

A VULTURE WARRIORS OF DIMENSION X ADVENTURE FOR

PARANOIA[®]

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

PARANOIA

CYCLE
TWILIGHT: 2000

A cross-over
adventure
with GDW's
Twilight:2000[™]
roleplaying game!



**VULTURE
WARRIORS**



**WEST
END
GAMES**

Twilightcycle: 2000

by Sam Shirley

Michael "AK-47" Stern
Cover Fire/Development

Douglas "Howitzer" Kaufman
Artillery Barrage/Editing

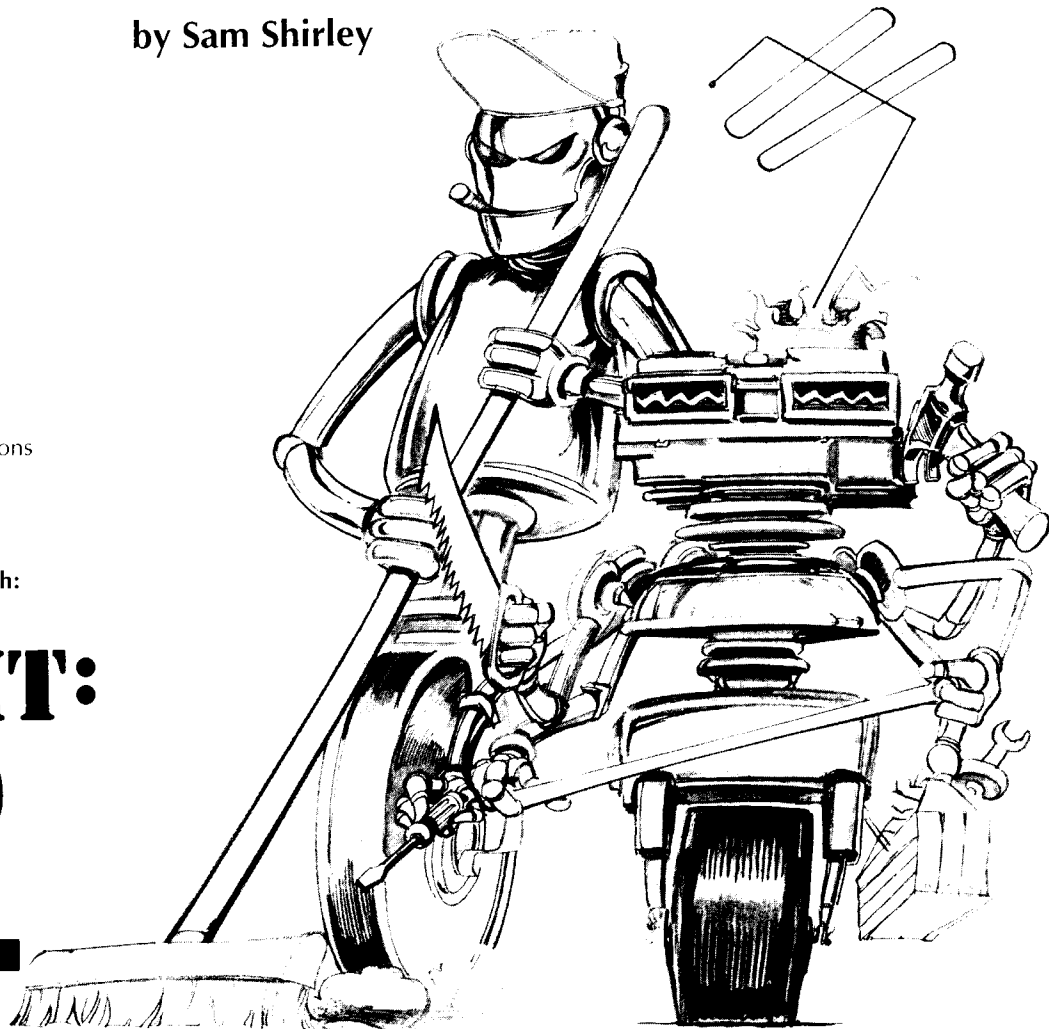
Sharon "Scalpel" Wyckoff
Medic/Graphics

Russ "Commando" Steffens
Camouflage/Cover and Interior Illustrations

The Computer
On the Fritz

This product is also suitable for use with:

TWILIGHT: 2000



What's The Big Idea?

Guess what?
Gosh Golly Gee Whiz — it's *Paranoia* time again! Welcome back to the fun-lovin' land of formerly-computerized dementia. In this *Twilight: 2000* crossover adventure, the Troubleshooters take an incredible trip back through time to World War III (Double-U Double-U Eye-Eye-Eye) San Francisco, where they get to blow up real live authentic 21st century Commies! More than once!!

And that's not all! This is the second of a spectacular three-adventure time-tripping

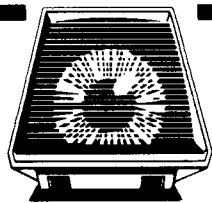
Vulture Warriors series. It comes right after the fabric o' reality-bending *Alice Through The Mirrorshades* adventure, and right before the mind-numbingly stunning ... well, you'll just have to wait for part three of the series to find *that* out.

You could try playing them out of order (all the more confusing for your players), but the only World Famous Game Designer-approved method is to play *Alice* first, then this one, then the next one. Remember, 'Ve haf vays of makink you play der advenchurs in der correct orders!'



West End Games
RD 3 Box 2345
Honesdale, PA 18431
12018

Publisher: **Daniel Scott Palter** • Associate Publisher: **Richard Hawran**
Assistant Publisher: **Denise D. Palter** • Editorial Director: **Bill Slavicsek**
Associate Editors: **Greg Gorden, Douglas Kaufman, Paul Murphy**
Editors: **Jonatha Caspian, Michael Stern** • Art Director: **Stephen Crane**
Graphic Artists: **Rosaria J. Baldari, Bernadette G. Cahill, Jacqueline M. Evans,**
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Introduction: When Last We Left Our Heroes ...

Read the Adventure First

Or skim it even. It's easier to give your players a hose job if you have taken the time to familiarize yourself with the hose. You can read the individual sections more carefully when it comes time to run them.

Adventure Materials

Inside these pages you will find the following bits of graphic violence — or is that violent graphics? No matter.

No Pre-Generated Player Characters

Ha! In defiance of a noble *Paranoia* tradition we did not include prepared player characters in this adventure. Just use the same traitor-bait you had in *Alice Through the Mirrorshades*. What, you didn't play that one? Why not? This is second in a series! You really must play these in sequence. See, we told you we had ways...

Pre-Generated NonPlayer Characters

Instead, we included the NPC sidekicks in the pullout section. Ignore their gobble-dygoon statistics unless you're running this using the *Twilight: 2000* mechanics. Read the *Paranoia* version of their skills instead.

P.S. We did include a quick-refresher roster of the *Alice* PCs with some handy *Twilight* conversions.



Hmmm ... good boots

Pullout Section (And More)

We've also got thrilling mission alerts, spectacular one-color maps, two space-age stainless-steel staples, the ever-popular shrinkwrapping, and much, much more.

How Did We Get Here From There?

Much has transpired in Alpha Complex while you were away. A while back, the Computer crashed big-time, due to the meddlings of a High Programmer From the Past. (You can read all about it in the exceedingly-brilliant-you-can't-say-enough-good-things-about-it adventure *The Iceman Returneth*.)

Anarchy now rules under the dome, as various splinter groups struggle for supremacy in the power vacuum left by The Computer's demise. A lot happens, most of it ugly. You can read all about that in the *Crash Course Manual*.

Anyway, in a last ditch effort to restore Alpha Complex to the way they knew and loathed it, a consortium of High Programmers sent a team of intrepid *Vulture Warriors* (actually they were just plain, time-hopping Troubleshooters — but the name sounded cool so they kept it) back through time. The details of their first mission (and subsequent failure) are in the adventure *Alice Through the Mirrorshades*.

