TWILIGHT

2013

STAGE I RULES

The Official Twilight: 2000™ 3.0

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Clayton's Dedication
To my my father, Bernie Oliver, for years of support in the face of my sometimes-questionable maturity and sanity
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Keith's Dedication
To Robin for your incredible tolerance
To Clayton for going above and beyond the call of duty
Again, to all of the fans of Twilight: 2000 (and Twilight: 2013)

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Every generation seems to have a defining moment - a "where were you?" day when the world inexorably changed for the worse. 7/7, the Indonesian tsunami, 9/11, Challenger, JFK, Pearl Harbor... I'm pretty sure that back in the early Fifth Century, citizens on the fringes of the Empire always remembered where they were when they got the news that the Visigoths had sacked Rome.

The problem for my generation - the survivors - is figuring out which day was The Day. Was it nerve-gassed bodies fallen in windrows across the Paris suburbs? Russian tanks summoning up ghosts of the Cold War as they slunk through Kiev? Nuclear flowers blossoming in the Belorussian summer? The great engines of the world grinding to a halt as darkness fell like a hammer on the European Union? Winds off Lake Michigan fanning a firestorm that reached higher than the jagged stump of the Sears Tower? Pinpricks of light in the high orbitals as the lights at home went out forever?

I can tell you where I was on each of those days. Quite frankly, they all sucked. Today isn't much better, and I can't even tell you where I am now, let alone where I'll be tomorrow.

....

Back before the Collapse, if someone had asked me to choose a place to spend the apocalypse... I can assure you it wouldn't have been Kurdistan. Hell, this wasn't even a country then. It isn't much of one now, but at least there's a vague semblance of order. More importantly, most of the locals aren't shooting at us, which is a distinct improvement from a lot of other places we could have wound up.

One of the few benefits (if you can call it that) of being stuck in the Third World is that the place didn't have as far to fall as home did. Yeah, when the lights went out, the cities took a hit, but out here in the foothills of the Zagros, you'd hardly notice. Life goes on as it has for centuries. Damned if I can see how, but our hosts manage to scrape a pretty good living out of what, to my eye, looks like a bunch of half-frozen rocks. And they're willing to share it with outsiders as long as we put in a share of the work.

So we have at least the base of Maslow's pyramid. We eat – not well, most days, but enough. We stay relatively warm and dry. The monthly supply run from Arbil brings in a trickle of the other things we can't make or make do without: batteries, ammo, lamp oil. And there are occasional luxuries, by today's definition. I almost cried the day they brought in a case of toilet paper.

So it's a life. It could be a lot worse. But, you know... there are days I'd kill someone I knew for a bacon cheeseburger and a hot shower.

....

Down in the valley, night falls like a headsman's axe. It comes early and suddenly, so I don't tend to get a lot of writing done when we're in the village. Rotating up to the listening post actually is good for me because I get another hour and a half of usable daylight.

The platoon takes a certain proprietary interest in my work. I've never fully understood why. I don't claim to produce Pulitzer material, but they hang on every word of what Sergeant Scott, in a rare loquacious mood, once termed *"the Monk-iad."* So I'm expecting the interruption when Little Jim stands up to look over my shoulder. *"Whatcha workin' on, Monk?"*

I tilt my notebook so the thin afternoon sunlight falls across it. "It's been quiet enough lately that I'm caught up on events, so I figured I'd do this. Just a collection of thoughts on what life's like now. You know... the lessons that we all pick up but never really articulate." Unspoken: lessons for the next generation, because I have to believe someone eventually will read this.

Little Jim peers at my ragged scrawl. *"'Two is one and one is none. Carry spares. Everything breaks.' Hell, we all learned that in BCT."*

"You may have, but I had to pick it up once I got here." I grin at him. *"You got one for me?"*

He scratches the ragged beard he's been cultivating of late. *"How about 'never miss a chance to eat, hydrate, sleep, or crap?'"*

Dunivan laughs from across the room. *"Pleasure is the absence of misery, huh? Monk, be sure you get the corollary to that one: 'vomiting is a normal process of a healthy digestive system and your body's way of telling you learn more about wild plants.'"*

Little Jim flips him an obscene hand gesture we've all picked up from the Kurds. *"Remember, 'going stupid places with stupid people to do stupid things makes you stupid, too.' I think that was Farnam. Or maybe Suarez."*

"There's too few people left for unnecessary killin', but some folks still make killin' 'em necessary." Big Jim speaks without turning away from the shack's window. *"Heads up, kids. The sentries have traffic comin' out of Iran."*

I curse, drop my pen, and grab my rifle. So much for uninterrupted writing. Always gotta be something.

....

I know everyone in the platoon, but my assignment is with Third Squad. I rode with them on the nightmare that was the Kirkuk evacuation. After, when the captain was consolidating the survivors of what used to be a company, I thought he was gonna kick me out. But he just looked at me, shook his head, and told Sergeant Scott that the old rules on embeds were out the door and he'd better make sure I knew how to shoot.

1

So. Staff Sergeant Edward Scott. Six feet three inches of laconic Chicago beef, with only a slight limp to show that he had to re-learn how to walk after his HMMWV rolled into a canal in '03. Along with the PT, he picked up a Master's in Art History because he was bored with all the bed rest. He's got a downright scary ability to just look at someone and read his mind. I hate it when he does that.

His second is Sergeant Sharon Kim. Like me, she's a New Yorker. Unlike me, she had a sister in the Towers on 9/11. She went MP because it was the best way to get around the Army's prohibitions on women in ground combat. She's all delicate and fine-boned and still looks about sixteen if you can get her to laugh. When the Pasdaran overran us last fall, she beat two of them to death with an entrenching tool.

The platoon's real medic is over in First Squad, but Tom Dunivan is just as good, as far as I'm concerned. So what if he was a veterinary technician for bomb dogs? I think Sergeant Kim is the only one of us he hasn't saved at least once. Someday, I'll get him to tell me just how he lost those two fingertips.

Every squad has to have a sphinx. Ours is Vince Streeter. We picked him up on the third night of the Kirkuk fiasco. He claims to have been a cook in the RAF, but I've tasted the atrocity he claims is stew, and I don't know a lot of cooks who can rig demolitions. Sergeant Scott says the patch on his shoulder is RAF Regiment, which raises more questions than it answers.

"Big Jim" Yaudas and Marcelo *"Little Jim"* Jimenez are inseparable. They've been in the same squad since their first day of Basic. Hollywood could not have cast a more perfect buddy movie. Big Jim's from backwoods Wisconsin and Little Jim grew up in Miami. They rag each other constantly, but there's never any edge to it. When the sergeants have that crawly-back-of-the-neck feeling, they put the Jims on point. If they shut up, the shit's about to hit the fan.

Our local guide and interpreter is Adela Qasim. She's an Iraqi-born Kurd whose family's had an on-again off-again CIA connection for two decades now. Seems like she has a cousin in every village for a hundred miles around, and they typically get more done for us than the national "authorities" do.

The Jims won't let me forget Demon. She's a dirty white raggedy dog-thing that their old platoon adopted before things came apart. When we can spare fuel for the Stryker, she rides on top like it's just a big pickup truck.

Then there's me. The captain says he keeps me around because I was a ham radio operator and can push a soldering iron, but I still like to pretend I'm a war correspondent. B.A. Journalism, NYU '06, for whatever that's worth. It got me over here, blogging the war on embedded-monkey.com when we still had an Internet. Now I'm down to paper and pens and a dozen rolls of 35mm film in a rusty ammo can. I'm a big-time newsman, baby.

....

Everyone handles a firefight differently. Streeter is a machine: no wasted motion, just perfectly efficient killing. Sergeant Kim goes on luck, aggression, and mobility – she doesn't wear armor, and she'll just dump her pack and move like a weasel on speed. The Jims spend ammo like it was water, but they do get results. Me? I don't remember any of my fights. They're just confused blurs. Except the first one.

I'd never touched a gun before I got to Iraq. I got some range time with the soldiers I was covering, but the Army had strict rules about embeds being total noncombatants. I wore armor and a helmet, but I didn't carry anything more dangerous than a camera for two years.

Kirkuk changed that. I was riding with Sergeant Scott when our HMMWV took an RPG to the engine. He bailed out, dragging his unconscious driver with one hand and shooting with the other. I just scampered along in his wake because staying in a stationary, smoking HMMWV seemed like a bad idea.

He went straight for the nearest shop – this was before we actually got out of the city – kicked in the front door and charged right in. Later, he told me he was just looking for cover, but, as his luck usually goes, he chose the building that the guys running the ambush were using as a command post. So when he went through the door, he was face to face with seven pissed-off Pasdaran. He emptied his pistol into the first two, kicked a third in the wedding tackle, and then went down in a flurry of skinny arms and legs as the rest saw a great opportunity for a hostage and dogpiled him.

I was just standing there, more or less petrified, when one of the Iranians extracted himself from the group hug and saw me. We both looked at the ground, saw the AK-47 that someone had dropped, and dove for it. I beat him by about a millisecond and heard his nose break on the crown of my skull.

I was wrestling around on the floor with this guy who's about half my size but twice as strong, and neither of us had control of the gun. Someone got a thumb inside the trigger guard – and that's when we found out the safety was off. Thirty rounds, full auto, straight into the whole pile of guys on Sergeant Scott. All I had time to think was oh, crap, I just killed– and then a size 12 combat boot kicked the Iranian off me.

So I looked up and Sergeant Scott was standing over me, covered in blood. I mean, hair, teeth, and eyeballs all over the place. His armor had two smoking craters where tracers went through Iranians to get to him. If I thought I was a dead man before, I was certain now. But he just looked at me and said, *"Monk, what the hell were you waiting for?"*

....

A day in the life of an embedded reporter:

0500 (5:00 A.M. for those of you who don't live by a military clock): Get woken up by the last guy to have fire watch duty, stoke the fire, start the breakfast flatbread. Hunt up some honey or yogurt. Boil water for tea; try not to think of coffee. If it's an egg day, fry 'em. No, Sergeant, there's still no bacon in Kurdistan, but can I interest you in some boiled cow tongue?

0600: Shave and sponge bath, if today's your day for the leftover hot water – and if it's not too cold to strip down.

0615: Lurk on the fringes of the captain's morning staff meeting. Take note of anything newsworthy (ha) that's planned for the day. Log the morning radio report from the squad running the listening post at the top of Mount Nowhere.

0630: Turn out for agricultural duty with our Kurdish hosts. Allow self to be guided around the fields by an illiterate kid who, at the ripe old age of eleven, is a much better farmer than you'll ever be. Try not to kill the wheat.

1200: Lunch break, which the Kurds bring out to the fields. More flatbread. Some combination of beans, rice, potato, poultry, or sheep. More tea. If you're eating sheep, you probably knew its name at some point.

1245: Back to the fields.

1600: Get the worst of the field grime off yourself, as best you can with a stream that's mostly frigid snowmelt. Do your share of maintenance on the platoon's equipment, which usually involves trying to diagnose and fix malfunctioning electronics with minimal tools. Listen to the captain's daily rant about the radios. Listen to Little Jim cursing the Stryker's turbocharger. Add a few more spare parts to the shopping list that the next supply convoy will take back to Arbil.

1800: Clean your rifle.

1815: Mend your clothes.

1830: Dinner, probably a repeat of lunch. If you're very lucky, there may be some fruit for dessert; mix it into yogurt to ensure there's enough to go around.

1900: Fill the lamps with oil. Scrawl a few lines in your journal about the day's events, or listen to someone read another chapter of the paperback novels from the platoon's collective library.

2030: Log the evening radio report. Leave your boots and rifle where you can find them in the dark. Turn down the lamp and go to bed. Try not to dream about home.

....

Before the Collapse, I took a lot of stuff for granted. Something breaks? Buy a new one. Need batteries, fuel, soup, pants, a new memory stick? Run down the the corner store.

If only.

I flew into Iraq with a lot of gear. Some of it broke – I bought cheap, and it wasn't ready for a war. A lot of it burned with the hotel. That which I still have left is precious, both because it's from home and because I know I can rely on it. And I've picked up some other stuff along the way, too.

First: boots. I love my boots. Perfectly broken-in. They used to be my spare pair. I bought 'em at an REI store about a month before I came over. I do not think the salesman believed me when I told him where I was headed.

Then there are the tools of the trade: my cameras. There are many like them, but these are mine. One digital, one 35mm SLR that was my parents' graduation present to me. The digital rides in a padded NVG pouch on my vest; the SLR stays wrapped in a towel inside an ammo can unless I'm sure it's safe to bring it out.

The vest is the one the Army issued me when I embedded. Everything I absolutely can't live without stays attached to it: water, snacks, ammo, trauma kit, a few very basic wilderness survival items. If I beat the dust out of it, I can see the original digital camouflage pattern.

I still carry Maggie, the AK-47 I picked up from an Iranian acquaintance. I named her because, at the time, I thought that's what you're supposed to do. If the platoon's M4s are prom queens, Maggie's a biker chick. But she gets the job done.

The most important things I carry, though, are these notebooks. I've captured the last two years in these stained, battered volumes. Every chance I get to steal current from the solar cells, I boot my slowly-dying laptop and spend a few hours transcribing typed notes into longhand. It may be a pointless gesture, but it's what I *do*.

....

I haven't seen a paved road in months. Out here, the governments only put real highways where they wanted people to travel. Kurdistan straddles the former borders of Iraq, Turkey, and Iran, and none of those nations were real keen on seeing a lot of traffic from their neighbors.

The platoon still has enough vehicles to move everyone at once, but fuel is in short supply. Despite enough good intentions to pave a six-lane turnpike to hell, the Kurdish government hasn't gotten oil production back on line, and what we're hearing from headquarters is a minimum of another year. We have enough diesel for the thirsty Strykers to get our happy selves back to Arbil in the event of a sufficient emergency, but regular jaunts around the countryside are right out. Even the nigh-indestructible four-wheel-drive

Toyotas, which practically sip gasoline by comparison, don't see a lot of use.

So today's expedition is something out of the ordinary. The general safety rule is *"never drive faster than you can see,"* but we're barreling through a late spring snowstorm at a speed everyone but Big Jim considers insane. Unfortunately, Big Jim is the one driving.

