



# THE 13<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

By  
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**FARSIGHT  
GAMES**

## + + + REPORT + + +

MAY 24<sup>TH</sup> 1952

For The Attention Of: \_\_\_\_\_

Stamped:

Dear Sir - Here is the historical documentation you wanted sealed in the vault for future generations. I' ve attached a summary that covers the details within. Excuse me the rather colourful use of our language in my summary - I was trained as a journalist, not as a military attaché. I hate what I have become. It' s hard to imagine that my last piece of writing should be describing the madness the world has fallen into.

Good luck on your mission to Poland. I won' t be here when you get back.

NC

+ + + +

The Second Great War didn' t end quite as well as the Allies would have wanted.

In June 1944 the Allies assaulted fortress Europe with everything they had on land, on sea and in the air. The Axis were on the back foot and the war intensified.

Within a year the Allies had pushed into Berlin and the war raged street by street. The Japanese were being pushed back in the Pacific theatre and the end of the carnage and sorrow seemed close at hand. Each foot of progress was paid for in blood on all sides.

We were once told that Adolf Hitler, the leader of Germany and the most hated man in Europe - possibly the world - was found dead by Russian forces, after committing suicide and then having his body set alight in a ditch. They were right in one thing, a body *was* found.

But it wasn' t Hitler.

Hitler had faked his death and escaped with the help of his Gestapo and SS, fleeing into Austria and then into a secret hiding place in the mountains of Switzerland. Hitler, unbalanced and near insanity, had a last part to play in the war. Unbeknownst to the Allies his scientists had developed a fully operational atomic bomb.

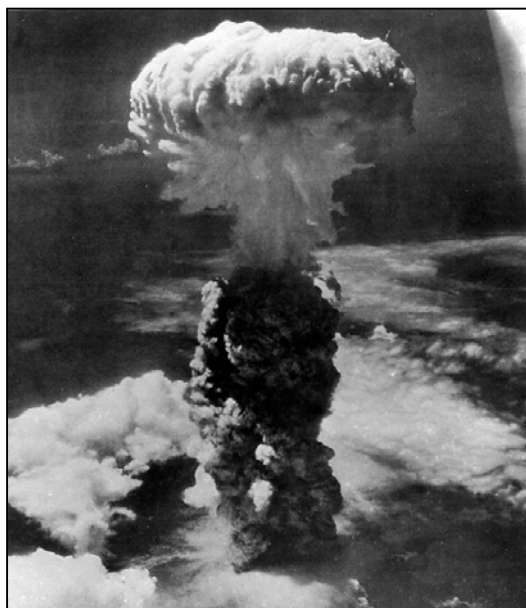


They had developed the weapon a full year previously, and had even had time to produce dozens of these catastrophic weapons, and the modified V2 rockets to deliver them to far-off targets. Knowing the war was going against him and his Axis he had even secretly shipped some of these weapons to the Pacific to be placed into the hands of his Japanese allies. He wasn't insane enough to use the weapons straight away. What was the use in ruling a world that had been burned to a cinder? His plan was to hold the world to ransom, threaten it with annihilation into submission

But then he changed his mind.

He changed his mind when the United States of America dropped two atomic bombs on Japan. The Japanese, forced back onto their island by American forces, responded in kind and fired their atomic-laden V2 weapons at targets in Asia and on the western seaboard of the USA.

Hitler, panicking that the Allies also had atomic weapons and were now capable of utterly destroying his vision of an Aryan future, decided to use his own weapons to strike at targets in Europe, Russia, Asia and the American mainland. If he could not have the world then no one could.



Atomic death decimated all countries and continents, especially the USA, the United Kingdom and Russia. China was hit hard; even Australia wasn't spared the atomic devastation. Even those countries not directly struck by the weapons were affected, the radiation caring very little for borders, getting into food, air and water.

Millions upon millions died. Capital cities were cast into ruin. Whole cultures were wiped clean from the face of the earth and the world was thrown into chaos. Economics, industry, social and political structure all collapsed in the raging atomic fires.

Many took to underground bunkers and installations, such as old underground railway networks and purpose built shelters, but many more tried to exist on the irradiated surface. Years passed.

In 1952, 13 years after the beginning of the war, it was realised that, even after the atomic war had ceased, the World War was still being fought. Although their countries had been decimated and the people just wanted to survive, the radical elements of both the Allied and Axis forces had risen again to try and finish the war they had started. Nazis were once again moving across the wastelands imposing their will on survivors, radical Japanese soldiers took up arms against the will of their own people to take the war back to the Pacific and the Allied forces, realising that the enemy had returned, turned on their own exhausted civilians to force them into combat and finish the fight. The common people just wanted to survive, not kill.

But the war rages on. Across the atomic wastelands men fight and die.

German forces landed on the mainland of the United States in early 1952 with an expeditionary force. The devastated east coast could do very little to prevent them from landing as many of their fighting men had been killed or trapped in Europe seven years before. The Nazis also entered the United Kingdom later that year, and made headway into the Mediterranean and North Africa.



The United States of America, the worst hit by the atomic strikes, was almost totally incapacitated by the attacks but managed to somehow cling to life.

Russia, wracked by the German invasion and then the atomic strike, pushed back into Europe with one thought - take the ruin for themselves. Their attack was not about stopping Germany but acquiring new lands and resources now that theirs had been destroyed. On their eastern borders they started crossing into Chinese territory to secure lands the Chinese were forced to abandon, but the Chinese responded and now wars rages between the two countries.