Cybernoia Revisited

For those who haven't played *Alice Through the Mirrorshades*, and for those who played it but weren't paying attention, here is a recap of some of the important events:

The Troubleshooters are "volunteered" by a post-crash consortium of High Programmers who got the bright idea of using the Transdimensional Collapsatron as a time machine. The Troubleshooters' mission is to retroactively eliminate the High Programmer From the Past in the past before he can show up in the present to cause the crash. The Troubleshooters go back to pre-Computer California to find and eliminate The Iceman (aka Clem Unger, aka "Alice").

Naturally the Troubleshooters blow it, but not before they discover the time and location of the pre-Computer computer that eventually evolves into The Computer

(Its electric youth stage, so to speak). The first adventure ends with the Troubleshooters imparting this information (via Collapsatron Communications) to the High Programmers, when suddenly they feel themselves grabbed by the time field and whisked away. Since they bungled plan A, the Troubleshooters are sent on to plan B — this adventure.

Plan B From Alpha Complex

This adventure picks up right where the precursor let off. The consortium wants the Troubleshooters to locate the infant Computer in AD 2000 San Francisco. When they find it, they are to secure the area and prepare for a High Programmer to step through the time portal.

The High Programmer will reprogram the infant Computer so that it is not so afraid of everything, particularly Communists, thus curbing its extreme "social deviance." (Can you say "clinical definition of which is the same as the name of a popular roleplaying game"?) This also (in theory) should prevent Clem Unger from fiddling with The Computer when he arrives in Our Present, as he would have no reason to "fix" it. Hence, the great crash will suddenly never have happened.

Episode 1: Disorientation. The Troubleshooters pop into the AD 2000 San Francisco Bay area in the aftermath of a fierce post WWII battle. They have no mission assignment and no clues about what to do. Bummer. They follow the trail of wanton death and egg-drop destruction to find their own lifeless bodies clutching their mission briefing.

Their mission: to proceed to the secret JCN Corporation Artificial Intelligence laboratory in San Francisco where they will receive further orders. Finally, they get ambushed by old-style, big-time, redder-than-red authentic Commies.

Episode 2: A Blind Date With Destiny. The Troubleshooters team up with local mercenaries, who tell them about a secret access into war-torn San Francisco. They meet geriatric hippies who know some interesting rumors. After dodging the Commies and taking a few pot-shots at a U.S. Army patrol, the gang presses on to the AI laboratories and ...

Episode 3: Alpha Project. The Troubleshooters and their sidekicks penetrate the AI labs to look for the infant Computer. They bumble their way past some proto-robots, and have to fool the Alpha 9000 Proto-Computer into thinking they are members of the Alpha Project staff. Oh yeah, they do discover that the Proto-Computer is based on the brain engrams of a famous scientist who lived eleven years before.

Episode 4: The Great Collapsatron Mega-Disaster. The consortium holds an impromptu mission briefing at just the same time as Alpha Complex Commies try to steal the Collapsatron. The C-tron gets wedged into the time portal, violating the laws of the universe at their most fundamental level. A good time is had by all. Then the U.S. patrol shows up.

Episode 5: Our Buddies, the Commies. The Soviets (the ones in the past, that is) attack, unwittingly giving the Troubleshooters a shot at the Proto-Computer by drawing off the U.S. troops. The Troubleshooters secure the Proto-Computer, but Soviet ECM jams the Collapsatron and the PCs have to try to perform the reprogramming themselves. The U.S. troops are wiped out, the Soviets enter the lab, and the Computer has its anti-Commie paranoia more deeply ingrained.

Episode 6: I Left my Heart* in San Francisco. Everybody says goodbye in a tearful parting scene. The Troubleshooters are debriefed via the Collapsatron. The consortium of High Programmers decides to send the PCs to 1989 to confront the man on whom the infant Computer's engrams are based. Whoooooosh — they're off again, to plan C, and the third in the *Vulture Warrior From Dimension X* series (coming soon to a bookstore near you).

Home Equity Clones

Members of the High Programmer's consortium are keeping periodic tabs on the Troubleshooters through the Transdimensional Auditorons (high-tech doodads from out of time and the previous adventure [see below]). This means that they handily know about any treasonous actions the Troubleshooters commit, and they are able to ship in new clones whenever somebody kicks off.

Odds are, though, that the High Programmers can't send many clone replacements because the Troubleshooters used them all up in the last adventure. What they *can* do is keep going further and further back in the timestream of the final debriefing of the prior adventure and yanking the PCs out to send them into this adventure — sort of like having a computer disk copy to access over and over again.

The big limitation is that the Collapsatron cannot send someone back to the same time he was once sent back to. (You can't run into yourself, except for certain highly entertaining malfunctions. This is a major space-time continuum no-no, and it's not too easy on the frontal lobes, neither.)

This conveniently means that the replacement clone (though not truly a clone) picks up the adventure where his predecessor left off, although he technically has no memory of the prior portion of the adventure, since he did not live through it.

Sorry. Didn't mean to make you think.

You can simulate his confusion by sending the player out of the room, then secretly agreeing with the rest of the players to alter several facts from the events that have already happened. Alternatively, you can postpone replacements until *all* party members are killed, and then return them all at the same time, after you have underhandedly changed the aforementioned facts without telling anybody.

Like any good players, your guys will try to drive a Mack truck through the unlimited "resurrection" rule. It hardly matters, since they are doomed to failure no matter what they try. If it bothers you that they think they are getting away with something, here are a few penalties you can apply:

For one thing, being abruptly ripped through time is disagreeable to one's anatomy. New arrivals experience a sort of temporary shock/wounding during which all their skills are reduced by four points for a number of minutes equal to 20 minus their endurance. If your players still abuse the regenerative privilege, you can permanently subtract one point from a randomly selected statistic and refigure all their bonuses each time they die. Better yet, make them refigure the bonuses themselves.

Finally, if they still don't mellow out, why not take the existential attitude and not worry about it? Sartre said death is a viable alternative, after all. Here's your chance to find out if he's right.

The best thing about this amazing new clone replacement method is that you can kill off the Troubleshooters to your heart's content — with no detriment whatsoever to the adventure. But don't wear out this nifty bonus too soon; we've got a genocidal, mega-death extravaganza planned for the end of the adventure. Until then, try to keep the death rate in the low teens. Per Troubleshooter, that is.

Cyborg Modifications and Other Unpleasant Leftovers

So you ran the *Cyberpunk* crossover, and now the Troubleshooters have all these highly fashionable cyborg implants and brillo-pad hairdos. This is not a problem; let them keep 'em as long as they don't get in your way.



For once the PCs will be on the forward edge of high fashion. But if somebody irks you, yank away his goodies and say something like, "Oh gosh, that looks like smoke coming out of your ears. I think your cheap reflex-enhancement implants just burned out. I hope you got a good warranty." Don't fret about mixing your genres, with *Cyberpunk*, *Paranoia*, and nuclear Armageddon all in the same adventure. Geez, if it doesn't bother us, why should you care?

They've also still got those nifty Transdimensional Auditorons and antenna gloves from the prior adventure. This stuff lets them relay messages back to the High Programmer consortium through the addled Collapsatron. The Auditorons still work just like they used to, except that now that they've gone further back in time the reception is poorer. This means that the Troubleshooters must alternate between sticking their thumbs in their ears and in their noses while wiggling their fingers. Often they will have to switch their thumbs back and forth repeatedly while talking with the Transdimensional Collapsatron.

The Transdimensional Collapsatron, by the way, is just as unhelpful as it was in the last adventure.

Where Did This War Come From?

