoing experimentation with genetic manipulation, which creates the bio-engineered super soldiers known as the Nameless, and Project Undertow, dedicated to exploring and understanding the Zones of Corruption.

NIKUDA

Buried beneath the frozen soil of Siberia, west of the deep, clear waters of Lake Baikal, Nikuda is a typical small Stronghold. The settlement occupies one of the smaller Strongholds constructed shortly before the corporations' departure from Earth, and currently has around 200 inhabitants.

Its sole connection to the Whitestar network is a long and fragile underground road that runs, by a not particularly direct route, to the railhead at Vyuga City, some eighty kilometres to the south.

The chief of the community is Elder Sidorenko, a serious, analytical man in his late fifties. Sidorenko rules because people listen to what he tells them, and he is able to balance their differing needs and desires to keep the Stronghold thriving. Sidorenko dotes on his tearaway teenage daughter Agnes, whose mother died when she was only three. He would do anything to keep her safe.

LAYOUT

The Nikuda bunker is divided into four main levels, plus a small antechamber and surface entrance at the very top.

GETTING IN & OUT

The surface entrance is a bomb-proof, airtight steel construction set flush with the ground. It can only be opened from the inside—at the press of a button, a pneumatic lift rises from the floor of the antechamber, carrying vehicles and passengers up through twin blast doors as they iris open. A separate vehicle elevator runs from here directly to the motor pool on the Reactor Level, where Nikuda's various tanks, trucks, and other vehicles are stored.

ISOLATION

Nikuda has only been part of the Whitestar Federation for about a decade. Prior to that, the bunker remained sealed off from the outside world. Generations lived and died in the bunker without ever seeing the sky. Not that the sky was a particularly attractive sight in those days. Despite later picking up transmissions from the Tsarina's news networks that seemed to indicate a new stability and revival of society, the inhabitants were fearful of what might truly be going on out there.

During the Dark Symmetry era, their fears were exacerbated by the presence of a group of raiders based in a burned-out StopnShop supermarket close to the bunker, who spent several years trying unsuccessfully to break in to the bunker and make away with whatever treasures they might find. These raiders passed into legend in Nikuda, always cited whenever anyone suggested opening the doors again.

Nikuda's isolationist policy was not overturned until that historic day eleven years ago when the Tsarina herself travelled from Vyuga City to the very doors of the bunker, to speak in person with the Chief and invite Nikuda to become part of Whitestar.



Lighting up the Long Dark near Nikuda.

WELCOME HOME

The other major way in or out of the bunker lies adjacent to the motor pool. Here, huge blast doors roll back to reveal the subterranean roadway that runs to the south. In addition to joining up with the tunnels of Vyuga City, this road has a number of ramps to surface exits, which can be blown open with shaped explosive charges in the event of an emergency evacuation.

GOLD LEVEL

Beneath the surface entrance, and stretching away to the east, is the Gold Level. This floor houses the bunker's administration facilities, including the Chief's office, the Operations Room, Systems Maintenance, and Security Control. A number of personal apartments are also found on Gold Level. These were originally designed as quarters for the senior officers, and are the most desirable dwellings in Nikuda.

The Chief's office is Elder Sidorenko's haven, away from the constant hustle and bustle of the Gold Level. It is furnished with old rugs and wooden furniture, including a remarkable drinks cabinet with enamel inlays, salvaged from nearby ruined towns. Having been thoroughly decontaminated, these furnishings make the Elder's office into a refined, comfortable study. Sidorenko uses the office for his own admin work and small private meetings. The Chief, his wife Katia, and their two children live in a suite of rooms adjacent to this office.

Most meetings the Elder has take place in the Operations Room, where he talks to his heads of department every day to hear the latest situation reports and give instructions. Operations contains workstations and sensors to monitor and control systems throughout the bunker. The operations manager Kara Aristova can usually be found here during working hours. She is the foremost gossip-monger in Nikuda and has her nose in everyone's business. Her work in Administration gives her plenty of scope to pry into other people's business.

Systems Maintenance houses the servers and diagnostic systems that keep the light and power running. The tall, gawky Vladimir Medvedev heads the Technical Services team, and this office is his throne room, where he sits resplendent behind a permanently untidy desk, keeping an eye on the banks of monitors that warn of blown fuses, blocked pipes, or an overheating reactor.

Security Control is the headquarters for the Nikuda Militia. The former bandit Elena Kuznetsova is in charge. She has an easy, friendly way with her subordinates, but she is more than capable of being a disciplinarian when needs must, and is often aggressive with the bunker residents. A veteran of the Wastelands, she is an expert not only in combat but in tracking and survival too. She lives on Gold Level with her husband Vasilij and son Paul.



CHAPTER 09

IRON LEVEL

The largest floor level in Nikuda, Iron Level sits approximately ten metres further beneath the ground than Gold Level. Iron is the location for most of the everyday activity in the bunker. Facilities located here include the mess hall, schoolroom, chapel, trading post, medical bay, and almost all living quarters.

The mess hall is the communal dining area and can seat the whole population of the bunker at one time, though with minimal elbow room. The attached kitchen is run by Chef Franz, who serves three meals a day with the help of his two assistants. Other residents also use this kitchen to prepare meals for themselves at other times, as most living quarters on this level lack cooking facilities.

The schoolroom is the alma mater of almost all Nikuda residents. The current teacher in the bunker is Professor Babatyev, who inherited the job from his uncle. He teaches a mixed curriculum to all children in the bunker from the ages of five to sixteen. He is not strict, but it is very hard to get an A in his classes. The Professor is interested in history and old literature—he is one of only a handful of people who have taken the time to hook up the archive drives on the reactor level to find out about the history of the bunker and the local area.

The Chapel of Saint Matriona is the bunker's place of worship. The parish priest is Father Viktor, who came from Zlogora to become Nikuda's new pastor five years ago. The chapel is a spare, cold room, in form and construction no different from any other chamber in the bunker. Yet it retains an atmosphere of solemn tranquillity, watched over by an enamelled icon of Christ Pantokrator.

Nikuda General Store is the place where outsiders do business with the bunker. Residents who have something to sell give it to the manager, Svetlana Glukhova, specifying their asking price. Svetlana then handles negotiations with those who come to trade, and passes on the money or bartered items to the seller. She also maintains a stock of her own, for sale to visitors or outsiders. This general sale stock consists of staple foods, survival gear, basic clothing, and tools.

The Medical Centre contains beds for up to ten patients, a consulting room, and an operating theatre. The resident physician Doctor Yakimov is well trained, having studied at the medical institute in Zlogora, but the facilities and supplies he has available are no more than adequate. He is constantly in need of new supplies of medicines, anaesthetic, and even basic materials like bandages. Yakimov is fifty years of age, a kindly man who genuinely loves to help those in need. He is loved and respected by the residents of Nikuda.

The consulting room contains a medical scanner and a 100-year-old diagnostic computer that has proven useful in identifying unusual ailments picked up in the Wasteland, although its antiquated vocabulary can be confusing.

The living quarters are spartan, having been originally designed for military use. Private apartments are generally assigned to older residents, with families with children getting priority for these. Young unmarried adults, and all visitors, must make do with the shared dormitories with between four and ten bunks to a room.

THE REACTOR LEVEL

The lowest level of Nikuda is the Reactor Level. This is the industrial sector, housing the nuclear reactor that powers the bunker, the air filtration and pumping system, the hydroponic garden and fish farm, the motor pool, storage facilities, and the waste incinerator.

Solomon Aristov, the maintenance worker, is often to be found down here. In his early sixties, he is gentle, always worried about something, and not very bright. Now a widower, he has three daughters: Irina Markova, Kara Aristova, and Maria Karimova.

Of interest to the curious on this level is the Nikuda Archive. This is a room full of solid-state computer storage containing vast amounts of records dating from the construction of the bunker to the present day. Most of this is nothing but tedious accounting of food stores, work shifts, and other minutiae, but revealing glimpses into the past of Nikuda and the local area above ground can be found if one has the time and looks in the right places. Many of the archives are in obsolete formats, making them hard to boot up—as a result Nikuda residents rarely bother to do so.

THE MILITIA

Internal and external security is the responsibility of the Nikuda Militia, a corps of a dozen tough individuals who patrol the corridors of the bunker and, less frequently, the wilderness outside. The Militia are easily recognisable in their uniform of dark blue overalls with their names stencilled on the back in bright red letters. Inside the bunker, the Militia patrol alone, armed with only a stun baton and pistol, but with backup just a cry for help away. When they venture outside, they travel in groups of three or more, usually by jeep, and carry assault rifles and protective gear as standard.

The Militia's command structure is simple: Captain Kuznetsova is in charge, and everyone else is a Trooper.

PERSONNEL

Trooper Stephan Markov is an enthusiastic new recruit with a mean streak. Recently admitted to the Militia, which he had yearned to join ever since he was a kid, Markov is loyal to the point of fanaticism to Elena Kuznetsova. In his eagerness to get in her good books, he is prone to overreaction and brutality. He is the son of Alexei and Irina Markov, and older brother to Aleksandr, the Resector, and Suzanna.

Trooper Sergei Karimov is a big guy, but friendly with it. He follows orders and does not think too much beyond that. He is married to Maria, Solomon Aristov's daughter, with whom he has two daughters: Christina, sixteen, and Marina, twelve.



Nature has reclaimed much of ruins on Earth."

WELCOME HOME

THE STREET CREEPERS

This crew of Resectors hold a lot of influence in Nikuda thanks to valuable gear they bring back from the nearby Zone of Corruption, and the roubles they get from selling it. The Chief sometimes secretly uses them to hassle people he does not like, when it would be unseemly for the Militia to do so on his behalf. The Creepers do not have any interest in taking over the bunker, though they do like throwing their weight around when the opportunity presents itself. The Creepers are Aleksandr Markov, Yulia Kudryashova and Artyom Baratov. Aleksandr, the brains of the operation, is the younger brother of Militia trooper Stephan Markov. Yulia is the brave one, tackling the most dangerous and difficult obstacles with utter fearlessness, and Artyom uses his gift with words to get them the best deals for the things they bring back to the bunker. The crew has been together for three years, and Yulia still has not picked up that both the boys are a little bit in love with her.

A fourth member of the crew, Levon Ayupov, is currently somewhere in the Asteroid Belt, living the Resector dream as he explores wrecked spacecraft from before the Dark Symmetry.

A recent recruit to the Creepers, kind of, is Paul Kuznetsov, the security chief's son. He idolises the Resectors and always wants to hang around with them and win their approval. His mother disapproves, which the Creepers find amusing.

THE MOTOR POOL

Nikuda's vehicle fleet is housed in a large garage on the Reactor Level. The motor pool is equipped with extensive maintenance facilities—arguably more than they have for humans in the medical centre. A vehicle lift runs from the motor pool to the surface entrance, while a double blast door on the south wall leads out to the Vyuga City tunnel.

The vehicle fleet comprises:

- ◆ 1 × Lvov armoured personnel carrier (nicknamed 'The Love')
- ◆ 3 × Sakharov Wastelander patrol jeep
- ◆ 2 × Otkatchik medium trucks
- ◆ 2 × Osa all-terrain motorbikes



The heavily guarded entrance to the Vyuga City Tunnel.



Petropol and Belokamen meet underground to form Nova Zembla.”

Andrei Markov works in the motor pool as a vehicle mechanic, specialising in bodywork and armour. He and his wife Irina, who works in the mess hall, are the parents of Stephan, Aleksandr and Suzanna. The two boys have already moved out of the family rooms, but Suzanna, who is in her final year of school, still lives with them.

OUTSIDE THE BUNKER

Nikuda's surface entrance lies not far from the city limits of Gagarinskaya, a Bauhaus company town built before the exodus, centred around a huge aerospace manufacturing facility. A major population centre in its time, the city provides rich pickings for Resectors. These ruined streets are where the Street Creepers cut their teeth, learning to avoid the surface world's monsters and bringing back loot to the bunker.

The Creepers have since moved on to the tantalising riches of Zone 86. This Zone of Corruption lies a half-day's journey northwest of the bunker. In its centre, a military airfield sits irresistibly uncorroded, with planes and buildings gleaming in the sun, ripe for the picking apart. However, the site is surrounded by a so-far impenetrable curtain of deadly gravity effects and balefire pits. The Street Creepers have yet to figure out a way past these traps to reach the treasures within.

To the south of the bunker, a nest of Hollow Men shambles about in a dilapidated motorway service station. The Nikuda residents leave them alone, save for occasional Militia patrols to ensure that they do not approach any of the concealed entrances to the Vyuga City tunnel.

THE TWIN CITIES

While Whitestar's capital lies far to the east at Zlogora, its greatest city is without doubt the underground metropolis of Nova Zembla. In truth, Nova Zembla is not one settlement but two, an amalgam of the mighty Strongholds of Petropol and Belokamen.

In the long nuclear winter after the corporations fled Earth, the ground above what is now Nova Zembla was utterly uninhabitable—even more so than most places. The Petropol and Belokamen shelters were huge, but even so they had not been designed to accommodate the hundreds of thousands who took refuge there. So, in need of more room and unable to go up to the surface, both settlements began to expand outwards and downwards. With the sea to its west, Petropol headed mainly to the southeast, while Belokamen found the digging more agreeable to the northwest. After decades of tunnelling, the two cities met one

another coming in opposite directions. The two cities joined up and began to work together on planning new developments and exploring the gradually improving situation in the surface world. In 2324, the leaders of both cities proclaimed a new, joint administration and the name Nova Zembla for the combined Stronghold.

Both communities signed up with the Tsarina and her Whitestar Federation in the first months of her reign, and were key allies in the early years. No other Strongholds had the population or supplies to spare troops or resources on a nationwide scale. While other Strongholds took part in Whitestar missions or provided food, lodgings, and supplies for Whitestar operatives in their own areas, only Petropol and Belokamen were able to provide support for expeditions and projects far and wide throughout the Motherland.

GEOGRAPHY

Nova Zembla extends across a larger area, and deeper below ground, than any other Whitestar Stronghold. Its two poles are the original nuclear bunkers of Petropol and Belokamen. Around each of these huge shelters, a network of tunnels and chambers extends for a dozen kilometres to a depth of up to 600 metres.

Between these two nodes, a warren of dim tunnels and artificial rock chambers stretches along the better part of a thousand kilometres. These intercity tunnels are largely devoted to industry, mining, and hydroponic growing. The permanent residents of the intercity are those who work in the facilities along the way, and those who furnish the services and supplies that they need.