In North Africa the British forces were forced to retreat back to the UK as the Nazis dropped into the scorched ruins of London, and the French, their own country almost wiped clean by the fire, took advantage and took back old territories, much to the chagrin of those who lived there. Britain also tightened its hold on India as they had lost little to the atomic war, but India knows that the British influence on the world has waned and are doing what they can to get the British out so that they can run their own affairs.

The world has been reduced to a wasteland, a barren hunk of burned rock where most things are dead or dying. Our beloved cities are burned-out shells, the people reduced to digging in the dirt to survive. Some communities have sprung up here and there, but some of these fall foul to disease, famine, invading forces or brutal raiding scavengers.

And in all this devastation, mankind still finds time to wage war on each other. This Second Great War is in its thirteenth year and still there is no end in sight.

Damn you, you butchers. Damn you all to hell.



## INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to **The 13<sup>th</sup> Year**.

Back in the early 1990s I played *Twilight: 2000*, a post-apocalyptic roleplaying game that shied away from the usual crazy-mutants science-fiction scenario and focused on the reality of a post-nuclear holocaust world. I primarily used the game for a Second World War campaign and got many hours of use from it. I always wanted to run a post-apocalyptic game but never got around to it.

A couple of years ago I began to look at post-holocaust scenarios again for a possible campaign. I didn't want to do anything set in the now or the future because there are preconceptions of what these games would be like, either crazy radioactive mutated monsters or *Mad Max*-style stories. I was finding it difficult to visualise a suitable apocalyptic world I wanted to play in.

Last year I saw a trailer for the video game *Fallout 3*. The trailer played some old music and showed a world destroyed by nuclear fire. It was incredibly atmospheric and I was amazed. Here was a 1950s style game (I wasn't aware at the time that the game was actually set in the future) set in a post-holocaust world. This got me thinking – what if the Second World War had suffered an atomic holocaust? Could I take the *Twilight: 2000* premise, mix it with the Second World War games I did (minus the Nazi Vampires, of course) and create a viable, playable world?

After playing *Fallout 3* and seeing how vast and varied the holocaust world they had created in that game was, I realised that I could.

And I did.

**The 13<sup>th</sup> Year** is a game set in an alternate reality. Hitler never died and actually developed his own atomic weapons. Not only that, but he used them on the world in an insane attempt to claim victory over his enemies. The survivors just want to survive, the military want to finish a war because they have no other purpose left in life. It is set in 1952; 13 years after the beginning of the Second World War, in a period when decimated governments are trying to claw their way back to power and old enemies resurface once again. Armies are on the move and the war continues, the sides pretty much carrying on from where they'd left off in 1945. It's the Second World War set against a post-atomic holocaust wasteland.

In these rules I've tried to keep it as crazy-mutant free as possible, but if you want to do that kind of game then be my guest – the SKETCH system is more than capable of taking any extras you want to throw at it. You can even ignore the setting and use the rules for a Second World War game, there's no problem there either. What I'm presenting to you here is a fully playable game but it is open to additions and ideas of your own.

It's being assumed that you've downloaded this game already knowing all about roleplaying games – as such, there is no 'how to roleplay' section in this game. SKETCH games are designed for fast, last minute games for existing RPG groups, so apologies if you have downloaded this with the intention of getting started in the hobby. There are plenty of resources on the internet explaining the hobby of tabletop roleplaying games so you should be able to get all the information you need from them.

The weapons are hardly accurate as far as ammo capacity and damage effectiveness is concerned. I've even ignored rules for range, but you might want to put some negative modifiers on the skill levels for longer ranges. I'm not a gun expert and there's no way any rules in any game can accurately portray the damage these weapons do. The rules for weapons are to serve the game and for no other purpose.

I've also used metres and kilometres for measuring distances. This is for simple ease of use, but if you want to substitute metres for yards then go for it – it's your game, after all, so you can chop and change as you please.

The images I have used I have sourced from the Internet. They are pictures from the Second World War and are included to add flavour and imagery to the game. They are not being used as a representation of the actual characters and situations in the game; they are not actors posing for a picture. I have used the pictures to illustrate the age the game is set in and no offence is intended. The images are copyrighted their original owners and are not being used for profit. If you do have a legitimate problem with an image I have used then email me at [farsightgames@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:farsightgames@yahoo.co.uk) and explain to me the problem – I will be more than happy to remove the image.

Thank you for downloading **The 13<sup>th</sup> Year** and taking the time to read this introduction. I hope you enjoy your time in 1952.

**JONATHAN HICKS**

*Director of FARSIGHT GAMES*

## THE RULES

All characters are represented by two things – their **STRENGTH** and their **SKILLS**.

**STRENGTH** is a single score that decides how much physical damage, a person can take. This is decided by rolling 1D3 and adding 2 to the result, to get a number between 3 and 5. If this score ever reaches zero, the character is unconscious. If it ever goes *below* zero, the character is dead.

**STRENGTH = 1D3+2**

**SKILLS** are divided into six groups. The Player is given the numbers 1 through to 6 to put in each skill group – this means that he can have a skill level of 1 in one group, 2 in another, 3 in another and so on up to 6.

This number is what the player has to roll or less on 1D6 to succeed in an action. So remember: during character creation, the higher the number in the skill group the better the PC is at those skills!