The captain has Third Squad on point because our Stryker's in better shape than the one First has retained, and because Big Jim really is the best driver in the platoon. The platoon's moving because this really is a "sufficient emergency." Somewhere in what used to be Iran is a mixed bag of a couple hundred Canadian, Australian, and British troops who are on their last legs after evacuating Afghanistan. Unfortunately for them, they're attracting the attention of every armed Iranian within fifty miles. There's one, count it, one pass through the mountains that's melted clear so far, and we're the only friendly unit in position to hold that door open for them.

Suddenly, Demon lets out the godawful howl that earned her her name. A split-second later, everyone's screaming in counterpoint as 17 tons of Stryker breaks traction and goes sideways on a thin layer of ice. Somehow, Big Jim manages to wrestle it back under control before we go off a cliff.

"Dude, what the hell?" asks Little Jim.

"Snow leopard!" Big Jim shouts back. *"Had to hit the brakes, it was right there in the road!"*

There's a momentary silence as everyone digests that.

"Bollocks," Streeter puts in. *"Snow leopards don't range this far west. Are you sure you didn't see a goat?"*

"It was not a goat!"

Then Sergeant Kim gets that look in her eye and glances at me. *"We were somewhere around Kirkuk when the drugs began to take hold..."*

And I fire right back, *"We can't stop here! This is cat country!"*

We're still snickering a few minutes later when the first RPG hits.

....

In the end, enough of us are left to bury our dead. But it's a near thing.

Before someone bombed the crap out of it, the pass was home to a small village, long since abandoned. It was perfect for an ambush. The only thing that saved us was Big Jim's driving. If we'd arrived ten minutes later, the other side would have been finished setting up, with all their heavy weapons aimed straight down our throats.

We don't actually have to dig the graves in the half-frozen earth. The surviving Iranians handle that for us, supervised by a squad of Canadian artillerists who would just as soon let the prisoners dig a few extra for themselves. But, once the hulk of First Squad's Stryker cools enough for us to recover the remains, we wrap each of our friends in a poncho liner, lower him gently into the grave, and cover him with the soil he defended to the last. Then the captain and Sergeant Scott move down the line, enacting the ritual we all know too well: boots for the last march, rifle muzzle-down for an end to the fighting, helmet and ID tags to give a name to the fallen.

As the captain borrows Little Jim's Bible, the rest of the survivors fall into a loose semblance of ranks. As usually happens, I find myself off to one side with Adela, Sergeant Scott, and the rest of the folks who don't share the faith. Sergeant Scott bows his head and murmurs a brief Asatru invocation, which always gives me a shiver. Then he nudges me. "Monk, get your camera ready."

"What–?" I stare at him.

"Just do it."

So, with numb hands, I dig the SLR out of its makeshift case. And, in the failing mountain twilight, I do the kind of shooting I prefer, even if it's not subject matter I particularly want to record.

After, as I'm kneeling to label the exposed film and re-package the camera, a shadow falls over me. I look up at the captain's drawn, weary face. *"Captain?"*
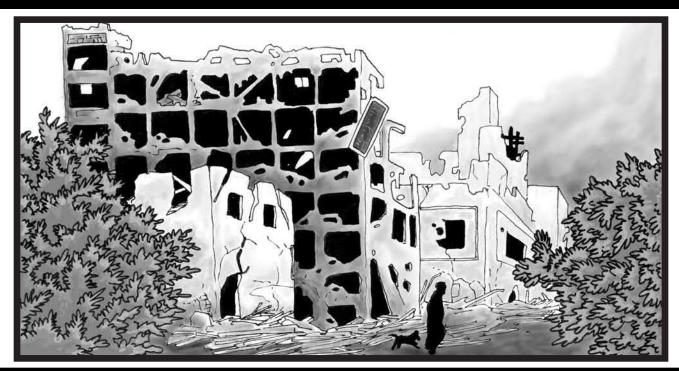
"Monk, you ever wonder why you're here?" He's swaying with exhaustion and blood loss.

"Uh... sir?" Suddenly, I'm certain that photographing the memorial service was a step over an invisible line that I should not have crossed.

"You know I got no use for the media, Monk. Never did. But Scott talked me into keeping you on. He said we needed every hand we could get, even if you couldn't shoot. But he also said we needed someone to remember the dead, to keep the book." He gestures with his good hand at the line of eighteen graves, already crusted with fresh snow. *"Your stories... you're the one who's gotta make it home, Monk. To tell our families what it was like for us."* He pauses, turns to go, turns back with a last thought. *"The President was wrong, you know. We aren't on our own. We're all in this together."*

And he leaves me there with a camera full of answers and a notebook full of thin red lines.

CHAPTER 1

ON THE GROUND 2013

He who wishes to fight must first count the cost. When you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, then men's weapons will grow dull, and their ardor will be dampened. If you lay siege to a town, you will exhaust your strength. Again, if the campaign is protracted, the resources of the State will not be equal to the strain. Now, when your weapons are dulled, your ardor dampened, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring up to take advantage of your extremity. Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must ensue... In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns.
— Sun Tzu, the Art of War

The world of **Twilight: 2013** is physically and technologically no different than the world of today; it's still the planet Earth in the 21st century. What differences there are come from the living conditions on the ground in 2013. With both nuclear and conventional attacks throughout the world, numerous cities are destroyed or abandoned and in many instances, both. Those remaining cities are but a remnant of their former selves and with only a fraction of their former population.

Life outside of major cities shifts as well; many now are comparable to forts both in style and physical features. What governments previously existed are now gone; replaced with whatever fits the local needs of the people or most often by whomever is strongest to take it. Life between the towns and cities is a virtual no-mans land where only the toughest or most desperate dwell.

Even areas that saw little to no actual combat experience conditions that range from what people of 2008 would call normal to complete and utter devastation. Bombs and bullets were not the only things to bring cities down and governments to a halt. Whole cities, and even some countries, felt the destructive power of the global depression, disease, epidemics, starvation, dwindling birth rates and climbing death rates, and other equally crippling circumstances. No place is immune to the chaos wrought by the Twilight War.

The **Euro-Russo War** has currently drawn to a stalemate. Russian forces occupy all of the former Warsaw Pact countries along with parts of Germany, Austria and Italy. Scattered forces throughout Eastern Europe, Germany, Spain, Italy and France create havoc where they can.

Europe now lies in ruins. The massive Russian nuclear assault on France left that nation's territory a virtual dead zone separating the Iberian Peninsula from the rest of the continent. Germany and Poland once again saw countless battles on their soil, and the Balkan nations are a chaotic mess of lawless fiefdoms. European Russia is no better – cities hit with both nuclear and conventional weapons have laid further waste to the region.

The **Great Muslim War** has also drawn to a stalemate in the Middle East. Baghdad is in the hands of Iran along with most of the southern regions. Most of central and western Iraq is under Saudi control. Northern Iraq is now Kurdistan, along with parts of southern Turkey and western Iran. The Islamic Confederation of Nations occupies a section of northeast Iran; however, most of that fighting has died down to just an occasional skirmish action.

Saudi Arabia seized all of the Arabian Peninsula. Syria now occupies what was once Lebanon and Israel. Islamic factions are struggling for control over the Israeli resources and religious sites. The Pakistani civil war ripped the country apart. Pakistanis are vying for control with Afghani, Taliban and Indian occupation forces.

The **North American Conflict**, while not classified as a stalemate has wound down to a relative calm. Chinese forces secured several small towns in the west. Canadians claim large sections along the northern border, including most of New England. American forces occupy sections of Mexico along the border with the U.S., but Mexican and other Central American militias are staging an effective insurgency. Russia entered into the conflict - securing the rich oil deposits off their neighboring region and creating a containment zone out of former Alaska and the northwestern Canadian territories.

After the dissolution of the country, the U.S. is split into rival factions trying to claim presidency and re-unite the country. Many cities and towns, however, are simply operating as individual city states. The exception is in the southeastern U.S. where the states faired better than most and created a loose confederation of states.

The **War of Chinese Aggression** (as some have labeled it) is all over the map in the South Pacific. Chinese forces occupy many countries in Southeast Asia. China itself is unstable after the nuclear attack with large portions of the surviving population seeking refuge in the newly absorbed countries. Unfortunately for the nations of the region, this helps to solidify the Chinese occupation in these areas.

The massive American nuclear attack on China inflicts as much devastation among neighboring countries as the Chinese invasions. Nuclear fallout and radiation blanket the sector causing millions of casualties due to sickness and death. Chinese forces occupy parts of Japan, Korea and the Philippines, the whole of Myanmar and Taiwan, and clusters of small islands in the region.

The **War of the Amazon** is a unique case study in regards to the Twilight War. South America is weathering the aftermath best of all other continents. While the nations of South America battled almost as long as everyone else, their wars were 100% conventional and mostly limited to unpopulated areas, thus leaving most of their infrastructures intact.

The **Forgotten War** of Africa is a study in contrasts. Along the Mediterranean coast, Egypt and Libya have united in all but name, and are positioning to become the dominant force in the area. French refugees and nationals have flooded into Algeria.

Sub-Saharan Africa suffered few direct effects of the global war, but deep-seated tribal and regional conflicts have only increased in ferocity. The interior of the country devolved into an all out war, and the coastal areas exist only as a refuge from the interior fighting. Utopia and South Africa being the exceptions, have survived virtually intact. South Africa has even managed to thrive. Its industrial complex has become a major supplier of arms and equipment for many of the world's conflicts.

All of the political power shifts and border rearrangements go above and beyond the other global effects of the Twilight War. Outside of the major conflict regions, almost every nation on the globe suffers the environmental and economic effects of the Twilight War as well.

EUROPE

France

In 2010, everything changes for France. The *Coupe de France* incident sets the country and its people on a course that eventually leads to their demise. By 2013, France essentially exists only as a footnote in history. Today France is mostly a no-mans land. Beyond the nuclear attacks, the winters of 2011 and 2012, along with the Oakland Flu manage to wreck further havoc with the already decimated nation. Millions die from disease, malnutrition and the elements in the year and a half after the nukes

hit. France's once majestic cities now lay in ruin from riots, fire and neglect. Those few cities still intact are controlled by military garrisons.

France's major population centers are destroyed in the nuclear attacks of 2011. The remaining cities, towns and villages either dissolve in the fallout or to the Nuclear Winter of 2011 (and the subsequent winter of 2012). Ironically, many of the French survivors of the initial nuclear attack become refugees in Spain, England and Germany. By 2013, the population of France is down to about a tenth of its pre-war numbers.

The government of France is eliminated in the nuclear strike that hit Paris. The French president along with the Prime Minister and most of the parliament are killed in the blast or its secondary effects (fires, fallout and building collapses). The loss of the government creates delays in responding to the nuclear attack, create more chaos and lead to many cities burning out of control. The French military assumes control and issues martial law and many other strict control measures, including sealing all borders and immediately recalling all military units from foreign soil.

The French military does not fair much better than the federal government, although the upper military command structure manages to survive intact. Military bases in Paris, Brest, Champagne and Orleans are almost 100% destroyed in the attack. However, with military bases scattered throughout the country, most of the French military machine survives the initial attacks.

Before the nukes hit France, the French military is already making plans to redeploy all of its forces on foreign soil. After the nukes hit, the military sends out an instant communiqué to all foreign-based French troops – abandon your post and return to France immediately. By 2013, only about half of the military forces have returned (most of which are naval and aerial forces). Many French army units are still trying to make their way back to France, although some simply give up and either offer their services to their host country or throw down their weapons and blend in with the civilian populace.

On a side note to history, the U.S. interdiction of the French retaliation attacks immediately puts the two nations on unstable ground. There are serious discussions at the most senior levels in France about listing the U.S. as an enemy nation and seizing all of its assets inside the country. If not for the almost unanimous voice from other EU countries France would have most certainly done so.

As of 2013, France is nothing more than a handful

of independent city states, mostly in the south. Each of these cities acts as its own independent governing body, although many still pay homage to one of the two seats of power. Lyon is the headquarters of the tattered French military, while Bordeaux is the seat of a new French civilian leadership. No population center of more than 100,000 exists north of Lyon, and the majority of those are only small villages.

Germany

When France launches its nukes at targets in Belarus; Germany is placed in a precarious situation; support a longtime ally and accept the consequences or stand neutral in the face of extremism. In the end, Germany chooses to side with France and strikes a blow against terrorism and the states that support it.

German heavy industry is the single largest target of the aerial campaign of 2012 by the Russians. Every major German city is targeted in a fierce bombardment that has not been seen since WWII. The bombing is so intense, several cities, such as Bremen, are almost completely leveled. The loss of the Bremen industry is especially hard on the Germans as it was home to many food producing companies.

In the waning months of 2012, the German Chancellor meets with the Queen of Denmark in private. The details of discussions at this meeting are never released publicly, although there are plenty of conspiracy theories about it. In January of 2013, the Queen of Denmark surprises everyone and dissolves the parliament, then announces a peaceful annexation of Denmark by Germany. This effectively gives total control of access to and from the Baltic Sea to the Germans. Theoretically, this also gives Germany easier access to the Russian rear areas going overland through Sweden (after crossing the Baltic of course). As of the summer of 2013, Germany is not utilizing this feature to attack the Russian homeland.

In order to secure the region of Denmark with little resistance from her citizens, Germany floods the major population areas with what food and medical supplies it can afford. While the majority of the population is opposed to the annexation, the influx of food, fuel and medicine quiets most dissenters. A resistance group, the *Holger Danske* (in honor of the WWII group of the same name) organizes in the city of Copenhagen to fight what they call the German Invasion and Occupation of Denmark but as of 2013 is lightly armed and poorly trained.

Germany of 2013 is a mish-mash of territories under differing control. Whole sections along the western border with France, where the nuclear fallout is concentrated the most, are virtually deserted and effectively lawless. Central Germany is under civilian control with some semblance of normalcy, albeit greatly reduced because of the lack of supplies and population. Eastern Germany is mostly under military rule by one side or the other. Russians control the northeast corner of Germany as far south as Templin with the remainder of eastern Germany under EU authority of varying countries.

Ukraine and Belarus

As of the start of the Euro-Russo War these countries technically no longer exist. Russia invades and conquers the Ukraine in 2010 and Belarus in 2011. One of Russia's first acts in each of these regions is to move what critical industries they have into central Russia.

Both of these countries are a vital part of the Russian invasion plan and the EU knows this. During the aerial war preceding the ground invasion, both countries are continually targeted. As a result, almost all of the cities are effectively leveled, and the population disperses out into the countryside (at least what remains).