Because of its layout, Nova Zembla controls a broad swathe of territory above ground as well as below. Petropol and Belokamen have numerous watch posts within the ancient cities above them, from which they maintain regular Militia patrols to keep the predators and bandits of the Wastelands under control. Along the intercity tunnels, monitoring stations and gun turrets poke up through the earth at regular intervals for much the same purpose, and form the principal line of defence for Whitestar's western frontiers. The intercity line does not present a physical barrier in the same way that the Tsarina's Wall does, but acts as an uninterrupted line of communication from Petropol to Belokamen that allows Whitestar to maintain security along its length.

MILITARY PRESENCE

As befits a Stronghold of such size and strategic importance, the Streltsy maintain a huge garrison in Nova Vesna Zembla. The surface guard towers along the intercity line are among the most heavily defended in Whitestar territory, and over 2000 Streltsy troops are stationed in the upper levels of the Stronghold at all times. Belokamen and Petropol each have two squadrons of Night Witches to provide reconnaissance and rapid-reaction capabilities. The Streltsy troops here are on constant alert, rotating in and out frequently to keep them fresh. The Tsarina is a frequent visitor to make sure that nothing is being neglected in this vital Stronghold.

PETROPOL

The Jewel of the Neva sits on the shores of the Baltic Sea, beneath the ruins of the city that was once the pride of the Romanov electors of Bauhaus. It was founded as the Kronshtadt Redoubt, a military shelter buried deep beneath the sea bed between the city proper and the naval base of Kotlin Island, thirty two kilometres to the west in the Neva Bay.

The first stage of expansion, once the panic of the nuclear wars was over and the community was able to properly take stock of the situation, was to tunnel eastwards to the city proper. Here, the military occupant of the Kronshtadt bunker encountered many thousands of civilian survivors who had taken up residence in the metro system, fortifying the tunnels against the monsters that now stalked the world above. This tunnel city was a savage, dog-eat-dog society. When everyone fled to the metro, the people with guns were the swaggering bravos of the city's street gangs, more than willing to use violence to get their way, and the stragglers from Bauhaus corporate security, who turned out to have a similar attitude to the rest of the population. The tunnels fragmented into miniature gangster states, where the refugees served the whims of amoral hardmen with poor impulse control. The Security troops established themselves along the Kirovsko-Viborgskaya Line, the oldest and longest in the system, and engaged the street gangs in frequent shoot-outs for control of the stations on connecting lines. The fragmented gangs eventually coalesced into larger factions capable of holding their own against the ex-Bauhaus operatives: the Blueliners, the Ligovskiys, and the Ulitsa Crew. On the south end of the Frunzensko-Primoskaya Line, the two-station Shushary Commune housed a collective of ordinary refugees who took up arms to defend themselves from the warring gangs.

The Kronshtadt Redoubt expedition was appalled at the violence and abuse they found in the metro. The shoot-outs dwindled only as ammunition supplies did, and the machete ambush became a favoured tactic of the Bauhaus Security holdouts in particular. The commander of Kronshtadt at the time, Major Stepanov, knew he could subdue the gangs easily, in military terms. But the fight for the tunnels would lead to tremendous loss of life in the process. Instead, he took a well-armed delegation to speak with each of the gang leaders. He offered survival gear and other resources to turn their desire for territory outward, backing exploration of the surface world, in return for an end to the fighting and treating the civilians like slaves. The alternative: a bloody but short war that the gangs would come out of very dead. To a man, the gangs took the deal.

By the time the Dark Symmetry began to break out among the off-world colonies, the descendants of Petropol's gangs, soldiers, and civilians had mingled and developed into the clannish, exuberant society for which Petropol is known today. Now, if you were a citizen

of Petropol, your Metro Line was your extended family—and the other Lines your rivals, with whom you must forever compete. This rivalry expressed itself in sporting contests, adventurous exploits, civic achievements, and any other field in which people could conceivably compete. When spirits got high, the Line rivalry would sometime boil over into brawling, but the internecine bloodshed of Petropol's formative years was thankfully long gone.

This was also the golden age of the Resector in Petropol. The city above was ripe with plunder from before the corporate exodus, and the competitive atmosphere of the city drove each Resectors from each Line onward to ever greater acts of daring in order to bring back the most valuable and exotic spoils from their expeditions.

In the modern day, the rivalry between the Lines has become, by necessity, more muted. It was no more than a year ago that sentinels on Kotlin Island first spotted unidentified scout ships out to sea. This was the first time anyone in Petropol had seen sea-going vessels operated by any of the tribes. Those ships turned out to be the first probing feelers of the Sons of Rasputin, who swept in with overwhelming force and took the island in a daring night-time assault launched from sub-aqua landing craft. By the following morning, the Sons were well entrenched in Petropol's own island fortress and had a foothold in the metro system, dug in to positions at three Blueliner stations, and with fierce fighting at the crucial Sadovaya interchange. Fortunately for Whitestar, that initial shock was as far as the Sons of Rasputin got. The fighting continues fiercely in the tunnels around Sadovaya and Admiralteyskaya, but the front line has changed little in the intervening months, especially since the Streltsy took over the front-line fighting from the Petropol Militias. The Sons have received enough backup, apparently resupplied by submarine through the Baltic, to sustain their position, but for some reason have yet to get the reinforcements they would need to push on further.

In the meantime, the Petropolitans have a similar problem. Nova Zembla has plenty of other fronts to worry about day to day, while it seems the Sons of Rasputin can be contained for now. And so the Petropol warlords' bloody assault to push the Sons of Rasputin back into the sea remains on the drawing board. Whitestar retains control of the surface city, and so for the time being the bloodshed is confined to the tunnels. Both sides skirmish with one another in the platform concourses, maintenance ducts, and railway tunnels, and the body count rises with each week that passes.

GOVERNMENT

Separate Militias, resource management, and trade are operated by each of the Lines, whose representatives meet in the Petropol Council of Elders. When the Council decides on a course of action, it is able to command great resources and manpower. However, it is rare for Petropol's leaders to ever emerge from a meeting with all agreed on a common plan.

As for the various Lines, the Commune operates along democratic lines, with an elected Senior Guide and Consultative Council. The other lines—Security, Blueliners, Ligoovskiys, and Ulitsa—retain their old gang structures: you get to be chief because people do what you say. The key to chieftom is no longer the willingness and capacity for brutality, but toughness and great fights or battle will get you a long way.

Though most Petropolitans remain in the Line that their parents were in, a person is free to choose which Line he belongs to. Anyone may freely swear allegiance to the Line that reflects his own personality and ethos, and it is common for people to do so on their twentieth birthdays as a statement of lifelong intent. Many subsequently change their minds and return to their original Line or join another, but people who cannot settle on one after the age of about twenty five are viewed as flighty and unreliable.

SECURITY

Still formed along a pseudo-military hierarchy, Security see stoicism and willpower as the measure of a person. Every member of Security is to die rather than fail in his duties, and to obey the orders of his superiors. Though it presents a united front to outsiders, Security is rife with internal politics and officers are often overtaken on the promotional ladder or 'promoted sideways' for allegedly failing in their duties as leaders.

Currently holding the reins of Security is Commander Yevgeny Isayev, who swears his moustache was not grey when he took over.

THE BLUELINERS

The kings of the Moskovsko-Petrogradskaya Line retain much of the street-gang outlook of their forebears: you have to earn status through your accomplishments, and as a group they love nothing more than to take new territory and loot. When a young Petropolitan swears to the Blueliners as an adult at age twenty, they receive a 'callsign' that becomes his nickname for all official Line business. The current leader is Snowy, real name Andrei Gerasimov, a fractious sort who makes friends and enemies quickly and easily.

THE LIGOVSKIYS

Styling themselves as flamboyant buccaneers, the Ligoovskiys are often derided by the other Lines for being all talk and no action. The Ligoovskiys are pretty sure everyone else is just jealous of how stylish they look in their carefully assembled retro outfits, and of their success as Resectors and fighters. They do not exactly have just one leader, but a series of cliques around charismatic individuals instead. Miki Tolstoi is the person who commands the most respect, and he manages to make sure they work together more often than not. He also attends the Council of Elders for the Ligoovskiys, though he can rarely make a confirmed deal there before he consults with everyone else back home.

ULITSA

This gang loves gadgets and guns. They are constantly on the lookout for high-tech gear to scavenge, or creating weird and wonderful gizmos from spare parts and bits of earlier, failed inventions. Sometimes they walk around looking like an explosion in a clock factory, but no one can deny that their home-made heat vision goggles and other gizmos can give them an edge in the dark of the tunnels. Their leader is the lateral thinking genius Angelika 'Zhar-ptitsa'—the Firebird—easily recognisable by her trademark bright red jacket.

THE COMMUNE

These descendants of the Shushary Commune hold solidarity as the greatest of virtues. Their leader, by consensus, is Ivan Makhno, an enthusiast for what he calls the 're-progress' of mankind—that is, rebuilding the Earth by recovering what is valuable from ancient times and using it as a basis for new progress while avoiding the mistakes of the past. The Commune's Resectors avidly seek out not only artefacts but information and archives from the city above, the better to build a complete picture of the history forgotten by both Whitestar and the colonial corporations.

LANDMARKS IN PETROPOL

The River Neva is a toxic stream of pollutants that has poisoned the life out of the surrounding land along its entire length. In some stretches, lurid yellow algae gathers and bubbles menacingly. In others, an acrid rust-coloured haze rises from the water's greasy surface and drifts with the wind, choking any living creature in its path. In yet others, it appears crystal clear and drinkable, which it is not. The river's ever-changing appearance gave rise to the old Petropol saying, "Whatever the colour, don't fall in."

In a great, high-vaulted cavern in Petropol's half of the intercity tunnels is the Assembly Line. This was once a gigantic high-tech automated factory, built and run by Bauhaus. It shut the factory down when it escaped from Earth, but left the machinery intact. The advanced technology in the factory systems were some of the few artefacts in Whitestar holdings to go haywire with the emergence of the Dark Symmetry. A brave team of technicians and soldiers took on the whirring malice of the assembly line robots to shut them off and rip out their internal electronics. Today, the Assembly Line is a public park, with slowly rusting robot arms where other parks have trees.

BELOKAMEN

Beneath the bleached and crumbling ruins of Moscow, the bright fluorescent lights and crisp concrete corridors of Belokamen, the City of White Stone, form the largest conurbation in Whitestar. The surface city is blighted by unusually severe acid storms that regularly blow in from the north-east. As far back as anyone can remember, the acid storms have been a monthly or more frequent event. These burning rains have killed off all the plant and animal life unable to

take shelter, and leached the colour from the landscape above, leaving only an ashen-hued ghost town.

The upper levels of Belokamen occupy the disused metro tunnels. There are few residents or businesses here—the metro belongs to the Militia and Resectors. The former have heavily fortified all access points to the surface to fend off the mutants of the wasted city outside, while the latter use the tunnels as a staging area for their scavenger raids.

Some of the stations are above ground, and when the acid storms blow in, the sentinels cannot stay up there on guard. What is worse, the acid eats through the surface structures and creates new holes in the metro ceilings. That is how mutants get into the tunnels. One of the most important of the Militia's ongoing tasks is to patrol the tunnels throughout Belokamen in search of mutants that have found their way into the Stronghold.

CULTURE

By the standards of a Whitestar Stronghold, Belokamen is an oasis of peace and security. Where Petropol is on the front lines of the struggle with the Sons of Rasputin, Belokamen is sufficiently distant and heavily defended that any threat seems far off indeed.

Belokamen is run on a seemingly constant series of plebiscites, with the option to vote on pretty much anything.

The people of Belokamen are famous for constantly holding votes on things. It seems no matter is too big or too small to hold a referendum on it, and polling stations are found at every tunnel intersection so that citizens can conveniently vote on the issues of the day.

During the nuclear winter people buried themselves deep below ground in huge numbers. Belokamen society developed in cramped conditions that only slowly improved as it excavated outwards, and cooperation, consensus, and conservation of resources were vital for survival. Today its culture is fastidious and punctual, by Whitestar standards. Standardised overalls are the most popular clothing—it is all they had in the old days and they got used to it.

The centre of Belokamen society is arguably the Grand Theatre. Constructed as a venue for the works of the great Russian playwrights, it is now a central meeting place and market. Market stalls are set up in between the few blocks of seating that remain. Open sessions of the ever-changing Citizen's Council are held on the stage, so that everyone can observe the proceedings. The Council is a body of twelve representatives who serve six-month terms, some of whom are appointed, some directly elected, and some co-opted on a biannual basis, in a series of elections and consultation processes bewildering in their complexity.

Equally confusing to outsiders is the byzantine array of committees, bureaus, departments, and offices that are Belokamen's administration. The Defence Force runs the Militia but is tasked only with external defence and hunting out mutant incursions. Patrolling the tunnels to maintain order falls within the extraordinarily broad remit of Housing Preservation & Development, more often called simply HPD, which is the largest of Belokamen's many government bodies. HPD not only oversees the Internal Stability Department, but all departments whose functions relate to the maintenance, hygiene, development, and construction of the Belokamen tunnels. The city's hydro farms and TV stations are the responsibility of the Bureau for Food & Entertainment, while the marketplaces and access to the city are run by the Department of Trade and Border Control. These are only a few of the many and varied levels of bureaucracy that Belokamen has to offer.

REFUGEES

As recently as one or two years ago, Belokamen had to fight for the crown of 'largest Whitestar city' with its unruly neighbour to the north-west. But the invasion of Petropol's western tunnels and the subsequent shift to a war footing there led to a wave of refugees along the intercity tunnels.

Almost a million displaced former residents of the Blue Line and its extension tunnels now reside in shelters in Belokamen. Over 200,000 are quartered along the Murmansk Drift, a tapped-out mining complex now converted for residential use. The quarters are cramped and provide few luxuries, but they are at least safe.

DEFENSIVE MEASURES

As well as its more conventional military resources, Belokamen has thousands of demolition points throughout its tunnels, ready to be detonated at a moment's notice as a terminal measure to keep out an invading force. That, at least, is the officially announced number—informed commentators have suggested that this number should be doubled or even tripled to provide a more accurate estimation.

Though every part of the city has junctions and tunnels rigged to blow, these defences are at their densest in the intercity tunnels. Near the transition zone that forms the ill-defined border between Belokamen and its twin city Petropol, and thus closest to the threat of an invasion by the Sons of Rasputin, every tunnel is inlaid with explosive charges ready to collapse it instantly on command. The practice of building in self-destruct mechanisms has become commonplace in Belokamen to the extent that as often as not the designer of a new tunnel extension or piece of public sculpture will also be the one entrusted with arranging to destroy it as quickly and efficiently as possible.

LANDMARKS IN BELOKAMEN

Above ground, the Cathedral of the Dormition remains a centre of worship and place of perilous pilgrimage for the faithful. The combined dangers of Belokamen's acid storms and mutant monsters means that worship is conducted in the cathedral only on high feast

days. On these occasions, provided there is no acid storm that day, the congregation proceeds from below ground, accompanied by holy icons and a heavily armed guard to keep back the mutants, and enters the Cathedral to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. The celebrant is usually Macarius XXI, the Metropolitan of Belokamen.

