



Don't Drink
the Water



Don't Drink the Water

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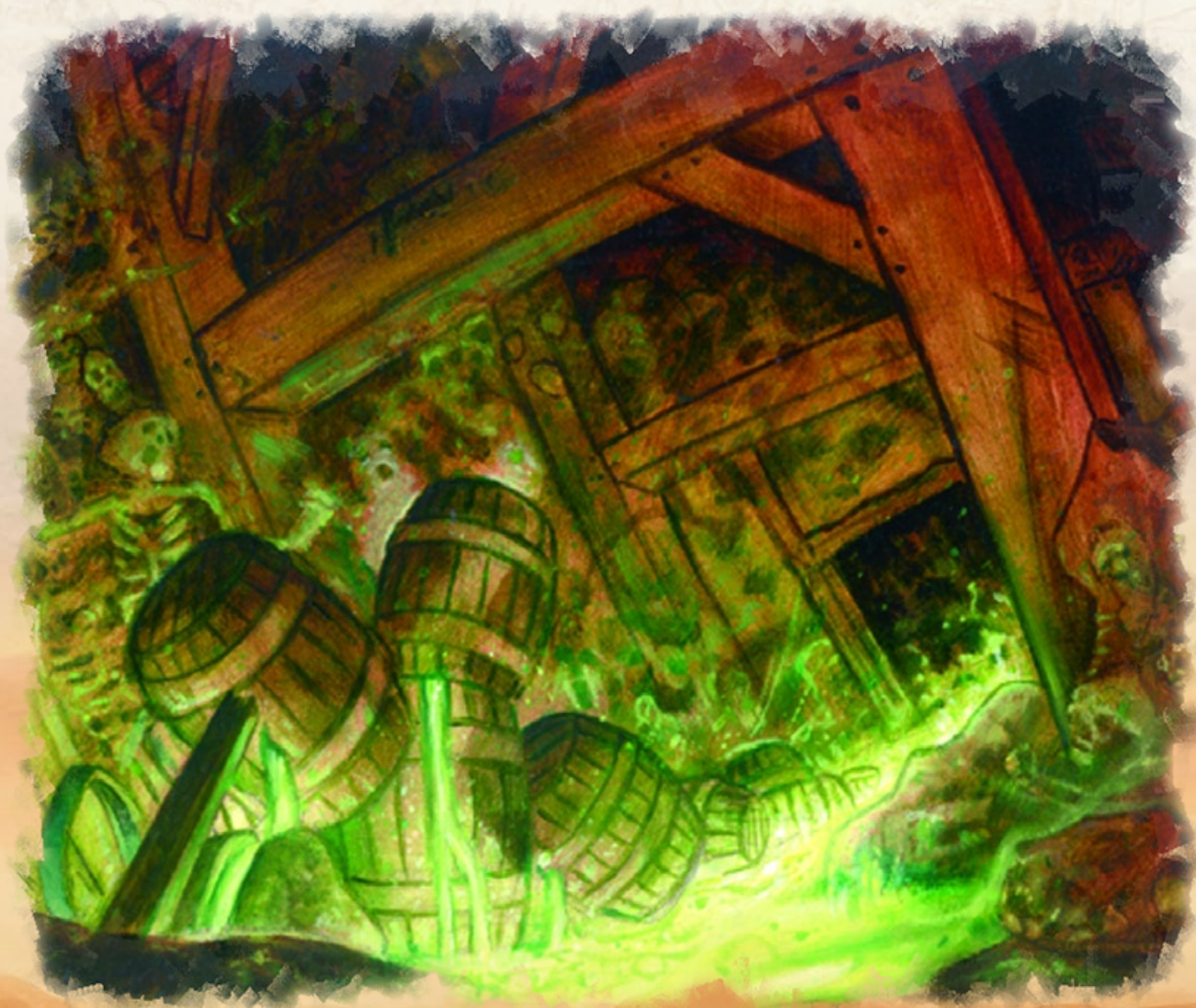
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Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
SPECIAL DELIVERY.....	5
I'VE GOT THE PISTOLS.....	9
VIVA LIBERTAD!.....	14
FRIENDS & FOES.....	18



INTRODUCTION

Howdy Marshal! It's time for a little fun south o' the Border. We're going to take your posse on a quick jaunt into ol' Mexico where they get to dodge the Foreign Legion, aid some revolutionaries, and put a few wayward dead folks back into Boot Hill where they belong! So saddle up and throw on your poncho, but don't drink the water!

Officially speaking, this adventure is set during the early part of 1880, after the fateful Battle of Lost Angels but several months before the end of *The Flood Plot* Point campaign. That said, with a few changes it'll fit nicely into just about any timeframe that suits you, Marshal.

The Story So Far

Santa Anna, in his bid to expand the Mexican Empire, has gotten a little frisky with his army. He generally limits his incursions to the Great Maze, but every so often "renegade" units cross into western Confederate states.

These bands usually restrict themselves to simple snatch-and-grab raids, but every now and then they damage railroads or other constructions. Unfortunately, the Confederate government won't risk its fragile relations with Mexico over these relatively inconsequential attacks. The South doesn't need a new war on its hands!

The Juaristas

The raiders have finally riled up the wrong folks. A couple of influential businessmen in Arizona have decided to take matters into their own hands.

They've contacted a few bands of *Juaristas*, one of the groups opposing the French-backed Mexican government, and offered some financial and material support. They hope that by stirring the pot in Santa Anna's own country, they'll force the general to keep his own troops home instead of gallivanting about parts farther north.

The businessmen have secured a wagonload of weapons and ammunition to send to the *Juaristas*. They've set a meeting with a band near the village of Bacoachi, about 75 miles south of the Confederate border.

All they need now is a few fool...uh, *brave souls* to sneak the weapons past the border patrols.

LaCroix's Special Sauce

Tired of losing workers to Apache attacks, Baron LaCroix—owner of Bayou Vermilion—was stockpiling his reanimation fluid in preparation for a massive push into the Indians' mountain strongholds. With enough zombies, he figured he could simply overwhelm the Apache warriors.

A band of wayward Legionnaires discovered a barrel during a raid on one of the railroad's southernmost outposts. At first, they figured the liquid was some sort of alcohol and lugged the barrel back to their outpost. This idea lasted until one of them took a swig and dropped dead on the spot.

The next assumption was the green fluid was a potent poison meant for the vital Apache water sources. This theory was also quickly disproven when the dead soldier rose up and attacked his former comrades.