While this is usually a rhetorical question, in this case we invented the war so we can invent an answer. In the history of Alpha Complex there was a third world war around the year 2000. GDW's *Twilight: 2000* game has a similar war at the same time. "Gee wouldn't it be swell," someone at West End said, "if we did a crossover adventure." Thus doth greatness manifest itself.

To summarize the *Twilight: 2000* timeline: lots of confusing stuff happens for a couple of years, then everybody gets hardcore into nuclear destruction.

After the exchange, radioactive pockmarks scar the U.S., Europe, and just about

everywhere else. The Mexicans, with the aid of their new buddies the Soviets, snatch a bit of Texas and some other neighboring states. The Cubans oust the Soviets from their island and plead with the U.S., "Please nyet to be nuking us friend comrades, we your new babushkas."

All these bombs and stuff are too much for the U.S. government. The destruction of the economic and political infrastructure gives it hysterical amnesia and it goes to pieces, losing control of the nation. Shortly after that is where this adventure picks up.

Back East the military and what's left of congress are vying for control of the government. Out here in California, there is complete chaos. Cats and dogs living together, Zsa-Zsa on the loose, everyone running around shooting at each other and no effective government — national, state, or local.

Strength rules, or nobody rules at all. In San Francisco, it's nobody. Our veteran post-MegaWhoops Troubleshooters should feel right at home.

Whence The Commies?

There's just one problem. According to the *Twilight: 2000* timeline, the Soviets don't make it into California anytime soon. Would we let a little detail like that stop us?

Of course not. We couldn't let such an oversight hinder your Commie-blasting enjoyment, so we brought some reds of our own — and not the kind from Cincinnati.

In this adventure, the Communist Party Secret Society in Alpha Complex is going to have been (time-travel tenses are a dimension in themselves) too late in acting against the plan to retroactively erase the Proto-Computer's fear of Communism. In this "projected future," the mission actually succeeds.

The Commies' Big Thinkers realized that without fear there is no persecution, and without persecution there is no people's revolt, and without a people's revolt, there can be no glorious Communist Revolution, and without the glorious Communist Revolution they'd have to stand in line for syntheborsch, just like every other clonetary.

In other words, if The Computer loses its fear of Communists, their hopes for ideological domination of Alpha Complex will be dashed.

To prevent this devastating set-back, the Communists unsuccessfully attempt to steal the Collapsatron device. Their failure not only precipitates the Great Collapsatron Mega-Disaster (episode four), it leaves them unable to prevent the Troubleshooters' return from their simple, brief, and highly

successful mission to reprogram the Proto-Computer.

Finally, in a desperate attempt to stave off complete success, Bigbro-U-THR-3, a turncoat within the High Programmer consortium (and secretly a communist ringleader) leaps through the Collapsatron time portal into the year 2000, to a point before the Troubleshooters' arrival. He uses Ultraviolet clearance memory-enhancement drugs to teach himself real Russian when he gets there.

Using his superior Alpha Complex technology and hardened post-crash savvy, he assumes control of a Soviet task force in Texas and brings them to California to foil the Troubleshooters' mission. He dogs their every move, using his future knowledge of what they will have already done to stop them from doing it in the first place. Or something like that.

Sorry for making you think again.

Running This as a *Twilight 2000* Scenario

If global nuclear Armageddon is more your usual cup of tea, you may want to run this as an episode in your regular *Twilight: 2000* campaign.

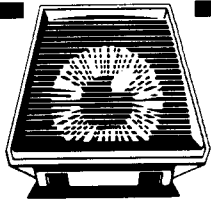
The approach is simple: treat the Troubleshooters as NPCs, and use the supplied NPC sidekicks as the PCs, if you don't already have some. The Game Stuff boxes do double-duty, with both *Paranoia* and *Twilight: 2000* statistics, so that you can blow things up in either game system.

Most of the textual descriptions are written from the Troubleshooters' viewpoint, so you'll have to do the work of describing things from the natives' perspective. To get the adventure started, have your player characters observe the Troubleshooters' arrival and encounter with the Soviets in the first episode, then let them step in and help to continue the adventure.

The rest of the adventure can happen pretty much as it would if your players were running the Troubleshooters. Be careful not to relegate the *Twilight: 2000* player characters into a secondary role subordinate to the gamemaster-run Troubleshooters. The native player characters know the territory and the rules of survival in AD 2000 — let them use their superior knowledge to make important decisions and control the action. There is no need to worry. It'll only be a matter of time before they use their AD 2000 total lack of regard for human life to get themselves killed in a variety of new and exciting ways.

Alice PC Roster for *Twilight: 2000* Players

PC Name	Mutant Power	Important Skills	Weapon Equivalent	Armor Equivalent
Walt-R-JON	Hypersenses	Vehicle Aimed Weapons (60) Vehicle Op. (75)	Automatic Rifle Laser	Kevlar
Broost-R-LNG	Regeneration	Nunchuk (65) Interrogate (60)	Nunchuk Laser	Flak Vest Leggings
William-G-BSN	Machine Empathy	Neurowhip (60) Spurious Logic (85) Laser (70) Data Search (85)	Tazer Laser	Mylar
Rude-Y-RKR	Deep Probe	Psychescan (65) Bot Repair (85) Demolition (65)	Axe Laser	Cloth
Shirl-Y-JON	Electroshock	Melee (60) Biochemical Therapy (80)	Tazer Laser	Leather
Greg-B-EAR	Polymorph Precognition Energy Field	Medical (60) Bioscience (95) Engineering (70)	Flechette Laser	Cloth



Episode One: Disorientation

Summary

This episode introduces your players to the pastoral post-nuclear nightmare of WWII San Francisco. As our story begins, the Troubleshooters are sort-of briefed on their mission, and they sort-of hear some sort-of interesting rumors. They wander around a bit, stumble across their own cadavers, and shoot it out with a Commie patrol led by a cruel Soviet Commissar (our time-traveling Commie buddy Bigbro).

Just an average day in the lives of a few intrepid, time-hopping Vulture Warriors of Dimension X (X-X-X-X). (The echo is simply for effect.)

Background

The Soviet patrol is led by Comrade Bigolas Brudderkof, a time-traveling Communist Secret Society muckety-muck from Alpha Complex who already knows everything the Troubleshooters are going to do. In his time line, the Troubleshooters have already reprogrammed the Proto-Computer and returned to an Alpha Complex which is now (or then?) an honest-to-Computer utopia.

But Brudderkof has traveled back in time to undo their success before they succeed. His future knowledge of the Troubleshooters' actions gives him a strategic advantage, but his very presence here affects the Troubleshooters, making them do some things differently, thus negating enough of his advantage to keep the adventure interesting.

Once the Troubleshooters are permanently dealt with, Brudderkof plans to reprogram the Proto-Computer himself. He plans to change it so that it will create a Communist Alpha Complex instead of the Communist-hating Alpha Complex of his own timeline. The Troubleshooters, of course, know none of this.

More recently, Brudderkof's Soviets just finished a limited engagement with a U.S. patrol that has been on their tail since they entered California. The two groups slugged it out in the general area of the Troubleshooters' arrival, resulting in the U.S. patrol pulling back to the north. This left Brudderkof free to terminate the Troubleshooters upon their initial arrival.

Also nearby are some local freedom-fighter types, the *Twilight: 2000* NPCs. They are a composite band of soldiers from different units, branches — even nationalities — who have banded together for mutual survival. (Not entirely unlike our unique little post-crash Troubleshooter group.)

They were attracted to the battle, and are wondering what to do about the newly-arrived Soviets. When they notice the Troubleshooters, they hang back and try to puzzle out the relationship between these paranoid weirdos from the future and the Soviets. Then they pitch in and help the PCs at the beginning of the next episode.