In the centre of the city, reaching from the metro level to four storeys below ground, the Okhotnyi Ryad Museum is housed in a huge subterranean structure built some time in the 20th or 21st century. It is not clear what purpose the ancestral people of the city intended this space for: at 29,000 square metres, it is far larger than was normal for underground constructions of the time. Archaeologists have suggested it served some religious function similar to the Mithraeum of ancient Mithras worshippers. Today, it houses one of Earth's most extensive collections, certainly the most assiduously catalogued, of artefacts and publications from before the nuclear winter. The pride of the collection is a near-mint condition Soyuz spacecraft from 1982.

URGAMAL

The centre of Whitestar's space industry and interplanetary dealings is located in Urgamal, a remote Stronghold in the Central Desert, conveniently equidistant between the major cities of Nova Zembla and Zlogora. More importantly, it is far away from the depredations of the Tribes, guarded by the armies of Whitestar to the east and west, and the impassable desert sands to the south. Nonetheless, it is guarded by the Tsarina's own armed forces rather than the regional Militia, for even here bandits and monsters lurk in the wilderness, and the Stronghold is a vital link to the off-world colonies.

The key component of that link is the Kosmograd Spaceport, where a dozen launchpads lie on the wide, flat Urgamal Plain, alternately baked by the sun and lashed by fierce sandstorms. The only structures of note here are the sparse metal frames of the launch gantries that support Whitestar's antiquated spacecraft as they are hoisted into launch position and primed for take-off. When the



Kosmograd Spaceport launches craft twelve times a day.

WELCOME HOME

THE TSARINA

Describe her. What did she look like?

Like a blurry angel! I mean, sir, at first it was hard to see. My eyes weren't accustomed to the light. Everything was a blur. I could only make out an outline of her.

Then how do you know that was the same person you saw later?

Her hair, sir. Golden yellow. I could make that out, even when all I could see were smudges of colour. She's a beauty, sir, if I may be so bold. It's no wonder the Whitestar people adore her. The pictures they carry—they don't do her justice. She's small, quite... dainty, I suppose you might say, but you can tell she's tough underneath. When she came back, I remember, she was looking at me and her face was real stern, eyes like ice. But when she saw I was awake, that I could see her, she smiled and, you know, I felt flooded with warmth. You know?

Yes, very touching. You realise those pictures are of the first Tsarina, don't you? A different person. A relative at best.

The Whitestars I talked to said she's the same one, sir. They was certain of it.

Yes, a somewhat fanciful notion. Did she speak to you?

She asked about my injuries. If I was comfortable. That sort of thing.

I see. And were you aware of the extent of your injuries at this time?

No, sir. I said I didn't know and she asked if I felt any pain. I didn't.

No, they were medicating you quite heavily. Did she question you on matters relating to our corporation or the Cartel?

No, sir.

Hmm. Let's go back to how you were wounded. There are some parts about which I'm still unclear.

As you wish, sir.

Yes, as I wish. Now. You touched down in Landing Zone 4 and disembarked with your squad. What happened next?

We proceeded on foot towards the south, and began to fortify a position overlooking the river. There was a wide plaza there, with a fallen pillar. Like a square pillar with triangles on top. We used it as a wall for one side of the emplacement. We encountered no hostiles at that time. All around us was fog. Heavy fog, thick like smoke, and you could feel it on your throat if you breathed it in without a mask. Visibility was down to maybe twenty metres.

Just as we were finishing up the emplacement, the fog started to glow weird colours. It took us a while to figure it out, but then we realised it was the sunset, glowing through the fog. That's when we started to hear... noises.

Describe these noises.

That's difficult, sir. They was screeches and moans like nothing I'd ever heard. I could be here hours thinking of words for it and not be able to get you to imagine it right, in your head.

That's all right. What happened next?

They came at us out of the fog, in waves. These creatures. Some of them looked human, like twisted versions of humans. Some of them were huge red giants, some of them had armoured skin like the Dark Legion things we've fought before, others the size of dogs, all teeth and claws. We opened fire en masse, sir. They died easy enough but more and more just kept coming, climbing over the bodies. It wasn't long before we was surrounded completely and they was at our throats. That's when I lost me leg, sir. I'd had to fight off one of the red brutes. Smashed it with the butt of my rifle, and in the moment I took a breath, my guard was down, and this... thing, like a scaly spider the size of a cat, head like a lizard, it just clamped onto me leg and chewed right through it in a second. I fell down. Lewis, my squad mate, he killed the thing that got me—but they was all around and pressing in on us. I thought I was dead meat for sure.

Then there was this rumbling all around. Like an earthquake? All of sudden these huge drills burst through from under the ground and these massive machines came up out from nowhere. Huge, they was. And doors opened on all sides and hundreds of infantry came pouring out. There were these absolute nutcases leaping ahead of the main body of their troops in ones and



WELCOME HOME

weather is clear, squat, blocky locomotives tow spacecraft from their underground hangars along creaking rails to their launchpads, processing twelve launches per day, one from each pad. After each take-off, the launch pad must be cleared of spilt fuel or other combustibles, and the gantry structure hammered back into shape.

For visitors arriving from off the planet, at least those with authorisation to land from the Whitestar authorities, this bleak prospect is their first view of Earth at ground level. But while Kosmograd may be merely a functional transit hub in the middle of a board, dusty plain, the Stronghold beneath is a vibrant hive of activity.

Constructed inside a wide, roughly circular cavern, the bustling city of Urgamal is the crossroads for all of Whitestar and the colony worlds beyond. Here among the steel mesh walkways and makeshift partition walls, merchants haggle with Wasteland trappers, off-world speculators, and Resectors returned from salvage expeditions in orbit or as far afield as the Asteroid Belt. Off-worlders come to find the exotic wares of a once closed-off world: the pelts of mutant predators, ancient artworks, or perhaps even contraband from the Zones of Corruption, if they can get a lead on who to trust. Would-be émigrés beg and cajole, sometimes for years, for a place on the next spaceship out—or for the money to procure the ticket.

While Urgamal is a self-governing Stronghold, its external security is handled directly by the Streltsy, who operate all external checkpoints and patrol the Stronghold for spies and mutants. Civilian issues such as crime and punishment are outside their purview, falling instead to the Urgamal Militia and Elders' Council. The Streltsy exercises exclusive authority over all part of Urgamal below Level 2. These lower levels are off-limits to all but the highest-clearance personnel, and their extent is unknown for certain, though it is an open secret that there is some kind of spacecraft assembly plant down there.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Urgamal has two levels open to the public—Level 1 is the first below ground, about five metres deep, and Level 2 sits below it. Urgamal is largely constructed from metal meshes and has many balconies and bridges on Level 1, which among other things means people on each floor can see into the other in many locations. Private residences are fitted with ceilings and floors made from wood, cardboard or metal sheeting to afford privacy.

The floor of Level 2 is concrete, so no one can see what happens below in the closely guarded Level 3, which is under the Streltsy's military jurisdiction. Just how far down Urgamal extends is not publicly known. It may be just one more level, or it could be several.

LEVEL 1

The closest level to the surface is full of the services for arriving space travellers, who enter from Kosmograd through one of four surface entrances.

SAINT HILARION'S CHURCH: An eye-catching landmark visible from almost everywhere in Urgamal's public levels, Saint Hilarion's Church sits on its own raised platform in the centre of Level 1, connected to the rest of the bunker by five foot bridges, their number symbolising the 5th of May, Saint Hilarion's feast day. Its walls are built from ancient car body panels of various colours, welded together to form a broad octagon that then slopes toward a point to form the church's roof. Urgamal's population has become somewhat too large for the church, and the morning Sunday liturgy is usually standing room only.

The parish priest is Father Kirill, a young cleric who took over the pastorship of the church only recently, after the death of his venerable predecessor and mentor, whose name was also Kirill. He is an enthusiastic young man and always particularly keen to chat with off-world visitors.

COMMON DORMITORY: This long vault-like room holds forty double bunks for temporary accommodation. The Stronghold is crowded at the best of times, and on days when a ship has landed, or if departing launches are delayed, travellers may be crammed into the dormitory room, sleeping cheek by jowl on the floor once all the beds are full. Beds are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

URGAMAL BAZAAR: Cramped, but overflowing with densely packed commerce, Urgamal's bazaar is a claustrophobic labyrinth of covered booths. Some are nondescript, others blaze with attractive colours to lure in passers-by. The booths are so tightly packed that it can be hard to tell where one merchant's domain ends and the next begins. All manner of items and services are traded here, under the motto "if I don't have it, I can get it for you". The most in-demand products are off-world luxuries to import to the Whitestar Stronghold, and unique Whitestar products to bring to Luna. Despite the Militia and Streltsy's best efforts, the ever shifting bazaar remains the centre of the trade in contraband Type 1 prototypes.

KOSMIK SUPPLIES GENERAL STORE: While the bazaar is heaven for hard-nosed traders with an eye for a bargain, if you just want to buy ordinary food and equipment with a minimum of hassle, you are better off heading for the general store operated by Maksim Denisov. The prices may be a little higher than you could get in the bazaar, but you will not spend an hour haggling over a couple of kopecks.

LUKAS SIMONOV'S RESIDENCE: This is the home of the town sheriff, Lukas Simonov. The sheriff's official business is handled at the Armoury, but as often as not he is to be found on his rocking chair out the front of his home, watching the comings and goings on Level 1's walkways.

ARKADY'S BAR: A watering hole of low repute, low prices, and dubious hygiene. Despite the squalor, weary travellers make a beeline for Arkady's as soon as they arrive in Urgamal, for a refreshing jolt of alcohol or other stimulants. The rooms behind the bar can be rented by the night or the hour.

PORT-MASTER'S OFFICE: This is where you have to go if you want to get off the planet. The port-master, Natascha Tereshkova, controls access to the spaceport above with exceptional diligence. If you do not have the right paperwork, you will not even get to see the launchpads, much less get near a spacecraft. You need a permit from here to get out through any of the surface exits.

LEVEL 2

Urgamal's lower public level is where the permanent residents of the Stronghold go about their daily lives. Travellers do not come down here so much, except to pass through to the road and rail tunnels that connect Urgamal to other Whitestar Strongholds.

WATER PROCESSING PLANT & REACTOR: It might not be ideal to have the reactor that generates the Stronghold's power right next to the water purification plant, but space was a premium when the Urgamal bunker was first being excavated. The water processing plant supplies not only potable drinking water for residents but also irrigates the hydro farms in adjoining tunnels. The reactor is a standard RTG electrical generator of the type once common in Bauhaus arcologies.

NIKOLAS AND ANGELIKA'S ROOMS: The home of Nikolas and Angelika Voronin, often visited by neighbours in need of sage advice.

LENA VELJKOVIĆ'S PLACE: The Resector Lena lives here but is often away on a scavenging expedition of one sort or another. When she is away, she lets other Resectors—including those she barely knows—stay at her place, which she considers part of being in the 'Resector family'.

GENNADY BALMER'S HOME: The mysterious traveller from the west who calls himself Genady Balmer rents a single-room shack from Nikolas and Angelika. He has made some improvements, welding shut the gaps between the edges of the corrugated iron walls and ceiling, boarding up the single window, and installing a heavy duty lock on the door.

CLINIC: This small medical facility, run by the stern but warm-hearted Doctor Bulgakov, serves the general Urgamal population and visitors to the Stronghold. Its equipment is basic but well maintained, and Bulgakov is a good doctor. He is sometimes able to arrange for serious cases to be taken to the military hospital on Level 3, if he can convince the Streltsy's commanding officer, Captain Renko, that a lack of treatment would be a threat to public health.

COUNCIL OFFICE: This small room is where the Stronghold government, elected by an annual plebiscite, meets to discuss matters of policy. Angelika Voronina is a council member, as is the bar owner Arkady. Sheriff Simonov sits on the council in an advisory, non-voting capacity.

The council does little in the way of policy making. It does not interfere with the running of the spaceport or the Streltsy's activities, and adopts a laissez-faire approach to the activities of Stronghold residents, provided that nothing seriously disturbs the peace. The most important decisions the council makes on a regular basis concern the allotment of residential space, food and water rationing, and equipping the Militia.

ARMOURY: This is the Militia headquarters, housing a dormitory for the Militia rank and file, the Militia administrative offices, a communications centre and a firing range. It also holds the armoury after which it is named, which contains a diverse collection of weapons and armour. This collection has been lovingly curated by the Militia over the years, who equip themselves not only with the general issue gear they receive from the Urgamal Council, but also those rare and interesting guns they confiscate from violent felons.

TRAKTIR KOSLOV: This rough-and-ready restaurant purveys hearty Whitestar cuisine of generally high quality. It is owned by husband and wife Maria and Ivan Koslov. They live in the back rooms of the restaurant, with their teenage daughter Oksana.

RAIL AND ROAD TUNNELS: This is where Urgamal connects to the rest of the Whitestar network. The railway ultimately connects with Zlogora, while the road tunnels stretch radiate northwards towards closer regional neighbours.

LEVEL 3

All sections of the Urgamal bunker below Level 2 are off-limits to civilians—a designation that in this case includes the Urgamal Militia too. Level 3 is the domain of the Streltsy regiments entrusted with the protection of Whitestar's crucial link to the colony worlds. It is the newest level of the bunker—construction of Level 3 and its facilities began around the same time as the emergence of the Dark Symmetry, which only magnifies the importance of the project in the eyes of the Tsarina.

A heavily guarded vehicle lift connects to Level 3 directly from the surface at Kosmograd, large enough to accommodate a single spacecraft or one of the road convoys that bring raw materials to the base.

STRELTSY BARRACKS: Two regiments of the Streltsy are stationed at Urgamal at all times. When not on duty they are largely confined to their subterranean barracks. This is a network of bland grey corridors with little diversion other than the mess hall and old, damp gymnasium. Competition for the few monthly 'shore leave' tickets that allow a break in Urgamal's public levels is, therefore, fierce.

As well as sleeping quarters, the Level 3 barracks contains a firing range, long-term food and equipment stores, a tunnel warfare training area known as 'the Mystery Cave', and a well-stocked arsenal of Whitestar's most powerful weaponry.

WELCOME HOME

SPACECRAFT CONSTRUCTION FACILITY: All the security around Kosmograd and Urgamal is to protect one thing—the secret factory that lies on Level 3, connected to the Streltsy barracks by four long, vast tunnels, each guarded by a hundred soldiers and sealed off by fifteen secure blast doors. Four more tunnels, each more than 200 metres in diameter, slope upward to join the exit roads from Urgamal’s Level 2. The exits to these tunnels have not yet been fully bored through and remain hidden from the public behind a dozen metres of earth and rock. When the time comes, the tunnels will be opened so that Whitestar’s battle fleet can be hauled through and launched within a matter of hours.