***For example, Player A is creating a tank driver character, so he puts a 1 in Survival, 2 in Technical, 3 in Combat, 4 in Agility, 5 in Vehicles and 6 in Personality.***

### **The Skills Golden Rule is:**

***Rolls of natural 6 are always a failure  
Rolls of natural 1 are always a success.***

Each skill group, from Agility through to Vehicles, covers abilities that are unique to that group. This means that if the character has an Agility score of 4, then any action that required a physical action would have a skill level of 4. Agility would cover all actions such as climbing a rock face to leaping a gorge. So, instead of reading down a long list of individual skills, the player would simply choose the skill group the action they wish to perform is most likely covered by and they roll against that group's skill level.

***For example, Player A has a skill level of 4 in Agility and wants to jump the gap between two buildings. This means the player must roll a 1,2,3 or 4 on a single six-sided die to succeed. Any other number rolled is a failure.***

So, for jumping onto a moving vehicle, the player rolls against their Agility skill level. For shooting at someone with a pistol, they roll against their Combat skill level. To con an NPC out of their money they roll against their Personality skill level.

All skill rolls are made this way, with the exception of Opposed Rolls and certain types of combat. See the skill group descriptions below to get a better idea of where skills should be placed.

If, for any reason, a decision cannot be reached on which skill group should be used for a particular action then add the two skill groups together and divide by two, rounding down – the resulting number is the skill level to beat.

***For example, Player A wants to jump between two vehicles during combat – Player A thinks it should be an Agility skill roll, but the GM says that it should be a Vehicles skill roll because they are on moving trucks. To compromise, they add the Agility and Vehicle skill levels together (3+5=8) and divide it by two (4). Player A has to roll 4 or less to make the jump.***

**Agility** - This skill allows the character to do all kinds of non-combat physical actions, such as climbing, swimming, jumping or lifting.



**Combat** – The ability to use fists, blades and firearms.

For hand-to-hand or hand-held weapon combat, use the ‘Opposing Rolls’ system, by players rolling a D6 and adding their Combat skill level to the roll. Whoever rolls the highest number wins the round and the loser takes damage.

For missile weapons and small arms, such as thrown items and pistols, roll against the Combat skill level as you would for a normal skill roll. To determine who fires first, everyone rolls 1D6 and adds their Agility skill – the highest goes first, the next highest goes second and so on. If any rolls are tied, simply roll again.

There are some extra rules for small arms and explosives:

Small arms come in four types, each with a different ammo capacity:

**Pistol (P)** 6 ammo for a revolver, 14 for an automatic.

**Sub Machine Gun (SMG)** 30 ammo.

**Battle Rifle (BR)** with 7 ammo.

**Machine Gun (MG)** with up to 100 belt-fed ammo. For every extra shot fired (all weapons except for bolt-action rifles) minus the skill level by 1 for every extra shot. Each shot is rolled for separately.

If the player wants to fire a ‘burst’ (SMG and MG only) then they get a +1 to their skill level and damage roll but they use up 5 rounds of ammunition per roll.

Explosives have a burst radius equal to 1 metre for every point of damage rolled – anything within this radius takes damage.

**Personality** – Use this skill when you need to command, charm, bargain, persuade or even seduce another character (note that this skill cannot be used on PCs).

This skill works in a slightly different way to normal skills. If you’re trying to do something honest, like convince someone that they must do the right thing or be honestly pleasant to someone then you must roll **less** than your Personality skill level. If you intend to do something dishonest, such as lie about something, cheat someone or con them out of their money, then you have to roll **more** than your Personality skill level. This reflects the fact the lower your Personality, the more willing and able you are to do immoral things.

**Survival** – This skill gives the character the ability to exist in the apocalyptic atomic wastelands that is now the surface of the earth. It enables them to scrounge for supplies, avoid dangerous radiation and storms, and otherwise exist on the scorched surface of the world.

*Scrounging:* It’s necessary to find equipment, food and supplies in deserted or bombed-out cities. You can nominate one item you need per day and the roll is made, with the difficulty depending on the item wanted. 1D6 days worth of Food and Water +3; Medical Supplies for single use +2; 1D6 x 20 km/hours worth of Fuel and Batteries -1; Small Arms or 1D6x5 rounds of Ammunition -2; Vehicles, Heavy Weapons and 1 pound Explosives or 1 grenade -3. If you fail the roll, you can’t try or nominate another item again until the next day.

*Environment:* Also, the cold nights and dangerous weather is as much a threat as the enemy. You must roll against this skill when adverse weather strikes to successfully find shelter. If you fail to do so then you lose 1 hit point per hour the weather continues. Storms last 4D6 hours and you are allowed to re-test every 6 hours.

**Technical** - This enables the character to repair and modify vehicle engines, generators and all other kinds of machines. Anything that has wires and moving parts can be used or repaired with this skill.

**Vehicles** – This skill allows the character to do all the things that are necessary to get by in a vehicle, be it a motorbike, a car or a tank.

So, to succeed in a roll a player must roll 1 six-sided die. If the number rolled equals the skill number or lower then the roll is a success. If they roll higher than the number, then it is a failure.

The GM can change the character's skill level if they feel that the action they wish to perform is more difficult, or even easier, than normal. They can lower the skill level to simulate a harder action, or raise it for easier ones.