Briefing about the last Adventure

The adventure does not begin with the first arrival of the Troubleshooters in AD 2000. The first time they showed up they didn't last more than a few seconds as Bigolas Brudderkof's Soviet patrol pumped them full of lead. Now Brudderkof has gone off, flush with his success, to look for the Proto-Computer. Before he gets too far, the Troubleshooters show up again for the first time and he has to shoot them all over again. (Ouch! Yeah, we know. Our brains twitched thinking about that one, too.)

The Troubleshooters come into it totally unawares, as per usual. It's more fun that way. Besides, it lets everybody experience the disorientation and brain-bending time paradoxes of their peculiar clone replacement arrangements. Unless your players are psychic, they won't figure out the clone replacement procedure until their characters die and return the next time.

Encounter One: Finding Yourself in California

Since this is the second of three adventures and the Troubleshooters partook in the last one, they should know something about what went on in *Alice Through the Mirrorshades*. Rather than waste everybody's time with a boring recitation, a psychedelic mini-synopsis of the prior adventure is included in the dazzling special effects of their arrival into this adventure.

To kick it off, read this paragraph aloud (it is a repeat of the last thing they heard in the prior adventure), and keep reading aloud through the following paragraphs:

The Collapsatron continues: "Oh, yeah, one thing the High Programmers said to me, they said 'Collapsatron, this is really important. Tell the Troublesh —'"

Cut. The universe melts around you.

Suddenly, there's that familiar gut wrenching jerk as your atoms turn inside-out again. If it is possible to become used to the sensation of feeling yourself falling through a point of eternity into another moment in time, you have.

As you fall, you pass distorted images from your last mission (this is the special effects part). You see yourselves as you were in Post WWII San Francisco, tracking Alice through the city's tall, neon canyons. You were sent back through time to eliminate him, preventing him from assassinating The Computer in your own beloved Alpha Complex of the future. You failed. That's why you are here now (or not here yet, as the case may be).

The images fade. Your brain jump-starts back to life again, and you find yourselves back on firm earth. The sky overhead is a smoky gray, not the dull glowing red from your last mission. You have arrived in the aftermath of a battle.

Around you are numerous structures, primitive buildings and such. Many are burned out or partially demolished. It kind of reminds you of good 'ol post-crash Alpha.

Before you is some sort of destroyed Warbot, black smoke billowing from its ruptured side. Scattered about are overturned and burnt-out vehicles of many descriptions. *Sigh* It almost brings a tear to your eye. From a short ways off you can hear the pleasant fading echoes of automatic weapons fire.

The gunfire is the last echoes of themselves (prior version) being ventilated by Bigolas Brudderkof and his Soviet squad. The Commies hightail it pretty quick after that, so the Troubleshooters won't be able to locate them (at least not until they get ambushed at the end of this episode). Take a look at the map in the Game Stuff box to see what's around here.

Your players have no idea what they are supposed to do. The characters have no mission assignment. They don't know where, or even when they are. Don't ya' just love this game? In a moment you can let



That eerie feeling of déjà vu.

them trip over themselves, but first grind it in a bit.

Ask them what they are going to do next, then sit back and look impatient. You can say something like "Well gee, I paid plenty big bucks for this adventure. You could at least get on with it," or "I hope the High Programmer consortium doesn't get upset at your lackadaisical attitudes." Then look at them expectantly. They'll hem and haw a bit, then probably start nosing through the junk like good little post-crash scavengers.

Having them go in the direction of the gunfire is a requirement for the continuation of the adventure, so exercise your GM's prerogative and make 'em. If the Troubleshooters decide to look around elsewhere instead, let them bump into the bodies anyway. You can have this happen

Game Stuff

And Here We Are!

Map: Arrival. There are many old buildings in this area, most of them burned or destroyed in the earlier Soviet/US conflict. Smoking tank hulks and overturned vehicles litter the streets. To the east (if the Troubleshooters are sophisticated enough to tell directions) are tall foothills. To the west lies blue water spanned by a massive bridge stretching off into the fog. The dead bodies in the intersection are the Troubleshooters' dead bodies from the first time they were here.

even if they wander off in the wrong direction (remember that Troubleshooters aren't too good at this above-ground navigation schtick). If you need an excuse, ask the team leader to roll dice, then tell the Troubleshooters they have bumped into something peculiar.

Encounter Two: Something Peculiar

By whatever dirty gamemaster trick, the Troubleshooters discover their own recently deceased selves. This is what the Troubleshooters see (and what you read) when they round the corner:

It's you! And you and you and you, sprawled out in an intersection riddled with gunfire! If you ignore the blood 'n' gore, your dead selves look just as you do now, even down to the algae pudding stains on the collar.

Waitaminnit! These are no unfortunate prior clones — they're yourselves as you looked only moments ago! It's eerie, sort of Déjà Vu in reverse — you can tell you must have been here before but you have no memory of it!

When the Troubleshooters look over the bodies, they find a couple of thrilling and amazing things. The most thrilling of these is a mission briefing in the possession of the deceased team leader. Anyone with his head screwed on right will snatch the briefing up immediately. Of course, if the players are running around with cheap cyber-

enhancements, there's no guarantee that their cranial appendages are properly affixed.

Sadly (for them) the bodies don't have duplicates of all the neat and useful gadgets the Troubleshooters may have picked up in the last adventure (no need to be Monty Hall about this) but at least they now have a change of undies.

The mission briefing (#T2K/1A) is printed in the yank-out section. When they come across it, slide the briefing across the table so that the players can read it. If they don't think to look over the bodies, have them all make stupidity checks. If anybody can pass a moxie roll, tell him the team leader (the dead one, that is) seems to be clutching a mission briefing-looking thingy.

As a penalty for being dim-witted, in this case sow some suspicion that the current team leader might therefore already have a briefing and be holding out. It's easy to do. Just catch the eye of the leader's player, give him a conspiratorial wink, and say something like, "You've already seen this, right — oh, sorry!" That should be all it takes.

You can use the recently-wasted-selves trick anytime the Troubleshooters get way off the track or completely out of their element. They could, for example, stumble across themselves recently dead, with a map of the area and an x in one spot that says "you are here" and an x in another spot that says "you should be there." In fact, it's already fated (and written into the adventure) that the Troubleshooters get their

customary experimental weapons off of a dead pile of themselves, as well as some particularly juicy rumors.

Remember our motto: Fear of time paradoxes is for weenies — real Troubleshooters aren't afraid to meet themselves.

Encounter Three: Rumors of Rumors

Speaking of rumors, it's about time the Troubleshooters heard a few. According to most theories, rumors propagate forward in time much more readily than in the other direction. But rather than abandon such a noble Alpha Complex tradition, the usual rumormongers have chosen to exercise some extra ingenuity.

Due to the difficulty of delivery, all the rumors aren't going to arrive at this point in the adventure. The first one arrives now, but the rest show up later at the most peculiar moments. When the time feels right, drop this rumor on them by reading:

Team Leader:

A swirling black vortex opens in front of you. From out of the center sticks the head of another you, which you can only see down to the neck. He looks at you and says "Listen you twit, it's me, uh you ... I mean, we're us. Look, I don't have time to explain everything. When the Commies ambush you, use this radio to get help from the 'mericans. Now don't blow it again, you idiot. There isn't going to be a third chance." He drops a primitive Com-unit onto the ground; then the vortex shrinks and disappears.

That was an Old Reckoning military Walkie-Talkie that he gave himself, tuned to the frequency that the mercenary NPCs are using. The Troubleshooters can use it to eavesdrop on the mercs' conversations, in which case they hear things like "Geez, are they weird. Do ya think they're from Europe?" Or "We'd better hang back and keep an eye on 'em, pardner."

If the Troubleshooters try saying anything over the air, the mercenaries realize their communications are being monitored and they won't say anything more at all. If that happens, their arrival to aid the PCs is delayed because they fear some sort of trap.