In recent months the various insurgent groups (birthed by Russia seizing control of both countries) begin to operate more brazenly and attack more hardened military targets. This forces Russia to shift some of its fighting forces around to these areas to protect what supply trains they do manage to operate. Due to the weakened state of the Russian military though, its provincial government resorts to more drastic measures to quell the insurgency. Midnight kidnappings, mass public executions and other extremely questionable means are used against the rebels.

Poland

United States and NATO forces stage out of Poland during the invasion of Russia in early 2012, and the country suffers the brunt of Russia's conventional counterattacks. The devastation here is, perversely, less extreme than in much of the rest of the world, as neither faction is willing to risk hitting its own troops with a nuke. Polish forces offer up a token resistance to the Russian invasion, but essentially Poland is a "gimme" for the Russians.

During the final offensives of 2013, Poland witnesses an influx of her former EU allies (along with a fresh US BCT recently transferred from England) as they try to push back at the Russians. Presently,

large numbers of European, American, and Russian troops are now on Polish soil. Command authority for these units varies widely, with EU forces tending to have the highest cohesion. As of mid 2013 though, most non-Polish EU units are gearing up for withdrawal to their home nations; there is no way to maintain an effective supply train.

Russian forces are concentrated in northern Poland, from the Kaliningrad Oblast all the way to Germany, and effectively add the territory under their control to that of the Russian outpost. American troops are lining up with their EU counterparts, hoping that some ports in Western Europe still have ships available for the trip back home, and that they can break their way through the Russian lines to get to them.

Poland's surviving civilian population and government make entreaties to both EU and American forces within the nation's borders. The Poles are concerned that Russia may launch another attack with fresh troops from Kaliningrad or across Belarus in an attempt to shore up the border with the EU, possibly dissolving Poland entirely.

The Czech Republic and Slovakia

Located on some of Europe's oldest and most important land travel routes, the Czech Republic is positioned to control transportation across the continent. The small country also controls an invaluable resource – the still-functional Temelin nuclear power plant. At full capacity, Temelin

generates more than 1700 megawatts of electricity; reduced output will still be sufficient to provide power for the small country's residents and industries – including iron and steel production and armament manufacture.

Neighboring Slovakia is closely tied to the Czech Republic's economy and industry. Fuel for the aforementioned Temelin plant is produced in Slovakia, and energy supplies have long been shared between the two nations. A similar industrial base, a result of decades of central planning under Communist rule, allows for easy trade and combined manufacture.

These two countries are major battlegrounds during the push into central Europe. Currently most of Slovakia is under Russian control, however, the Czech Republic is teeming with troops from almost every European nation along with a few battalions of Russians. A true "front" line does not exist in the Czech Republic; units are spread throughout the country. The Russians are concentrated around Temelin though, with at least two battalions of armor protecting the reactor.

The dissolution of Czechoslovakia into the two current countries is, for many residents, a living memory. The border today is gone. Refugees from Slovakia flood into the Czech Republic and the surviving military forces of both countries combine and are tasked with ensuring internal security, operating under joint command. Criminal elements remain strong though, and even after the nuclear

exchange there is some production of synthetic drugs in both countries.

Austria and Hungary

A century ago, these two small countries were the cores of an empire spanning much of central Europe. Following the First World War, the empire was divided into a handful of independent powers.

As members of the European Union (and, in Hungary's case, NATO as well), Austria and Hungary take part in the defense against Russian forces in 2012. Both nations keep the majority of their armed forces within their borders as a hedge against possible counterstrikes and illegal entry into the EU. Because of the internal political climate of these two nations, no EU forces are allowed to be stationed in either country. In the spring of 2013, this policy is lifted (at least in Austria's case) but it's too little too late to save either of them.

By the end of 2012, almost all of Hungary is now under Russian rule, and a large number of Russian units are within Austria's borders. By 2013, Russia sets up a regional command post in Budapest to control the action as the Russian army moves toward capturing Vienna. Along with Hungary, the Russians now control the southwest section of Austria.

As Austria and Hungary form a major prong in the Russian advance westward, both suffer from the two years of conflict. Hungary's border with Serbia is heavily patrolled by surviving police and some Russian military units. Criminal organizations based in the Balkan region presented a threat to Austro-Hungarian security for decades, and the situation only worsens during the Twilight War. Traffic in contraband, from narcotics to weapons to kidnap victims, is rampant.

The Former Yugoslavia

The small nations formed out of the breakup of Yugoslavia are wildly different from one another, but they all face similar problems. Years of ethnic cleansing and civil wars, as well as pervasive corruption in government and widespread organized crime, caused tremendous problems for their citizens even before the world blew itself apart.

Russia bypasses this region entirely on her march west, at least in the sense of sending army units into their borders to fight and die. Instead, surplus Russian weapons and equipment found its way into the region. Tactically the Russians feel it will be easier to let them kill themselves off rather than spill Russian blood in any pyrrhic victory.

Today, better than half of the surviving population of these countries is in a refugee state. Semi-permanent tent cities are widespread, usually clustered around remnants of United Nations or European Union peacekeeping forces and their installations. Guerrilla troops made up of former soldiers, criminal enforcers, and other combatants roam the countryside and cityscapes, fighting for control of territory and resources. In southern Serbia's Kosovo province, the specter of ethnic and religious genocide has resurfaced.

Eastern European criminal organizations are the functional government throughout most of this region. They are ruthless and tolerate no interference in their enterprises, but provide employment and, in many cases, security for the areas in which they operate. Legitimate authorities deal with these organizations on a more-or-less equal footing.

The exception to these troubles lies in Slovenia. The small country establishes close ties with Austria and Italy, and troops from both nations can be found within its borders, establishing Slovenia as a de facto buffer zone against other regional threats.

Other Nations

As the final prong in the Russian European attack plan, Romania serves as the gateway to central Europe. One third of the Russian assault force sweeps through Romania in a matter of weeks, seizing control of major roads, industry and supply dumps.

Moldova is a speed bump on the way to Romania for the Russian Army. Before the invasion, however, the Russia delivers an ultimatum to the Moldovan government – surrender or face annihilation. They choose to surrender, and the country is assimilated into Russia without a shot being fired. Protected by early surrender, it escapes any harm both from Russia and from the EU. Not one bomb falls on the country, and for the most part its infrastructure is still intact (although it still endures the nuclear winters and Oakland Flu along with everyone else). Life in 2013 Moldova is very similar to what it was years ago, albeit with fewer people and Russian tanks rolling along the highways.

Along with the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria is also spared a direct Russian invasion. It too becomes a haven for criminal organizations. Even though it escapes the military conflict, Bulgaria is currently being ripped apart by rival crime syndicates fighting for what little territory they can grab. It is also serving as a buffer zone for Russia against the Greek-Turkey conflict.

LIFE IN 2013

The **Twilight War** reaches every corner of the world on some level. Even those areas not involved in direct conflict are affected. The global connectedness of the last 25 years leads to the unforeseen consequence of what happens to one country also happens to many others.

It seems odd that in all of history the 20th century saw growth at an unparalleled rate. Industry and technology made advances at an exponential rate. In 1944, Germany was still fighting WWII largely from horse drawn vehicles. In 1969 the U.S. landed a man on the moon, and in the 1990's the Internet became a worldwide phenomenon.

In 2011 all of the progress made over the last 100 years is almost entirely erased. In 3 short years, mankind returns to the 1800's in terms of available industry, technology, luxury and even population (and worsens with regard to widespread disease and famine).

All is not lost. With the **Twilight War** grinding to a stand still (due to the major lack of capability to continue it and the collapse of those governments involved) civilian peoples begin to pick up the pieces of their lives and move on. Cities around the globe are bombed into history, while now new ones spring forth. Old ways of doing business disappear and now people without economic degrees from Ivy League schools create whole systems of trade and value. Countries are destroyed, but the people who formed them still survive ... and surviving they are.

TRANSPORTATION

When the EMPs hit Europe, Russia and North America, transportation comes to a screeching halt. Many modern vehicles (post 1970's) rely on computer controlled systems to function, systems vulnerable to EMPs. In the major cities and countries, transportation is the hardest hit area from the wars. Without transportation many other aspects of society wither and die. Without transportation people can no longer commute to work, food cannot be shipped from the farms, emergency medical personnel cannot reach victims, and police officers cannot patrol.

South of the equator, the lack of any EMP effects means that any transportation lost is due to breakdowns from use and lack of repair parts. As the population shrinks though, the sheer number of operating vehicles is plenty. In fact, the second

largest export (the largest being food) for many South American countries is automobiles and transportation trucks.

People are ingenious and inventive though. In lieu of more traditional means of transportation, older, forgotten methods resurface along with creative uses of surviving modern technology.

River Travel

The world's rivers have always been the life blood of society. They provide water for people and plants and the ability to travel easily from one place to the next. The first form of transportation to begin rebuilding is river transit. It requires little more than a vessel, a crew and some cargo, and its ready to use. No roads must be repaired, no paths must be cleared, and in many cases the ships don't even need fuel as they are powered by the river's current.

River transit has always been hampered by falls and rapids. To overcome these natural obstacles, locks and dams were built. In order to rebuild river transportation, the obstacles on the river must be addressed. Some engineers manage to hook up steam engines to get their locks and pumps working. However, many transportation routes again rely on ships to travel as far as they can, off load their supplies for over land transport around the obstacle, and then reload on another ship to continue their journey.

Steam Power

Steam engines use heat to create stream that drives either a piston or rotary mechanism. These engines require both a heat source (usually wood or coal) and water (either recycled or replenished during use). In developed nations, steam driven vehicles (mostly locomotives) are relegated to museum pieces or the occasional historic society. Many of these are coaxed to life and are plying the rail yards once again. In parts of Asia steam locomotives never went out of use though. A few of these models are "confiscated" by invading armies and shipped back to their home countries to rebuild struggling transportation systems.

Nuclear Vessels

While it's true that nuclear powered vessels can ply the seas without the need for conventional fuels, they are essentially viewed as floating power plants. Rather than using them for shipping, combat or other sea going ventures, most of the surviving vessels are relegated to permanent docks and their nuclear power plants connected to the city's power

grid in areas hit with EMPs (or lack the fuel to keep the local power plant running). The majority of these are connected to some sort of military station, but a few are connected to civilian centers.

Most nuclear vessels lack two essential requirements to operate normally – manpower and food for said manpower (outside of the nuclear-powered ice breakers, which have small crews). This is another reason why most are being used for alternative activities.

A few vessels, however, are still functioning in their normal capacity, submarines making up the majority of that small category. With their offensive capabilities removed or depleted, nearly all of these operating subs are used for extraction and insertion of military personnel (generally for raiding purposes).

INDUSTRY

The production facilities of all sides are prime targets when the war escalates into its final phases. Nuclear and conventional weapons destroy factories and refineries all over the world.

Facilities that survive the war more or less intact face other problems. Lack of electrical power, raw materials, and trained labor reduces most factories to little more than large buildings with extremely heavy machinery bolted to the floor. In locations where power and labor are still available, whatever authority exists may be investigating the surviving factories and the feasibility of returning them to service – though not necessarily producing the same items as in prewar times.

Some "historic villages" operating as tourist attractions have the potential for conversion to more conventional production, and the staff of such locations, if they survive, are valuable sources of information on early-industrial manufacturing methods and machinery. Water- or animal-powered mills can be put into operation very quickly.

Because of the effects of the EMPs, computer-controlled manufacturing across the northern hemisphere is now extremely limited, if not completely eliminated. The last functional precision-manufacturing facilities in the north are in Scandinavia, Canada, and a few locations in Japan and India. South of the equator, things are significantly better – factories in Australia, South America, and parts of Africa are still operating as best they can with limited supplies of power and raw materials.

Industries that require advanced materials – most synthetic chemicals, for example – are virtually gone in the **Twilight War**'s major conflict areas. The near-necessities of pre-War life like consumer electronics, over-the-counter and prescription medicines, and reliable mechanical transportation are indefinitely out of production throughout much of the world. Items manufactured using petroleum by-products are increasingly scarce – tires and plastic products (especially recyclable ones) are highly sought-after.

Steel and concrete are valuable trade goods for any community able to manufacture them. Repair or replacement of damaged and destroyed structures often requires these two materials in varying amounts. Production of other construction materials, especially brick, is highly valuable to a community able to maintain such an operation.

Decentralized "cottage industries" are the new norm in areas most affected by the **Twilight War**'s destruction. Home and school workshops are modified to use animal (or human!) power when electricity or conventional fuels are unavailable. While grossly inefficient compared to prewar standards, small workshops are able to produce some necessary goods, repair and maintain other valuable devices.

COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout much of the northern hemisphere, long-distance communication networks are in shambles. The EMPs generated during the nuclear exchanges wreak havoc on non-military broadcast and receiver devices, and the bombs themselves destroy many of the junctions and routers necessary to maintain reliable service. Radios are prized, so long as power to run them is available. Amateur shortwave ("ham") radio sets, able to send and receive signals at transcontinental ranges, are often the sole link a community has with the outside world – and in many cases, operators only listen, for fear of revealing the location and relative prosperity of their community.

Broadcast television is mostly a thing of the past, but some fiber-optic-based cable networks may be intact here and there. Landline and cellular telephone systems are in similar shape. Satellite phones are a hit-and-miss proposition – the EMP blasts cripples many of the communications satellites essential to this service.

The Internet still works, but only in places where the physical servers and lines are mostly intact. Although after the EMPs hit Europe, Russia, North America and China the system is a mere shell of what it used to be. For the most part, Australia is the new backbone of the 'Net, hosting better than 80% of the world's remaining traffic. Localized networks and old style Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) are starting to come online in parts of the northern hemisphere, but a restoration of instant global communication is still many years away.

Mail – actual physical paper-and-ink letters – is the most reliable method of long-distance communication in most of Europe and North America. The remnants of national postal services are still able to deliver mail in these areas, and most cases are awarded armed escort by whatever entity holds power in the region.

For mass communication, newspapers dominate. Some papers are still printed out on massive presses – although at circulation numbers far below prewar levels – but many are produced on hand-cranked mimeograph machines and distributed by hand. As advertising revenue is mostly a thing of the past in devastated areas, local governments subsidize the production of papers to help reestablish ties in surviving communities.

COMMERCE

The collapse of the global economy means the collapse of established methods of trade. Before the war, much of the world's wealth existed only electronically. Individuals, companies, and even entire countries financial reserves were based solely on good faith and credit from someone else.