In a sense, the armada has been under construction for centuries, though those first produced have now become obsolete and have been cannibalized for parts to construct newer, more formidable designs. Because Whitestar cannot build its own spacecraft from scratch, and to purchase the parts would tip off the corporations as to the Tsarina’s plans, the factory here continues the Whitestar tradition of turning derelict machines into something new. Each and every ship in the Whitestar fleet is a mongrel creation cobbled together from two or more wrecked ships of the bygone ages.

Despite that wreck-born heritage, the factory mechanics, who number more than 500, have managed to salvage the best from the ancient spacecraft of Earth. They also incorporate more advanced technology salvaged by Resectors who have travelled into orbit to pillage the derelict craft of the paralysed fleet left floating in space after the corporations’ failed invasion when the Tsarina of the White Star first made herself known to the solar system.

At present, approximately a hundred warships of varying sizes and configurations have been completed. The completed craft sit waiting in **the Hangar**, a gigantic natural cavern, undergoing periodic maintenance checks to ensure they will be ready when needed. The work of construction takes place in **the Factory**, an equally huge but manmade cavern equipped with a dazzling array of unique, custom-built manufacturing devices.

PEOPLE

LENA VELJKOVIĆ: This young woman is a Resector and Wastelands guide for hire. She has lived in Urgamal for a year or so, hailing originally from a small Stronghold two weeks’ journey to the north. She has not heard from her family in several weeks and is beginning to get worried.

NIKOLAS AND ANGELIKA VORONIN: Two oldtimers, fixtures of the town who formerly ran an extensive trade network. They are good contacts for anyone in the market for Type 1 artefacts. Nikolas is a Sons of Rasputin sympathiser and will subtly try to get travellers who have come from the western regions to tell him what they know about the group’s activities.

ARKADY: The eponymous owner-operator of Arkady’s Bar is a tall, red-bearded man in his early fifties. He inherited the bar from his father, who was killed in a brawl over an unpaid bill when Arkady was just fourteen years old.

GENNADY BALMER: A pale fellow with a long, drooping black moustache and a Nova Zembla accent, more or less. He says he is a travelling merchant, but he rarely buys or sells anything. Instead, he hangs around the bazaar and the bar, listening for rumours and trying to make friends with Streltsy personnel. He is a spy for the Sons of Rasputin. He knows Nikola is interested in his group, but he has not made himself known to the old man, for fear of having his cover blown. What he really wants to find out about is the Whitestar space programme.

CAPTAIN TATYANA RENKO: She commands the Streltsy garrison at Urgamal and is responsible for protecting not only the spaceport and the city beneath it, but also the secrecy of the work that goes on in Level 3 on the nascent Whitestar space armada. Renko rarely goes to the public levels or the surface of the Stronghold—if you see her out in public, it means something has gone dangerously wrong somewhere in Urgamal.

KOSMOGRAD

Whitestar’s principal and, as far as anyone knows, only spaceport is an unprepossessing array of wide, cracked launchpads in a flat, dusty landscape. The dozen pads at Kosmograd could handle up to thirty six launches or landings per day, but in practice two ships in twenty four hours is a busy day here. Spacecraft are hauled by heavy cargo trains to and from the pads on rusting heavy-gauge rails that connect to concealed underground hangars.

One thing Kosmograd does have going for it is a mild climate, by Whitestar standards. It is cool, if not warm, all year round, and while stinging dust storms frequently blow in from the Central Desert, it is not affected by the acid storms that make life elsewhere on Earth so precarious. It is also close to the equator, making it an ideal site for space launches.

NOVOZVEZDA

Unlike the vast majority of Whitestar Strongholds, which sit ensconced beneath the ground for protection, Novozvezda perches upon the rooftops. What was once one of the largest cities in Bauhaus now clings to the upper floors of its core skyscrapers and the rooftops of apartment buildings, while mutant predators roam the ground at street level, too ferocious and numerous to combat for more than a short time. Narrow walkways span the chasms between the rooftops, and gliders flit from one building to another, enabling the city’s people to get around without setting foot on the ground.

Novozvezda is legendary for its bitterly cold climate. Even before the nuclear winter and the deadly climatic changes that ravaged Earth in the wake of the corporate civil wars, Novozvezda—then called Novosibirsk—was the coldest major city on the planet. Today it is a city of constant winter, with freezing rains, snowstorms, and hail all year round. The people of the city are, at least, able to take advantage of the ice that forms on the windows and ledges of their skyscrapers homes, chipping it off to boil and use as fresh water.

THE CORE

The human population of Novozvezda dwells almost exclusively in the Core. This part of the city was the central business district during the Bauhaus era, and consists of hundreds of towering office and residential blocks, each dozens of storeys tall. The greatest of these is the Pinnacle, the 150-floor palace of glass and steel built centuries ago by the wealthy Kuznetsov family as a place of business and leisure—and above all as a monument to the family's wealth and power. Not a single pane of the original blue mirrored glass remains unbroken, but the building is still lived in. On the top twenty floors, Baron Chyu and his court occupy the heart of the Novozvezda Stronghold. On the bottom few floors, the monstrous mutant creatures called *noch'volki* nest in the hundreds.

The Baron is a veteran warrior, one of the Tsarina's staunchest allies east of the Urals. He holds the rank of Commander in the Streltsy, though he is only called up to lead a regiment in the times of direst need, as his responsibilities at home are already demanding enough.

LOCAL MILITARY

The Novozvezda Militia is a force of 5000 hardened full-time troops, with every able-bodied adult in Novozvezda standing ready in reserve. The Militia's training is focused on lightning raids to the ground levels—the troops' most common mission is to swoop down from the rooftops to establish a beachhead, where they can temporarily hold back the swarming packs of *noch'volki* and other monsters of the city. The most common reason for this is to secure a shipment of goods coming into the city from elsewhere in Whitestar territory. Because all the Novozvezda dwellings are located far above ground level, the Stronghold's connection to the Whitestar rail and tunnel network is tenuous. The nearest freight station is fifty kilometres from the Pinnacle: a short distance, but a journey fraught with peril for the crews of the trucks that must drive it.

The New Star Night Witches are the locally stationed unit of the Streltsy. Their presence is vital to the survival of the Stronghold, as their jetwings are the only vehicles able to quickly go to and from Novozvezda to scout out incoming threats from the Sons of Rasputin to the north, to bring firepower to bear on Resector missions at ground level, or simply to travel to neighbouring Strongholds. Their leader is Irina Sadovaya, a young commander with a chip on her shoulder about being given what she perceives as a backwater assignment. She clashes frequently with Baron Chyu, whom she sees as past it.

NOVOZVEZDA GLIDER

The most common personal vehicle is a small unpowered glider, used to get from one rooftop to another within the Core district. Light and unarmed, these fragile aircraft can accommodate a pilot and one passenger with luggage, or one more if you do not need to gain any altitude. These craft are not suitable for trips to the Circles, as they can rarely gain enough height to get back up to the level of the buildings in the Core.

Piloting these craft is simple but landing them is not—the landing areas on top of the Core buildings are short, and the air currents that eddy about them are gusty and unpredictable. A Novozvezda teenager's first solo flight is considered a rite of passage.

NOVOZVEZDA GLIDER

RESTRICTION: 2 **COST: 15**
MAINTENANCE: 2 **RELIABILITY: 3**

QUALITIES	Agile, Aircraft (Glider), Exposed			
CRUISING SPEED	60 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	2	
CREW	1 pilot	CARRYING CAPACITY	1 Passenger 20 encumbrance	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	3	4	3	1
MOTIVE SYSTEM	1	4	3	1
IMPACT DAMAGE	1+†4			
ARMAMENTS	None			
NOTES	<p><i>Glider: A glider is an unpowered machine that is simple to operate, but notoriously difficult to land accurately. Increase the Repercussion range by one for Pilot tests made to land the glider on target. Repercussion may be further increased by one for each Dark Symmetry point spent, to a maximum of two Dark Symmetry points and three Repercussion. This represents wind and environmental factors affecting the landing (such as those of the rooftop landing zones of Novozvezda).</i></p>			

SCAVENGING IN THE CIRCLES

As one of Bauhaus's major population centres before the civil wars, the streets and buildings of Novozvezda are a paradise for Resectors. Or at least they would be if it was not for all the monsters. The once-gleaming towers of the Core district have been all but cleared out of useful artefacts and supplies after decades of salvage operations. Now anyone looking for items of value must venture out to the much riskier Circles. These suburbs encircle the Core, as the name suggests, stretching for over a hundred kilometres in

every direction. Few of the buildings in the Circles exceed six storeys, since the abundant empty space at the time they were constructed meant there was no particular incentive to build upwards. What it means for scavengers is that the mutant animals of the Circles are much more likely to detect their presence, and not even the top floor of a building is safe. Resectors in the Core refer to 'skimming' buildings—breaking in through a roof access door or skylight and taking the easy pickings on the upper floors where the *noch'volki* and other beasts never go. But such a casual approach can be a recipe for an early grave in the Circles, where the mutants are everywhere, sometimes even nesting in rooftop water tanks.

Below the streets of Novozvezda is the old metro system. Many people, including Baron Chyu, would like to extend the Stronghold into the old tunnel system, in order to link up with the rest of the Whitestar network. So far, none of the exploratory Militia expeditions has returned with useful data. Only a scant few survivors, bloodied and maddened with fear, speaking of hideous insectoid creatures, came back from any of the half-dozen missions. Each one died soon afterwards from massive radiation poisoning, the victims of rad dosages far beyond anything surface detectors can explain.

THREATS TO THE NORTH

For all that the packs of savage mutant creatures in the streets of Novozvezda are a danger, they also afford the city much-needed protection from the warlike rebels who call themselves the Sons of Rasputin. The local warlord of the Sons is one Svetlana Kraeva, who established a powerful military presence in the plains to the north a little over a year ago. Dissuaded from a direct southward strike on Novozvezda by the wild beasts that throng the area, Kraeva elected to sit tight in the ancient military bunker that is now her fortress, suffering sporadic raids by the Night Witches while she builds up a riverine assault force to enter the city by water. Obtaining supplies and watercraft was a slow process, but Kraeva's river fleet is now almost ready.



VOSTMOR: GATEWAY TO THE OCEANS

Vostmor sits on the shore toward the far east of Whitestar territory. Once a bustling port city, all that remains of its proud maritime history is a coastal community numbering fewer than 20,000, built in the shell of the city's old naval dockyards. Vostmor is buffeted by ocean storms in the summer and covered in snow during the winter, though the harbour is ice-free all year round. On winter nights, temperatures drop below -20°C , while summers are warm and humid, around 15 to 20°C .

Fully a quarter of Vostmor's population live in Varyag City, a settlement built on top of the huge suspension bridge that spans Vostmor Harbour. Its twenty decks rise from the road surface of the bridge to the tops of its support pillars. Half submerged in the water beneath the bridge lies the wrecked assault carrier ship Varyag II. Though still heavily armed and armoured, the ship's propulsion units were destroyed long ago, so that it is now a stationary fortress guarding the entrance to the bay and the headquarters of the Vostmor Militia. Its nuclear reactors are still operational, providing light and power to the city on the bridge above.

Varyag City can be reached by road from either end of the Vostmor Bridge, or via a narrow footbridge from the old cruise ship terminal, which is the closest entrance to the Stronghold's military rail depot, its connection to the hinterland. The footbridge is narrow and rickety, making it a difficult crossing when the winter storms are blowing in from the sea. A small guard post is maintained on the shore side, though it is not heavily protected, as its exposed position makes it too difficult to defend. Visitors must identify themselves here before they are allowed to proceed across the bridge, and this is itself only a precursor to a more thorough interrogation as to their reasons for visiting when they reach the main bridge.

Every deck of the bridge settlement is patrolled day and night by the Varyag City Militia. They usually admit travellers provided that they are not known enemies of the city and do not appear to be mutants, though they watch them closely once they are inside.

Heavy goods must be brought in by boat. The city has cargo derricks on all sides that are used to haul freight up and down for trading. Smugglers wait until nightfall to use the derricks in little-frequented parts of the city to sneak in goods without paying the import duty levied by the city council, or to get items on board that are banned, such as unregistered artefacts from the Zones of Corruption. Because the punishment for smuggling is lifetime exile from Varyag City, only high-value items are sufficient to make the smugglers take the risk.

The city has a thriving Market Deck and is the centre of trade for the eastern Whitestar region. The city's inhabitants trade weaponry, services and manufactured goods with the hydroponic farmers of the surrounding countryside and with the Resectors who scavenge further afield in the Wastelands.

NOTABLE ESTABLISHMENTS ON THE MARKET DECK

"Tracer's" is the premier place to buy weapons and ammunition in all of Vostmor. The store is owned and operated by the grizzled ex-bandit Tracer, who moved to Varyag City and set up in the market almost a decade ago, having parted company on bad terms with the Wasteland raider band he commanded. Tracer has extensive contacts in the Vostmor area and as far afield as Zlogora and Urgamal—like the traders of Urgamal, his promise is "If I don't have what you want, I can get it!" The price goes up if it turns out to be hard to get.

Varyag City General Trading is a cornucopia of foodstuffs, tools and equipment, home decor, clothing, and more. Sitting under a huge marquee in shades of red and purple, and occupying the width of the Market Deck's aft end, it is a market within the market. The owner, Lady Hannah, rents out stalls within the bazaar to traders she deems trustworthy, and sells herbs and spices from her own stall. The other traders at the bazaar pay Lady Hannah a percentage of their takings in return for her seal of approval and the protection of her security guards.

The Lion of the East is a celebrated restaurant and tavern, taking the bounty of the underground farms that stretch inland from Vostmor to create gastronomic delights of the highest calibre. By the standards of Whitestar dining, the menu is astonishingly expensive—but gourmets travel from far and wide, and even from the colonial worlds now that travel to Earth has been reopened, just to dine here. The proprietor and head chef is the talented, eccentric Igor Kominsky.

Narko Express sells a wide range of drugs, for both recreational and medicinal purposes. The owner, Anna Stesia, has a reputation for selling fair weights and not cutting her product with anything too awful, which is why people keep coming back. It is rumoured she has a handle on some really hard-to-get stuff, including the combat drugs Nameless deserters need to keep their systems from shutting down.

Sharp Threads is a bespoke tailoring service, able to provide customers with everything from the latest fashions to customised Wasteland survival gear. The only proviso is that the customer must bring in the raw fabrics and materials themselves, as supplies are hard to get on this planet.