<b>Difficulty</b>	<b>Change Skill Level By:</b>
Very easy	+3
Easy	+2
Normal	0
Hard	-1
Very Hard	-2
Extremely Hard	-3

## **ACTION ROUNDS**

The time it takes to perform a skill is up the GM, but in general each action takes one round to perform. A single action round lasts for five seconds.

## **OPPOSING ROLLS**

If for any reason two characters 'face off', pitting either wits or physical skills against one another, then do the following; each player rolls the D6 and adds their applicable skill level to the result. Whoever rolls the highest wins the face-off. If the rolls are tied then roll again until someone wins.

For hand to hand or weapon combat (**not** missile or thrown weapons), use the Opposing Rolls system, with each player rolling a D6 and adding his or her Combat skill level to the roll. Whoever rolls the highest number wins the round and the loser takes damage. If the rolls are tied, they have parried each other in that round, no damage has been taken on either side and they must roll again.



### **IMPORTANT!**

**Ignore the 'Ones are always a success, Sixes are always a failure' rule for opposed rolls.**

## DAMAGE and HEALING

If a character 'takes damage', then this means they are reducing their STRENGTH score by the amount of damage they have taken. For every 1 point of damage taken, the character reduces their STRENGTH by 1 point. If the STRENGTH score ever reaches zero, the character is unconscious. If it ever goes *below* zero, the character is dead.

Damage is calculated by rolling 1D3 and adding the weapon's Damage score. The result is the number of damage points that must be taken from the character's STRENGTH score.

If a PC wants to heal naturally, they'll get 1 STRENGTH point back per 24 hours of rest. If they use a basic medical unit, such as a portable medical kit, they get back 1 point every six hours. If they use a fully equipped surgery or hospital, they get back 1 point per hour. To benefit from medical facilities, the attending character doing the healing has to make a successful SURVIVAL roll or the healing rate is 1 point per 12 hours.

<b>Damage Source</b>	<b>Damage</b>
<b>Hand to Hand</b> (punch, kick, headbutt)	1D3
<b>Knife, Pistol, Sub Machine Gun</b>	1D3+1
<b>Battle Rifle</b>	1D3+2
<b>Machine Gun</b>	1D3+3
<b>Grenade</b>	1D3+2
<b>Bazooka</b>	1D3+4
<b>Explosive</b>	1D3+1 point per pound
<b>Falling</b> – 1 damage point for every 2 metres fallen.	
<b>Suffocating</b> – 1 damage point for every 3 rounds the character is deprived of air (drowning, choking etc)	
<b>Collision</b> – 1 damage point for every 10 kilometres an hour an object is moving.	

The table to the left lists the common causes of damage. The 'damage' number is the amount of points that have to be taken from the STRENGTH score.

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## ARMOUR

Characters can save themselves from combat damage if they are wearing armour, and armour is used the same way as skill levels.

Each type of armour is given a skill level depending on its protective capability. This means that the better the skill level, the better the armour is at stopping damage.

If a character loses a combat round they can roll against their armour skill level as if it was a normal skill roll – if they succeed, they do not take any damage.

The types of armour and their skill ranks are listed below.

<b>Protective Vest</b>	2
<b>'Iron Nazi' Armour</b>	4

## VEHICLES



The stats for vehicles are exactly the same no matter what the type. A vehicle is represented by Body Strength and a Top Speed.

Body Strength acts the same way as a character's Strength – once it has been reduced to zero the vehicle stops dead, and below zero it explodes or catches fire, possibly injuring the occupants.

Damage done to a vehicle is calculated as per the damage table as normal but all damage rolls are reduced by 4 points.

Vehicles can be saved from combat damage if they have armour, and armour is used the same way as skill levels. Armour is given a skill level depending on its protective capability. This means that the better the skill level, the better the armour is at stopping damage.

If a vehicle is hit and in danger of taking damage, roll against their armour skill level as if it was a normal skill roll – if they succeed, they do not take any damage. The automatic failure/success rules still apply.

**Motorbikes:** Body Strength 3, Top Speed 80 kph.

**Cars:** have a Body Strength 6, Top Speed 70 kph.

**Vans:** Body Strength 7, Top Speed 60 kph.

**Trucks:** Body Strength 8, Top Speed 50 kph.

**Armoured Vehicles:** Body Strength 9, Top Speed 50 kph, Armour 3 (armed with an MG).

**Light Tanks:** Body Strength 10, Top Speed 40 kph, Armour 4 (armed with a 1D3+8 damage cannon and MG).

**Heavy Tanks:** Body Strength 12, Top Speed 40 kph, Armour 5 (armed with an 1D3+10 damage cannon and MG).



## GAME REWARDS AND THE FATE DICE

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This game is not designed with an experience system in mind, so there is no way for players to improve their skills. In view of this, there is a system in place that may aid players in future games – these are **Game Rewards** and **Fate Dice**.

**Game Rewards** are just that – rewards that the player characters receive in the game. It would be too much to ask the players to get their supplies, ammo and any other equipment by simply scrounging and scavenging so games should have a set reward at the end.

First of all, have a look at the PC equipment lists and see what they could do with. It could be anything; ammunition, medical supplies, food, clean water, even a special weapon such as a bazooka or explosives that will aid them in the next part of the game. This item is their reward – if they complete the mission set them then they ‘win’ these items. They can be rewards given to them by grateful townsfolk, a military leader, they can be taken off a defeated foe or they can find the items once the mission they are on is over. The PCs should get something for their troubles.