In the postwar world, paper currency is valued more for the material itself than the purchasing power it represented before the missiles flew. Likewise, coins made of non-precious metals – nickel and steel are more useful as manufacturing materials than units of trade. Even precious metals are vastly devalued – gold, silver, and platinum are accepted in trade, but their perceived value varies wildly from place to place.

In less-devastated parts of the world, currency can still be used for purchases – the inertia of hundreds of years is not completely eliminated by the end of the old world. Circulating coins made of precious metals – most notably, South African Krugerrands – are afforded the greatest worth, as they comprise both a measurable amount of a valued metal and the perceived value of a nation's

economic strength.

Barter is becoming the most common method of trade throughout much of the world – goods and services are exchanged at a rate negotiated between those providing either, or sometimes established by local authority. With some large prewar nations dissolved, local economies establish their own standards of trade and value and provide new currencies distinct from predecessors – but the word "dollar" still carries some degree of weight in the polities forming in what was the United States.

Virtually anything of value can be traded – someone somewhere is looking for whatever it is you have in surplus. The most common trade good now is simple human labor. Muscle power, technical know-how, and other, less-savory services, are traded constantly for food, shelter, or other goods. Renaissance-style guilds spring up to provide protection and training for workers and craftsmen.

FOOD

Current global population estimates range from one to two billion, down from over seven billion just five years ago. While there are many fewer mouths to feed, much of the world's most productive farmland (most noticeably the American Midwest) is unusable, and still-fertile land will suffer reduced yields because of the lack of machinery and fertilizers. With the global disruption in supply and distribution networks, the food that is produced cannot be delivered to the many regions in need.

The years of draught, fire, extreme temperatures and conversion to corn (for biofuel purposes) leaves seed stocks virtually bare in many parts of the world. Stockpiles remaining in the storage facilities still sit there, unable to be delivered to the fields for planting. In the northern hemisphere, the massive "factory farms" of the last century are no longer viable. Around the world, 2013's harvests are expected to be extremely small.

Australia and South America are the overriding exceptions. While war rages throughout those regions as it does elsewhere, the conflicts remain non-nuclear and limited in their destruction, leaving most of the countryside still usable for farming. Global weather patterns also keep the worst of the fallout from reaching the southern hemisphere for some years.

Grains remain the backbone of the world's food supply, with wheat being supplemented by hardier oats. Rice is popular as well, producing high yields per acre once established. Fruits and vegetables are now an entirely regional product – long-distance distribution of tropical and citrus fruits in particular is extremely difficult without refrigeration systems. The smaller organic and "farmer's market"-oriented farms that experienced a renaissance in popularity since the 1960s are likely to grow in importance, and serve as models for farming in the coming years, as they place less importance on large-scale fertilizer use.

RELIGION

As the popular saying goes *"there are no atheists in foxholes."* With the world in its current shape, it's no surprise that there is a shortage of atheists. Religion in 2013 takes on a different approach than just a few years ago. Religion in people's life is about hope and faith now. Religious experiences mainly focus on ideas and thoughts that lift people's spirits and help them make it one day at a time.

After the collapse of governments and borders, the last remaining refuge of identity for most people is religion. It has become a rallying point for people seeking to keep (or find) their place in the world. Mayors and councilmen are being replaced by priests, ministers, rabbis or imams in many communities. Most manage to keep some resemblance of their old community in tact.

Some religious congregations adopt a more cult-like existence surrounding their "messiah". These religious cults increase ten fold after the **Twilight War** begins in earnest. Beyond the belief that their leader is the new messiah, all of these cults possess one other quality in common – fanaticism. In areas where these cults form, they are often more dangerous to deal with than highwaymen or enemy soldiers.

The opposite effect also manifests; the anti-religion community. After the nukes hit, some people have trouble reconciling how any benevolent being could ever allow this to happen. Where are mercy, compassion and love? In those areas the first estate becomes the target of fear, anger and outrage. Churches are burned, and the clergy either run out of town or executed for spreading lies and mistrust. These communities are often filled with bitter, angry people who distrust outsiders and hand outs.

In the Middle East, ancient tensions still exist between different sects and religious groups; however, Egypt shows that this doesn't have to be so. Arab, European and Jew manage to build a working and semi-prosperous new society out of the harsh African desert. Other communities around the

world, because of the scattering of people and the lack of places to worship, also mix their practices in a sign of unity and forgiveness. Their services now are multi- or non-denominational. It is not uncommon in some parts of the world to see a Buddhist, a Muslim, a Jew and a Christian worshipping, living and working together.

CULTURE

Much of the history and culture of the world is lost by 2013. A great deal of the world's art, music, books, and artifacts are lost, destroyed or misplaced.

In 2012, many cities see the rise of cultural fundamentalists groups. These groups seek to preserve and protect the history and cultural of the world from the savagery of war. Theft is the most common tool in their arsenal, although several groups negotiate with museums and such for the safe retrieval of artifacts and items. Unfortunately quite a few of these cultural caches are themselves lost either through acts of war or the deaths of their new curators.

A few of these cultural *fundie* groups form expeditions seeking to find lost works and items in abandoned cities or rumored lost caches. Along with them, merchants and treasure hunters also crisscross the war-torn countryside looking for items that can bring a nice sum on the open market.

Non-tangible aspects of culture are also affected; trips to the mall, cruising, dating, etc, are all no more. People suffer from some forms of massive psychological trauma - global PTSD and depression. Life is really not significantly more difficult than it was prior to the collapse. People work long hours for little satisfaction, but in 2013 distractions that take people's minds off the rat race are few and far between.

The massive media cultural monster of the last few decades is now in the same category as Nessie and Bigfoot. People are left to create their own heroes, hopes, and rallying points. Entertainment is low-tech with traveling player groups, puppet shows, storytelling and other simple methods of entertaining. In many communities, those who can make people laugh and take their minds off the tragedies around them are just as needed as the doctors or security guards.

URBAN AND SUBURBAN AREAS

Urban areas are zones with dense populations of people and man-made structures. Urban areas are designed (or at least attempt) to take full advantage of space for industrial, commercial, residential and recreational uses. Prior to the **Twilight War**, urban areas allowed people to live a modern life. Therefore the space available for agriculture, livestock and other "raw" materials is at a minimum. Open space is the mainstay for more rural areas where there is room to grow crops and feed animals (and keep their inconveniences from interfering in the enjoyment of modern life). With modern transportation it's simpler to just ship these items from the farms to people.

As the war builds, shipping and transportation become virtually non-existent. People living in urban cities no longer have access to food and raw materials. In early 2011 in Europe and 2012 in North America, urbanites begin migrating out of their cities either to other cities or the countryside. On top of that, every city (including those not touched directly by war) is also hit by famine and disease. Overall, previous urban areas are now composed of mostly empty buildings.

In North American and Europe, those who stay behind often consolidate (for workforce and security reasons) into decent-sized communities. A city might host up to a dozen or so such communities with no-man zones between. Each one fights for whatever resources it can find, steal or otherwise acquire. With no working sanitation, these no-man zones are often filled with garbage and overrun with rats and other vermin.

In other areas, the populations also consolidate, but rather than form their own mini-cities, the people often flock around government-sponsored resources, such as: water treatment plants, security zones or shipping ports. This not only brings the workforce to the work, but also minimizes the distances to deliver necessary societal needs (clean water, sanitation, etc).

RURAL AREAS

Rural areas are characterized as being sparsely populated and usually with an agricultural background. With large tracts of undeveloped land, the countryside is an ideal place for farming, logging and herding. Many "country" folk can accurately be described as those who live off the land (as opposed to the urban counterparts who live off the

megamart).

Unlike urban areas (100% of which change due to the **Twilight War**), country change is often an accident of battle geography. In regions untouched directly by war, life in rural areas in 2013 resembles life prior to 2013. In regions directly hit by war, rural areas are worn down from fighting and over harvesting resources.

Rural areas, due to the small population, are normally last in line for technological improvements and luxuries; therefore, reliance on them is considerably less than in urban areas. When the EMPs hit and commerce slows, the effect on country life is minimal.

At first, people migrating from the larger cities to the more rural towns are welcomed with hospitality and kindness. But as it soon becomes apparent that they lack basic skills necessary to farm crops or herd livestock, their welcome wears out quickly. Small towns increasingly resist the influx of urbanites and the drain on resources they cause.

CHAPTER 2

THE REFLEX SYSTEM

The chess board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is always hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But we also know, to our cost,
that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance.
— Thomas Huxley, A Liberal Education

THE REFLEX SYSTEM

The rules that **Twilight: 2013** uses are collectively called the Reflex System. This system is designed for rapid, descriptive play. While some aspects of the game are intricately detailed, our intent is for most of the heavy math to take place during character creation and periodic maintenance, rather than bogging down action scenes. We've written these rules with the assumption that you have some prior experience with roleplaying games – at least enough to understand these basic concepts:

• The concept of a roleplaying game as an attempt at cooperative narration, or at least as a series of problem-solving exercises;

• The roles of game masters (GMs) and players;

• The functions of player characters (PCs) and non-player characters (NPCs);

• The idea that the point of the game should be for everyone involved to have fun.

With that said, here's a quick summary of the basic principles of RPGs that are unique to, or modified for, the Reflex System.

STAGED RULES

Individual play groups often use "house rules" to tune their game systems to a specific preferred level of complexity and realism. To facilitate this, we've written the Reflex System with three stages of rules. This document contains the **Stage I** rules set, which is intended as a "light" or introductory set of mechanics for players new to Twilight: 2013. **Stage II** (standard) and **Stage III** ("crunchy" or detail-heavy) rules appear in the Twilight: 2013 Core Rules and will be further expanded in future supplements

Dice and Dice Notations

Most gamers are familiar with the standard notations for dice sizes: a d4 is a four-sided die, 3d6 is the sum of a trio of six-sided dice, and so forth. The Reflex System primarily uses d20s, with a few cases calling for d6s and d10s. Typically, you'll want a few of each.

We do have one specific convention for rolling multiple dice and taking the best or worst result of the group: "high" and "low" rolls. We indicate this through an "H" or "L" suffix. For example, "3d20L" is shorthand for "roll three 20-sided dice and take the lowest of the three dice results." "4d10H+5" means" roll four 10-siders, take the highest result, and add 5 to it."

Rounding

Unless otherwise stated, always round decimals or fractions according to normal mathematic standards: up for 0.5 or more, down for anything less.

Measurements

In an attempt to avoid cultural imperialism, we've chosen to use the metric system for all measurements. If you're more familiar with U.S. customary units, the following equivalencies may be helpful:

Distance	
Metric Unit	**U.S. Customary Unit**
1 kilometer	0.621 mile or 3,280 feet
1 meter (m)	1.09 yard or 39.4 inches
1 centimeter (cm)	0.394 inches
Area	
Metric Unit	**U.S. Customary Unit**
1 square kilometer	0.386 square mile or 247 acres
1 square meter	1.20 sq. yards or 10.8 sq. feet
Volume	
Metric Unit	**U.S. Customary Unit**
1 liter	0.264 gallon or 33.8 fluid ounces
1 cubic meter	35.3 cubic feet
Weight	
Metric Unit	**U.S. Customary Unit**
1 metric ton	1.10 ton or 2,200 pounds
1 kilogram	2.20 pounds

Task Checks and Target Numbers

When you make a task check, your character's attribute value serves as your base target number and his skill rating determines the number of dice you roll. The object is to roll under the target number. Thus, low rolls are good in the Reflex System. This may be a bit jarring if you're accustomed to hoping for high rolls in – ahem – those other systems that use 20-sided dice. Work with us; we'll provide more details in the next section, and it's not as hard as it

sounds. Also, this gives you a chance to rehabilitate all those d20s that never rolled well for you when you were fighting orcs...

BASIC TASK RESOLUTION

All task checks are based on your character's rating in the appropriate skill and his value in the relevant attribute. As we've already noted, skill rating determines the number of dice you roll, while attribute value determines your base target number (TN). When you make a skill check, roll the appropriate number of dice and take the lowest die result. If the result is equal to or less than your target number, you succeed. If it's greater than your target number, you fail.

Example: An attack with a handgun is a task that relies on the Sidearm skill and the Coordination attribute. Bob has Coordination 9 and a Professional rating in the Sidearm skill. A skill check with a Professional-rated skill is a 3d20L roll. Therefore, whenever Bob makes an attack with a handgun at normal difficulty, he rolls 3d20L against a TN of 9.

Unskilled Task Checks

If your character has no rating in a skill, he's considered unskilled. You can still attempt most actions, but at a significant penalty. Roll 2d20H – 2d20, taking the highest of the two die results.

Attribute Checks

If no skill applies to what you're doing, your GM may ask you to make an attribute check. Attribute checks occur just like skill checks, but you always roll 2d20L (as if your character had a Competent rating in the appropriate skill).

COMPLICATIONS AND REFINEMENTS

Bonuses and Penalties

Your character's appropriate attribute value is always your base TN. However, beneficial effects can make tasks easier, while adverse effects can make them harder. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Reflex System reflects these in bonuses and penalties. Each applicable bonus raises your TN by its value, while each penalty reduces your TN.

Example: Bob takes a shot with his handgun. His Coordination is 9, so that's his base TN. However, Bob is suffering from a −3 penalty and a −2 penalty. On the plus side, he's using a laser sight,

which provides a +2 bonus. Bob's net TN is (9 − 3 − 2 + 2) 6.

You can't apply more bonuses than the number of dice you're rolling, and no single bonus can be better than +5. These restrictions don't apply to penalties – life's hard like that.

Difficulty

The most common source of a bonus or penalty is a task that's easier or harder than usual. Your GM has a comprehensive list of complications in Chapter Three of the core rules. For the sake of brevity, here's a quick look at bonus and penalty magnitudes for a task's basic difficulty:

Difficulty	Modifier
Trivial	+5
Laughable	+4
Everyday	+3
Easy	+2
Simple	+1
Normal	±0
Complex	−1
Challenging	−2
Difficult	−3
Daunting	−4
Impossible	−5 or worse

Success, Failure, and Margins Thereof

Sometimes, simple success or failure doesn't provide enough detail - you need to know how thoroughly you succeeded or how catastrophically you failed. In such instances, the relevant value is the difference between your TN and your die result. This is referred to as the margin of success (MoS) or margin of failure (MoF).

Example: Bob has a TN of 6. He rolls, achieving a die result of 1. Bob succeeds with a margin of success of 5.

A MoS of zero (i.e. a die result equal to your TN) indicates that you barely succeeded, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.