ELSEWHERE IN VARYAG CITY

The Vostmor Museum is on the Palace Deck, where the government offices are situated. It contains a wealth of information on the history of the Whitestar homeland and showcases many items recovered by the Vostmor Stronghold's brave Resectors, including a 15th century copy of the Russkaya Pravda judicial code, and the so-called 'Danish Egg', a jewelled and enamelled trinket of immense value, created for Tsar Nicholas II in 1903.

Fans of strong alcoholic drinks will enjoy the Vodkopia, a bar that claims to have the widest selection of vodka anywhere in the human worlds. And with a vodka menu running to over 200 options, the owners' claims may very well be true. A large wooden carousel sits behind the circular bar, constantly turning, from which the staff pluck out the various bottles as the thirsty patrons call out their orders. The Vodkopia is on the Entertainment Deck, along with dozens of other bars, eateries and music halls.

The Church of Saint Juvenaly sits at the northernmost edge of Level 12, a largely residential level directly above the Market Deck,

and is the largest church in Vostmor. It is built from solid concrete, ornately carved with scenes from the lives of the saints. Inside, its high arching ceiling is painted with colourful geometric patterns throughout.

Another ecclesiastical site of note is the Shrine of Saint Raphael of Brooklyn. This small chapel sits at the very top of one of the bridge's suspension towers, buffeted by the fierce winds that blow in from the north and east. It was built and is maintained by the hermit Yevgeny of the Wastes, a *yurodivy* or 'holy fool' who wandered in from the wilderness one day in a blinding snowstorm and took up residence on the tower. He assembled the chapel from leftover pallets and other oddments, which have now lasted over ten years and proved to be a sturdy structure. Yevgeny is reputed as a wonderworker, and his little chapel has become a place of pilgrimage for those brave and strong enough to make the perilous climb to the top of the bridge. Several pilgrims have lost their lives on this climb. One who made it all the way up was David Stakhanov, the owner of Sharp Threads on the Market Deck. He brought with him an icon of Saint Raphael, which he donated to the hermit, turning his shack into a shrine.

VARYAG II

Commissioned shortly before the great exodus from Earth, the *Varyag II* was intended to be the centrepiece of the Bauhaus Pacific Fleet. At the time it was laid down, the *Varyag II* was the largest warship on planet Earth, over half a kilometre in length, with a crew complement of 5000 and powered by four nuclear reactors, giving it unlimited range over a period of twenty to twenty five years.

The events of the corporate wars and subsequent abandonment of Earth ensured that the *Varyag II* never took up its position as the Bauhaus flagship in the Pacific. In the chaos of the corporations' withdrawal, a group of proto-Whitestar partisans seized control of the bridge and attempted to take the just-completed ship out to sea. Rather than see his prized flagship in the hands of anyone else, even though he intended to be in orbit within a matter of hours, Vostmor's regional defence commander Anatole Schultz activated a remote failsafe device that crippled the ship's engines. The white-hot plasma from the self-destruct device melted through the ship's hull, sending it to the bottom of the bay—but at that time the harbour mouth was littered with sandbanks and accumulated debris, making the water shallow enough that the upper decks of the *Varyag II* remain above water.

WELCOME HOME

BEYOND VARYAG CITY

The burnt-out remains of the pre-exodus city of Vostmor lie at the north end of the bridge. This was a bountiful hunting ground for Resectors back in the Dark Symmetry era but now offers slim pickings at best. Nonetheless, Resectors continue to visit in small numbers thanks to rumours of a hidden Bauhaus research lab, bank vault, luxury nuclear bunker, or whatever other treasure features in the particular version of the story they heard.

A number of small farmsteads dot the landscape on either shore of Vostmor Harbour, each inhabited by a single extended family. They are able to produce enough food to sustain themselves and still have a little left over for trade on the bridge. These settlements are menaced by a large encampment of blood giants a day's journey to the west. For the most part, the blood giants content themselves with eating wild animals and preying on travellers passing through their immediate area. But when they are hungry, particularly in the winter, they will range eastwards to try and pillage the farms of western Vostmor.

GORKY BASE AND THE AVANTYURA

To the south of the bridge is the old Gorky Naval Base, once the home of a powerful ocean-going fleet. During the Dark Symmetry era, this area was inhabited by a well-organised group of bandits who called themselves the Vostok Nation and vociferously opposed Whitestar hegemony. They engaged in a low-intensity brushfire war with Vostmor forces for over a decade. Eventually, the ammunition and food supplies stored in the bunkers beneath the base began to run low, and Whitestar was able to overrun the facility. Most of the survivors surrendered to Whitestar and became citizens or were shipped off as Nameless. Some preferred death to surrender. Around 200, including women and children, made their escape to sea, setting sail to the south in the battle cruiser *Nikopol*, the restoration of which had been their project for years. Their ultimate fate remains a mystery.

Today, the base is the location of another naval restoration. The *Avantyura* is the first of a planned fleet of exploration ships that will set out across the seas to rediscover the world, from the irradiated shores of China to the great dead cities of the Americas and beyond.

Four hundred years ago, the *Avantyura* was a prototype attack sub, designed to be part of a new generation of long-range patrol and assault craft, swifter and more deadly than anything ever seen before beneath the waves. Now it is a design vastly outdated by corporate standards, capable of barely half the speed it was originally designed to go, but set to be the fresh face of Whitestar's fleet of rediscovery nonetheless.

Thanks to its internal nuclear reactor, which Whitestar technicians have only recently managed to get hooked up and powering all the necessary systems, the vessel can run for twenty five years before

it needs to be refuelled, meaning the submarine need only surface to replenish its air tanks and food supplies. The *Avantyura* is in the process of being kitted out with all the equipment necessary for its exploratory mission: everything from nuclear torpedoes to dry rations, radiation suits for shore missions, a database loaded with almost everything Whitestar knows about its target destinations, and backups for everything.

Even the reactor has a backup, an internal combustion engine that will run on any type of ethanol, it is hard to imagine what could possibly happen to a machine as robust as the reactor system. In fact, the internal combustion motor does have one advantage—it can be turned off in order to run silently and avoid detection from ships on the surface or other submarines, not that there are any other submarines on Earth any more. The nuclear reactor, in contrast, is always on and making noise, though it does not need to provide oxygen to the motor and so can operate at any depth down to 750 metres below the surface. If the crew were to turn the reactor off, they would have to use the ethanol engine and stay on or just below the surface, or use the short-range electrical batteries if they wanted to manoeuvre below ten metres.

The commander of the *Avantyura*, now fretfully waiting for his vessel to be ready, is Kapitan of the Fleet Yakov Timonovich Tserkov, a dashing, bold officer who is known for tactical brilliance but has a serious problem respecting the chain of command. He was deemed an ideal captain for the first rediscovery mission, as the sub would be far from home, making Tserkov's ability to think on his feet invaluable and keeping him well away from the Streltsy's top brass.

His second in command is the straitlaced Senior Lieutenant of the Fleet Leona Spitsa, who is both a decorated Streltsy officer and a respected member of Whitestar's scientific community. She specialises in geology but has a formidable amateur interest in a broad range of studies, including anthropology, history, physics, and botany. A formidable intellect, her command of those subjects in which she merely dabbles would be for most people the product of years in academia. She and Tserkov have a good working relationship, though she does not get many of his jokes.

Lieutenant of the Fleet Marat Semyonov is the chief engineer and oversees the power system and damage control. He is fiercely protective of the submariners under his command, and ferociously pessimistic when asked to predict the possible outcomes of any decision.

The *Avantyura* carries an array of powerful weaponry, including twelve *Ragnarok*-class tactical nuclear missiles, and cruises at twenty knots on the surface. Its projected crew complement is forty five, though it can be functionally manoeuvred with a skeleton crew of as few as four in the short term.

THE ICON

BACKGROUND

Bishop Artyom is the Metropolitan of the Moon. He resides and presides at Saint Barbara's Cathedral, adjacent to the Whitestar embassy, and cares for the spiritual and pastoral needs of the Whitestar community on the moon. A gregarious fellow, he has become a familiar face around the city and something of an unofficial ambassador for the White Star, attending public functions and participating in community activities. He is on good terms with many members of the Brotherhood, with whom he enjoys both cordial relations and theological discussions. A keen amateur historian, Bishop Artyom was delighted when he was given access to some of the Brotherhood's vast libraries—and it was here that he discovered the last known whereabouts of the Sergiyev Icon, a holy painting lost at the time of the great planetary exodus. The records indicate that the icon was sealed in a vault in the Bauhaus factory city of Wiolant-252.

Bishop Artyom has great fondness for Saint Gregory the Theologian, the subject of the Sergiyev Icon, and was at once enraptured by the possibility of finding it and bringing it to Luna, to give as a gift to the Cardinal as a token of friendship between Whitestar and the colonies, and ecumenism between the Church and the Brotherhood.



PRELUDE: THE METROPOLITAN OF THE MOON

This section happens before the game begins—so you do not actually play it through, but you can refer to it or flash back to it later on as the adventure progresses.

In the Prelude, at least one of the Player Characters meets Whitestar's most senior clergyman on Luna, Bishop Artyom, and agrees to travel to Earth to recover an ancient icon of Saint Gregory the Theologian. He explains how he discovered the whereabouts of the icon, that he has arranged with his Brotherhood and Cartel contacts to send a group of investigators to find it, and his plans for it once recovered. He has secured funding to pay each character's travel expenses plus one asset upon their return, either with the icon or having located it for later recovery.

BISHOP ARTYOM, METROPOLITAN OF THE MOON

Bishop Artyom of Luna is the spiritual shepherd of the Luna Dom flock. His wizened features and compassionate eyes allude to wisdom earned through hardship and trial, whilst his avuncular and cheerful disposition make it a difficult task to not like the old fellow. Many have learned to their detriment, however, that a keen intellect and uncompromising will hide behind the kindly smile; the Bishop can be ruthless in achieving the results that are most beneficial to Whitestar.

Ordained in YC1236, he served as a Streltsy chaplain for ten years, before undertaking missionary work with the tribes of the Central Desert. In YC1283 he was called on by the church to become the Bishop of Luna. He has devoted himself to the post and forged a strong, positive relationship between Whitestar and the Brotherhood.

BISHOP ARTYOM, METROPOLITAN OF THE MOON ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	9	7	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	12	12	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	2	1	–	–	2	2	4	3	1	–

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: **Interwoven Ceremonial Vestments and Mitre:** (All 1)

ATTACKS:

◀▶ **Pósokh (melee):** 1+↑4, 2H, Knockdown, Parry 1, Pious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◀▶ **Heed the Word:** Bishop Artyom has achieved his current position due to his endearing personality, unwavering faith, masterful oratory, and iron determination to never concede in the face of adversity or conflict. He gains an additional d20 when attempting a Persuade or Command test, with each successful Persuade test yielding an additional point of Momentum. Additionally, he reduces the difficulty of all Command tests by one, which may eliminate the need for a test. Finally, he may re-roll one d20 when making a Willpower test, but must accept the new result.

- ◆ **Tribal Induction:** Life amongst the tribes of the Wastelands has hardened Artyom's constitution. He may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, when he needs to make a Resistance test against a poison, toxin, or to resist the effects of alcohol or other drugs, he may reduce the difficulty of the test by one step, which may eliminate the need for a test.

ACT 1: THE CROSSING

The adventure begins as the space transport *Joensen* thunders free of the moon's gravity well. The last glimpse of the moon's surface is a thin sliver of white seen retreating through a shuddering porthole. The pulsating roar of the rocket engines seems to go on for an eternity and then, with a surge of power, they deactivate, and an eerie stillness pervades the cabin. On either side, derelict hulks of spacecraft float alongside tumbling flotsam and jetsam in the inky blackness of space. At the very cusp of vision, an ancient satellite takes its last arcing fall from orbit and flares orange as it burns up in the atmosphere of the *Joensen's* destination, which looms huge and luminous ahead: Earth.

The passengers are the delegation travelling to Earth to recover a holy icon on behalf of Bishop Artyom of Luna. The Player characters are among them.

How did they get involved in this? Some possible answers:

- ◆ They are Whitestar military or diplomatic personnel handling liaison duties for the mission.
- ◆ They are personal acquaintances of Bishop Artyom, going on the mission as a favour. How did they meet the Bishop?
- ◆ They have been sent by the Brotherhood, the Cartel, or a corporation to show willingness to assist their shared cause—and to keep an eye on the other factions.
- ◆ Bishop Artyom or one of the corporations has hired them as a freelancer for their much-needed skills.
- ◆ If they work for Luna PD, they may have been selected as a reliable but relatively neutral party without strong ties to any of the corporations.

Characters travelling on behalf of a corporation, the Brotherhood, or the Cartel will have been told in no uncertain terms that their expedition serves a much more important symbolic role than anything else. Their true mission is a diplomatic one—they have to win over Whitestar and show that the colony dwellers are trustworthy and capable. The Whitestar leader, the Tsarina, has taken a personal interest in the expedition and will be monitoring their progress.

The trip to the Earth, which will take the better part of a day, is the characters' chance to meet one another if they have not previously done so. It is also the time to meet Mikhail Ostrov, the expedition guide for the duration of their visit to the Whitestar territories. He is there to act as a fixer and intermediary where necessary, and to some degree to keep them out of trouble. Player characters accustomed to the control freaks who run security for the corporations may be surprised to find out how long a leash they are on while on Earth. Mikhail has not been given responsibility for controlling the visitors or spying on their activities, though he will warn them off particularly disruptive or destructive courses of action, especially when they are in the confines of a Stronghold. His normal job is being a tour guide for leisure travellers from Zlogora visiting Nova Zembla and vice versa, and that is pretty much how he tackles his current assignment—he is keen to show the characters the sights of Whitestar, and will do his best to make sure they have a good time.

The scenes that follow provide an outline for what the player characters will encounter if they stick the plan—if they go off track, well, you have a book full of Whitestar stuff for them to go and mess with right here.

Mikhail makes his way aft from the cockpit around ten minutes after take-off, just as the player characters are settling into the journey and getting a bit bored. He introduces himself and outlines the first steps of the trip:

"We will land at Kosmograd, the great spaceport. There is a city there, with a famous market, which I am sure you will enjoy! After that we'll head to a little bunker town called Nikuda. It's the nearest stronghold to what is left of the Bauhaus city where the icon is. They'll be able to give more information and an overland guide to get to the vault."

MIKHAIL OSTROV, WHITESTAR ENVOY

Hailing from Petropol, Mikhail is the sort of person that always has a sunny disposition, despite any of the trials or misfortune life may throw at him. He trod a line that took him very close to becoming a freeloader at one point, but strings were pulled due to his father's presence on the Ligoyskiy Council of Elders; somewhat predictably, only this flamboyant clan could create a position for a tourist guide in a city that is besieged.