**Fate Dice** are, basically, a free dice roll. Every time a PC finishes an adventure the player may be awarded a single Fate Dice. Whether they deserve this Fate Dice is up to the GM – did they do well? Did they complete their mission? If the GM is satisfied they have earned it (the award can also be determined by how well the player roleplayed the character, or whether they helped or hindered the game), the player is given a single Fate Dice to spend in any future game.

A Fate Dice can be spent in the following ways:

**1:** During play, the player may need to make a certain important skill roll. Perhaps someone’s life depends on them succeeding the roll. If this is the case, the player can use a Fate Dice to get an extra roll if they fail the original roll. Basically, if they fail the important roll and they have a Fate Dice, they can spend it and roll again to try and succeed. They can roll as many times as the number of Fate Dice they have.

**2:** Spending a Fate Dice can decrease and increase damage by 1D6. Let’s say you’ve been shot – the damage the hit has caused will kill you outright. So, if you have a Fate Dice, you can spend it and reduce the damage by 1D6. If you have two Fate Dice you can reduce it by 2D6 if you wish. Every Fate Dice used reduces the damage by 1D6. On the other side of coin, you can increase the damage you do to others. Lets say you’ve managed to shoot an enemy but he’s not going down – if you spend a fate Dice you can increase the damage by 1D6.

Fate Dice can be spent at any time during play, even after the original rolls have been made.

***Example:** Frank is trying to save a life using his Survival skill of 4. He rolls the dice and gets a 5, a fail! He knows he needs to save this life to complete his mission, so he elects to use the Fate Dice he was awarded in the last game. He rolls again, and gets a 3. The life is saved and he’s a hero. If he’d had more than one Fate Dice, he could have rolled again if he’d failed the second roll.*

*Now he’s taking a shot at a scavenger trying to detonate a bomb. He hits, rolls damage and only gets a 3. The scavenger has a STRENGTH of 4 - he’s still alive and can still detonate the bomb! Frank elects to use a Fate Dice to increase the damage, rolls 1D6 and gets a 4. Adding this to his original damage roll yields a 7; the scavenger is reduced to minus 3 STRENGTH and is killed.*

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**STATS FOR NPCs AND OTHER REGULARS**

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**Standard Soldier**

Strength 4, Agility 3, Combat 4, Technical 3, Personality 1, Survival 2, Vehicles 2  
(armoured Iron Nazis have Armour 4)

**Officer**

Strength 4, Agility 3, Combat 4, Technical 3, Personality 2, Survival 2, Vehicles 2

**Driver**

Strength 4, Agility 3, Combat 3, Technical 4, Personality 2, Survival 2, Vehicles 5

**Trader**

Strength 4, Agility 3, Combat 3, Technical 3, Personality 4, Survival 2, Vehicles 4

**Scavenger**

Strength 4, Agility 3, Combat 4, Technical 3, Personality 2, Survival 3, Vehicles 3

**Bounty Hunter**

Strength 4, Agility 3, Combat 4, Technical 3, Personality 2, Survival 2, Vehicles 2

**Civilian**

Strength 4, Agility 2, Combat 2, Technical 2, Personality 2, Survival 2, Vehicles 2

**Medic**

Strength 4, Agility 2, Combat 1, Technical 2, Personality 4, Survival 5, Vehicles 2

**Small Creature (rat, cat, bird)**

Strength 2, Agility 3, Combat 2

**Medium Creature (dog, wolf, goat)**

Strength 4, Agility 3, Combat 3

**Large Creature (horse, cow, bear)**

Strength 6, Agility 2, Combat 3

## JOURNAL

*January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1952*

Back in 1945 I remember seeing a flash on the horizon and at first we thought it was really bright sunlight reflecting off something or a nearby soundless explosion. When we saw the mushroom cloud rising over where Shanghai used to be, we



knew something was terribly wrong.

There was me, Frank, Larry and Kojima - Kojima was a prisoner we'd picked up whilst making our way back to our camp - and at first we just stood thinking '*what the hell is that?*' I mean we'd never seen an atomic explosion before. When the shockwave hit and we all fell to the floor clutching our ears screaming... well, that pretty much told us that something really bad had happened.

It took us months to make our way back to anywhere that even remotely resembled ~~civilisat~~

civilisation. I remember those months with horror - burned corpses, half-alive shells of humanity with huge sores and skin falling off in chunks, charred people weeping in their agony. We stayed in a small town up the coast for a year or so, but when the people started dying in droves - now we know that's radiation sickness - we thought some kind of plague had struck and **so** we decided to get out. There had been no communication with any form of government or military higher power in all that time. We all decided to go home - after all, you can hardly desert from an army that's been wiped out. Kojima, surprisingly, elected to come with us.

It took us from 1947 to now to get to where we are, deep in ~~Russian~~ Russian territory. Getting through India was difficult, the remnant of British power there was failing and the people were taking power back. A couple of atomic bombs had landed on their borders **and** they were finding it difficult to help all the displaced people. Their military was kind enough to help us with supplies and ammo, and we managed to get into Russia.

And that's where we are now, nearing Stalingrad. Larry suggested we keep a journal as we didn't know if we were going to make it or not, so we've left messages for our loved ones in here.

*March 9<sup>th</sup> 1952*

Stalingrad is a shell. A bomb landed pretty much directly on target and it's like walking through charred wood. Larry is pretty sick, this morning he coughed up blood and when we went to help him a big chunk of his hair came out.