In the meantime, the mercenaries trail along through the deserted buildings to observe the Troubleshooters until they can determine who they are and whose side they are on. At any given time they'll be about a block away within one of the vacant buildings.

Give the Troubleshooters a difficult time if they try to confront the mercenaries. The locals are much better at hiding in this type of environment, so subtract five points from the PC's skills in attempts to spot or track them. Once the mercenaries know they

have been spotted they scurry away, ducking into buildings in an attempt to escape.

To avoid the risk of the Troubleshooters blowing their potential allies away too soon, hit them with the Commie ambush if they persist in chasing the 'mericans.

Oh yeah. The Commie Ambush.

Encounter Four: Ambushky

While the Troubleshooters were busy messing around with themselves, Bigolas Brudderkof and his Soviet squad have set up to jump them. Brudderkof suspected the consortium would be sending more Troubleshooters, so he found an ambush site along the same route the Troubleshooters in his timeline chose. (Don't worry, we'll keep track of the time paradox stuff, all you need to do is provide the action.)

Don't ambush them right away. Let them work themselves away from the site of the old ambush, then spring the new one on them.

Have folks roll their moxies, then read the following paragraphs. If nobody makes the roll, then don't read the last paragraph below. In that case the Troubleshooters won't have time to ready their weapons, or to radio for help before the fight.

It's a beautiful daycycle as you stroll through the rustic burnt-out buildings of ancient San Francisco. That nostalgic smell of old napalm reminds each of you of your last visit to the R&D weapons testing rectory.

(This is the one you skip if they missed the moxie roll.) **Yes, a beautiful city, especially the strange metallic glints now appearing in all the doors and windows of the buildings around you. Glints that are not unlike the reflections cast from high-grade polished steel.**

What if the Troubleshooters Win?

You need Brudderkof and his Soviet patrol to survive this encounter so they can harass the Troubleshooters later in the adventure. They have the PCs out-classed, so as long as the mercenaries stay out of it the Soviets should win this fight, but maybe they won't.

Don't fret it if the Troubleshooters kill Brudderkof; the Alpha Commies simply ship in a clone replacement once his men get away. Be sure the PCs don't annihilate the Soviet patrol, because they have another appearance scheduled for later; let them escape with minor casualties instead.

Give them a chance to react, then jump them with the ambush. If they do everything right (i.e. they haven't tipped off the mercs that they're being listened to, and they immediately call for help on the walkie-talkies) the 'merican mercenaries show up right now. In this case, Brudderkof realizes he is out-flanked and retreats with his men. Skip to encounter two of Episode Two. (Read the sidebars between here and there for some useful information, though.)

It's more likely that the Troubleshooters spook the mercenaries or miss the clues and don't call them in time. Let them be captured and wait for their rescue. If you feel up to it, try to take a few of the Troubleshooters alive so they can be rescued later. It's more likely that even with your help they'll still get themselves totally annihilated.

In that case, ship in a new crop of replacements to the exact same spot. But this time the Soviets have them completely



It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood!

Game Stuff

Commie Ambush

Map: Use the prior map. There are a whole lot of burnt out buildings in this area. Most of them look the same after a while. Just pick a place and have the ambush there.

Soviet Patrol: 24 soldiers

Secret Society: Communist Party, although it's not a secret.

Mutations: None

Weapons: Soviet made AK-47 fully automatic assault rifles (sounds impressive, no?). And the amazing thing is they work just like *Paranoia* semi-auto slug throwers shooting solid slugs, but without all those annoying malfunction problems. Go ahead and use the spray rules if you want.

Semi-Auto Slug thrower (7P)_10

Armor: Body Kevlar and that kind of thing (P3)

Tactics: Pin down the Troubleshooters while the leader lobs sleep gas from his high-tech (to the Soviets) top-secret grenade launching device.

Description: These are highly trained Soviet troopers. They all speak a little English, enough to get by. They came over to North America more than year ago to participate in the Mexican invasion of Texas, and they've been pretty busy since then. They don't smell too great.

Bigolas Brudderkof assumed command a few months ago and brought them to California to track down an "American CIA special unit" (or so they were told). He told them that the special unit is trying to get to a super computer which could influence the future history of mankind. Their mission is to defeat the CIA unit and secure the computer for themselves.

Twilight: 2000 stats: The Soviet soldiers are Veteran characters. Consider that they are wearing Kevlar vests (AC10), and nylon helmets (AC10).

Bigolas Brudderkof alias Bigbro-U-THR- 3

Secret Society: Communist Party

Mutations: Precognition, Empathy.

Weapons: Cone Rifle ___15

He brought along from Alpha Complex boxes of HE, AP, HEAT, Napalm,

ECM, sleep gas, and vomit gas rounds. Sleep gas works like this: each combat round a person remains within the gas cloud, he must make an endurance roll; if he fails, he falls asleep long enough for the Soviets to tie him up and begin questioning him.

Armor: Brudderkof also brought along a super-modern lightweight combat suit. His R&D contacts made it look like a Soviet officer's uniform, which it mostly does, except for the barely discernable rivets and occasional steam ventings. His fellow Communists believe it is one more example of superior Soviet top-secret technology.

Combat Suit (All4)

Tactics: Hide behind cover. Lob sleep gas at Troubleshooters. Brudderkof wants to take the Troubleshooters alive, so he lobs sleep gas until they are all either dead or asleep.

Description: As mentioned, Brudderkof is an Alpha Complex hoighty-toit in the Communist secret society. He needs to know where the Proto-Computer is hidden. He thinks the Troubleshooters may have discovered its location, so he wants to capture and interrogate them.

He also doesn't wish to reveal his Alpha Complex origins, since his troops still think he is just a remarkably well connected fellow Russkie. All the same, his cone rifle and armor probably give him away pretty quickly to the Troubleshooters. Not to mention his detailed knowledge of things Alpha Complexian.

No matter what the Troubleshooters say, he denies any connection to anything out of the ordinary (for WWII San Francisco, that is) until he has completed his mission.

Twilight: 2000 stats: Brudderkof is an Elite character, with a cone rifle skill of 75. Treat the cone rifle as a cross between a one-man large caliber gun and a grenade launcher, as appropriate. The functions of the various *Paranoia* gasses are easy to extrapolate in T2K rules. Sleep gas is explained already. Vomit gas causes the victim extreme nausea for one to 10 rounds (roll a die).

His futuristic armor gives him (AC 12) all over his body.

Vehicles

The Soviet fellows have a few vehicles. To the Troubleshooters, they should seem like grossly primitive, incredibly stupid transport bots. So stupid that not only don't they have bot brains but they don't have recognizable computerized functions of any sort.

The Troubleshooters' vehicle operation skills allow them to drive these primitive transports. Any applicable Vehicle Maintenance skill can be used to quickly repair any of these childish simple vehicles.

In fact, the Troubleshooters may wish to add to or modify some of the standard features, like controls and number of wheels and such, to overcome some of the aboriginal design limitations. In mechanics terms, add five to a Troubleshooter's skill when working with primitive technology such as these vehicles. A successful mechanical engineer roll will allow a Troubleshooter to increase the fuel mileage two- or three-fold, and maybe add a rear window defogger and a wifty AM/FM stereo cassette player.

Treat them all like autocars when the Troubleshooters decide to drive them.

UAZ-469: This is a Warsaw pact version of a jeep or 3/4 ton truck. A DShK heavy machine gun (9P auto slugthrower) is mounted on a post behind the driver. They have two of these vehicles with machine guns mounted.

Motorcycle: This dangerous, fully-exposed design looks like something the R&D priests would create just to answer a few questions about high-velocity impact physics. The reds have two of these also.

8-ton truck: Some supplies and equipment in the back, plus seats for lots of soldiers.