Mikhail fell under the scrutiny of Artyom when he hosted the Bishop during the Metropolitan's visit to the Church of the Herald of Rebirth in Petropol. Artyom took the itinerant youth under his wing in order to instill a sense of responsibility in him; a task that has so far proven both fruitless and exasperating. He is a likeable young man, despite his failings, and fairly competent at his job when focussed and sober.

"That deserves a toast my friend! More vodka!"

MIKHAIL OSTROV, WHITESTAR ENVOY ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	8	8	7
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	6	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	2	2	2	1

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Reinforced Whitestar Jumpsuit: (Torso 1, Arms 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Pistolet Gyutka (ranged):** 1+^T3, Close, Semi-Automatic, Close Quarters, Hidden 1, Perishable

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Appointed Guide:** Bishop Artyom has ensured that Mikhail has undertaken some study of Whitestar's territories beyond the walls of Petropol, though it has been a frustrating task due to Mikhail's slipshod attitude to life. He may immediately roll an additional d20 on any Education test that generates at least one success. Additionally, he reduces the difficulty by one step on any Education test that deals with a familiarity of events within the past twenty years, which may eliminate the need for the test.

ACT 2: URGAMAL

The view through the portholes blazes red hot as the *Joensen* enters Earth's atmosphere. When the flames die down, the player characters should have a commanding panorama of the world below—but there is nothing to see, because the view is obscured by sickly, roiling clouds of toxic swirling purples and browns that blanket the landscape as far as the eye can see. The ship plunges into the towering clouds—any character in the cockpit will see that the pilots are now relying on only a single beacon signal that flickers in and out of contact. Strange scraping sounds rasp along the length of the hull, though the ship's sensor indicate no contact with anything solid.

The *Joensen* emerges from the clouds a mere 200 metres up. Its passengers get a glimpse of cracked landing pads and listing, corroded launch pylons in a vast and desolate desert—before the dust from their landing obscures the view once again. "Welcome to Kosmograd!" says Mikhail as they settle on Pad 4.

A fierce, biting cold wind is blowing across the spaceport as the group disembarks, whipping up the desert sands into a

stinging torrent that requires an **Average D1 Resistance test** to avoid becoming Dazed. A clanking diesel train waits to ferry the new arrivals to the low concrete dome that houses the border control station.

A successful **Average D1 Persuade test** prevents a player character from somehow ticking off the stony-faced border guards inside the dome—allow the player to describe the details of their *faux pas*. Anyone who fails is targeted for extra luggage searching or some intrusive questions. Pointedly note down the names of any player character who makes a poor first impression. Remember that a Dazed character will be rolling at **Challenging D2**.

This test does not actually affect future Whitestar/off-world relations, but is a reminder for the players what is going on here. From now on, keep a tally of each time the off-world player characters do something you think makes them look competent, honourable, or generally like good guys from the Whitestar point of view. Equally, put a mark in the 'bad' column each time they embarrass themselves, behave badly, or act like idiots.

Mikhail then leads the group into the upper level of Urgamal. He explains that this is the last place where they will be reliably able to buy things using their off-world money, so if there is anything they feel sure they should bring, they had better look for it here. The players are free to explore the city for as long as they see fit, obtain any provisions for their journey they may require, meet the locals, and more than likely get into scrapes—see **Chapter 09: Welcome Home** for information on Urgamal, its people, and the places they can encounter.

When the player characters are ready to leave, Mikhail meets them at a Streltsy garage on Level 2, where a hulking, patched-together flatbed truck waits to take them through a web of airy, concrete-lined tunnels to the military railhead at Kosmograd Junction, five kilometres east of Urgamal.

LANGUAGE ISSUES

You will probably make it through the whole adventure without this coming up, but if someone does ask exactly how they are communicating with the locals, Urgamal is the last place they will find many people who speak the Luna patois. From here on out, it is Russo-Mandarin all the way.

If no one asks, ignore this and just let everyone talk to each other without impediment.



THE ICON

ACT 3: THE TRAIN

Awaiting the visitors at Kosmograd Junction is a magnificent sight—the *Almazy Vechny*, one of Whitestar’s powerful armoured trains, is a sister vehicle to the Tsarina’s personal mobile fortress, although it lacks the distinctive railgun turret of her sibling. Twelve carriages long, immensely armoured, and bristling with defensive weaponry, the *Almazy Vechny* is a fighting platform that the Streltsy use as a mobile headquarters for its teams of roving troubleshooters.

This is the visitors’ assigned transport to Nikuda, which is an honour. Mikhail gasps when he sees it.

BANDIT ATTACK

The journey to Nikuda takes a little over a day. The first twelve hours are spent underground, and involve numerous diversions from the most direct route—unseen to the passengers—in order to keep the corporate expedition from being able to deduce the location of Nikuda. (**D2 Awareness/Observation test** to pick up that the crew is getting directions to which it is unaccustomed; the difficulty is reduced to D1 if the character speaks Russo-Mandarin.)

When the train emerges above ground, the landscape outside is difficult to see—the *Almazy Vechny* has armoured viewslits rather than windows through which to take in the view. What the player characters can make out is a twisted, poisoned, shattered land of crumbling ancient towns, abandoned vehicles and stunted, malformed vegetation. From time to time some half-glimpsed, unfamiliar animal lopes from one hiding place to another. The map of the *Zoloty Glaz* on “Zoloty Glaz Map” on page 10-11 can be used for subsequent events, though the front and rearmost carriages of the *Almazy Vechny* are used to deploy the rapid response vehicles of the 1st Tamanskaya, which means that they are different in construction to those of the *Zoloty Glaz* due to them being more like large vehicle hangars.

The train must travel for six hours above ground before it re-enters the Whitestar tunnel system. During this time, it is the target of a bandit attack. At around hour eighteen of the journey, red lights and alarm klaxons go off, and the train starts to slow. There is, as any crew member who is asked can hurriedly tell the players, an obstruction on the track.

The *Almazy Vechny* scout cars are launched to investigate the obstacle. It is a crude barricade, easily disassembled. The scouts can remove it from the track quickly enough that the train will not need to stop, but it will need to slow down in order to give the scouts time to accomplish their task and return to the train. While the *Almazy Vechny* is travelling at reduced speed, the bandits attack.

The player characters will be allowed to help operate gun turrets or assist in other ways, if they volunteer. This will contribute to a favourable impression with their Whitestar hosts. If they do not volunteer, no one asks them to help. The Whitestar crew will look down on offworlders who do not volunteer, but since they view them all as a cowardly bunch anyway, a failure to volunteer does not cause a particularly negative reaction. Whitestar player characters will be admonished and yelled at to help out if they do not volunteer. The bandits stand little chance of overrunning the train, but the players may make an impression here with their composure under fire.

Bandit tektanks—off-road trucks converted to act as armoured personnel carriers—pull up alongside the train and attempt to close for boarding, while infantry armed with shoulder-mounted rocket launchers and anti-armour grenades attempt to take out the train’s gun emplacements. Use the statistics provided for the off-road variant of the Otkatchik from **Chapter 06: Tools for Survival** to represent the tektanks.

Player characters who are firing from the train have two combat rounds in which to fend off the boarding parties. Assign one tektank for each player character in the group, and one rocket attack per two player characters.

For each tektank that the players fail to knock out in these two combat rounds, **T1** bandits are able to board the train and gain entry at the least convenient point from the players’ point of view. The GM may spend one or two Dark Symmetry points to add one or two additional bandits to the boarding party. Refer to **Chapter 08: The Wastelands** for stats for bandits. Each rocket launcher they do not deal with will attack an autocannon turret—one that a player character is in if there is one. The bandits will use Momentum from successful attacks to specifically target the gun turrets of the train, and may spend two Dark Symmetry points following each successful attack to inflict **1+T3** damage with the Knockdown and Stun qualities to anyone inside the turrets from concussive force and interior shrapnel. In all cases, the rest of the train crew are busy fighting the other bandits, who number around one hundred. The enemies outlined here are those that the player characters must oppose themselves, or evade until the train regains full speed, which will require 2d6 combat rounds, at which time the train crew will deal with them.

The autocannon turrets are the player characters’ best chance of dealing with the attackers directly, despite them being the focus of the attack. It is unlikely that the bandits will manage to seize control of one or more of the train carriages, but if the players let things deteriorate to that situation then yes, you can turn a turret to fire directly at your own train.





The Bandits mount up to attack the Almaz Vechny.

ALMAZY VECHNY

Implacable titans of the rails, the armoured fortress trains of Whitestar are an awe-inspiring sight to behold as they thunder their way along the reinforced rail links that connect the Strongholds.

The Almaz Vechny has been designated as a mobile garrison for the 1st Tamanskaya Response Regiment of the Streltsy. It consists of the Almaz Vechny locomotive unit, two defensive bulwark cars (front and rear of the train), two vehicular deployment cars, and eight troop carriages.

ALMAZY VECHNY

RESTRICTION: 5 **COST:** 40
MAINTENANCE: 7 **RELIABILITY:** 3

QUALITIES	Enclosed, Rugged, Wheeled (Tram)			
CRUISING SPEED	64 lph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	0	
CREW	1 commander, 1 pilot, 4 gunners	CARRYING CAPACITY	800 passengers 20,000 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	8	12	8	6
MOTIVE SYSTEM	7	8	6	4
WEAPONS	5	6	5	4
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+ [†] 8			
ARMAMENTS	<p>4x Zhivotnoye Mat Type 15 Autocannon Turrets: Long, 2+[†]6, Automatic, Armour Piercing 1, Split Fire, Spread 1</p> <p>12x Rebrov Machine Guns: Medium, 1+[†]6, Automatic, Spread 1</p> <p>4x Puskin Rocket Launchers with Anti-armour grenades: Long, 2+[†]5, Munition, Armour Piercing 2, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1</p>			
NOTES	<p>Ten Reloads each for Autocannons. Six reloads each for Machine Guns. Four Reloads each for Rocket Launchers.</p> <p><i>Wheeled (Tram):</i> The vehicle's motion and direction of travel is entirely dependent upon the tracks that provide it with traction. A vehicle with this quality may only make movement within its current zone or into adjacent zones if there are rails present to allow this. Vehicles with this quality may not take Evasive Action against ranged attacks.</p>			



ACT 4: NIKUDA

The player characters arrive at Nikuda after a few hours of being feted with vodka in the dining car (if they acquitted themselves well in the bandit attack) or being politely ignored (if they did not). A clanking, rusty bus collects the visitors from the underground station and drives them through miles of dank tunnels to the bunker, entering the Stronghold on the lowest level.

They are met by security chief Elena Kuznetsova. She welcomes the outsiders to Nikuda while running an appraising eye over the lot of them. She does not seem particularly impressed. Kuznetsova accompanies the group to a dormitory on Iron level, where she shows them the bunks they have been assigned and tells them how to set the combination on their foot lockers. To corporate employees this all appears hideously primitive. Do people really live like this? A **Challenging D2 Observation test** while around Kuznetsova reveals mannerisms—a certain swagger, the way she holds a gun, her lack of deference to her boss—that suggest a somewhat wilder background than the usual military training you might expect for someone in her position.

The visitors can actually go and see pretty much anything they want, though Kuznetsova will not volunteer anything in particular. They have to ask, then she will take them there. After the first couple of requests, Kuznetsova delegates one of her security team, Stephan Markov, to accompany them. Markov will consider himself still on police duty, so the player characters may get a chance to see his overzealousness for the job in action.

Things the player characters might be interested in include:

Whoever is in charge of this place: Elder Sidorenko can be found in his office or the Operations Room. He's very excited about having off-world visitors and will make them feel very welcome. He is happy to answer any questions that the players may have about Nikuda, though his knowledge is limited to the present day and recent past. When it comes to Nikuda's ancient history and the icon the players are looking for, he is forced to delegate the answer, pointing them in the direction of Irina Stepanova, the studious young woman who located the information about the icon when Bishop Artyom contacted them.

Historical information: The archives located on the Reactor Level house all the information available on Nikuda and the surrounding area, as well as the Stronghold's exhaustive records. Irina Stepanova looks after the archive. It is not exactly her job, and she has never been officially assigned to do it, but she just kind of drifted into being the Stronghold's historian over the years, ever since she first begged for access to the archive when she was a little girl. Actual record-keeping is the function of the Operations team, but if you want to find out about the long-ago events and people of the stronghold and the surrounding region, Irina is the one to talk to.

Irina will be shy at first when approached about the icon, but soon warms to her subject. When Bishop Artyom contacted Elder Sidorenko to ask about the icon, she went through the archive to figure out which vault the Bauhaus records could be referring to. There is only one vault that it could be, based on the date that the icon must have been placed in storage.

If the player characters agree, Irina shows them the archives, pointing out this storage server and that, including the very oldest – “But I ... well, I don’t know how to turn those on.” A player may attempt to do so. The machines are positively ancient and the operating system is so antiquated the user manual was probably inscribed on papyrus. Turning it on is relatively simple for anyone with a nose for computers but finding information on the icon requires a Challenging D2 Education skill test. Success uncovers the true location of the icon: Saint Gregory’s Church, in the ruins of Nikopol, a small town located partially in Zone 86.

Exploring the bunker: Visitors are not allowed to poke around in people’s private belongings, the nuclear reactor, or the militia stores, but other than that the outsiders have the freedom of the bunker to wander round and meet people.

Sergei Karimov may be found sitting in the atrium having a drink with a few friends, and will challenge the toughest-looking player character to an arm-wrestle. He takes either victory or defeat in good humour and invites the outsiders to sit and drink, and talk about where they come from. His drinking buddies include Svetlana Glukhova, Professor Babatyev, and Doctor Yakimov.

The Street Creepers will approach the players shortly before they leave the bunker, offering to provide their Resector expertise, in exchange for “a fair cut” of whatever valuables are to be found. Even if the players turn the Street Creepers down, Paul Kuznetsov will try to follow them to see what they find—getting spotted or possibly captured by mutants at an inopportune time.

ACT 5: WIOLANT-252

Unless the players discover the location of the icon by powering up Nikuda’s deep archives, the next stage of the planned itinerary is to head for the vault at Wiolant-252. Elder Sidorenko provides maps and coordinates. The ruins of the factory city are a good five hours away by all-terrain vehicle. Elder Sidorenko assigns a truck and a driver (Boris) to get them there. The player characters can get more, but must successfully Persuade the security chief, who is reluctant to loan out her personnel or gear. An **Average D1 Persuade test** may be attempted to requisition half a dozen soldiers. One Momentum may be spent to borrow heavy weapons, or two Momentum to take the single LVOV APC she commands; these two options may be combined.

En route, the players must pass through territory inhabited by a band of Blood Giant bandits (refer to page “Blood Giants” on page 77 of this sourcebook). A dozen of these fearsome mutants, armed with old rifles, bows, and simple clubs, have established a base of operations in what remains of a Bauhaus shopping mall—the walls have mostly collapsed, but a few sections of roof are still intact, providing shelter from the elements. The road from Nikuda to Wiolant-252 passes right through it.