Met with a soldier here called Sergei who helped us through. There are some insane people, here, driven mad by the pain, disease and God knows what else. There's no reasoning with them. We **had to** shoot two of them just to get out the other side of Stalingrad alive.

Sergei's lost everything, and so now he's coming with us, too. What's left of the Russian government has reformed, calling themselves the Red Children.



Apparently they just murder, rape and take what they want from their own people under the pretence of fighting enemies who want to take over Russia.

### *May 18<sup>th</sup> 1952*

Made our way through Poland at last. We managed to scrounge some food and what we think is fresh water, as well as some ammo and a couple of grenades, but I'm a bit wary about eating scavenged food after seeing what's happening to Larry.

We were warned off going to Warsaw by some crazy scientist guy called Hinestein, or something, as it's just an irradiated nightmare. This Hinestein was a crackpot. Crazy hair, big bushy moustache. He kept going on about the atomic bombs, how their ~~destauctie~~ destructive power couldn't be measured in the devastation they'd caused. He kept talking about how fooling with the atom in such a way might have consequences far beyond the explosions. He said something that kept me up that night - he said that changing the structure of atoms in a violent way might even bend the universe. He said that an atomic explosion might even reshape reality as we know it.

Crazy fool. I can't think about that right now. I just want to go home.

### *July 4<sup>th</sup> 1952*

We ran into some Yank soldiers today, all happy and smiling, celebrating their Independence Day. They shared their scavenged whiskey with us - God above, the first drink I'd had in seven years. It tasted sweet.

The captain of the group had told us that they'd tried to make the best of a bad situation in Italy, and had stayed at their posting near Rome after the bombs went off. They stayed as long as they could but I guess the news they were getting of home made them start the journey back.

Turns out the Nazis are on the move again. Now they call themselves the Iron Nazis and they're travelling in fortified trucks, heavy tanks, and dressing in long coats and gas masks. The captain even said some of them were wearing armour, like old panel-beat sheets of metal. Anyway, they'd landed on the American mainland and were creating merry hell.

Then he ~~told~~ told me they'd landed in Britain, too. My God. Seven years since the bombs dropped and they still want to fight.

I cried that night. We all did.



### *July 5<sup>th</sup> 1952*

We got hit by Iron Nazis today. They came upon us as we were breaking camp. We were all a bit hung over and next thing we know there's a tank and about a dozen men all coming out of the trees.

Damnest thing I ever saw. They wore long trenchcoats with helmets and gasmasks on, all armed with submachine guns. The tank was a Tiger, belching thick

gouts of black smoke, and leading them all was a man in iron. I'm not kidding, this crazy bastard had metal plates on his chest and thick metal tubes on his forearms and lower legs, and he was wearing what looked like a welders mask and his normal helmet. He had this flamethrower and everything we fired at him bounced, even the machine gun.

Larry had been violently sick the last few days and had eaten very little. His ribs were showing through, he was gaunt, his hair was gone. He was dying. It was probably why he grabbed a couple of grenades, pulled the pins, and ran at the man in the armour. The flamethrower engulfed him but he just screamed and pretty much gave the man a big hug. Then they went up and it's raining armour plating and Larry.

The Yanks just went for it, us alongside, Kojima screaming something in Japanese, Sergei singing some kind of folk song. We dropped every one of the bastards.

And the Tiger tank? Never fired a shot. When we blew away the last Nazi, it just turned around and powered off. Strange.

Bye, Larry. Love you, mate.

### *August 21<sup>st</sup> 1952*

Germany wasn't spared. Obviously, when Hitler decided to wipe the earth clean he never decided to spare his own country.

The Germans were welcoming, even shared their meagre supplies with us. They were desperate for news of the outside world. The Iron Nazis had reformed the SS and Gestapo and the people were terrified. They just wanted to try and rebuild their lives. They knew nothing about what was happening outside their own borders and when we told them that the rest of the world had been destroyed, they just went silent. They really thought it had been just them, that the Allies had attacked with ~~atom~~ atomic bombs. This is what the Iron Nazis had told them, at any rate.



It was here we said goodbye to the Yanks. They were heading to France to hopefully meet up with other American forces to see if they could get a boat back to the USA. From what we learned nobody flew anymore, mainly because of fuel and repairs. We decided to head into northern France, get to Calais, and try to get a boat back over to England.

The locals told us some crazy stories that night. They told stories of crazy animals, twisted oversized ants, dogs with two heads and horses with fangs and a lust for blood. There was one story of people turned into living corpses, like rotted skeletons, wailing in the light and killing all they came across with claw and infection. Of course, none of them had actually seen these things, it was just what they'd heard from other people, who had also been told the stories. Sounded like a load of old tosh to me.

Still - when you're told things like that and then you hear a dog howling at night, you worry about being bit on the arse. Twice.

### *August 30<sup>th</sup> 1952*

We've managed to avoid Iron Nazi patrols and passed into ~~nocthen~~ Northern France, only to find some crazy Allied general has taken control of the area and has declared himself leader. General Harris his name is - I've never heard of him, could be a Yank or a fellow Brit for all I know - and he's instructed the locals to kill anyone passing through. So, three fire fights later, one where got caught in a shootout between Harris's boys and the Iron Nazis trying to push into his territory, we've finally got to safety.