Captain Juan Carlos Burgos de Diaz, commander of the tiny garrison of Mexican soldiers in Bacoachi, just happened to be visiting the outpost when the incident occurred. Poorly supported and surrounded by rebel guerrillas, Captain Diaz's small force was little more than an armed gang, incapable of taking any real action against the *Juaristas*. But if he could gain possession of that very special barrel...

Realizing what the Legionnaires had captured, Diaz bartered for the barrel and headed back to his own garrison. At first he intended to immediately forward the barrel and its contents to his superiors. Then he realized he had found the answer to all his troubles.

DON'T DRINK THE WATER

MARSHAL'S NOTES

There is a lot going on in this adventure, so it's very important to keep things moving. The goal of this adventure is to capture the feel of a Mexican-revolution western film—with zombies, of course—so keep it fast-paced and fun.

A couple of scenes in the adventure can be trimmed without any real consequences. If you're running short on time, you can shortcut through these encounters. These scenes, along with the "shortcut" method are noted at the end of the appropriate section.

The final battle may look overwhelming—don't worry, it's not. Miniatures would prove very helpful in the scene, just to help the players visualize where their characters are and so forth. Most of the NPCs in the fight have little interaction with the posse; they're there solely to provide a spaghetti-western-battle feel to the fight. We've included a note on how to handle these characters as quickly as possible while still giving the impression there is a fight going on around the heroes.

Finally, the author doesn't speak Spanish—he doesn't even pretend to. If you do, by all means spice up the dialogue with the *Juaristas* with appropriate phrases.

Bad Water

Natural springs and wells are very rare in the northern Sonoran desert of Mexico. Diaz figured if he poured the liquid into all the water sources outside his garrison, he'd sharply curtail any guerrilla activities in the region. The zombies of those who drank the tainted water would make short work of those who didn't succumb to the poison.

Diaz would be rewarded for his success by the current government, and probably even get a better posting. All things considered, it looked like the perfect plan. Of course, there would be quite a few innocent victims of the poisoned water. But then again, there are *always* innocent victims...

Diaz's Descent

Over the past month or so, Diaz's continuous contact with the reanimation fluid has completely destroyed his mind and humanity. A week or so ago, his tolerance reached the point he actually began drinking it straight.

The liquid has given him an inhuman vitality as well as warping his personality. He no longer wishes to pass the secret on to his masters. Instead, his twisted brain believes he can use it to rule Mexico himself.

The Setup

The heroes begin the adventure in Tombstone. A messenger has approached each one with an offer of employment, to be explained that evening in a private dining room at the Crystal Palace Saloon (*not* the one Doc Holliday frequents, by the way).

Allow the players a little time to introduce their characters and interact. Once everyone's gotten to know each other, you're ready to start the adventure.

CHAPTER ONE: SPECIAL DELIVERY

SPECIAL DELIVERY

A well-dressed man with salt-and-pepper hair and a handlebar moustache enters the Crystal Palace Saloon and thanks the posse for answering his request. When he gets around to explaining his offer of employment, read the following passage.

Good evening, gentlemen (and ladies). My name is James Rogers. I represent a group of concerned individuals who wish to aid our impoverished and downtrodden neighbors to the south against their oppressive European dictators.

If this confuses any of the cowpokes, he clears his throat and says,

The Mexicans. We want to help them fight the French, son (or ma'am).

He then straightens his collar and continues,

We've put together a wagonload of much-needed supplies for these valiant souls. However, the French Foreign Legion—who would delight in confiscating our relief shipment—patrols the border.

We are searching for a group of individuals brave enough to strike a blow for freedom. Brave enough to risk capture by the Legion to aid their fellow man. We have reason to believe you folks meet those requirements.

There is one further stipulation—you must be prepared to leave tonight. The political situation, and the nature of our "supplies," requires we move as quickly as possible.

Negotiations

Rogers figures the heroes aren't going to do this out of the goodness of their hearts, but he might as well give it a shot. In fact, *some* characters might agree to it for exactly that reason, but these are definitely going to be in the minority!

When they insist on some sort of payment, he quickly changes to all business.

We're prepared to offer each of you \$500 to deliver the wagon and supplies. We'll pay you \$250 now as a measure of good faith. However, the goods we're sending are quite valuable, so we require some evidence of your own good faith in return.



DON'T DRINK THE WATER

You are to turn the shipment over to an individual named Miguel Cruz near the village of Bacoachi. He'll meet you at the ruins of an old mission. We have a map to guide you there. He'll pay you an agreed-upon sum in gold and provide you with a document as proof of this delivery. Return with this document and we'll pay you the rest of the money.

Rogers leaves it at that—unless a posse member questions further the method of delivery and payment.

I'll be frank. We are supporting the rebels in an effort to stem Mexican raids into our own country. These are beginning to become an annoyance to us.

You'll be delivering a fair amount of weapons; no doubt you could sell these for no small sum. Let me advise against this.

Play fair by us and you'll be \$500 richer. Double-cross us and you will live to regret it.

We know what the document you are to return with says—we agreed on it prior to arranging the shipment. Don't try to bring us a forgery.

If you've got ideas about running off with the weapons or gold, we'll find out soon enough. My associates and I are not ones to trifle with. We're willing to take on a government; don't think for an instant we'd be concerned about a few hired guns.

I believe you all to be trustworthy and true to your word. We wouldn't have selected you otherwise. If I've insulted you, I apologize.

Now, are we going to do business?

If the posse tries to negotiate, allow one (and only one!) Persuasion roll (–2). Every success nets the heroes an additional \$100—half now, half later. Even if the negotiator fails, Rogers increases the final payment by \$50, just because the group has some spirit. A roll of snake eyes gets them nothing but on the man's bad side!

Final Details

If they have no further questions, Rogers tells the heroes some of his associates will have the wagon behind the Crystal Palace within the hour—plenty of time for the cowpokes to gather their personal gear. At this time, he also gives them the map (see page 7).

He explains he's also taken the liberty of having rations and water enough to get the group to and from their destination loaded onto the wagon. Finally, he pays each of them \$250—or more if the posse successfully bartered a higher amount.

The Wagon

One hour later, true to Rogers' word, the wagon is delivered behind the Crystal Palace. It's pulled by two horses and the back is fully loaded, but covered by a heavy tarp.