The mutants have set up a series of obstacles intended to look like normal debris to slow down approaching vehicles and force them to weave back and forth before dumping them into a concealed pit trap. A Challenging D2 Observation skill test (increased to a Daunting D3 if travelling by night) is required to spot the trap and slow down to avoid it. A **Daunting D3 Pilot test** can be made if the Observation test fails, to allow a chance to swerve aside at the last moment. If both of these are failed, the vehicle falls into the trap; each passenger receives 1+**T**3 damage with the Stun quality to a random hit location.

When the trap is sprung or spotted, the mutants may attack. They will attack a soft target such as a truck or motorcycle whether it has fallen into the trap or not. However, they will only attack something tougher—for example, Nikuda’s Lvov APC, if the players managed to borrow it—if it is safely immobilised in the pit trap.

The pit is a good six feet deep: vehicle-mounted weapons cannot be fired from it if the vehicle in question has fallen in. Getting it back out will require another vehicle to tow it if it is anything bigger than a bike (a Chronicle point can come into play here; maybe there is something in the mall’s parking garage?). If they cannot get it back out or if their vehicle is destroyed in the fight with the Blood Giants, they will need another form of transport—it is a long walk back to Nikuda.

If the player characters are travelling by night, they must deal with the mutants’ trap as above, with the increased difficulty of the Observation test. However, the Blood Giants will remain safely ensconced in the dilapidated mall. Anyone passing by can see their campfire lights from the road with a successful **Average D1 Observation test**. The Blood Giants do not go out at night because a pair of Kleshnya also live in the area—and will attack the player characters if they are given the chance.

This is not the only hazard to be found along the way. Travelling through the Wastelands is a fraught business. Check out **Chapter 08: The Wastelands** for information on the hazards to be found and throw any of them you like at the players. It does not have to be all of them—just the ones you find most compelling. Keep a couple in reserve (maybe an acid storm or a Red Wind) for one last piece of hassle on their return journey to Nikuda once they have recovered the icon, if they get that far.



Breaking and entering is best done quietly...

Violant-252 is an expanse of grey, windswept factory ruins. Here and there the corroded hulk of a huge fabricator machine stands forlornly, but everything of value has long since been taken or withered away. Laid out on a grid of straight, broad boulevards, this was once a proud symbol of Bauhaus' industrial might. Now it is nothing but a sad ruin.

The vault is not hard to find—Bishop Artyom was able to provide precise coordinates. Getting in is slightly more challenging, because the Bauhaus records did not include the most recent combination to the vault door lock. Powering up the lock and breaking the code is a Daunting D3 Thievery skill test, or up to three hours of sustained, noisy drilling. (The players thought about this and equipped appropriately while they were in Urgamal, right?) The sound of drilling echoes throughout the factory ruins, drawing the attention of local bandits, though wildlife will stay away.

Inside the vault are row upon row of safety deposit boxes, hermetically sealed away for centuries. But Box 514, where the icon is supposed to be, is empty.

A small office at the back of the vault contains administrative notices in an archaic form of the Bauhaus language. A handwritten note shows that the icon was supposed to be delivered here but there was a last-minute change of plan. In the folder under the note, marked "GREGORY ICON", is only a set of ancient simsense cassettes. The

location of the icon must be gleaned by reliving the recording made by the original couriers. There is a simsense unit that can play these recordings back in a nearby employee recreation building. Powering it up is an Average D1 Mechanics skill test.

ACT 6: INTO THE PAST

There are five simsense units available. Each person who wants to use a recording must choose one of the six recordings, each made by one of the couriers.

Each player character who enters the simsense playback must make an **Average D1 Mechanics test**, or nominate a technician to make the test for them as they plug in. Failure means the character's input balances are at the wrong initial settings, causing a wave of nausea, bewilderment, and terror that requires an **Average D1 Willpower test** to avoid mental assault. The simsense unit self-corrects after a few seconds.

The aim of this section, though you need not spell it out to the players just yet, is to survive to the end of the recording in order to see the passcode for the vault in Zone 86. If one or more of the player characters 'survives' the courier run, they will enter the passcode (DOVERIYE). If none of the couriers on the recording survives, the one who made it to the end must have been the sixth, Tatiana, whose recording they do not have. Try to run through this

section pretty quickly—it is a glimpse of a long-lost world, but the nature of the recordings means it can never be more than that. The players cannot go off and explore, because the couriers did not do that. That is the other reason not to dwell too long on the flashback: it is incredibly railroad, so you should probably let the players get back to making proper decisions as soon as they can.

By a massive coincidence, each of the couriers happens to have had the exact same relevant stats to each task at hand as the player character who is playing back their simsense recording. In other words, roll for each challenge as if it were the player character doing it.

The following outline presumes that a group of player characters will enter the playback simultaneously. It is also possible for just one player to try each of them in sequence, though this would be too dull to actually play out. If something like this happens, the character in question must take the Mechanics skill test to avoid mental assault for each recording, but you can skip ahead to the furthest challenge the other recordings made it to, like loading from a checkpoint in a video game.

The recordings begin in a panic, with a man dressed in black hurriedly pressing identical backpacks into the arms of each of the couriers, saying “We can’t let them take it! Quickly—get to Saint Gregory’s Church in Nikopol!” Hoarse military shouting can be heard from outside the small room they are in, as someone tries to kick down the door.

One of the backpacks contains the icon. The others are decoys—the players do not have time to check which is which. If they stop to look, they are caught up to and killed, and dumped out of the recording before they can see what is inside.

The sequence contains five challenges. If a character fails, they are killed and the recording ends suddenly, requiring a **Challenging D2 Willpower test** to avoid mental assault and one Dread.

CHALLENGE 1: ON TO THE ROOF

The couriers are hustled up a narrow stairway and emerge blinking into bright sunlight on a factory roof somewhere in the western district of Wiolant-252. The buildings are all shiny and new, but smoke pours from numerous fires around the town, and sporadic gunfire can be heard echoing through the streets.

There is a sudden crash as the soldiers in the room below break through the door, and a gunshot as the man in black is killed. It is time to run.

Each courier must make a **Challenging D2 Athletics test** to sprint to the far side of the factory roof before the soldiers get up the stairs and shoot them.

CHALLENGE 2: JUMP!

The chase is still on as the soldiers spill out from the roof access door. Each courier must make a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics or Athletics test** to leap across to the next building over. Anyone who fails either plummets to their death on the street below, or is shot by their pursuers.

CHALLENGE 3: STEALTH

An external staircase leads down to street level, next to a car park full of vehicles of an ancient and peculiar design. A fire-gutted automatic diner is across the street.

The couriers must hide from a heavily armed enemy patrol. This requires a **Challenging D2 Stealth test**—increased to Daunting D3 if the player hesitates for too long before deciding where to hide.

CHALLENGE 4: HIT THE ROAD

The couriers have sleek motorcycles waiting for them, powered by almost silent electric engines. They must weave through the streets, avoiding traffic and fleeing refugees, to escape from the pursuing enemy troops. A **Challenging D2 Pilot test** is necessary to avoid being captured or killed.



The couriers make their escape.

CHALLENGE 5: FIGHT A WAY THROUGH

Having shaken off their pursuers, the couriers close in on their destination, the ornate Saint Gregory’s Church in the town of Nikopol. Only a squad of enemy troops stands between them and their goal. Each courier may test either **Close Combat or Range Weapons** at a difficulty of **Challenging D2** (there is a gun in each motorbike’s storage unit under the saddle, if anyone asks) to take out one of the foes and make it safely into the church.

Inside, the parish priest quickly conducts the surviving courier(s) into the basement. They can now see the icon for the first time. It depicts the saint standing with a large book in one hand and the other raised in benediction. The detail and devotion that went into the creation of the work is breath-taking. It is truly an extraordinary work of art. They have little time to savour it, however, as the priest (Father Markos) quickly takes the icon and places it carefully into a reinforced floor safe. The safe hisses down into the floor and one of the couriers is invited to key in the passcode.

The recordings then all fade to black and the remaining players calmly reawaken to the real world.

ACT 7: THE ZONE

One way or another, by this point the players will now be aware that if they want to get the icon, they will need to head for the town of Nikopol, specifically the Church of Saint Gregory. There is just one problem with that: it lies within a Zone of Corruption.

Outside the boundary of the Zone of Corruption, Nikopol's streets lie in ruins, scarcely one brick on top of another. Centuries of neglect, weather, and looting have almost wiped every trace of the town away. Inside Zone 86 is a totally different story. The streets, houses, cars, factories, and shops there are perfectly preserved as if frozen in time. The town was a little run-down at the time it was abandoned, so it is not pristine, but all decay stopped when

the Zone of Corruption sprang up, whilst the mantle of the effect provided complete protection from the severe environmental effects that have ruined the town outside of Zone 86. There is no wind here, nor rain, nor life of any kind. It is utterly silent. Saint Gregory's Church is clearly visible on the skyline, a spire of stone and stained glass reaching up to the dismal-clouded skies amid a mixture of residential blocks, rail yards and factories.

You will want an ordinary deck of cards or a **♣** for this next bit. The map marked 'Zone 86' is for the GM's reference. It has been divided into a number of sectors, which follow the boundary lines where a Deviation may occur. The GM should draw a card or roll the **♣** each time he deems the characters to have crossed a boundary between sectors. If a face card or ace is drawn, or a damage indicator or DSI is rolled, there is a Deviation somewhere in the sector. Apply the usual Observation tests as appropriate (see the Zones of Corruption sidebar, below, for more details).

Although still dangerous, the approach through the Zone to the church may be attempted in as close to ideal conditions as one can get—that is, with all due caution. However, the return journey will not be so safe, for the group has been observed entering Zone 86. The observers may be a group of mutants similar to those at the mall *en-route* to Violant-252, or an interested party encountered earlier in the adventure. For example, if the visitors went out of their way to rile the Street Creepers when they met them at Nikuda, the Resectors will hire some bandits as back-up and follow them with

ZONES OF CORRUPTION

Zones of Corruption will be more fully expanded upon in the forthcoming Dark Eden setting book, though some cursory notes are provided both here and within the **Mutant Chronicles** core rulebook.

Zones of Corruption are sphere shaped anomalies of an unknown origin that range in size anywhere from ten metres to twenty kilometres. It is important to note the spherical shape, as the reality altering effects of the Zone can also extend below ground.

Some Zones, such as the one affecting Nikopol, exhibit obvious effects that alert would-be explorers to the fact that they are entering the oddity, whilst others may only be revealed by the simple fact that no wildlife will ever venture into a Zone (which may require an Observation or Survival check to discern). Each Zone can contain any number of effects, called Distortions, that disturb or alter the laws of physics and affect a person's senses. Distortions can alter the flow of time, wreak havoc with gravity,

create magnetic storms, or alter perception and memory; the exact effects of the Distortions within each Zone vary in intensity and execution. Some Zones contain various Distortions that are confined to fixed areas, almost like a bubble within a bubble, whilst others contain only a single anomaly that is prevalent throughout. Entering any Distortion is dangerous to say the least, but as much caution as possible should be practiced due to the mantle (outer skin) of the effect, which can cause severe injury to the unaware.

The Nikopol Zone of Corruption has altered the flow of time within it so that it fluctuates between sub-normal and an almost imperceptible crawl. Entering the Distortion at anything other than an extremely slow walk can result in serious injury as the effects of crossing the boundary between time flows will be similar to breaking through one inch of plate steel if done at speed. Spotting the Deviation's mantle requires a **Challenging D2 Observation** or **Insight test**. Moving at an extremely slow pace requires an **Average D1 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to avoid minor injury. Crossing the mantle at walking pace must make a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test**, with

the intention of stealing whatever treasure they plan to find in the Zone of Corruption.

Navigating a Zone of Corruption in combat conditions is, needless to say, a much more perilous proposition, than no one in their right mind would voluntarily get into.

Some of the sectors have particular features of interest:

1. The Church. The star icon marks the location of the church. It is a cruciform building constructed in the Neo-Snowist style that first flourished in the 2300s. Inside, everything is quiet, pristine, and orderly—as if waiting for the congregation to arrive at any moment.

The icon is in a basement accessed by a small staircase under the bell tower. Player characters who successfully completed the couriers' recording will know the way already. If the players do not know the location of the floor safe, they will need to pass a **Challenging D2 Observation test** or smash up the floor tiles to find it.

Opening the safe requires either the passcode or a **Challenging D2 Thievery test**—the safe was once state of the art, but security has moved on a lot since then, even taking into account the emergence of the Dark Symmetry.

If they cannot get it open, the group will have to chisel the safe out of the floor and bring it back to Nikuda intact.

2. A broad, grassy park, bordered by a high security fence to the north and railway tracks to the south.

3. Train repair yard with covered garage.

4. A long, concrete drainage channel sunk below the surrounding ground level. Crossed every dozen metres by a narrow footbridge. Connects to no. 19.

5. Open ground marked with pitches for various sports.

6. Waste ground, soggy with runoff from the factories to the north.

7. Warehouse full of crates containing miscellaneous vehicle parts.

8. Open-sided barn for storage. Empty.

9. A small, disused railway siding with a train shed.

10. Sewage works. Two wide circular sedimentation tanks sit in the open air, with a small control room between the two.

11. Open waste ground, bordered by the access rail line to the north, an elevated pipeline to the east, the drainage channel to the south and a covered conveyor belt to the west.