Some Polish men have helped us. They call themselves the Free Jews and they got us to safety as three heavy Tiger tanks started pounding Harris's ~~gun~~ artillery positions. They dress like civilians but they're armed and well trained, and for

whatever reason they wear sashes of striped black and white cloth. I never asked about that.

They told us that Calais was lost to Harris and he controlled the port. He lived on a fully functioning German battleship and if we needed aid from him or his followers we would have to gain an audience in some crazy ritual of deference.

The hell with that. I didn't come all this way to be stopped by some crazy megalomaniac. We decided to push on to Normandy, where we knew our boys had landed back in 1944.

### *September 12<sup>th</sup> 1952*

We made it to Normandy today, and got to a beach. My God. It's like an army of millions landed here and then just vanished. The ships and landing boats are scrap, lying dead in the water. Tents are slips of cloth, small dugouts filled with water. Equipment, hardly any of it useful, is stacked in the back of flat-tyred and rusting trucks. Others have been here and scavenged what they can, and we managed to find some German sub machine guns and ammo in an old sealed bunker.

Frank has also found a serviceable boat and Sergei and Kojima have agreed to come back to Britain with us.

We're going home.

### *September 15<sup>th</sup> 1952*

We're home.

And I wish to God I'd never come back.

+ + + +

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## PLAYING THE 13<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

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The world of **The 13<sup>th</sup> Year** is not so far removed from our own. The people have the same ideals and dreams, the countries are still divided by borders and the world still turns. Of course, the major difference is that most of it has been devastated by atomic bombs.

Below are a few pointers on how to run a game in **The 13<sup>th</sup> Year**, and some of the things that players may come across.

### **RADIATION**

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The atomic fallout will irradiate many places across the globe. This radiation can cause sickness and death.

Every time a player character drinks from a suspicious water source or eats scavenged food there is a chance they will contract radiation sickness. Secretly roll 2D6 – if you roll **double one** then the PC has been poisoned. The radiation sickness will spread slowly. Every week of game time, have them roll against their STRENGTH score like a normal skill roll. If they pass then they carry on as normal. If they fail, then they lose 1 point of STRENGTH permanently. These rolls continue on a monthly basis against the adjusted STRENGTH score and if they reach zero STRENGTH then they become invalid and must be carried and cared for by the other players. When they go below zero, they unfortunately die.

Radiation sickness can also be contracted in areas that are heavily irradiated, such as ground zero and the immediate area around – roll the 2D6 for each PC every day they stay in an area such as this.

## LOCATIONS

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In their travels around the post-atomic wasteland of the world, the players will no doubt come across many places where people are trying to rebuild their lives. Of course they'll be trying to live in the burned ruins of their towns and cities, but there are other places that people may try to turn into a home.

There might be many airfields that have been converted into settlements. They are already defensible, as they will have fences or walls surrounding them. The aeroplanes, mainly bombers and transports, might have had their undercarriage raised so that the

fuselage is level on the ground, enabling them to be used as homes. Their gun emplacements might be at the gates to the settlement, glass dome and all, as protection. The earth of the useless fields may have been turned for use as grazing areas for cattle and crop growing. The hangars could be filled with people, with workshops and the like, building things for a better future. The control tower could be a 'town hall', with the tower commanding a view of the surrounding area.

There will be many old factories that might be inhabited, the people living in the steam tunnels and old furnaces, the pipes being used for morse code communication and for hanging out washing. The great machines might be stripped down for parts or hollowed out for living quarters, the offices and old staff areas put aside as living quarters for those who feel they deserve it.

Mountains and hills that were hollowed out for V2 production and other war efforts would be a great place to live, hidden underground and protected from bombing and discovery. A network of tunnels and chambers greets those who try to infiltrate.

Dams would also make for a good place to start again as it may still be functional – those erecting their houses in this area or living in the dam itself would get access to electricity, and maybe even control other settlements that can still connect to the dam's output.

Many old war bunkers would also make for good places to live for smaller communities. The bunker, either a command centre of concrete and steel or a small outpost of shored-up dirt and sheet metal, would be an ideal place to live as there will always be a hidden, protected place to run to if the need arose.

Ships moored off the coasts or in rivers. Imagine a great barge floating down a river with several families living on it, trying to stay on the move to avoid trouble. What about massive warships at dock, converted into small towns? Even submarines in their pens with a family's washing hanging between the periscope and the stern, with music playing from an old turntable and children playing in the water next to the torpedo launch tubes?

Underground train tunnels and stations might be a desperate place to live but needs must – a whole community could exist in the dark, lit by gas and oil, the families

living in empty station rooms and train carriages, the tunnels linking each of the areas under a bombed-out city.

Destroyed cities can be filled with people trying to create a new life, but think about the places that are beyond redemption; where would the people go? What would they convert into a place to live?

## DANGERS

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Out in the atomic wastelands there are all kinds of dangers, not just from enemy soldiers or possible death by radiation, exposure or accident.

There are animals out there that you would not have originally thought a threat. Take the common domestic dog, for example. Years of hunger and pain, dogs being born into a veritable wild – they would no doubt become pack animals again and they would attack a human being or any other animal for food. There may still be some that are domesticated and even friendly, but about half of them would most definitely not be. Other animals of the wild, such as bears, foxes and wolves, would also be a greater threat as they would not be wary of entering towns and cities not that they are pretty much deserted. They themselves would be desperate for food and what would they do to get it?