1/4 ton truck: Contains more supplies, and a mobile wood alcohol still to brew more fuel. Wood alcohol is a poisonous fuel unsuitable for merry-making, although it is fun for a little while before you croak.

disadvantaged, aiming dozens of incredibly lethal weapons only inches from everybody's sensitive vital areas.

So now that you've heard the pep talk, start the battle. The surrounding buildings bristle with gun barrels in every window and door. This is the ultimate test, the small

team of six poorly-armed Troubleshooters mano a mano against dozens of heavily beuponeed USSR regulars.

During the combat, the Soviets try to pin down the Troubleshooters while their leader fires round after round of sleep gas at them. If all the Troubleshooters die before falling asleep, you know what to do. Otherwise

they are trussed up while they slumber and awake to the questions of Bigolas Brudderkof. Their gear has been removed and left piled in one of the jeeps.

If the Troubleshooters don't get captured they don't learn about Brudderkof. On the other hand, they don't lose their equipment.

Encounter Five: Interrogation and Other Recreational Activities

If the Troubleshooters played their cards right and didn't get captured, then they obviously aren't interrogated either. In that case skip this bit and pick up the adventure with encounter two of Episode Two. Otherwise continue on.

Brudderkof wants to know where to find The Proto-Computer that the PCs are looking for. He starts the mass questioning with something like this:

"So you capitalist pig-dogs are being thinking to out-fox me, Da? Is nyet to be working. I am to be putting an end to your mission for all and for once. But first, you are telling me where is hidden The Computer."

Go ahead and indulge yourself with the questioning. Brudderkof stops at nothing to get the information he wants. He insults their clonehood, belittles their Not-So-Secret Societies, and threatens all manner of bodily harm. Have him make up facts about the Troubleshooters if you like, just to stir up the others.

Something like: "Vait a miniet. I tink I am recognizing dis one from High Programmers' picnic last yearcycle. Am I not correct, your Ultravioletness?" or:

"Do not think you are fooling me with your phoney-baloney disguise. I am knowing who you really are, Comrade Unger. Or should I call you 'Alice?'"

Staging tips for Brudderkof and the Soviets

We all know what dastardly people the Commies actually are. They're not fooling any of us red-blooded Americans with this Glasnost thing. It's all a scam perpetrated by cynical war-mongering atheist heathens on drugs. Alpha Complex Commies, Brudderkof in particular, are no exception. Use these staging tips to portray his wholly malignant personality.

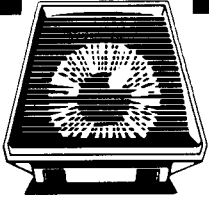
For Brudderkof, start by sneering. Squint your eyes like it was a little to bright for you. Get a pencil and slap it into your palm as you interrogate the PCs. At some point, work yourself into a frenzy and accidentally break the pencil in two. Then utter a short, menacing chuckle as you glance from the pencil to the Troubleshooter.

As a role model, think about all those POW movies with the evil Soviet officer trying to get vital state secrets out of the hero. Stallone made a couple. So did Chuck Norris.

For the Soviets: These are highly trained and efficient elite military men. They frown a lot. They are no fun. They engage in no camaraderie of any sort with Troubleshooters. Their speech (and their hair) is short, clipped and to the point.

If a Troubleshooter makes a Bootlicking or Fast Talk roll, he can convince Brudderkof that they haven't found the Proto-Computer yet. In that case Brudderkof just wants to know everything else they know so that his own search will be easier.

Once Brudderkof is satisfied that the Troubleshooters have talked as much as they are going to, he leaves them tied up with a small guard of four men, and goes to search for the Proto-Computer with the rest of his soldiers. (He's starting to catch on that if he just kills them, more show up. But if he keeps them alive and in one place, maybe no more will arrive.)



Episode Two: A Blind Date With Destiny

Summary

The Troubleshooters are sprung by local mercenaries, who help them find their way across the bay to the Proto-Computer. Along the way they dodge a US patrol and bump into another dead pile of themselves, this time with experimental equipment.

Background

The U.S. Army patrol has been tracking Brudderkof and his Soviet squad since they entered California. They want to find out what the Soviets are up to and stop it. When they meet suspicious Troubleshooters from the future, they understandably overreact (i.e., get real trigger-happy).

Something else you'll need to know about is the 'merican mercenaries. Their personal backgrounds explain a bit about how they got to California in the first place, and by now they've been in this area for a while. At first they searched for a seat of government or authority; finding none, they've since been concentrating on personal survival against the hostilities of local petty dictators and brigand bands. They would be called freedom fighters, except that there is no occupying power to fight against.

Game Stuff

Fight for freedom

Four Soviet Guards: These are four of the same Soviet patrol mentioned above. Look at the previous game stuff box for their armor and weapons.

Tactics: Guard the prisoners. Act sullen. Be cannon fodder (accidentally let the Troubleshooters escape, or else be killed by the mercenaries in the escape attempt).

Six Mercenaries: You can find name, rank and personality description in the pullout section in the middle of the book.

Weapons: These guys are armed with a thrilling array of old reckoning weaponry. Amazingly, all of it works just like some comparable Alpha Complex weapon. Look at the pullout section to see what each is using.

Armor: Flak vests, light kevlar, etc (P2)

Tactics: Sneak up on two Soviets.

The mercenaries give the regular U.S. military a wide berth upon the infrequent occasions of a patrol's presence in this area: the mercs did not find their European assignment much to their liking and prefer to avoid being "volunteered" back into the army.

Even though they are living through the upheavals of WWII, these guys still aren't prepared to believe that the Troubleshooters are from the future. After a little time and a few more examples of Alpha Complex oddities, they may come to accept it.

Remember, these natives don't have clone replacements, so try not to kill them off needlessly.

Encounter One: Rescue or be Rescued

At this point the Troubleshooters are most likely lounging about, trussed up under the watchful eyes of four crack Soviet guards. Unlike most Communists the Troubleshooters have known, the guards aren't talkative and don't try to infect them with Commie propaganda.

If your players are bright enough to find a way out on their own, well bully for them — give them each a couple billion experience points. Probably the most effective

Provide covering fire for the Troubleshooters. Throw grenades where they will be useful. Generally be helpful.

Description: This team came together in the months after the collapse of the American government and military. A couple of them had served together in the war in Europe, but most joined since their return. They wear old worn combat uniforms from their original units, with bits and pieces of scavenged clothing to fill out their attire.

Vehicles: The Mercenaries have an All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and a 1/4 ton truck with a still on the back. This distillery *does* make drinkable alcohol. ATVs are great for going places where other vehicles give up.

Stats & Stuff: The background, skills, individual stats and all that other stuff on the NPCs is in the pullout section.

albeit unappealing escape method is mass suicide; it would allow the High Programmer consortium back in Alpha Complex to replace the Troubleshooters with new, uncaptured versions.

If your players decide they would rather take a break and wait for you to show your hand, then send in the mercenaries to fight for the PCs' freedom. Don't take too long to spring them, since it isn't much fun sitting around tied up (at least not for us normal folks).

Picture the scene: The Troubleshooters tied up, lying on the ground. Near them are two guards playing some kind of Communist card game called "Red Square." Another guard is leaning against the back of a jeep sipping a bottle of wodka, while the fourth is catching some shuteye on the ground.

At the start of the rescue, the first thing the Troubleshooters may notice (moxie rolls, again) is a person sneaking up behind the guard at the jeep, and another stealthily approaching the napping commie. The newcomers jump their victims from behind as the other guards are shot by other rescuers.

The Troubleshooters can help with the rescue if they have managed to work themselves free, or if they want to risk revealing any of their mutant powers. This isn't a vacation — if the Troubleshooters just lie passively in the open and allow themselves to be rescued in a leisurely fashion, the rescue goes off with a few hitches in it.

For instance: one of the guards takes it into his head to shoot the prisoners, wounding a couple before he is taken out. If the Troubleshooters help speed things up or even just help by getting under cover, they're spared.