Optional Rule: Exceptional Success

If more than one die result could be a success, use the lowest result to determine your base MoS. Then increase your MoS by 2 for each additional successful die.

Example: Bob rolls 3d20 against a TN of 6, with die results of 1, 5, and 18. His MoS is 7: a base of

5 for the die result of 1, +2 for the die that came up 5.

Opposed Checks

If two actions are in direct opposition to one another – for example, hiding in an alley (a Streetcraft skill check) and trying to detect an ambush (an Awareness attribute check) – the check with the greatest MoS (or, at the GM's discretion, the lesser MoF) determines the winner. If MoS is relevant to the outcome of the check, subtract the loser's MoS from the winner's to determine the actual MoS.

SURVIVAL POINTS

Survival points (SPs) are an optional rule to represent the natural resilience, reflexes, or dumb luck that keep player characters alive. NPCs don't get SPs unless they're essential to the plot. You already determined your character's maximum and starting pool of SPs. During play, you may spend those SPs for the following effects:

You may spend your SPs for the following benefits:

Mitigate Injury
When your character receives a wound, spend one or more SPs to reduce reduce its severity by one level per SP spent.

Boost Check
Spend one or more SPs to add a +4 bonus per SP to any one skill check. You may spend SPs after you roll.

Ignore Wound Penalties
Spend one SP to negate all wound penalties for a single skill check.

Aid Treatment
As per Boost Check, but adding bonuses to someone else's attempt to perform a medical procedure on your character.

You earn SPs at the GM's discretion for performing acts of heroism, entertaining your fellow players, roleplaying your character well, or doing things that "look good on screen."

For Stage I rules, Survival Points are an optional rule for ensuring character longevity. If your group is using this rule, your character's maximum survival point pool (i.e. the maximum number of SPs he may have in reserve at any one time) is determined by his age, as per the following table:

Age	Max SPs
18 or younger	12
19	11
20-21	10
22-24	9
25-28	8
29-33	7
35-39	6
40-46	5
47+	4

You regain SPs at the GM's discretion for performing acts of heroism, entertaining your fellow players, roleplaying your character well, or doing things that "look good on screen."

CHARACTER CREATION

Obviously, you'll need a character before you begin playing. The full Stage II/III character creation process uses a life path system, which allows you to plot out your character's career and personal history from adulthood to the beginning of play. It's also 46 pages long, which is a bit much for a quick-and-dirty introductory experience. The following system isn't as detailed or precise as the life path system, but neither does it require as much flipping of pages.

Stage I Character Creation Summary

Step Zero: Generate a character concept
Step One: Generate starting attribute values
Step Two: Select skills
Step Three: Calculate derived values
Step Four: Gear up

STEP ZERO: CONCEPT

It's always best to know who you're building before you start throwing around numbers. What jobs has he held in the past? Does he have any particular fortes or weaknesses, or is he a jack of all trades? Is he a combat novice or has he seen the proverbial elephant? What drives him? What does he want, love, fear, hate?

STEP ONE: ATTRIBUTES

Every character has eight attributes: four physical and four mental. See the sidebar for descriptions. Attribute values range from 1 to 15, though any value over 10 is in the upper 1% of human capacity and probably requires you to bribe your GM. A value of 6 is considered human average. Anything below 4 is a serious liability – perhaps an actual physical or mental handicap.

Physical Attributes
Awareness (AWA): How well your character pays attention to his surroundings and processes what's going on around him. Used for both active (searching for clues) and passive (noticing an impending ambush) observation.
Coordination (CDN): Kinesthetic sense, hand-eye coordination, and fine motor skills. Used for any delicate manipulation, from surgery to ranged attacks.
Fitness (FIT): Endurance, immune system strength, and resistance to physical injury. Rarely used for skill checks, but key in not dying prematurely.
Muscle (MUS): Physical strength, muscle tone, flexibility, and gross motor skills. Used for any full-body athletic action, from swimming to hand-to-hand combat.

Mental Attributes
Cognition (COG): Your character's capacity for abstract thought, logical reasoning, and creativity – in other words, his intelligence and cunning. Used for tasks involving analysis or creative inspiration.
Education (EDU): The amount of "book learning" your character has picked up, as measured by early 21st century academic standards. Assume your character has a number of years of formal schooling equal to twice his EDU value. Anything involving the recall of facts and figures relies on this attribute.
Personality (PER): Capacity for human interaction and empathy (whether real or feigned). Most social tasks rely on this attribute. It's also the interpersonal counterpart to Awareness, used to detect social rather than physical clues and cues.
Resolve (RES): Psychological stability and mental endurance. Used for social interaction that requires a display of aggression or determination (e.g. intimidation, leadership). Also used to resist other characters' attempts to change your character's behavior.

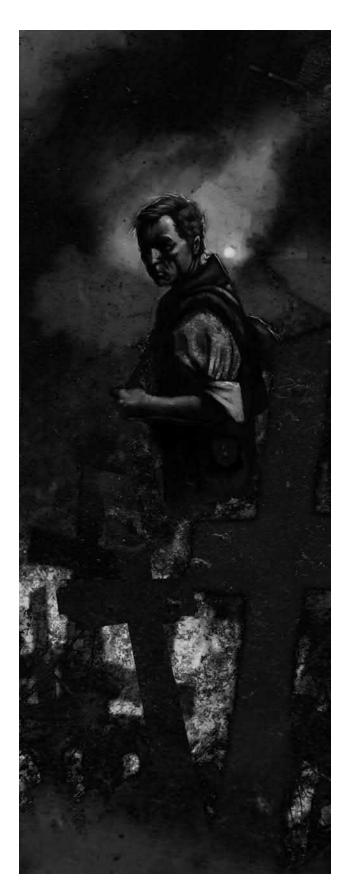Use one of the following methods to assign attribute values.

Option A: Fully Random

Roll 2d6–1 eight times, recording each die result. Then allocate the results as you see fit among the eight attributes. If EDU is lower than 6, you may (but are not required to) move points from any combination of other attributes to raise it to 6.

If the total of these eight values is less than 46, add points as you see fit to bring the total up to 46. You may not increase any attribute above 8 in this manner.

Option B: Point Allocation

Distribute a pool of 52 points as you see fit between all eight attributes, assigning each attribute a value between 1 and 10. If your GM wants particularly heroic or unseasoned characters, he may give you more or fewer points – but 52 is "normal."

STEP TWO: SKILLS

The Reflex System has 37 skills, as shown in the **Skill List**. Few characters are good at all of them. Under Stage I rules, skills have ratings: broad tiers of competence. Your character's rating in a given skill determines how many dice you roll for checks with that skill:

Rating (Dice Rolled)
Master (5d20L)
Expert (4d20L)
Professional (3d20L)
Competent (2d20L)
Novice (1d20)

Four skills are considered cascade skills. Each cascade skill is a broad category encompassing a number of related fields or disciplines. Your character can have multiple cascades in a cascade skill, each one treated as a separate skill in all ways. For example, your character might have a Professional rating in Artisan (Gunsmithing), a Competent rating in Artisan (Engraving), and Novice ratings in Artisan (Woodcarving) and Artisan (Glassblowing).

To determine your character's skills, pick one of the following three skill rating selections:

Specialist: Choose 1 skill at Expert, 2 skills at Professional, 4 skills at Competent, and 4 skills at Novice.

Balanced: Choose 3 skills at Professional, 5 skills at Competent, and 7 skills at Novice.

Generalist: Choose 1 skill at Professional, 8 skills at Competent, and 10 skills at Novice.

The only restrictions are that you can't choose any skill more than once (except for cascades, where you can select each specific cascade once) and you must choose at least one Language cascade with a Competent or better rating (as your character's native language).

Skill List
Administration: Using, abusing, organizing, and bypassing bureaucracies.

Agriculture: Planting, tending, harvesting, and storing crops.

Animal Husbandry: Breeding, raising, feeding, and slaughtering and storing animals. Also includes basic knowledge of veterinary medicine.

Aquatics: Maneuvering on and in the water, including swimming, SCUBA diving, and handling small boats (anything up to 20 meters in length). Also includes an understanding of survival techniques for the open water.

Archery: Creation, maintenance, and use of bows and crossbows.

Artillery: Use and maintenance of modern indirect-fire weapons, including howitzers, rocket artillery, and mortars.

Artisan (cascade): Creation of works of physical or literary beauty – or of simple functional objects. Each cascade represents a different area of a craftsman's focus. Sample cascades: Basketry, Blacksmithing, Bowyery, Brewing, Carpentry, Cinematography, Fiction Writing, Gem, Cutting, Glassblowing, Glasscutting, Gunsmithing, Knitting, Leatherworking, Locksmithing, Machining, Painting, Photography, Poetry, Sculpture, Silversmithing, Tailoring, Videography, Watchsmithing, Welding, Woodcarving.

Aviation: Controlling standard vehicles in powered flight, as well as related tasks like air navigation and basic meteorology.

Climbing: Ascending and descending vertical surfaces and solid objects.

Command: Organizing groups, delegating tasks, and issuing orders that social or organizational subordinates (and, on occasion, superiors) will obey.

Computing: Use of computers and related information technology.

Construction: Creation, maintenance, repair, and destruction of structures. Yes, this includes demolitions.

Deception: Intentionally distorting the truth for purposes other than entertainment.

Driving: Controlling standard ground vehicles, as well as related tasks like street navigation.

Electronics: Repairing, maintaining, and modifying electrical and electronic devices.

Fieldcraft: Basic wilderness survival, overland navigation, and stealth in a wilderness (or deserted urban) environment.

Forensics: Analysis of physical evidence to understand the past. Also includes forging documents or art objects and detecting other people's forgeries.

Freefall: Maneuvering in the absence of gravity – most commonly while skydiving. Also encompasses maneuvering (deliberately) unpowered aircraft.

Gunnery: Using and maintaining any direct-fire weapon that doesn't have a human hand on the actual weapon itself. Usually, this means vehicle-mounted weapons with a control interface of some sort.

Hand-to-Hand: Hurting people using your bare hands (feet, knees, forehead, teeth…).

Hand Weapons: Hurting people using something other than your bare hands.

Instruction: Imparting skills and knowledge to other people.

Intimidation: Gaining social dominance and eliciting compliance through implicit or explicit threats.

Language (cascade): Speaking and reading a specific language. Each Language cascade is a separate language.

Longarm: Marksmanship with any firearm designed for two-handed, shoulder-fired operation: submachine guns, rifles, shotguns, and squad automatic weapons.

Mechanics: Maintaining and repairing mechanical equipment.

Medicine: Maintaining and repairing people and animals.

Mounts: Caring for, feeding, training, and riding animals.

Performance (cascade): Delivering an entertaining or informative performance. Each cascade is a

separate performing art. Sample cascades: Ballet, Broadcast News, Ceremonial Drill, Comedy Acting, Country and Western Singing, Disguise (opposed by an observer's Awareness if used outside an entertainment context), Dramatic Acting, Guitar, Opera, Pantomime, Public Address, Rap, Saxophone, Stand-Up Comedy, Stunts, Torture.

Persuasion: Convincing another individual that a different perspective or course of action is in his own best interest. This includes therapy.

Seamanship: Controlling seagoing vessels too large for use of Aquatics (i.e. over 20 meters long). Also encompasses navigation on or under the open water.
Security: Installing, bypassing, or disabling mechanisms that restrict physical access to a place or item.

Sidearm: Marksmanship with any firearm designed for one-handed operation – in other words, handguns and a few machine pistols.

Special Equipment (cascade): Use and misuse of specialized technology that doesn't readily fall under any other skill. Sample cascades: Astronomy Instruments, Blast Furnaces, Chemical Plants, Commercial Radio Transmitters, Deep-Space Radar, Firefighting Gear, Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, Medical Diagnostic Instruments, Military Communication Gear, Mining Equipment, Nuclear Power Plants, Oil Drilling Platforms, Television Broadcast Equipment.

Special Vehicle (cascade): Use and abuse of specialized vehicles that don't readily fall under any other skill. Sample cascades: Apollo Capsule, Caspian Sea Monster, Hot-Air Balloon, Hovercraft, Space Shuttle, Train, Zeppelin.

Streetcraft: Urban navigation, knowledge of how to locate goods or services in a population center (or the ruins of one), and stealth in a populated environment.

Support Weapons: Marksmanship with man-portable direct-fire heavy weapons, including grenade launchers, medium and heavy machine guns, flamethrowers, and rocket and missile launchers.

Tactics: The study of combat above a personal scale, as well as common military tasks and protocol.

STEP THREE: DERIVED VALUES

Aside from attributes and skills, a few other numbers may come into play.

Wound Thresholds

Your character's wound thresholds determine how hard he is to injure or kill. The Reflex System uses four broad grades of injury: slight (just a scratch), moderate (okay, gonna need a doctor), serious (nature's way of telling you to slow down), and critical (where's my arm?).

Your character's slight wound threshold is always 1. His moderate wound threshold is equal to the average of 10, his Muscle, his Fitness, and his Fitness again – or, expressed algebraically, (10 + MUS + [2 x FIT]) / 4. His serious wound threshold is 1.5x his moderate threshold, and his critical wound threshold is twice moderate.

Example: Bob has Muscle 7 and Fitness 8. The average of 10, 7, 8, and 8 is 8.25, rounded to 8. Bob's wound thresholds are Slight 1, Moderate 8, Serious 12, and Critical 16.

Movement Speeds

The Muscle attribute regulates combat speed, while Fitness governs marching. Your character's speeds for various modes of movement are:

Combat Speeds	
Sprint	10 + (Muscle / 2) meters per action
Run	8 + (Muscle / 3) meters per action
Trot	6 + (Muscle / 4) meters per action
Walk	4 meters per action
Stagger	2 meters per action
Crawl	1 meter per action
Travel Speed	3 + (Fitness / 3) kilometers per hour

Rads

Twilight: 2013 occurs in the immediate aftermath of (among other catastrophes) a nuclear war. It's safe to assume that every survivor has picked up some degree of irradiation. Your character's cumulative lifetime dose doesn't have any effect on him at the beginning of play, but subsequent exposure can cause varying degrees of radiation sickness or, ultimately, death. The Reflex System measures radiation in rads.

Your character begins play with 2d100H rads.

Survival Points

As mentioned earlier, Survival Points (SPs) keep your character alive so you don't have to come back to this section of the rules so much. SPs are an optional mechanic, so check with your GM to see if they matter in his game.

If they do, your character's maximum SPs are equal to 10 plus his lowest attribute value and minus his highest attribute value.