People would be a great threat, too. Imagine people driven to desperation through hunger and loss. What would they do to get what they need? There may be those taking advantage of the situation, those who made their bids for power in the chaos and now control whole areas through fear and murder.

Gangs of people might be roaming the lands looking supplies to take from those who have tried to start a new life for themselves. Why work when you can take?



## ATMOSPHERE

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It's relatively easy to invoke atmosphere for a game of **The 13<sup>th</sup> Year**. Most people will have seen movies of the Second World War, from *'The Sands of Iwo Jima'* to *'Kelly's Heroes'* to *'Where Eagles Dare'*, from *'The Dirty Dozen'* to *'The Iron Cross'* all the way up to more recent films such as *'Saving Private Ryan'*, *'Stalingrad'* and *'The Thin Red Line'*. Television documentaries such as the excellent *'The World At War'* and series such as *'Band Of Brothers'* give you a lot of background and visual reference.

It's easy enough to picture scenes in the games as there are real-world equivalents. The attitudes and feelings of average people are as they are today and their basic needs and desires, both mental and physical, differ very little from what we know today.

Any written work about the war will aid you and there is an abundance of material in print or on the internet.

One great way to set the scene is with music. If you can get hold of any pre-1945 music recordings (or even up to 1952, if you decide that a recording studio survived the holocaust!) to play softly in the background then that's a great boost to atmosphere. Can I suggest Glen Miller or the Inkspots as they invoke pure 1940s.

*Great was the encounter I ran in an old train yard where the PCs were in a fire fight with the local murderous militia to the tune of 'Chattanooga Choo-choo'. It was surreal and yet it worked really well.*

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## ADVENTURES

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Scenarios for **The 13<sup>th</sup> Year** are plentiful. Just look at the number of war films there are out there. In fact, go to [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) and have a look, read some of the plot summaries – you might get some adventure ideas from them.

To begin with, all PCs must have starting equipment. Each PC gets:

One small arm of their choice (Pistol, Sub Machine Gun or Battle Rifle) with 1D6 x 10 rounds of ammunition.

1D6 days of food rations.

1D6 days of water rations.

1 medical kit (Survival skill level +2 when using on an injury to get back 1D3 points of STRENGTH with a successful use, cannot be used if STRENGTH is below zero).

(Soldiers only) 1D3 grenades to share between the group.

The players themselves must decide on two things for their Player Characters before the game progresses:

### **Where are they from?**

What nationality are they? Are they all from the same place, or are they misplaced? Are they soldiers? Farmers? Were they children when the bombs dropped or were they adults? How bad was their country hit by the atomic strikes? Deciding where the PCs are from may decide the next question.

### **What do they want?**

Do they want to start again, build a new settlement from scratch? Perhaps they are soldiers stuck in a foreign country and want to get back home – the fact that there are no ships or aeroplanes in use and very few vehicles might make that difficult. Deciding what they want will help you come with an adventure idea.

Here are a few **Adventure Ideas** to help get you started:

*SUPPLY AND DEMAND* – The players need supplies such as ammo and food, maybe even an important part for a vehicle they have, and scavenging has turned up very little. A nearby settlement has what they need but they need a favour doing in return. What would the PCs do if they were desperate enough? The favour may be a simple case of taking out a local gang of raiders or hunting down a particularly nasty wild animal. It might be something sinister, such as assassinating the head of a rival settlement or stealing something.

*RUN, RABBIT, RUN* – The enemy has found them. Whoever the PCs have warred against are on their trail and they have to run. The enemy pursue them with dogs and wide lines of armed men as if they are flushing for wild game. Do they hide? Do they find a position and fight? Do they run as fast as they can?

*BARELY ALIVE* – The denizens of a remote settlement have been so short of food they have reverted to the lowest of human conditions... cannibalism. Welcoming the PCs into their homes they treat them like honoured guests. Little do the PCs know, they have been invited to dinner and *they* are the main course. What would you do to escape such a place?



*MASKS ON* – A settlement, terrified of radiation poisoning, keep their gas masks on almost all of the time. The problem is that a murderer is stalking the town, taking the sparse tinned food the victims have. As everyone wears gas masks how can they tell who it is? And do they really need to wear the masks or the time or is just mass hysteria?

*NAZIS ON THE MARCH* –The Iron Nazis are on the move, pushing into Holland and west through Belgium and into France again. What is left of the Allied Forces are hard pressed to even slow them down. What can the PCs do to help? And when the self-appointed Allied commander holds the Nazis back and then declares himself dictator of the lands he has protected, what will they do then? Rise against the Allies?

*AS A BIRD* – The PCs find a man with an almost fully functional Dakota. He says he can take them anywhere they want if only they can get him some oil. The problem is, the plane is almost totally useless and the man is slightly delusional. Even if the plane gets airborne it will crash after a few minutes. Will the players spot his insanity, or will they merrily help him with the oil and then sit in the plane as it comes crashing down God-knows where?

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# THE 13<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

## CHARACTER SHEET

Player Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Character Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_

Career: \_\_\_\_\_

Description:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**STRENGTH:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equipment:**

**Agility** \_\_\_\_\_

**Combat** \_\_\_\_\_

**Personality** \_\_\_\_\_

**Survival** \_\_\_\_\_

**Technical** \_\_\_\_\_

**Vehicles** \_\_\_\_\_

**LOG:**