Encounter Two: Axes and Allies

All right, so this encounter has nothing to do with axes. Well, maybe hatchets, as in "burying the hatchet." We realize it's kind of a reach, but we liked the title, so tough. Just read.

If the Troubleshooters arrange their own escape, let the mercenaries lend a helping hand with a few well-placed bullets, grenades, that sort of thing. Make sure the Troubleshooters know that the mercs are on their side, at least for the time being.

When the dust has settled, the Troubleshooters and mercenaries can take time



out to give each other the once-over. Refer to the pullout section for the locals' descriptions.

Generally, the new people should seem pretty peculiar to the Troubleshooters. You can use this read-aloud to describe what the local mercenaries look like, or just use it as a guide:

Smoke still rises from the battlefield as you get the first good look at your rescuers. They're a motley, rag-tag bunch. Some of their clothing looks as though it may have been a uniform at one point, but now it's just odd collections of bits and pieces.

It is difficult to determine everyone's clearances, although a couple are definitely Green.

They look as if they have been 'living free,' as you have been since the Computer

Notes for a Twilight 2000 run

If you are doing this as a T2K run with the mercenaries as the PCs, then you'll need some of these tips for motivating them to stick with the Troubleshooters — when they are NPCs, it's no trouble just saying they feel like sticking around. When they're PCs, you've got to *make* them feel like it.

An easy way to make them hang around is to pique their interest. Have the NPC Troubleshooters say things about super computers, the Great Crash, time travel, algae chips, the end of civilization, etc. Since the Doc is a Sci-Fi fan, she should find this very interesting. Emphasize to Doc's player how wonderfully extraordinary this could be if it were true.

Second, the mercenaries have just been through WWII, so you can appeal to their Commie-hating instincts. The Troubleshooters hint that they are on a very important mission to save the world from Communist domination.

If your mercenary PCs still ignore the Troubleshooters, cheat. Use the old referee trick of retro-fitting, in which you retroactively invent something in the past which affects the present. Tell Lt. Duboise that he remembers something he read when he was serving in the French military. At the time he dismissed it as quackery, but now it seems to make some sort of impossible sense. He happened to read a secret report which mentioned time-traveling agents from a future place called "Alpha Complex" (he, of course, pronounces it "le Complé du Alpha"). These agents, he says, were engaged in a time-war with Communist infiltrators for control of the planet.

Then let Duboise convince his subordinates.

crashed. But it appears as if the 'mericans have never had a Computer to keep order and conformity among the population. Even their body-types are unruly; one of them stands a full head above the one-time Preferred Citizen Height (PCH), while another is almost equally shorter than the standard.

They seem both wary of you and curious at the same time. Their apparent team leader, the small one, barks a few orders in an archaic dialect of your own language. They all stow their weapons and take on a friendlier posture.

Since the Troubleshooters know they are going to the Presidio (see the mission alert), but they don't know where it is, it would benefit them to team up with these local folk. The mercenaries are easy to talk into showing the way to the Presidio.

Lt. Mousey Duboise accepts the fact that these guys are on an important mission, even if he doesn't swallow the whole time travel bit. He'll stick with them, even if it's just to see what's got the Soviets so interested.

Insta-menaces

Fling some of these menaces at them during the hour-long trip to the BART tunnel. You don't have to use them all, or even any of them if your players have found a way to keep themselves amused.

Scavengers: At one spot of slow going, a half dozen wretched locals surrounds the caravan, begging for handouts. When the PCs stop, the scavengers each grab a lose item and scatter into the surrounding buildings. If you feel like instigating a bug-hunt, have them grab something important like the mission assignment or the adaptor plug from a cyber-enhanced bionic foot. Then have them dart off with the thing. **Twilight: 2000 stats:** The scavengers are all *Novice* characters.

Soviet sniper: Brudderkof thought he might be followed to the bay, so he left a sniper here to harass pursuers. The sniper takes a few rapid shots (7P at skill 4 for extreme range) at the lead vehicle, then changes hiding position before he is located. If they stick around, he takes more shots in a few minutes, then moves again. **Twilight: 2000 stats:** The sniper is a *Veteran* character with a 20 skill for this range. He is firing an SVD sniper rifle.

Tac Nuke Crater: As the group approaches the tunnel, they enter a half-mile diameter ring of burnt building frames opening onto a blast-cleared plane and a central glass bowl 200 yards across.

If the Troubleshooters don't think of asking for help, have Weiser offer his group's services with something like,

"Ya know, y'all don't seem to be from these parts. We may not spit in the same bucket, but at least we got us the same enemies. We'd be glad to show y'all around for no more than just a minute (put the accent on the "nute") token of your appreciation, like one of those fancy weapon dohickies you got there."

You can even let them be talked out of the fee if that's what it takes to keep everybody together.

Just What is a Presidio and Why Should I Care?

Ah, glad you asked. The Presidio is a military complex at the San Francisco end of the Golden Gate Bridge. The bridge spans the bay, at one time connecting the city to less interesting parts of the world to the North. The Presidio isn't secret, but the

The group must make a wide detour on uninhabited side streets to avoid the blast area. No people are foolish enough to live this close to a radioactive crater, but you can use this encounter to lead into the pack of wild dogs living in the empty buildings (look below). If the PCs stick around they get to soak up those troublesome RADs (one of the more popular *Twilight: 2000* pastimes).

The hole isn't hot enough to kill straight out. Even if the Troubleshooters tarried long enough to get a lethal dose (1 hour), the slow-acting radiation poisoning wouldn't take effect until after they had already blown away this and the next couple clones. For T2K PCs, just up their RAD count by 1d10 per each five minutes they stay here.

Wild Dogs: With no people around to provide for them, many dogs have gone back to the wild. First tell the Troubleshooters they hear an eerie, inhuman howl. Then mention furtive, darting figures in the darkened buildings. If the group stops or turns back, they are confronted by a growling pack of feral dogs. The dogs can shadow them to the BART tunnel, or be driven by their hunger to leap into the open vehicles. Six wild dogs, bite (6I) skill 7.

Twilight: 2000 stats: Just use the normal dog stats.

joint Military-JCN Corp Artificial Intelligence Laboratory there is.

Inside the lab, ground-breaking research into self-aware computers and advanced robotics was performed. Since the war began, the laboratory has been empty except for the The Proto-Computer and a few robots.

The mercenaries can lead the Troubleshooters there. The normal route would be to go south along the shore, around the southerly tip of the bay and then north again up the peninsula to the city. Post-WWIII roads are in poor repair; for them to go that way, even in vehicles, would take much too long. The Soviets have amphibious vehicles that can cross the bay in 20 minutes.

Doc Webbley suggests the quickest route across the bay is the old abandoned subway tunnel that runs beneath the water. If the tunnel is clear, they can be across almost as fast as the Soviets. They can't take any of the bridges, because all of those have taken substantial damage during the fighting (substantial enough that whatever foolish idea they get for spanning one won't work).

The last option would be swimming across, but since most Troubleshooters have never even taken a bath, let alone tried swimming, this is not feasible. There are no boats available, but they may still try to fake one up. In that case, dampen their enthusi-

asm with some sort of *Twilight: 2000* -ish menace, like a real Soviet sub, or a U.S. helicopter on target practice, or pirates, or rabid mutant guppies with big pointy teeth ...

No, the only way across requires crawling through a dank, crumbling subway tunnel teeming with post-holocaust under-achievers and other vermin. Aren't you looking forward to this? Just like commuters of old, the Troubleshooters can take the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) tunnel across to San Francisco. Only they're going to do it on foot.

You can see from the area map where the BART tunnel is in relation to San Francisco and to the east side of the bay where the Troubleshooters are now. Including the two the Soviets left behind, there are enough vehicles to carry everyone to the tunnel mouth.