Example: Bob's highest attribute is Coordination 9. His lowest attribute is Personality 3. Bob has a maximum of (10 + 3 − 9) 4 SPs.

Your character begins play with his maximum possible SPs. We'll discuss how to use them – and how to get more – in a few pages.

STEP FOUR: GEARING UP

Equipment is easy to acquire in 2013 – with so many people dead, a lot of them left their stuff laying around. Good equipment – equipment upon which a character can stake his life – is a bit rarer. It's sensible to assume your character has chosen quality over quantity and has a small amount of gear he knows he can trust rather than a wheelbarrow full of secondhand trash.

Remember when we mentioned the length of the Stage II/III character creation chapter (46 pages)? Well, we overwrote the hell out of the equipment chapter, and it takes up 70 pages of the core rules. If you want to go all-out on equipping your character, borrow your GM's copy of the book and pick out a total weight of equipment no greater than (21 + MUS + MUS + FIT + RES) kilograms. Otherwise, turn to page 28 and pick out what you want. Remember, though: the more your character carries, the slower he moves and acts in combat.

COMBAT BASICS

Ah, the meat of the game (so to speak).

COMBAT TIMING

The Reflex System divides combat into exchanges of fire (brief flurries of action), which further break down into ticks (single instants within the firefight). A typical exchange of fire lasts about 20 ticks; each tick is between ¼ and ½ second.

At the beginning of an exchange of fire, an initiative check establishes the speed at which your character acts. When your character's initiative value is the highest among all combatants, it's his turn to act. Each action has a tick cost, which represents the time required to perform it. When your character takes an action, resolve it, then subtract its tick cost from his initiative value.

Example: Bob has an initiative value of 12. He takes an action with a tick cost of 5. After the action is resolved, Bob's initiative value drops to 7.

When every combatant's initiative value is zero (or so low that no player has anything else to do), the exchange of fire ends.

INITIATIVE CHECKS

At the beginning of an exchange of fire, your character's starting initiative value depends on his encumbrance (see p. 27):

Encumberance Level	Initiative Value
Overloaded	5
Heavily encumbered	7
Moderately encumbered	9
Lightly encumbered	12
Unencumbered	15

Your initiative check is an AWA attribute check. If you fail, your character receives only his base initiative for this exchange of fire. If you succeed, add twice your MoS (1 if you got MoS 0) to his base initiative value.

Now that you have your character's initiative, what can he do when it's his turn to act?

MOVEMENT

Each Move action costs 5 ticks. The distance your character covers depends on his movement speed. Encumbrance and injuries both place limits on movement.

While moving, your character may also take any one other action with a tick cost of 5 or less. Movement imposes penalties on most physical actions, but it may also make your character harder for attackers to hit.

Sprint: A sprinting character must be unencumbered and may not have any leg injuries. A sprinting character suffers a −5 penalty on any action requiring fine motor control. However, his speed inflicts a −3 penalty to all ranged attacks made against him.

Run: A character may run so long as he has no leg injury worse than slight and is not more than lightly encumbered. A running character suffers a −3 penalty on any action requiring fine motor control. However, his speed inflicts a −2 penalty to all ranged attacks made against him.

Trot: A character may trot if he has no leg injury worse than slight and is not more than moderately encumbered (combat loaded). A trotting character suffers a −2 penalty on any action requiring fine motor control. However, his speed inflicts a −1 penalty to all ranged attacks made against him.

Walk: A character with a moderate leg injury or heavy encumbrance is limited to walking speed. A walking character suffers a −1 penalty on any action requiring fine motor control.

Stagger: A character with a serious leg injury, one who is kneeling, or one who is overloaded is limited to staggering. A staggering character suffers a −1 penalty on any action requiring fine motor control.

Crawl: The last resort of those who must move or die but who cannot stand up – or those who need to stay low to avoid hazards. A prone character or one with a critical leg injury may only crawl. When crawling, a character suffers a −4 penalty on any action requiring fine motor control.

RANGED ATTACKS

To make an attack, your character must have a weapon ready, he must be able to see his target, and the target must be within the weapon's effective range. The governing attribute is Coordination for ranged attacks and Muscle for close combat attacks. The relevant skill depends on the weapon in use – see the Skill List on p. 18-20.

A character can use any weapon for any of three basic attack types. Each weapon has a Speed rating, which lists the tick costs for these attacks in order. Each attack is a compromise between accuracy and speed:

Blind Strike/Hip Shot: Fast but wild. Suffers a penalty equal to the weapon's Bulk (miniumum -2, even for Bulk 1 or 0 weapons).

Snap Strike/Snap Shot: Standard attack. No bonuses or penalties.

Calculated Strike/Aimed Shot: Slow but steady. Total penalties are halved.

ATTACK COMPLICATIONS

Range

It's a lot harder to shoot someone at a range of four meters than at 40 or 400. The Reflex System breaks range into descriptive bands rather than precisely-calibrated exact distances. From nearest to farthest, the range bands are:

Personal: Arm's length.

Gunfighting: Normal conversational distance (if you aren't trying to kill your conversational partner, anyway), or inside a room in most houses.

Close Quarters Battle (CQB; −1 penalty): Within a basketball court; inside a bus or airliner; close enough to converse in raised voices and identify faces.

Tight (−2 penalty): Within a football field; inside a large warehouse; close enough to hold a shouted conversation or identify a friend from clothing and body language.

Medium (−4 penalty): Close enough to pick out

a human-sized target from the scenery about 50% of the time.

Open (−8 penalty): Close enough to pick our a human-sized target from the scenery about 15% of the time.

Sniping (−16 penalty): Too far to see a human-sized target with unaided vision.

Extreme (−32 penalty): Don't even think about making shots at this distance unless you're a professional sniper.

Range Band	Visual Range Penalty
Personal	none
Gunfighting (to 7m)	none
CQB (7-25m)	-1
Tight (25-100m)	-2
Medium (100-200m)	-4
Open (200-400m)	-8
Sniping (400-800m)	-16
Extreme (800-1,600m)	-32

Range has two effects on combat. First, the visual penalties listed above apply to all ranged attacks because it's harder to see targets and errors in aim are magnified. Second, each ranged weapon has an optimum range and attacks past than that optimum range are less accurate because of the weapon's mechanical limitations, to the tune of −3 per range band past optimum range.

Use of a telescopic sight mitigates the first problem; reduce the visual range to a target by a number of range bands equal to the scope's Magnification value. However, scoped shots are slower; increase the attack's Speed by the scope's Magnification value.

Odd-Sized Targets

Big targets are easier to hit, while small targets are harder. For ranged attacks on such targets, the effective visual range changes:

Human Size Equivalence	Effective Range
¼ (cat, rifle)	2 bands farther
½ (dog, child)	1 band farther
2x (horse, passenger car)	1 band closer
4x (elephant, AFV)	2 bands closer
8x (small house)	3 bands closer

Called Attacks

The attacker must designate an attack as called when he declares the attack action, before making his skill check to determine if he hits or misses. A called attack is declared against one of the six hit locations: head, torso, or a limb. If the attack succeeds, the attacker doesn't roll for hit location as normal – instead, the attack automatically strikes the declared location. If the attack fails, it completely misses the target as normal. In addition, called attacks to specific locations have additional effects:

Head: A called attack to the head suffers a −4 penalty. If it succeeds, however, its total damage is increased by 2.

Limb: A called attack to an arm or leg suffers a −2 penalty. If it succeeds, however, its total damage is increased by 1.

Torso: A called attack to the torso suffers a −1 penalty.

Burst Fire

Many military firearms are capable of burst fire, which fires multiple bullets with a single pull of the trigger. A burst-capable weapon has a "B#" notation in its Rate of Fire trait, with "#" representing the number of rounds fired per burst.

When your character fires a burst, he receives a bonus equal to the number of additional rounds he's sending downrange (e.g. a 3-round burst provides a +2 bonus). If the attack hits, roll 1d6 for each additional bullet. A result of 1-3 indicates an additional hit, while a result of 4-6 is a clean miss. Each additional hit does damage as if it were a separate attack.

If you're using the optional hit location rules (p. 26), a result of 1 is a hit in the same location as the first bullet, while a result of 2 or 3 is a hit in another random location.

CLOSE COMBAT ATTACKS

Close combat receives a slightly greater degree of abstraction than ranged combat does. In reality, most close combat fights involve more than a simple series of attacks and occasional blocks. Opponents maneuver for position, close and separate, and feint in a constant dance. Most attacks aren't single strikes, but rather rapid combinations of maneuvers intended to get the final strike or strikes through the enemy's defenses. However, precisely replicating these subtle complexities would significantly slow down the pace of combat.

For this reason, we've reduced close combat in the Stage I rules sets to the same three basic attack types as ranged combat.

OTHER ACTIONS

Moving and shooting often are the most important things a character can do, but they aren't the only available actions in a fight.

Action Tick cost

Action	Tick Cost
Activate/deactivate equipment	1
Assess situation (look around)	1 to 6
Block in close combat	1 + weapon Speed
Change stance down	2
Change stance up	4
Communicate	1, 3, or 5
Ditch clothing/pack	all remaining ticks
Ready item	item Bulk
Reload weapon	weapon Bulk
Stow item	item Bulk
Wait	see Waiting to Act

Waiting to Act

Your character's AWA represents, among other things, his ability to take in and process sensory information about a fluid situation like combat. Accordingly, if a character is waiting for something to happen, his ability to react quickly depends on his AWA. You may declare "waiting" in place of an action. You may end your character's waiting status on any subsequent tick. When you do so, make an AWA check. With success, your character may act immediately. With failure, his wait continues for a number of ticks equal to your MoF before he can act again.

Interrupting Other Actions

If your character attempts to end his wait and pre-empt or interrupt another character's action, apply your action's tick cost as a penalty to your AWA roll, but apply the tick cost of the other character's action as a bonus. If you succeed, you may resolve your action before the resolution of your target's action. The GM determines any effects of your success in such an interruption.

Example: Bob is covering an open area between two buildings, waiting and watching for movement. Suddenly, an enemy rifleman breaks cover, sprinting from one building to the other. Bob attempts to interrupt this movement action by shooting this new target. Bob's attack action has a tick cost of 3, but the enemy's movement action has a tick cost of 5. Bob's AWA check suffers a −3 penalty and receives a +5 bonus. The AWA check succeeds; Bob gets to shoot before his target moves out of his field of fire.

RES	Wait TickCost
15	1 tick
13-14	2 ticks
10-12	3 ticks
7-9	4 ticks
4-6	5 ticks
1-3	6 ticks

Changing Stances

Standing is a character's normal active posture. Kneeling and going prone limit your character's movement options but make you harder to hit. Taking a lower stance is easier than moving to a higher one, as reflected in the table of actions and their tick costs.

When a character kneels, all ranged attacks against him suffer a −1 penalty. However, all close combat attacks against him get a +1 bonus. In addition, his only movement options are walking and staggering.

A prone character is considered one range band farther away for purposes of ranged attacks against him. However, all close combat attacks against him get a +2 bonus. In addition, his only movement option is crawling.

BLEEDING AND SQUEALING

Every weapon has a base Damage value. The total Damage value of a successful attack is equal to this value plus the margin of success on the attack. Compare a successful attack's total Damage to the target's wound thresholds. The target's wound condition becomes equal to that of the highest threshold the attack's Damage meets or exceeds. If the target already is wounded to that level of severity, his wound condition becomes one level worse.

Example: Bob takes a hit from a weapon with Damage 6. His attacker's MoS is 3, which raises the attack's total Damage value to 9. Bob's wound thresholds are slight 1, Moderate 8, Serious 12, and Critical 16. This attack exceeds Bob's moderate threshold but not his serious threshold, so Bob is now moderately wounded. If Bob already was moderately wounded before taking this hit, his condition instead worsens to serious.

Wound Effects

Your character's wound condition can impose some fairly serious obstacles to success. Unlike all other penalties, which reduce the target number of tasks, wound penalties reduce the number of dice you roll for all task checks, as well as all attribute checks made to actively do something. If a wound penalty reduces your dice pool below 1d20, you must make that check as if your character were unskilled.

Slightly Wounded: −1 die to all checks; can't sprint.

Moderately Wounded: −2 dice to all checks; can't run or trot.

Seriously Wounded: −3 dice to all checks; can only stagger or crawl.

Critically Wounded: −4 dice to all checks; must remain kneeling or prone; can only crawl.

In addition, whenever your character suffers a serious or critical wound, make a FIT check. If you fail this check, your character is bleeding out and will die in a number of exchanges of fire or minutes

equal to his RES unless a character provides medical treatment to stabilize him (see p. 32).

Armor and Penetration

In addition to Damage, every weapon has a Penetration rating. This reflects its ability to punch through armor and cover. If an attack strikes an intervening object, multiply that object's Armor value by the weapon's Penetration. Then subtract the result from the attack's Damage value.

Example: Bob takes a hit from a weapon with Damage 6. His attacker's MoS is 3, which raises the attack's total Damage value to 9 (look familiar?). However, Bob is hiding behind a tree, which is cover with an Armor value of 2. The attack has Penetration x2, so the tree's effective Armor value is 4. This reduces the attack's Damage from 9 to 5, so Bob only suffers a slight wound.

If a weapon has a "Nil" penetration value, it has no capacity for punching through obstructions. Any attack that strikes armor inflicts no damage.

Hit Location (Marginally Optional)

Under normal circumstances and Stage I rules, hit location doesn't matter. However, it does apply in the case of armor and cover. A Kevlar vest doesn't cover the wearer's kneecaps, and a sniper's head isn't behind a tree if he's leaning out to shoot. In cases where armor or cover might or might not intervene, an extra step imposes itself between making the attack and applying damage: determining hit location. This requires a roll of two different-colored d6s, using one die for horizontal placement and the other for vertical placement:

Die Roll	1-2	3-4	5-6
1	left hand/wrist	head/neck	right hand/wrist
2	left elbow/forearm	upper chest	right elbow/forearm
3	left shoulder/upper arm	center chest	right shoulder/upper arm
4	left hip/thigh	center chest	right hip/thigh
5	left knee/lower leg	upper abdomen	right knee/lower leg
6	left ankle/foot	lower abdomen	right ankle/foot

Example: Bob takes a hit... you know the drill. Bob is leaning out from behind his tree to return fire, so the GM rules that Bob's head, right arm, and upper chest are exposed. The GM rolls two d6s, getting a result of 3 across and 5 down. The attack strikes Bob's upper abdomen, which does benefit from the tree's cover.