12. A two-storey house surrounded by extensive gardens. Judging

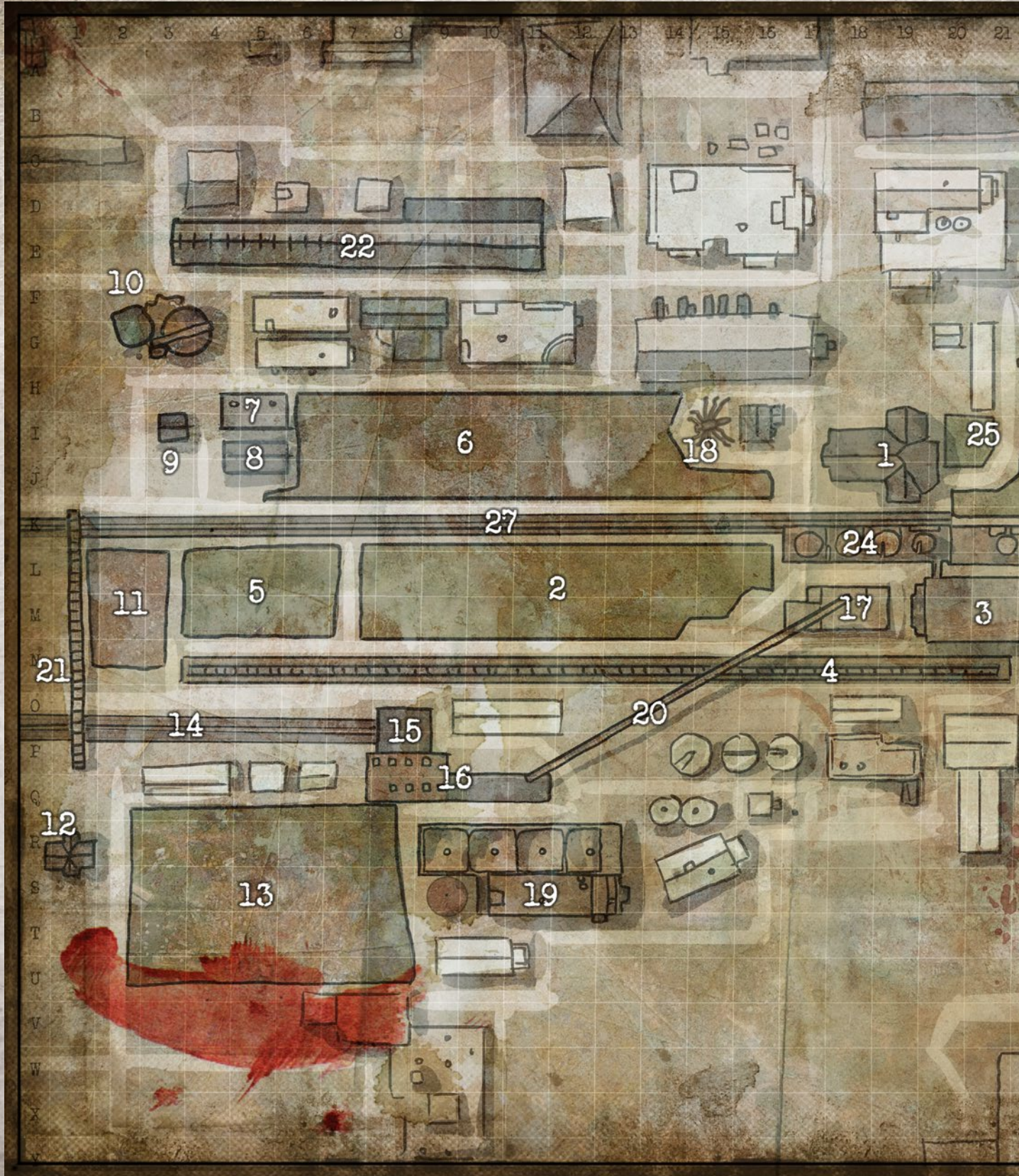
success resulting in minor injury and failure in major injury. Charging through the Nikopol mantle requires a **Dire D3 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test**, with success meaning that the character has pierced the mantle at the cost of a major injury, whilst failure results in a major injury plus the fact that the character has rebounded from the mantle and must try again if he wishes to enter.

MINOR INJURY: 1+**T**3 damage with the Dreadful and Stun qualities that ignores Soak. The character is also subjected to an Average D1 mental assault. The GM may spend two Dark Symmetry point to inflict a minor physical impairment, such as a sprained ankle or knee. The minor impairment will increase the Repercussion of Acrobatics and Athletics tests by two until a **Challenging D2 Treatment test** is made for the injury.

MAJOR INJURY: 2+**T**6 damage with the Dreadful, Knockdown, and Stun qualities that ignores Soak. The character is also subjected to a Challenging D2 mental assault. The GM may spend four Dark Symmetry points to inflict a broken limb upon

the character. Broken limbs require a **Challenging D2 Medicine test** to be set correctly and effectively immobilise the appendage. Characters with a broken leg will need a support to take any movement actions other than a slow crawl, and even then may only take the Adjust Stance movement action, which now requires a Standard Action as opposed to a Free Action. Characters with a broken arm may not use the arm for anything that involves manual dexterity with that member.

To those on the outside of the Nikopol Zone, characters inside appear to freeze in place as soon as they pierce the mantle, although occasionally those on the inside appear to hop between different points. The disturbing effects of this will require an Average D1 Willpower for observers to avoid mental assault. Once a character has entered the Zone, they are safe from any effects that are external to the Zone, such as the environment or someone attempting to shoot them—barring a nuclear explosion of course. The GM should roll two d20 for every six hours spent within the Nikopol Zone to determine how much actual real time has passed since they entered.



CHAPTER 10



by the furnishings and layout, this was home to a family of four or five. There are probably all sorts of useful things in the cupboards.

13. Open waste ground. No cover here for a long way. Anyone crossing in the open will be easily visible to anyone looking for them.

14. East-west railway line, once the route for trains that linked the major Bauhaus archologies.

15. A canopy extending over the railway lines. Attached to the underside are complex loading machines with articulated claws, used for loading and unloading trains on the railway below.

16. A warehouse used for storing taken off passing trains or waiting to be loaded onto them.

17. Another storage shed, connected to no. 16 by an automated cargo line (no. 21)

18. A circular frame construction that looks something like a huge metal spider, twenty metres tall. Its purpose is unclear.

19. Drainage channel—see no. 4.

20. Open ground containing a small nuclear power plant and its cooling tower.

21. A narrow elevated cargo conveyor, linking sectors 16 and 17. An adult human can only go along the inside by crawling. You could also cross it by crawling along the top, though you would be easily visible (a Challenging D2 Acrobatics skill test is required to walk the length of it without falling two floors).

22. Elevated, enclosed conveyor belt, approximately ten metres wide, for moving heavy goods.

23. Presbytery—lodgings for the parish priest.

25. A network of pipes and machinery for refuelling trains.

26. Manicured gardens with a picturesque pond for quiet reflection.

27. A partially covered service railway, crossed by access bridges and electricity pylons at regular intervals. A high security fence runs along its length on the southern side, originally to keep people from wandering on to the line from the adjacent park.

28. Nikopol Cultural Centre. A museum and performance space for the people of the town.

29. Local light rail line connection, terminating at the Cultural Centre station.

Class of Service

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above the preceding address.

TELEGRAM

Symbols

DL—Day Letter

NL—Night Letter

LC—Deferred Cable

NLT—Cable Night Letter

Ship Radiogram

All communications are subject to Review and Censorship before processing.
Filing times above in the date time on the telegram and day letters are ZST.
Sender is responsible for all material in this communiqué.

APPROVED FOR DELIVERY

MITCH

GOOD TO HEAR FROM YOU AGAIN, MATE. DUNNO HOW MUCH I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT EARTH, I ONLY GOT TO URGAMAL MYSELF, THAT'S THE CITY NEXT TO THE SPACEPORT. PRETTY WILD PLACE THOUGH. A FEW THINGS TO SEE, PLENTY OF INTERESTING PEOPLE TO MEET.

HERE'S A FEW WORDS YOU MIGHT FIND USEFUL, WHICH THE FIRM WON'T HAVE PUT IN THE PHRASEBOOK THEY GAVE YOU.

KAMPEI! ALL PURPOSE TOAST, YOU'LL HEAR THIS A LOT. THEY LIKE TO HAVE LONG-WINDED TOASTS BEFORE ROUNDS OF DRINKS SOMETIMES. DIFFICULT TO COMPETE WITH THE NATIVES, BUT AS LONG AS YOU GET THIS ON THE END YOU'LL BE GOLDEN.

VOTSAU! SWEARY INTERJECTION. "EFF ME", BASICALLY. NOT SUITABLE FOR FORMAL OCCASIONS.

VOKAU! A SLIGHTLY LESS RUDE VERSION OF THE ABOVE. STILL NOT SUITABLE FOR FORMAL OCCASIONS.

SHTUKA. THING/THINGUMMY. ONE OF THE MOST USEFUL WORDS TO KNOW IN ANY LANGUAGE WHEN YOU'RE STARTING OUT, NO?

KAKAYA GOVANSIY NAS?" WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO WITH ME? THIS IS FIGHTING TALK.

POZHALUSTA, NE MOYE LITSO! PLEASE, NOT MY FACE! JUST IN CASE THE FIGHTING TALK GETS GOING, BECAUSE I KNOW YOU NAVY TYPES ONLY PRETEND TO BE TOUGH, HOHOHO.

BUT SERIOUSLY, HAVE A GOOD TRIP.

DOS VIDANYA - STEPHEN



ACT 8: THE RETURN

Hopefully, the off-world delegation will make it all the way to Nikopol and retrieve the icon. At the very least, they can locate it, in order to send a larger, better equipped expedition at some future date.

When it comes time to head back from the Wastelands, after a few hours of travel, Mikhail (or another character if he is not present) will see vehicles moving in convoy on the horizon, and stopping at a defensible spot in the Wastelands where a flat hilltop provides a panoramic view of the surrounding landscape.

There are dozens of trucks and APCs in the convoy. If one or more player characters get closer to scout out the situation by making an **Average D1 Stealth test**, it becomes clear that this group of Wastelands raiders are preparing to camp here for at least one or two nights before moving on—they are digging ditches, setting up embankments, and so on, which they would not do if they were only stopping for a short time. Momentum from the Stealth test may be used to get an idea of the force composition and strength, or to see insignia that they may later identify as those of the Sons of Rasputin. This camp is right between the player characters and Nikuda.

They now have two options to get to the stronghold: the dangerous route, or the dangerous route. To be more specific, they may try to sneak and/or fight their way past the raiders, or they can take a longer, more difficult route over the snowy mountain ridge to the west.

The first option is to be improvised by the GM, but should entail dealing with at least three separate enemy patrols or emplacements. And you can hit them with an acid storm here while you are at it.

The second requires a total of three **Daunting D3 Survival skill tests** to cross the mountains. Each failed Survival test indicates that the group has become lost or encountered difficulties; they lose a day of travel and must make an **Average D1 Resistance test**

to resist the effects of the extreme environment (see the effects of extreme cold on page 106 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core rulebook and consider the characters to be unprotected due to their failure).

FINAL RESOLUTION

The delegation will be feted by their patrons and the media, as well as by the Whitestar communities they pass through on their way home, should they return to the Moon with the icon of Saint Gregory intact. Corporate employees receive financial stipends from their employers (to the tune of one bonus asset). Freelancers do not get anything more than the payment promised by Bishop Artyom—who, by the way, is utterly delighted to see the icon; he even starts to cry a little bit, he is so happy—but their new-found fleeting celebrity means that their next few clients will increase the pay they offer by one asset.

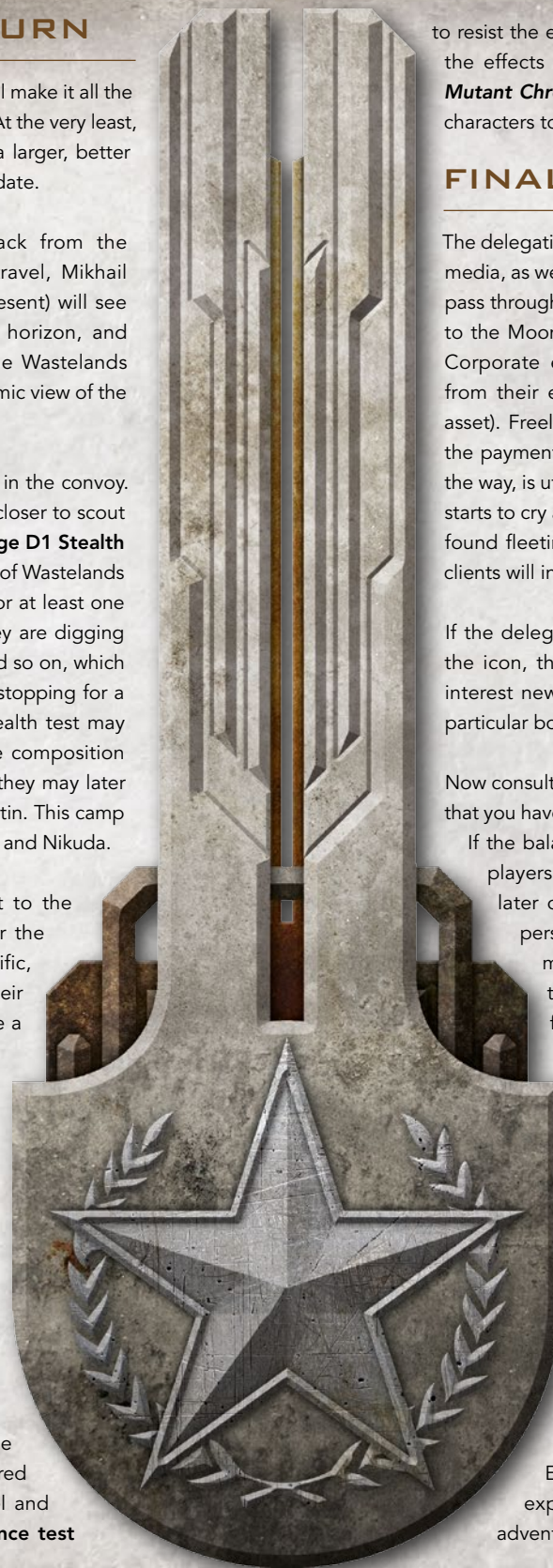
If the delegation locates but does not bring back the icon, they still get their faces on the human-interest news segments, but they do not get any particular bonuses.

Now consult your tally of good and bad impressions that you have been noting throughout the adventure.

If the balance swings to the 'good' column, the players will hear from a contact in the Cartel later on that the Tsarina is visiting Luna for personal talks with the Cartel—and that she mentioned their visit to Earth in approving tones. Potential opportunities arising from this may be as liaisons to Whitestar, or employment opportunities with the Federation itself.

If the marks are mostly bad, no such visit occurs, and the Whitestar embassy on Luna maintains only the bare minimum of communication with the Cartel and corporations for almost a year. Should the characters meet any Cartel diplomats during this time, they will be recognised as "those clowns who stuffed up the Earth expedition".

Each player character receives 400 experience points for each session this adventure took to complete.



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THOSE LEFT BEHIND

The megacorporations could not flee fast enough from the irradiated and chemically saturated Earth. They assumed that nothing could survive amongst the acid-scarred ruins of their birthplace. Not until they returned in the hopes of finding plunder amongst the rubble did they realise how wrong their assumptions had been. Following the example of their beloved Tsarina, Whitestar has founded an empire amongst the tunnels and Strongholds below the wastelands. One that sits ready to defend their ancient homeland no matter the cost.

- ◀ **Federated We Stand:** Delve into the history of the Whitestar Federation and discover the untold facts about their growth into a power to be reckoned with.
- ◀ **Survival and Exploration:** The Federation has managed to flourish despite the many dangers that now stalk the Wastelands. Tread carefully in their footsteps across the frozen wastes, and avoid the blood red winds.
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