Two burly cowpokes wait with the wagon until the posse arrives to take it off their hands. One says,

If I were you folks, I'd get movin' and get as close to the border as I could before daylight. Then hole up and sneak across tomorrow night. You probably don't want no entanglements with either side of the border.

After his word of advice, he and his partner slip off into the night.

It's possible none of the characters in the posse have the Driving skill to handle a wagon. That's fine—the driver won't need to roll for control unless he tries something more risky than moving the wagon at a normal pace.

The Contents

If the heroes check the contents (and of course they will!), they find the following:

100 Winchester '73 rifles

100 .44 Army revolvers

1 Gatling gun

5000 rounds of rifle ammunition (.44–40)

5000 rounds of pistol ammunition (.44)

5000 rounds of Gatling ammunition (.45)

5 cases of dynamite (20 sticks per case)

There are also 50 wool blankets, and the food and water promised by Rogers.

Crossin' the Border

The trip is nearly 100 miles each way. Since the heroes are probably avoiding well-traveled roads, at least on the way into Mexico, it takes them four days to reach Bacoachi. The return trip only takes three days without the ponderous wagon to slow them down.

CHAPTER ONE: SPECIAL DELIVERY

Regardless of whether or not the posse heeds the guard's words, the 25 miles or so to the border pass uneventfully. Even crossing the border proves to be nothing more than driving straight through the desert—assuming the posse does so in an unoccupied area, which should be quite simple since they have an accurate map.

If they insist on going through Agua Prieta or even Nogales, they have all kinds of trouble with Mexican border guards. Use the Mexican Soldier profile (page 20) and throw in as many as you want to show the heroes the error of their ways. Fast talking and even faster bribes are all that can get them through one of these towns without a *serious* battle. Even then, they have soldiers and Legionnaires hounding them every step of the way!

The Sonoran Desert

Fear Level: 1

The northern Mexican desert is a bleak and barren country. Trees of any size tend to grow only along extremely rare, and usually seasonal, streams. Low-lying bushes and hardy, sun-browned, wild grass are the most common vegetation in this dry, rocky land.

The desert is far from a flat plain, however. The entire region is part of the Sierra Madre range and nearly a mile above sea level. Mountains reaching even higher altitudes rise on all sides, although valleys of several miles wide separate each ridgeline. The valley floor is crisscrossed by arroyos and gullies carved by sudden flashfloods raging down from the highlands.

The ragged nature of the region makes it attractive to bandits, Apaches, and deserters, along with the *Juarista* guerrillas. A sizeable band of riders led by a canny scout could vanish into the Sonoran desert within a matter of minutes.

Dodgin' the Legion

The first obstacle the smugglers must overcome is the French Foreign Legion. A small outpost of Legionnaires guards—and often raids across—the Confederate border. The Legionnaires patrol about 10 miles or so back from the border, just far enough to let any would-be invaders think they've managed to avoid being spotted!



DON'T DRINK THE WATER

As long as they've taken some precautions (outriders, scouting ahead, etc.), have the hero farthest to the front of the group make a Stealth roll (−4) opposed by a group Notice roll for the Legionnaires (see page 19 for the Legionnaire profile). If the heroes are traveling at night, give the cowpoke a +2 on this roll.

With success on the roll, the heroes may avoid the small patrol without any difficulty—no more rolls are necessary. If they choose to get closer to the Legionnaires for some reason, each hero doing so needs to make his own Stealth roll, as usual.

If the Legionnaire patrol wins, they spot the posse before it has time to hide. If they get a raise or better on their roll, they have time to lay an ambush.

If neither side gets a success, deal cards for Initiative—the two groups literally run into each other.

Okay, You Caught Us...

Should the Legionnaires catch sight of the posse, they don't attack immediately. They take the chance to question the heroes and ask to inspect the wagon.

The gun-runners can fast-talk their way out of this by succeeding on a Persuasion roll (−4). Only one attempt is allowed. If some silver-tongued devil succeeds, he's convinced the patrol there's nothing to see, and the posse isn't the smugglers they're looking for. Even on a failure the soldiers are still open for negotiations, so in that case leaving safely requires a good, old bribe.

If the heroes can't talk their way out of it, the Legionnaires pull the tarp back and find the guns. The heroes have two options: surrender or fight it out.

Surrender gets them thrown in a Mexican jail. Fortunately, their stay is blissfully short. Unfortunately, it ends with a firing squad. If they start leaning toward giving up, point out the rather draconian legal system for which old Mexico is famous.

If they decide to fight, it's a rough one, but it beats being tied to a post and given a cigarette and blindfold!

Gunfight!

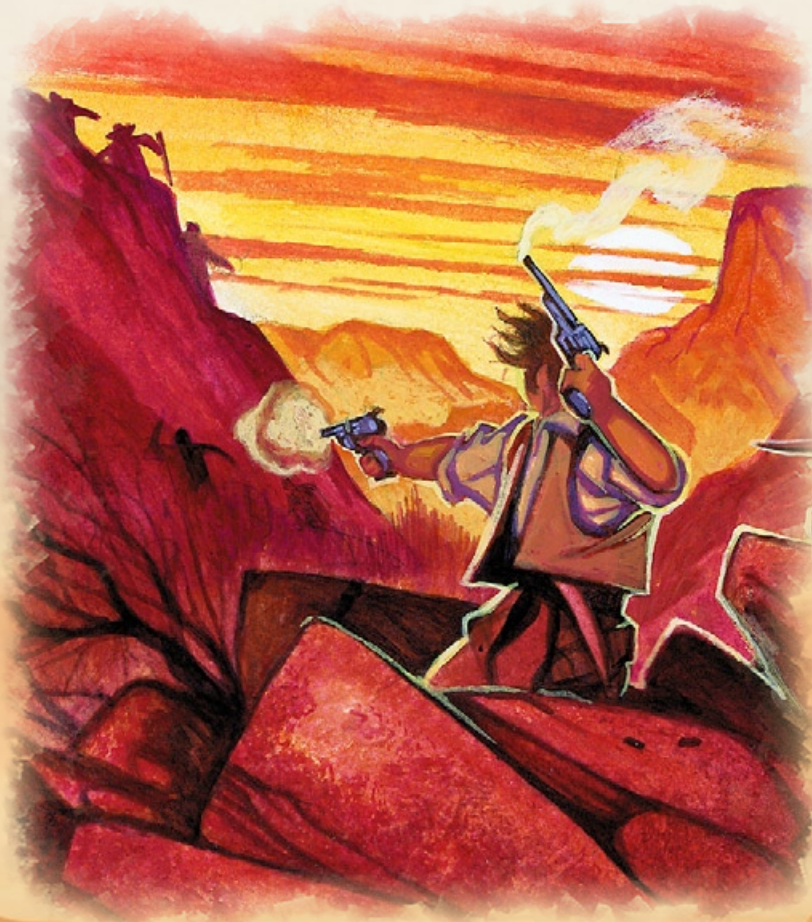
The Legion has a reputation as one of the toughest fighting units in the world. The heroes are about to find out first-hand that it's not just bragging either.