EQUIPMENT

The right gear can save your character's life. The wrong gear is, quite literally, dead weight.

ENCUMBRANCE

The Reflex System rates encumbrance on five levels of ascending severity. Your character's encumbrance depends on both the mass and the ergonomics of his load. Even a single carried item can be a serious impediment if it's particularly heavy or unwieldy. Conversely, modern load-bearing equipment can more ergonomically distribute the weight of a heavy pack or vest across the wearer's body, allowing him to carry a greater amount of gear than he could handle if he had to juggle a less-efficient set of containers.

Under Stage I rules, encumbrance is descriptive rather than absolute. If you want more precision, see the Stage II/III rules, which provide alternate guidelines for total carried weight affecting encumbrance.

Unencumbered

An unencumbered character has complete freedom of movement. He is neither weighted down with gear nor wrapped up in layers of clothing or armor. Your character is unencumbered if he is wearing and carrying the same amount of clothing and equipment that an average 21st-century individual has on his person in a typical classroom or office environment. This includes:

Wearing clothes suitable for warm (temperate spring/summer) or warmer environment.

Not wearing body armor or a helmet.

Carrying or wielding a single personal weapon of Bulk 2 or less, or two of Bulk 1 or less.

Lightly Encumbered

A lightly encumbered character has to work a little harder to achieve peak physical performance, but is still capable of performing most actions. At this level of encumbrance, the character is still comfortable in almost all conditions. Your character is lightly encumbered if he is wearing and carrying the same amount of clothing and equipment that an average 21st-century commuter carries to and from work or school, or the same amount of gear that a police officer wears for street duty. This includes:

Carrying or wearing no more than a single small bag, pack, purse, or other container.

Wearing clothes suitable for a cool (temperate zone autumn) or warmer environment.

Wearing motorcycle leathers, a light armor vest without trauma plates, or other minimal body armor, possibly with a helmet or protective gear (kneepads, work gloves).

Carrying or wielding a single personal weapon of Bulk 3 or less, maybe with a holstered backup weapon of Bulk 1 or less.

Moderately Encumbered

A moderately encumbered (or "combat loaded") character is likely to be uncomfortable from time to time, but can move and, if required, fight. Characters carrying this much equipment often find it inconvenient to enter or exit vehicles or move through confined spaces such as interior hallways. Your character is moderately encumbered if he is hauling the typical amount of gear that a modern infantryman wears into combat or the amount of equipment that an experienced backpacker carries for a week-long hiking trip. This also can include:

Carrying or wearing no more than a single medium-sized bag, pack, purse, or other container.

Wearing clothes suitable for a cold (temperate zone winter) or warmer environment.

Wearing a fireman's bunker coat, a fighter pilot's G-suit, a vest with trauma plates, or other significant body armor or equivalently bulky overgarments, along with a helmet and supplementary protective gear.

Carrying or wielding a single personal weapon of Bulk 4 or less; he may have one or two backup weapons, each with Bulk 1 or less.

Carrying or wearing a single large bag or pack, or a combination of load-bearing equipment and a smaller container.

Heavily Encumbered

A heavily encumbered (or "march loaded") character is likely to be in some degree of physical discomfort on a constant basis. If called upon to fight or otherwise exert himself at peak capacity, one of his first priorities will be to ditch some of the crap that's weighing him down and making him an easy target. Your character is heavily encumbered if he is lugging the typical amount of gear that a modern infantryman carries for

a sustained march or other field operation. He may also be:

Wearing SCUBA or OBA gear on land.

Wearing clothes suitable for polar winter.

Wearing chemical protective gear, EOD armor, an airport crash rescue suit, or other enclosed fully-body protection.

Carrying or wielding a single personal weapon of Bulk 5 or less; he may have one or two backup weapons, each with Bulk 1 or less.

Carrying or wearing a single large bag or pack plus load-bearing equipment.

Overloaded

An overloaded character is staggering under his burden. Even if load-bearing equipment and a custom-fitted frame pack are distributing it across his entire torso, he's carrying more than he should. Your character is overloaded if he is:

Helping another character to move.

Carrying a tripod-mounted or similar support weapon of Bulk 5 or greater.

Carrying multiple large containers or one very heavy one(ammo crates, beer keg,

Carrying another character.

GEAR PACKAGES

To streamline the equipment selection process, we've provided the following themed gear packages. Each one is built with a particular role or need in mind. Of course, you also can select equipment á la carte from Chapter Seven of the Twilight: 2013 Core Rules.

Clothing

Don't worry too much about basic wardrobe items. Assume your character has whatever clothing is appropriate to his current environment, as well as basic functional accessories (hat, gloves, sunglasses, wristwatch). Military or ex-military characters will tend to have mostly correct uniforms; civilians might have surplus camouflage or just rugged working or hiking clothes. Everyone probably has a good pair of boots.

Tactical Gear

Most combat-oriented characters will have some sort of web gear, tactical vest, or other ensemble to keep their fighting implements close at hand. For characters trained and equipped by modern militaries or police forces, this usually includes some sort of body armor.

Police Duty Gear

Most 21st-century patrol cops have a basic duty kit similar to what's listed here. Plainclothes detectives might not carry all of these items, but they should at least have had access to them prior to the Collapse.

Undercover vest (Armor 2 for chest and upper abdomen); duty belt; handgun holster; 2 pistol magazine or revolver speedloader pouches; tactical radio; 2 sets of handcuffs; pepper spray; flashlight; folding utility knife.

Modern Infantry Vest

Modular load-bearing equipment (MLBE) allows the individual infantryman to customize his armor to carry exactly what he needs for the mission at hand. This is a general sketch of what's on a "typical" rifleman's vest. Grenadiers, machine gunners, and designated marksmen will switch out ammo pouches as appropriate for their own weapons, while medics and platoon leaders typically carry less ordnance and more gear appropriate to their battlefield roles.

MLBE tactical vest (Armor 2 for chest and abdomen); ballistic nylon combat helmet (Armor 2 for head, 50% chance of stopping any given attack); goggles; earplugs; folding utility knife; flashlight; medical pouch with individual trauma kit; full 2-liter hydration bladder or 1-liter canteen; 10 rifle magazine pouches; 2 hand grenade pouches.

Survival Kits

A character living on the road in 2013 isn't assured of having a roof over his head or food in his stomach at any given time. The following kits allow for a bit more comfort than sleeping in a ditch.

Minimalist Backpacker's Kit

Seasoned hikers already understood the value of saving weight on the trail. This kit is appropriate for a skilled outdoorsman with pre-apocalypse outdoor experience.

High-capacity frame backpack; temperate sleeping bag or bivy bag; full 3-liter hydration bladder; full 1-liter water bottle; personal water filter; pocket fishing kit; flint and steel; backpacking stove w/ 2 fuel bottles; compass; topographic maps; civilian first aid kit; Swiss army knife; headlamp; 4-pack of small batteries; signal mirror; Magnification-1 compact binoculars; 2d6 days of freeze-dried camping food.

Military Field Kit

Troops operating in combat conditions tend to assume they'll have less comfort and more external support than civilian campers expect.

Military frame pack; bivouac bag or shelter

half; 2 full 1-liter canteens; 30-meter climbing rope; camouflage facepaint; mild stimulant pills (10 units); mild pain reliever pills (10 units); multitool; 1d6 chemlights; 1d6 days of military rations.

Urban Exploration Essentials

This is a typical everyday equipment load for a civilian survivor operating from a fixed urban base. It's light on shelter and food, but heavy on tools.

Civilian rucksack or messenger bag; 2 full 1-liter water bottles; 3 energy bars; refillable cigarette lighter; civilian first aid kit; multitool; prybar; headlamp; paperback city guidebook; street maps; 50m roll of duct tape; 4-pack of small batteries; sidewalk chalk; notepad and permanent markers; SOTA GPS smartphone with reference software (as appropriate for character; phone networks are offline but the right database can be a lifesaver if power is available for charging the phone).

Mission-Oriented Gear

The following collections of equipment are typical for characters with certain specialized duties.

Aid Bag

Each trauma care specialist, whether a civilian paramedic or a military corpsman, customizes his loadout according to his own experience, preferences, and operating environment. No two aid bags contain exactly the same contents. Typically, however, a Twilight War combat medic carried at least the following equipment and supplies when going outside the wire. For the following medical gear, one "unit" equals one use or dose.

MLBE medic pack; general practitioner's tools; EMT shears; disposable surgical tools; first aid supplies (12 units); surgical supplies (2 units); IV fluids (4 units); burn cream (2 units); clotting agent (4 units); hydration salts (2 units); antidiarrheal, pill (10 units); mild pain reliever (100 units); mild stimulant (10 units); atropine/2-PAM-CI autoinjector (x5); strong pain reliever autoinjector (x2).

Combat Engineer's Pack

Although demolition is the most photogenic part of a combat engineer's job, it's neither the biggest nor (arguably) the most important part. In 2013, keeping himself and others safe from the residue of the Twilight War is both more common and more necessary.

MLBE field pack; goggles; earplugs; knee and elbow pads; gas mask and spare filters; disposable cigarette lighter; 30m roll of paracord; prybar; multitool; folding shovel; 1d6 chemlights; Geiger counter or box of 1d100 dosimeters; gas detector or 3d6 sheets of HAZMAT reactive paper; 2d6 meters of detonating cord or 2d6L sticks of military dynamite.

Free Trader Essentials

In a barter- and salvage-based economy, some of the foremost entrepreneurs are the ones who are re-establishing commerce on a local or regional level.

Prybar; bolt cutters; locksmith's tools; hand-held CB radio; 1d6 bottles of high-quality prewar alcohol; 1d6 rolls of toilet paper; 1d6 months' worth of personal hygiene supplies; 2d10 packets of vegetable seeds; 3d10 servings of coffee or tea; road maps or civilian mapping GPS; pharmaceutical reference manual; digital laboratory scale; standard 100-, 10-, and 1-gram weights; 2d10x100 grams of raw or recovered gold.

Mechanic's Box of Tricks

A generalist handyman who can keep surviving technology functioning is worth his own weight in gold, food, or fuel. Every mechanic would like to have more tools than he actually does – but if he has to carry only the essentials while he's running for his life, this is what he'd hold onto.

Multitool or Swiss army knife; 50-meter roll of duct tape; bag of cable ties; welder's goggles; basic hand tools; electronics tools; gunsmith's tools; crowbar; 30-meter coil of synthetic cable (2-ton test); solar battery charger or bicycle-cranked electric generator; 3d6 rechargeable batteries; 1d6 chemlights; headlamp or portable searchlight; 2d6 units of spare parts for team's vehicles or other equipment.

Scout/Sniper Gear

The following small collection of equipment is typical of support gear used by precision riflemen or reconnaissance personnel.

Ghillie suit (+2 to appropriate stealth tasks); 10m roll of camouflage tape; camouflage facepaint; gun cleaning kit; Magnification-2 compact binoculars or Magnification-5 spotting scope or Magnification-1 night vision binoculars; portable weather monitor; topographical or street map; soft-sided rifle case ("drag bag").

WEAPONS

Guns are easy to come by, but ammo isn't always so ubiquitous. When selecting a weapon for your character, roll to determine how much ammo he has at the start of play:

Autoloader: 1d6 full magazines
Revolver: 1d6x1d10 rounds
Submachine gun or assault rifle: 2d6H full magazines
Target or hunting rifle: 1d6x1d10 rounds
Sniper rifle: 1d6 full magazines (don't whine, you're a sniper – make every shot count!)
Shotgun: 1d6x1d6 shells Squad automatic weapon: 2d6L belts or full magazines

Weapons have a few traits that other equipment doesn't possess. Damage and Penetration are explained in the combat rules. The others are:

Caliber: The size of ammunition a gun requires.

Capacity: The amount of ammo a gun holds. Most firearms feed from detachable magazines, and the standard rules for the Reload action reflect this. A parenthetical (cy), (in), or (bt) notation respectively indicates a revolver-style cylinder, an internal magazine, or a belt feed mechanism. For a cylinder- or internal-fed weapon, a Reload action only loads three rounds, not a full magazine. For a belt-fed weapon, reloading has twice its normal tick cost.
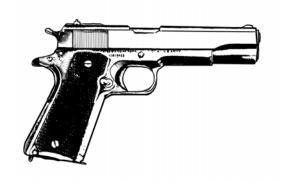
Range: A gun's optimum and maximum ranges. For every range band past optimum, attacks suffer a cumulative –3 in addition to any other penalties. Attacks past maximum range are impossible. Abbreviations are P = Personal, GF = Gunfighting, CQB as itself, T = Tight, M = Medium, O = Open, S = Sniping, and EX = Extreme.

ROF: Rate of Fire, or the number of bullets a gun fires with each pull of the trigger. "S" indicates a single shot, while "B#" indicates a burst of "#" rounds. See the combat rules for the effects of burst fire. A weapon with multiple ROF values can be fired at any one of those values.

Speed: In order, the tick costs of a hip shot, snap shot, and aimed shot.

Bulk: A relative, abstract measurement of how handy the weapon is to maneuver. Higher Bulk means a larger, heavier, or less ergonomic weapon.