There are two Legionnaires, plus one more for each posse member. Once the lead starts flying, they're not interested in taking or becoming prisoners—it's a fight to the death!

However, there is one last option. The Legionnaires are on foot; a mounted posse can leave them in the dust. The soldiers get two shots at running heroes before distance, terrain, and small magazines allow the posse to fully expose its yellow streak.

Leaving the fight means the Legion knows the posse is in the area. Word gets back to Captain Diaz as well, and his men are better prepared (see **Chapter 3**). If the Legion patrol escapes after realizing the posse is smuggling guns, they attack on sight in the next encounter.

Legionnaires (2, plus 1 per hero): See page 19.



CHAPTER TWO: I'VE GOT THE PISTOLS...

I'VE GOT THE PISTOLS...

Other than the encounter with the Legionnaires, the trip is uneventful. Not only is northern Mexico a mountainous desert, it's fairly unpopulated. As long as the posse makes even a token effort at avoiding contact with people, they have no further encounters.

About midway through the fourth day of travel they arrive at the ruins marked on the rough map Rogers provided.

The Old Mission

Time has reduced this old Spanish mission to little more than a collection of adobe and brick walls surrounding a large courtyard. Several gaps breach the walls, and piles of wood mark the final resting place of less resilient buildings. None of the remaining structures has an intact roof, although a couple of them create enough shadow to escape the hot Mexican sun (assuming the posse arrives in the daytime, of course!).

An old well sits in the middle of the courtyard, but its crossbeam has long ago collapsed into its depths.

Skittish or paranoid cowpokes might be expecting some nasty surprise at the ruins. They're both right and wrong. At this point, have the heroes make a Notice roll (characters don't have to roll if they posted guards outside the mission).

A rumbling sound announces the approach of numerous mounted men.

The Juaristas

The guerillas, nearly 30 in number, ride quickly into the enclosure, separating as they do so to surround the wagon and heroes. Each one has a carbine in his hands and looks more than ready to use it.

After a tense moment one of the rebels, wearing a sombrero and crossed bandoleers, rides forward and addresses the cowpoke closest to the wagon.

My friends, this mission has been abandoned for years. If you are seeking spiritual guidance, I fear you may be out of luck.

Or maybe, you've come to tithe your wealth to the Almighty, eh? It is a shame the priests have all gone away, no?

I tell you what—because I like you, you give your wealth to me and I'll see it's well taken care of.

Of course, if you're seeking the afterlife, my men and I can help you there as well...

At the last remark, the man leans back in his saddle and laughs at his own cleverness. Several others in the group, although they don't speak English, catch on and laugh as well. He looks around and motions the rest of the band to join in.

After a moment, he looks back to the heroes and says,

I am Miguel Alejandro Ramirez de Cruz. You gringos should feel honored you have been robbed by one of the great heroes of the Revolution!

Assuming the heroes explain who they are at this point, Cruz quickly dismounts and moves to embrace them. His jovial but threatening manner is quickly replaced by a jovial and obsequious one.

I hope you can forgive my little jest, my friends. How was I to know you were allies? Come, come, we have business to conduct! Then, you must have dinner with my men and I, and rest from your long journey.

At his signal, his men lower their weapons and tensions ease.

DON'T DRINK THE WATER



Draw!

If the posse responds to Cruz's initial remarks by going for its weapons, remind the hot-heads they are outnumbered four- or five-to-one, and surrounded. Fighting is a bad—we repeat *bad*—idea here.

If they insist on throwing down here, before the fight gets underway one of the banditos gets a look under the tarp and calls out to Cruz. Realizing his error, Cruz immediately becomes very conciliatory and even apologetic.

Miguel Cruz: Wild Card. See page 20.

Juaristas (28): See page 19.

Bad Water

Cruz inventories the supplies on the wagon and is pleased with the contents. He seems particularly surprised to see the water. He asks,

How is it that you knew we were in need of water, amigos?

If the posse explains it is their supply, or asks Cruz for further information, he asks them to take a short ride with him and his men to their camp in a nearby valley. Along the way he explains,

We Juaristas seldom stay in one place long—that makes it harder for the French and their allies to catch us. This is but one of many areas we use as a hideout in the desert, and we chose it because it had a year-round fresh water spring nearby.

Unfortunately, the last time we returned we found the water had gone bad—or been poisoned by our enemies. Several of my men died shortly after drinking the spring water. Since then, we've had only what little water we could scrounge from mountain trickles and mud holes.

Even the water in the local village well has gone bad. Except for the garrison, the town was nearly deserted when we last checked.

But that is not our worst problem...

The Valley Camp

Fear Level: 2

After less than a half-hour's ride, the posse reaches the small campsite, nestled in a rare copse of trees at the back of a steep-walled valley. Cruz positions a couple of his men in hiding places near the mouth of the valley as guards.

CHAPTER TWO: I'VE GOT THE PISTOLS...

El Diablo de Sierras

After making sure none of his men are in earshot, he leans toward the posse and says,

Some wild animal has claimed these hills as its hunting grounds. It began by digging up our dead and dragging their bodies away to eat. Now it is killing my men and eating...parts of them. Some of my men are blaming a diablo de sierras—a mountain devil—for the deaths.

After seeing what the creature left of the bodies, I am inclined to agree with them.

If asked to describe the corpses, Cruz tells the heroes they look as though a wild animal had ravaged them. Most of the soft parts—eyes, abdomen, and fleshy parts of the arms and legs—were gnawed away. The creature also cracked the skulls and dug out the brains of its victims.

Any hero with a scientific or wilderness background can make a Common Knowledge roll (–2) to realize the last bit isn't a common feeding trait for most animals.

Cruz's Offer

After reaching the small, well-hidden camp, the Juaristas corral their horses and begin to unload the wagon. By this time, the heroes should be wondering about the payment and letter Cruz owes them. If asked, he assures them he hasn't forgotten them. But before he answers, Cruz says,

Amigos, I have a serious problem. This "mountain devil" has my men as nervous as old women, afraid to go out in the night. We are simple farmers. If we try to face the Emperor's soldiers in broad daylight, we will be slaughtered.

You have shown yourselves to possess great valor by bringing us these supplies. Yet, as long as this creature plagues us, these weapons are of little use. My men, children that they have become, are too frightened to hunt the beast themselves.

Will you do us yet another service before we conclude our business?

If the posse asks what they can expect in return, Cruz answers,

Why, the gold for these weapons and the document you require, of course! Perhaps my men are afraid of the creature stalking these hills, but they can still fight.



Besides, without the document—which only I can provide—you will risk the wrath of the rich men you work for, no?

No doubt Cruz's blackmail angers the heroes, but he does hold all the cards. Even if they outfight the Juaristas and escape, they've still got their employers back home to worry about. Cruz is the only person south of the border who knows what must be written on the document, and the posse can't force it out of him.

Hunting the Devil

The Juaristas have few clues on the creature or creatures. None of the men have seen the monster and survived to tell the tale. All that remains is circumstantial evidence.

The "devil" is actually the zombies of the four men who died from the poisoned water. Because the water diluted the reanimation fluid, they've become a less-intelligent form of walkin' dead known as feral dead. However, they're just as evil and voracious as their brighter cousins.

DON'T DRINK THE WATER



The bodies themselves reveal little. They are exactly as Cruz described them, just a little more decomposed. Viewing the desiccated bodies requires the heroes to make a Guts check versus Fear/Nausea.

An interested cowpoke who makes a Healing roll (-2) notes that the bite marks don't look like the teeth of a mountain lion or bear. In fact, they look more like *human* teeth prints!

The heroes may note that these graves were not disturbed, unlike the first ones Cruz mentioned.

The Last Attack

Cruz has one of his men lead the heroes up the valley to the site of the last attack, which occurred two nights ago.

The sand there is stained with dried blood and a few shell casings are lying on the ground as well. Any hero looking for tracks finds that the area of the attack was too badly disturbed by the other *Juaristas* when they found the bodies.

However, should a cowpoke wander off the trail a few yards and look for clues, he can make a Tracking roll. If he succeeds, he finds a number of booted human tracks and realizes that there were as many as four in the group. A raise tells him that one of the men was wearing only one boot—the other foot was in a sock.

The prints disappear into a rocky, hilly region above the site of the attack.

The Grisly Remains

Should the heroes ask to look at the bodies of the last victims, Cruz tells them they've already been buried. He's not thrilled with digging up the bodies of his men, but if a cowpoke gives a good explanation and succeeds on a Persuasion roll, he agrees.

The "Stolen" Dead

The heroes may wish to look at the graves the creature(s) dug up first. There were four such graves and, if asked, Cruz tells the heroes all the bodies belonged to men who'd been poisoned by the spring water. Before the attacks, they were the only ones the *Juaristas* had buried here.

Any hero examining these graves should roll her Notice. If she succeeds, she notices there are no signs of an animal's digging—no piles of dirt, no claw marks, etc. The graves appear to have almost collapsed inward, as if something dug its way out.

If she gets a raise she finds a single boot—which, by the way, matches the odd footprint at the scene of the attack.

Finally, any hero wandering in the scrub around the burial site can make a Tracking check. If she makes it, she finds four sets of human tracks leading from the area into the wilderness. On a raise, she notices one of the sets has only one boot; the other foot looks to have been covered in only a sock.

Like before, the tracks are soon lost among the dry and rocky hills.

CHAPTER TWO: I'VE GOT THE PISTOLS...

The Spring

At some point, the posse is likely to want to have a look at the poisoned spring. The water pours into a small pool about 10 feet across, and two feet deep at its deepest point. There is nothing visibly wrong with the spring, at least at first glance.

Any hero making a Notice roll (–2) finds a two- or three-week-old set of wagon tracks leading to and away from the spring. The wagon was pulled by two horses and the wheels were in excellent condition. The tracks lead out of the valley and turn to the south. Cruz tells the heroes that's the direction of Bacoachi—and the garrison, with the only people in the area likely to have a wagon of that sort.

Also, a cowpoke who succeeds on a Notice roll at the spring finds some odd, dark green stains on the rocks near where the wagon tracks end. The stains lead to the water, and a few globs of green fluid are visible clinging to rocks on the bottom of the spring.

This is LaCroix's reanimation fluid, dumped into the spring weeks ago by Diaz's men, prior to Cruz's arrival in the area. Any hombre silly enough to sample the water has to succeed on a Vigor roll (–4) or suffer a level of Fatigue, severe stomach cramps, and vomiting, followed by an agonizing death in 1d6 hours. Moments after dying, the poor sod comes back as one of the feral dead.

The Dead Attack

The investigation takes the posse until nightfall. Although they're probably none too pleased with Cruz's tactics, he invites them to stay in camp with the *Juaristas*. He reminds them that it would be much safer to stay in a big group.

In spite of their rocky beginning, Cruz honestly tries to make amends. The guerrillas have a small stock of tequila, which Cruz offers to share with the heroes, along with a meal of beans and cornbread.

Just about the time the heroes are scraping their plates, a warning shout goes up. Into the flickering firelight lurch the four victims of the poisoned water. Lacking the restraint of other walkin' dead, the smell of brains has drawn the feral dead to the campsite.

Unless the heroes stated they were being inordinately cautious, everyone must succeed on a Notice roll to avoid Surprise. After the Surprise roll, the posse members must then make Guts checks. Don't forget the Fear Level of 2!

Feral Dead (4): See page 18.

The *Juaristas*, including Cruz, are badly shaken by the zombies' appearance. A few run screaming into the dark, but even those who stand their ground are out of the fight for the first two rounds. The posse members—or at least those able to act—are on their own at first. Feel free to have the dead attack stunned *Juaristas* instead of the heroes. After all, there are a good deal more of them.

After two rounds, the *Juaristas* snap out of their shock and fill the zombies full of lead, cutting the battle short. However, any heroes who made a good showing have gained a tremendous amount of respect in the guerrillas' eyes.