Autoloaders								
Firearm	**Caliber**	**Cap.**	**Dam.**	**Pen.**	**Rng**	**ROF**	**Speed**	**Bulk**
.22 target pistol	.22 LR	10	3	x4	GF/CQB	S	1/2/4	1
.380 service pistol	.380 ACP	8	4	x4	P/CQB	S	1/2/4	1
9mm service pistol	9mm P	13	4	x3	GF/CQB	S	1/2/4	1
.40 service pistol	.40 S&W	12	5	x3	GF/CQB	S	1/2/4	1
.45 service pistol	.45 ACP	8	5	x4	GF/CQB	S	1/2/4	1
Revolvers								
.38 Special holdout	.38 Special	5 (cy)	4	x4	P/CQB	S	1/2/4	1
.38 Special service	.38 Special	6 (cy)	4	x4	GF/CQB	S	1/2/4	1
.357 Magnum service	.357 Magnum	6 (cy)	5	x3	GF/CQB	S	1/2/4	1
.44 Magnum	.44 Magnum	6 (cy)	6	x3	GF/T	S	2/3/5	2
SMG								
.32 machine pistol	.32 ACP	20	4	x4	GF/CQB	S/B6	1/2/4	1
9mm machine pistol	9mm Parabellum	20	4	x3	GF/CQB	S/B5	1/2/4	1
PDW	5.7mm FN	50	5	x2	CQB/T	S/B6	2/3/5	2
9mm SMG	9mm Parabellum	30	4	x3	CQB/T	S/B4	2/3/5	2
.45 SMG	.45 ACP	25	5	x4	CQB/T	S/B3	2/3/5	2
Assualt Rifles								
Standard assault rifle	5.56x45mm	30	6	x2	M/S	S/B3/B5	3/5/7	3
Bullup assault rifle	5.56x45mm	30	6	x2	M/S	S/B5	3/4/6	3
Carbine	5.56x45mm	30	6	x2	T/O	S/B5	3/4/6	3
AK-47	7.62x39mm	30	7	x2	M/S	S/B4	3/5/7	3
AK-74	5.45x39mm	30	6	x2	M/S	S/B4	3/5/7	3
Battle rifle	7.62 NATO	20	8	x2	M/S	S/B4	3/6/8	3
Target and Hunting Rifles								
Target rifle, bolt action	.22 LR	5 (in)	3	x4	CQB/T	S	4/6/9	3
Varmint rifle, bolt action	5.56x45mm	6 (in)	6	x2	M/S	S	5/8/11	4
Hunting rifle, bolt action	7.62x51mm	5 (in)	8	x2	M/EX	S	5/8/11	4
Hunting rifle, bolt action	8mm Mauser	5 (in)	9	x2	M/EX	S	5/8/11	4
Hunting rifle, bolt action	.30-06	4 (in)	9	x2	M/EX	S	5/8/11	4
Sniper Rifles								
Sniper rifle, bolt action	7.62 NATO	10	8	x2	M/EX	S	5/8/11	4
Sniper rifle, semi automatic	7.62x51mm	20	8	x2	M/EX	S	4/6/9	4
Anti-material rifle	.50 BMG	5	16	x1	O/EX	S	6/9/14	5
Shotguns								
Double-barreled	12 gauge	2 (in)	10	x4	CQB/T	S	4/6/9	4
Pump-action	12 gauge	7 (in)	10	x4	CQB/T	S	5/8/11	4
Semi-automatic	12 gauge	5 (in)	10	x4	CQB/T	S	4/6/9	4
Sawed-off pump	12 gauge	5 (in)	10	x4	GF/CQB	S	3/6/8	2
20 gauge variant (any)	20 gauge	-	9	x4	-	-	-	-
.410 variant (any)	.410 gauge	-	4	x4	-	-	-	-
Squad Automatic Weapons								
NATO	5.56mm	200(bt)	6	x2	M/S	B5/B9	4/6/9	4
Warsaw Pact	7.62x39mm	75	7	x2	M/S	B4/B8	4/6/9	4
Warsaw Pact	5.45mm	45	6	x2	M/S	B4/B8	4/6/9	4

Hand Weapons			
Weapon	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Speed**	**Bulk**
Bare knuckles	0	Nil	1/2/4	0
Brass knuckles	2	x4	1/2/4	0
Sap/blackjack	2	x4	1/2/4	1
Baton/club	3	x4	2/3/5	2
Hammer	4	x3	2/3/5	2
Bat	5	x4	3/5/7	3
Sledgehammer	8	x4	6/9/14	4
Knife, folding	2	x2	1/2/4	1
Knife, combat or working	3	x1	1/2/4	1
Machete	3	x2	2/3/5	2
Axe	9	x2	5/8/11	4
Bayonex (on bulk 3 weapon)	4	x1	3/5/7	3
Bayonex (on bulk 4 weapon)	5	x1	4/6/9	4

Stage I Weapons

LIFE, DEATH, AND BUSINESS IN THE RUINS

The post-Collapse world of 2013 offers few of the modern amenities that we, as players, take for granted in our everyday lives. Under Stage I rules, the Reflex System glosses over inconveniences such as disease, starvation, and dehydration. A few basic survival issues, however, are worthy of detailed examination.

MEDICAL CARE

In a violent world with few operational hospitals, having a friend with some medical training is good for much more than scoring free samples of the latest prescription uppers.

Stabilization

Bleeding out after you've won the fight is a thoroughly ignominious way to go. Stabilization is the medical procedure for stopping blood loss and mitigating shock before this happens. An attempt at stabilization requires an entire exchange of fire during combat or one minute outside of combat, as well as a Medicine (COG) skill check. If the patient is critically injured, the check suffers a −1 penalty. Expending one unit of first aid supplies or the entire contents of an individual trauma kit provides a cumulative +1 bonus. With success, the patient stops bleeding out. A character can attempt to stabilize himself, but normal wound penalties apply.

First Aid

Once the screaming and shooting are over, first aid is general medical care for injuries that aren't immediately life-threatening. This requires five minutes per wound level and a Medicine (COG) skill check. The check suffers a cumulative penalty of −1 per wound level, as well as −1 per hour that has passed since the patient was injured. Expending one unit of first aid supplies or the entire contents of an individual trauma kit provides a cumulative +1 bonus. Successful first aid removes the slightly wounded condition from a character with no more severe problems. For a character with a moderate or worse wound, successful first aid improves his long-term prospects (see following).

Healing

Given sufficient time and favorable conditions, the human body can repair all but the gravest damage.

Your character's Fitness value gives him a base Healing Factor (HF). Various other circumstances, such as medical care, living conditions, and nutrition, can modify his base HF.

To determine the speed at which your character heals, divide his wound level's base healing time by his modified HF. The result is the number of days required for your character to heal to the next lowest wound level. If your character's HF is reduced to 0 or less, his body lacks the resources for self-repair.

Fitness Bas	HF
13+	4
8-12	3
5-7	2
1-4	1

Factor HF Modifier	
Living Conditions	
Hospitalization	+3
Pre-war modern housing	+2
Battered post-war housing	+1
Tent or vehicle	+0
No shelter to speak of	−1
Medical Conditions	
Starvation	−2
Dehydration	−1
Chronic fatigue	−1
Lifetime radiation dose	−1 per full 200 rads
Radiation sickness	no healing occurs
Successful first aid	+1
Extended care	+1 per die in caregiver's Medicine checks

Wound Level Base Healing Time	
Slight	10 days
Moderate	30 days
Serious	90 days
Critical	180 days

Example: Bob is seriously injured. He has Fitness 8, giving him a base HF of 3. The team is on the run in enemy territory and he's living in the back of a truck, which doesn't help matters (HF +0). However, Bob received first aid for his wounds (HF +1) and he is receiving medical care from a physician with Medicine Professional (3 dice for skill checks, providing HF +3). This gives Bob HF 7. He'll heal from seriously wounded to moderately wounded in (90 / 7) 13 days.

RADIATION

The Twilight War's nuclear exchanges ended in the winter of 2012-2013 and most of the weapons used were modern, "clean" designs. Still, radiation hazards are a fact of life for travelers passing downwind of impact sites – or nuclear power plants, several of which suffered catastrophic engineering failures.

As noted in character creation, every character in Twilight: 2013 has suffered some degree of radiation exposure. Lifetime radiation dosage is cumulative. The body can repair slight radioactive insults, but each successive dose becomes harder to overcome – and, eventually, harder to survive.

Exposure

Radiation exposure is subject to many randomizing factors. The following table lists likely radiation hazards and the doses they inflict.

Hazard	Dose
Nuclear explosion	2d100 rads
Fallout cloud, 1 day old	6d20 rads/day
Fallout, 2 days old	4d20 rads/day
Fallout cloud, 3 days old	2d20 rads/day
Fallout cloud, 4 days old	1d20 rads/day
Fallout cloud, 5-6 days old	1d10 rads/day
Fallout cloud, 7-8 days old	1d6 rads/day
Fallout cloud, 9-11 days old	1d3 rads/day
Fallout cloud, 12-14 days old	1 rad/day
Impact crater, high-yield ground burst	1d10 rads/day
Impact crater, tactical ground burst	1d6 rads/day
Reactor after core meltdown	1d10 rads/minute
Reactor waste storage facility	1d6 rads/minute
Damaged nuclear warhead	1d20 rads/hour
Damaged radiological medical device	1d6 rads/hour

Radiation Sickness

At the end of a day during which your character accumulates one or more rads and his cumulative lifetime dose is 50 rads or more, make a Fitness check. This check suffers a cumulative −1 penalty for every full 50 rads your character has accumulated (high doses and low Fitness may result in a negative TN, but you must roll anyway). If you succeed, your character suffers no ill effects. If you fail, the margin of failure indicates the degree of radiation sickness your character suffers: 1-5 slight, 6-10 severe, 11+ lethal.

Slight

1d6 hours after exposure, your character begins to experience nausea, vomiting, and headaches, which last for one day (two days if his dose is 600 rads or higher). For the duration of slight radiation illness, your character does not heal and functions as if he were slightly wounded (no cumulative effect if he's already wounded). Once this period passes, he has no lasting effects except his increased dose.

Severe

Your character first suffers slight radiation illness, from which he recovers normally. 2d6 days after exposure (1d6 days if his dose is 300 rads or higher), he is then incapacitated with severe vomiting and diarrhea (with blood in both), subcutaneous hemorrhaging, acute nausea and abdominal cramps, and hair loss. For the duration of this experience, he does not heal and functions as if he were moderately wounded (no cumulative effect if he already has a moderate or worse wound). Severe radiation illness lasts for 2d6 days. Each day during which your character receives treatment for symptoms (pain relief and intravenous fluid replenishment) counts as two days toward this duration. Once the illness itself passes, the character suffers the effects of slight illness again for 1d6 weeks.

Lethal

Your character first suffers slight and then severe radiation illness, dying 1d10+10 days after the onset of severe symptoms.

CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

That which does not kill your character is likely to make him stronger – if he learns from the experience. Apropos of this, the Reflex System tracks character improvement through learning experiences (LX). Your character sheet has space for individually tracking learning experiences for each skill. You can gain learning experiences in a skill in the following ways:

Extraordinary Success in the Face of Adversity: You make a skill check with a total modifier of at least −5 and succeed with a margin of success of 5 or more.

Catastrophic Failure: You fail a skill check and at least half of the dice you rolled come up 20s.

Roleplaying: The GM may, at his discretion, award

a learning experience as a reward for particularly good roleplaying involving use or discussion of the specific skill.

Training: Another character (whose rating in the specified skill equals or exceeds your own rating) spends 40 hours teaching your character, after which the trainer makes a successful Instruction (PER) skill check and you make a successful COG check. An instructor can simultaneously train a maximum number of students equal to his own COG.

The number of LXes required to increase a skill to the next rating depends on your character's current rating. When you attain a new rating, erase your accumulated LXes and start tracking again.

Current Rating	LXes Needed	Next Rating
Unskilled	1	Novice
Novice	3	Competent
Competent	4	Professional
Professional	8	Expert
Expert	16	Master

COMMERCE

Without national governments to define and regulate commerce, electronic transactions (even if the computers were working) and printed currency are things of the past. The primary means of trade in 2013 is barter, with occasional use of gems and precious metals as a representational means of exchange. The most common trade goods include food, books (particularly on subjects vital to survival), fuel, and ammunition, though traffic even in these is subject to the law of supply and demand. Under Stage I rules, trade is primarily a matter for roleplaying, though opposed Persuasion (PER) skill checks are appropriate in a pinch.

APPENDIX

CHARACTER SHEET

RECOMMENDED MEDIA

BOOKS

We Were Soldiers Once...and Young Band of Borthers by Harold G. Moore and Joseph L. Galloway

Generation Kill by Evan Wright

Citizen Soldiers by Stephen E. Ambrose

Black Hawk Down by Mark Bowden

Bravo Two-Zero by Andy McNab

On Killing - The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society by Dave Grossman

On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and Peace by Dave Grossman and Loren W. Christensen

Once a Warrior King : Memories of an Officer in Vietnam by David Donovan

Steel My Soldiers' Hearts by David H. Hackworth
About Face by David H. Hackworth

No True Glory - A frontline account of the battle for Fallujah by Bing West

The Postman by David Brim

Lucifer's Hammer by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle

War Day by Whitley Strieber and James Kunetka

Resurrection Day by Brendan DuBois

The War in 2020 by Ralph Peters

Roughneck Nine-One : The Extraordinary Story of a Special Forces A-team at War by Frank Antenori and Hans Halberstadt

Blood Stripes: The Grunt's View of the War in Iraq by David J. Danelo

Thunder Run: The Armored Strike to Capture Baghdad by David Zucchino

Warfare and the Third World by Robert E. Harkavy and Stephanie G. Neuman

World War Z by Max Brooks

MOVIES

Red Dawn
We Were Soldiers
The Day After
The Mad Max Series
Jarhead
Children of Men
Escape from New York
V for Vendetta
The Terminator Series
28 Days Later
The Beast
I Am Legend
The Stand
Def-Con 4
The Postman

TV

Band of Brothers
The Lost Battalion
Generation Kill
The Unit
Jericho
M*A*S*H*
Jeremiah
Combat!
Over There
Tour of Duty
Threads

WEB

Twilight: 2013
http://www.93gamesstudio.com
http://www.myspace.com/93gamesstudio
http://93gamesstudio.livejournal.com

Twilight: 2000
http://www.farfuture.net
http://forum.juhlin.com
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Twi2000
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/t2k

All Around Goodness
http://www.rpg.net
http://www.rpglife.com
http://zombiehunters.org/forum

TWILIGHT: 2013

CHARACTER SHEET

Character Name _____ Player Name _____

Age _____ Gender _____ Hair Color _____ Eye Color _____ Height _____ Weight _____ Handedness _____ Blood Type _____

Occupation/MOS/Position _____ Rank _____ Nationality _____

SKILL NAME	RATING	LX	LEVEL

AWARENESS (AWA)
COORDINATION (CDN)
FITNESS (FIT)
MUSCLE (MUS)

COGNITION (COG)
EDUCATION (EDU)
PERSONALITY (PER)
RESOLVE (RES)

SURVIVAL POINTS (SP) /
RADS (RADS)

Sprint	Run	Jog	Walk	Stagger	Crawl	Travel
			4	2	1	

WOUND THRESHOLDS

	Slight	Moderate	Serious	Critical	Armor
Threshold	1 / ☐	/ ☐	/ ☐	/ ☐	/

GEAR	LOCATION	QTY

Primary Firearm	Caliber	Cap.	Dam.	Pen.	Rng	ROF	Speed	Bulk

Primary Melee Weapon	Dam.	Pen.	Speed	Bulk