Marshal, if you're running short on time, you can cut this encounter. Simply have the *Juaristas* show up with the bodies of the zombies. They've already killed them, but Cruz wants the heroes to see what is really going on in the area.



DON'T DRINK THE WATER

VIVA LIBERTAD!

After the battle, Cruz approaches the posse. He has a small bag and a folded piece of paper.

My friends, you've earned my respect in addition to these. I hope you will accept my apologies for being, how shall we say, less than cooperative earlier?

It is obvious to me that the garrison in Bacoachi is responsible for these unholy deeds. From what I've seen, those men poisoned the water with some strange liquid, knowing it would cause the dead to rise again and hunt their former companions. With the weapons you've brought us, we will wipe those scum from the face of the Earth.

I would ask for your help as well. The garrison is poorly manned—probably less than 20 soldiers—but, as I said before, we are only farmers. The men who did this are enemies of everyone, not just the Juaristas.

Will you join us?

If the posse seems reluctant, Cruz adds,

I see you are clever as well as brave, no? You know about the rumors that the garrison guards a fortune in gold, don't you? Of course you do! I tell you what—if you help us I'll split the gold with you, 50-50. How is that?

If the posse asks him how much gold, Cruz only says, as he lets loose a deep belly laugh,

Enough to make us all rich many times over, my friends!

Between a desire to help the revolutionaries overthrow a foreign dictator, the chance to defeat evil schemers, and a shot at solid gold goodies, there should be ample cause for the heroes to agree to Cruz's second offer.

Scouting Bacoachi

Cruz tells the posse the *Juaristas* will attack the garrison the following night. The water shortage prevents them from delaying the attack any longer. Even the barrel brought by the posse doesn't last long when divided among the entire band of guerrillas.

Cruz, a few of his best scouts, and any posse members that wish to go along head out early the next morning to get a look at the village. Cruz takes the group to a high point a little over a mile away. Using an old telescope, the scouts spy on the garrison and surrounding village.

This is another scene that can be trimmed for time if necessary. Cruz and his men scout the area alone and return with all the information found below.

Ghost Town

The village itself is deserted. Less than a dozen adobe buildings make up the settlement. A well sits at the northern end of the single street and a walled compound occupies the southern end of town.

Other than one or two loose chickens, no sign of life is visible. Doors and shutters swing back and forth in the light breeze. A piece of cloth, maybe a poncho or small blanket, tumbles along the single street in the town. Overhead, carrion birds circle slowly in the rising heat.

Any hero observing the village through the telescope notices bodies along the street and half in buildings, with bloodstains on and around the bodies. None of them are moving.

A small cemetery sits outside the western edge of Bacoachi. Any cowpoke examining it with the telescope sees several graves have been exhumed. The graves appear to have been burst open, though, rather than dug up.

CHAPTER THREE: VIVA LIBERTAD!

After poisoning the well in town, Diaz and his men bottled up in the garrison and let the feral dead have run of the village. Once things quieted down, they captured or shot the remaining zombies. Those they captured, Diaz imprisoned in cells under in the garrison's main building.

The Garrison

From their vantage point, the scouts can tell the compound appears to have a main building and a smaller wooden building within its walls. The main building is made of adobe and occupies the back third of the compound. The wooden building rests against the east wall and appears to be a stable.

The walls are adobe, over a foot thick, and about 15 feet high. There appear to be guard catwalks running inside them near the top. The only obvious entrance is a large set of reinforced wooden gates that is always closed.

No more than three soldiers are ever visible on the walls of the garrison. Two remain on catwalks near the gate, one on each side watching both the front and sides of the compound. One stands atop the main building, guarding the rear.

Duck, You Suckers!

Cruz's plan is the essence of simplicity. That night, he and his men blow the main gates with some of the dynamite from Rogers' shipment. Then, relying on surprise and confusion, they and the posse rush into the compound and shoot the place up. Some of Cruz's men remain nearby, guarding the group's mounts for a quick getaway, if necessary.

The garrison looks sadly undermanned and Cruz estimates his men—not counting the heroes—outnumber the soldiers. The real trick is getting the dynamite to the gates without being spotted.

The posse may have some suggestions here. Magic or just a stealthy cowpoke goes a long way toward making Cruz's plan viable. If the heroes can't help, the *Juaristas* chance it on their own.

Once the rebels breach the gate, Cruz plans to bring the wagon—with the Gatling gun mounted on a tripod in the back—into the compound to bolster the *Juaristas'* firepower further. If one of the heroes is a particularly skilled shooter, Cruz offers her the honor of manning the weapon; otherwise Cruz does it himself.

Bacoachi

Fear Level: 3

The town is just as dead as it looked from a distance. The night is moonless and shadows fill every window, every doorway. A deathly quiet blankets the town, save for the occasional groan of a shutter creaking in the night breeze.

As they enter the village, however, the heroes get a good look at the unholy slaughter that occurred here. Streaks of blood mar the adobe walls and half-eaten corpses lay



DON'T DRINK THE WATER

in doorways or draped over windowsills. After getting an eyeful, the heroes must make a Guts roll, or suffer from Fear/Nausea.

Ka-boom!

If the posse has a plan for getting the dynamite to the gates, now is the time for them to enact it. You'll have to play this one by ear, Marshal, but possible scenarios include a diversion, hexes or other magic, or simple Stealth. Whether or not the guards detect them is entirely dependent on the heroes' actions—and rolls.

There are only two guards near the gate and normally they aren't expecting any trouble; they are Inactive. If, on the other hand, the Legion spotted them earlier and they got away, the sentries are more alert; in this case they are Active guards. Darkness also aids the heroes' advance, granting them a +2 on Stealth rolls.

If the *Juaristas* attempt to place the explosives themselves, two guerrillas try to creep up to the gate. At the last second, the guards spot them and gun them down. In a last act of defiance, the *Juarista* carrying the dynamite rolls it to the gate just in time to blow it open.

If either the heroes or the *Juaristas* are spotted trying to blow the gate, things are a little tougher once they get inside. Make a note of it—it will come back to haunt them.

Into the Breach...

Once the gate is blown, Cruz tells everyone to move fast. He has 20 men with him at this point. It takes the wagon and Gatling gun five rounds to reach the compound after the gate is blown.

There are two guards on the wall near the gate (the wall shielded them from the dynamite blast) and one atop the main building in the back. These guards begin firing on the attackers immediately.

There are only 12 other soldiers in the garrison besides the guards, and all are bedded down in the barracks (see map). How quickly they react depends on whether or not the guards spotted the attempt to plant the dynamite or not.

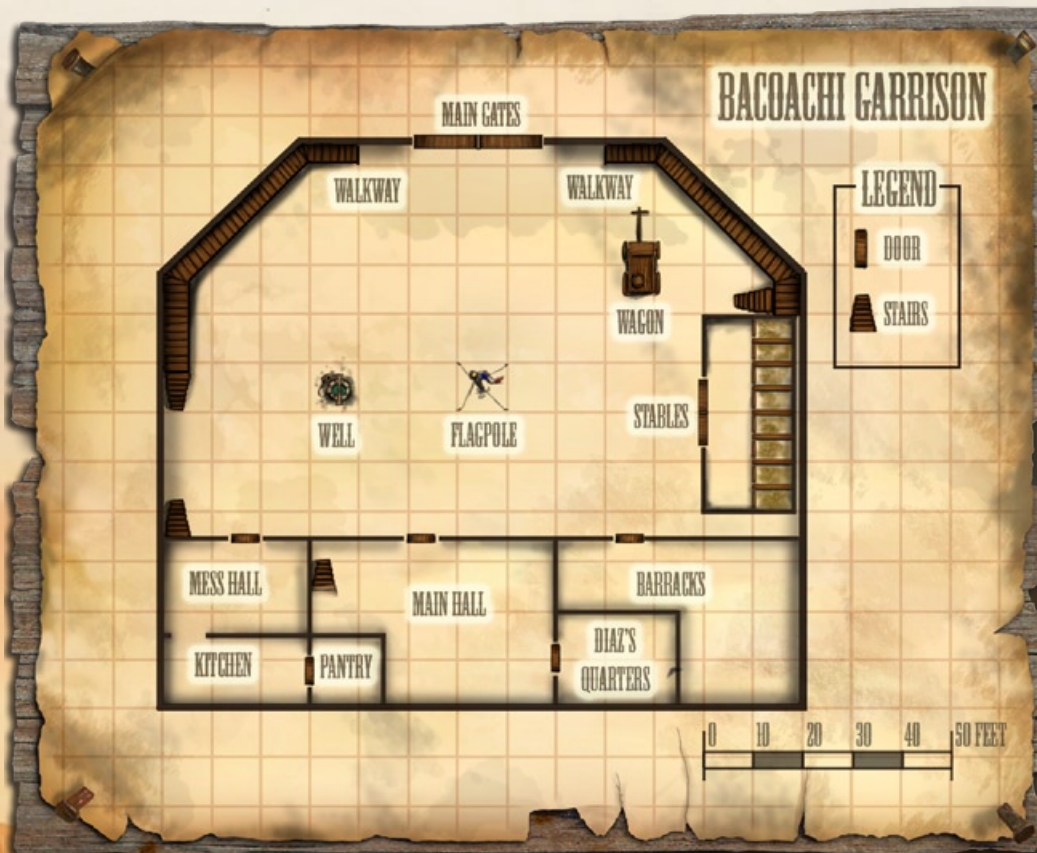
If the guards detected the attack, the men pour out of the building as the *Juaristas* storm the compound. Otherwise, it takes them two rounds to ready their weapons and get moving.

Garrison Soldiers

The soldiers' uniforms consist of a red shortcoat, white shirt, and red pants with a black stripe along the outside of each leg. Gold buttons adorn the coat and the entire affair is usually topped with a tall, black-plumed, red hat.

To a degree, Diaz's plan backfired. The town well draws from the same source as the garrison well; by poisoning it, he's inadvertently doomed himself and his men. However, the concentration is much weaker in the garrison, so the fluid's poison is progressing at a greatly retarded rate.

Mexican Soldiers (14):
See page 20.



CHAPTER FOUR: THE DEADLY GAUNTLET

The Wagon

Near the gate is the wagon Diaz used to carry the reanimation fluid. If you're feeling really vicious (or just need a laugh), you can always have a stray round or stick of dynamite land in the wagon, spraying the courtyard with the liquid. Within a few rounds, casualties start to rise as walkin' dead (the real deal, not feral dead) and attack anyone nearby.

If the heroes have a chance to examine the wagon later, they find an odd emblem on the side. A Common Knowledge roll tells the heroes it's the emblem of the Bayou Vermilion railroad.

The Zombie Stomp

Three rounds into the combat, the door to the main hall bursts open and a pack of eight feral dead rush into the courtyard. Diaz released them from the cells and doesn't really care who they attack at this point—a good thing since they jump on the nearest living creatures!

A good way to divide up the dead is to send two after soldiers, three after *Juaristas* and three after the posse. Yes, that does give the heroes more than their share, but they are the *heroes* after all!

Feral Dead (2 per hero): See page 18.

Diaz Attacks

Diaz himself follows the feral dead into the compound. Unless the heroes stop him, he begins killing *Juaristas* each round. Once engaged, Diaz draws his saber and switches his pistol to his off-hand. Remember the two-weapon penalties of -2 (for the saber) and -4 (for the pistol) if he uses both in the same action.

Juan Carlos Burgos de Diaz: Wild Card. See page 18.

If things turn too badly against him (and you've got time remaining in the game), Diaz shoots the barrel of reanimation fluid himself. This has two effects: it generates zombies (see **The Wagon**, above), and upon dousing Diaz it instantly heals any wounds he has suffered so far.

Solid Gold Goodies!

A search of the garrison turns up a few minor personal belongings, ammunition, food, typical weapons, and 16 dead (mostly eaten) horses in the stable—but no treasure.

THE SECRET EMPIRE

Unknown to all but a tiny handful north—or south—of the border, there is a secret society dedicated to returning the ancient Aztec Empire to its bloody glory. Officially known as the Order of the Obsidian Blade, it is led by Xitlan, Santa Anna's "pet" sorcerer (or so the General thinks!).

The Secret Empire works tirelessly to undermine the French government in Mexico. Xitlan, actually an undead Aztec sorcerer, is only supporting Santa Anna because it currently serves his own purposes. Xitlan's people are just as opposed to yanquis, but the French are a more immediate target!

Expect the Secret Empire to rear its ugly head in an upcoming Deadlands adventure, Marshal.

The closest thing to an artifact is in Diaz's quarters. Any cowpoke looking through here who makes a successful Notice roll finds an old, but ornate, obsidian knife—maybe a letter opener. Actually, it's an emblem of Diaz's secret masters, the Order of the Obsidian Blade (see sidebar), but the posse isn't likely to realize that. An archaeologist might pay as much as \$50 for it. Don't spend it all in one place, Indiana!

When asked about the treasure, Cruz shrugs his shoulders and laughs,

Oh, amigo, that's right! I forgot to tell you—I was lying about the treasure. There isn't any!

Headin' Home


All that's left is for the posse to get back to Tombstone with the gold and document from Cruz. If anyone reads it, the paper simply says,

I got it. Cruz

Unless you've got spare time left on your hands, the posse makes it back to Arizona without any further troubles. If Cruz has any guerrillas left, he even offers to provide a couple of guides to help the heroes avoid patrols.

DON'T DRINK THE WATER

FRIENDS & FOES

Here are the relevant details and statistics for all the major players in this tale, and the minor ones too. Wild Cards are marked with a marshal's badge, like this: 

Feral Dead

Feral walkin' dead are created by a weak or watered-down version of Baron LaCroix's reanimation fluid. These are similar to the abominations spawned in Nagodoches, Texas, after one of LaCroix's trains derailed nearby. Feral dead are faster than the more commonly encountered walkin' dead. Their hunger for human brains is nearly all-consuming and, once aroused, becomes the zombies' sole concern.

Although not as intelligent as other forms of walkin' dead, feral dead are frightfully cunning in laying ambushes. However, unlike regular walkin' dead, feral dead are unable to use firearms or other weapons.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fear:** Feral dead are terrifying creatures.
- **Fearless:** The feral dead are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Hunger:** Once one of these zombies downs a victim, it must make a Smarts roll to keep from stopping whatever else it was doing and chowing down on the unfortunate sap.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Due to their mad, all-consuming hunger, feral dead can make two Fighting attacks per action without a penalty.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage (except for the head).

- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a feral dead's head (–4 Called Shot) are +2 damage, for a total of +6.



Juan Carlos Burgos de Diaz

Once a handsome and dashing young officer, Diaz's contact with the reanimation fluid has turned him into a foul parody of a man. His eyes have acquired a greenish cast—whites and all. His veins are distended and a putrescent green in color. His nails and hair have grown at an accelerated rate and become wild and unkempt. His uniform, once his pride and joy, is now stained and tattered. He mumbles and gibbers beneath his breath almost constantly.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (English) d4, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Mean, Vow (Order of the Obsidian Blade)

Edges: Command, Hold the Line!, Soldier (Officer), Strong Willed

Gear: Colt Peacemaker double-action (12/24/48; 2d6+1; RoF 1; Shots 6; AP 1), 20 rounds of ammunition, saber (Str+d6), ruined uniform.

Special Abilities:

- **Regeneration (Fast):** Diaz makes a Vigor roll every round to heal any damage he has sustained—even after he has been “killed.”
- **Resistant to Pain:** Diaz ignores wound modifiers.
- **Thick Blood:** His blood has become thick and viscous, giving him +2 to recovering from Shaken.
- **Weakness (Head):** Diaz cannot regenerate wounds inflicted to his noggin, and he can be put down by a killing shot to a head.

CHAPTER FOUR: FRIENDS & FOES

Juaristas

The *Juaristas* are a motley band of ex-farmers, bandits and a rare soldier or two who've joined the fight for Mexican freedom. They have no "uniform," instead wearing their old work clothes or bits and pieces of uniforms they've scrounged during raids.

For the most part they're a rowdy lot, fond of drinking and partying. Since none speak English, unless a hero understands Spanish they have little interaction with the posse except through Cruz.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Wanted (Minor)

Edges: –

Gear: Spencer carbine .56 (20/40/80; 2d8; RoF 1; Shots 7; AP 2), 25 rounds of ammunition, clothing, rations, canteen.

Legionnaires

The standard uniform of the French Foreign Legion is a blue greatcoat, with the skirts usually buttoned back for marching, and a red and blue *kepi* (brimmed cap) with a white *puggaree* (headcloth) dangling from behind to keep the sun off the head. In Mexico, many Legionnaires have adopted local garb, abandoning the greatcoat and exchanging the *kepi* for a broad-brimmed sombrero.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Gambling d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Spanish) d4, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Sneak d6

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Outsider (Foreign Legion), Vow (Serve the Legion, protect France)

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Marksman, Soldier

Gear: Minie rifle (24/48/96; 2d8; RoF 1; Shots 2; AP 2), 50 rounds of ammunition, uniform, canteen.



DON'T DRINK THE WATER

Mexican Soldiers (14)

These soldiers are half-dead from drinking water tainted with the reanimation fluid, but they are still capable of putting up one hell of a fight.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Vow

Edges: Soldier

Gear: Winchester '73 (24/48/96, 2d8, RoF 1, Shots 15, AP 2), lance (treat as spear; only carried when mounted), 50 rounds of ammunition, uniform, rations, canteen, horse.

Special Abilities:

- **Near Dead:** The poison has corrupted the guards' bodies. They have their Toughness increased by 1, and gain +1 to Spirit rolls to recover from Shaken.



Miguel Cruz

Miguel Cruz is a tall, relatively fair-skinned Mexican. He has dark black hair and beard and looks to be in his early to mid-thirties. Cruz is a boisterous, but very brave,

man. He's not foolhardy; he knows his men are no match for a large unit of government soldiers. Whenever possible, his band performs quick hit-and-run raids designed more to harass than to harm.

He jokes a lot, but underneath he's deadly serious about his goal of freeing Mexico. However, he's not above a little larceny now and then.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle, English, French) d6, Notice d8, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Death Wish (Free Mexico), Enemy (French invaders), Wanted (Major)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Two-Fisted

Gear: Two Colt Navy revolvers (12/24/48; 2d6+1; RoF 1; Shots 6; AP 1), Spencer carbine .56 (20/40/80; 2d8; RoF 1; Shots 7; AP 2), 50 rounds of ammunition for both calibers, crossed bandoleers, sombrero, canteen.



WEIRD WAR II

War.

It's not what you expect.

I expected the grateful thanks of liberated frenchwomen, not dead soldiers dragged across battlefields behind their own undying hands that refused to quit fighting.

Not twelve-foot beasts in Nazi uniforms, unwounded by mortars but fleeing from our chaplain's pleas to God.

Not battleships of fog and memory, shelling the coasts with the bones of her drowned sailors.

It's not what you expect.