The trip takes about an hour because of the rubble-strewn terrain. Take a look at the sidebar for some insta-menaces to keep the pace up. When they get close to the tunnel, read the following aloud:

You've been weaving through the rubble-strewn streets for some time now. The vacant buildings thin as you near the bay, giving fewer places for an ambush, but also leaving you more uncomfortably in the open.

Your guides pull parallel to a pair of what look like transtube rails. A quarter mile ahead you see where the rails dive into the earth. It looks like you might finally be getting back to the cold comfort of a confined space.

Encounter Three: Rats in a Maze

Make everyone roll their moxies. Tell successful Troubleshooters that they notice motion up ahead, the same distance as they are from the tunnel entrance but on the far side (a half mile away). They've sighted a U.S. military patrol searching for the Soviets. If they continue any further, they'll be spotted in the open and in a good deal of trouble.

Read this:

"U.S. patrol," Says the tall one they call Chief, "Head for cover. They're not too friendly with us. They figure 'you nottum sign on with us, you must be red or dead.' We can't fight a tank; we must be smart like fox."

If the Troubleshooters just run for the tunnel, the U.S. patrol notices them and does the same; the PC's get the pajeebas shot out of them before they can duck into the hole. Realizing the likelihood of this, their guides swerve down a side street behind the cover of a burnt-out building.

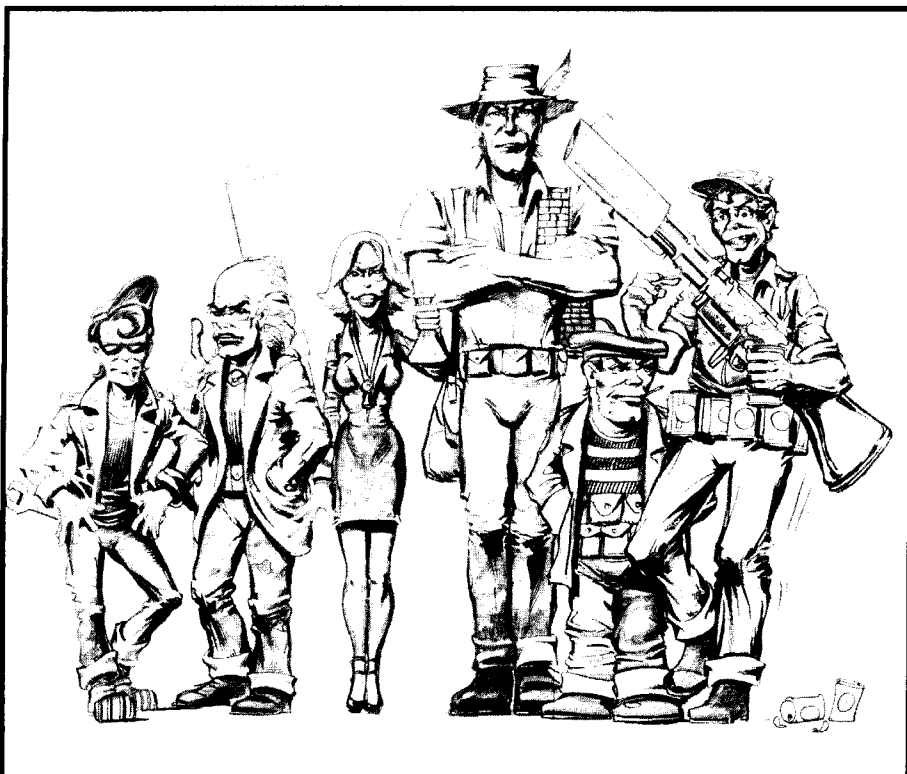
If the PCs insist on staying to fight, go ahead and waste them for their pig-headedness. Have the clones arrive near where the mercenaries are hiding so they can join up again.

Use this read aloud to describe what the town looks like. There is a brief passage which will require you to choose from one of two possible responses depending upon the feelings of your Troubleshooter group about the crash of the Computer, so keep an eye out for it:

The town is deadly quiet as you dart down the side street. It almost reminds you of the brief moment of eerie silence right after the crash of the Computer back in Alpha Complex. You a) shudder with the painful recollection of the trauma or b) smile at the warm memory of that joyous day.

The only sounds are your engines, and the echoes they make off of the nearby buildings. It looks as though the fighting was not too fierce here, because most of the buildings are intact and there are few burnt vehicles. Still, you don't see any people. Either they have all left, or they have learned when to stay out of sight.

Lay out the map of the tunnel east entrance. On it is a maze of streets, with the BART tunnel in the middle. Put a marker on



Our friends the 'mericans.



Game Stuff

Flight to the Tunnel

Map: Tunnel East Entrance

U.S. Army Patrol, 12 soldiers

Weapons: 10 have M-16 assault rifles (7P) skill__12

2 have M249 automatic rifles (9P) skill__12

Armor: Standard US issue battle armor (P2)

Tactics: Mistake Troubleshooters and mercenaries for Soviets, chase them. Narrowly miss with the 75mm cannon. Get tricked into letting the PCs into the subway tunnel. Follow them down the tunnel into San Francisco once they figure out where they've gone. Radio for the other dozen U.S. soldiers to come over to San Francisco and help.

If they are somehow blocked from continuing down the tunnel, the U.S. patrol backs out, goes to their base camp, and packs everybody into their amphibious vehicles which they take across the bay. Then they'll pick up the PCs' trail where they come out at the other end of the tunnel.

Description: The US patrol still wears complete US military uniforms, although they haven't been to a functioning military base for many months. None of them saw service in Europe.

The rest of their unit is at a base camp a dozen miles to the north. They'll join

up later for the assault on the Alpha Project compound.

Twilight: 2000 stats: The US patrol are all *Veteran* soldiers. They wear flak vests (AC 8) and nylon helmets (AC 10).

Vehicles: MS Bradley Armored personnel carrier. It has a crew of three, and six passengers. It has six M231 submachineguns mounted with two on either side and two in the rear so that from two to four can fire in any one direction. The M231 does (9P) damage and can fire at extreme range (like at the Troubleshooters if they are within 200 yards). You can use the autofire rules if you wish.

Even more intimidating is the LAV-75 light tank driven by the remaining three Americans. It can travel about as fast as the Troubleshooters in their jeeps, and it doesn't need to swerve around obstacles, including the PCs. The armor (A115) is thick enough that the Troubleshooters' hand held stuff won't penetrate it well.

The LAV-75 is mounted with a 75mm autocannon in a turret. Once a round it shoots a really big bullet that punches a really neat 75mm hole through the average Troubleshooter (15P at skill 12). It shoots a good 300 yards with accuracy, further without.

Both vehicles have been converted to run on alcohol.

Make sure the patrol is far enough behind the Troubleshooters that they can't interfere until they all get to the Presidio; don't be afraid to seal the tunnel if they are too close.

You could have a round from the 75mm cannon accidentally close up the mouth. Or the Troubleshooters could boobytrap a few grenades to collapse the entrance. Otherwise, the U.S. patrol follows the Troubleshooters into the tunnel.

Read this aloud as the Troubleshooters continue down the tunnel:

You and the 'mericans plod down the dank tunnel. It's nice to get out from under the open outdoors sky. The tunnel slopes downward for quite a ways, until it levels out somewhere beneath the bay. Down here it is very dark; the only illumination comes from the guides' flashlights.

The tunnel is filled with rubble and refuse, not unlike that charming post-MegaWhoops Alpha Complex you like to call home. The cracked walls leak water in little rivulets that collect in a foot-deep puddle covering the old-style transtube rails. Along the right wall is an elevated walkway that will keep you above the rails.

Before long they may discover that they share the tunnel with rats, the healthiest of which grow to an amazing two feet in length. Use the rats to set a mood. You can describe their beady eyes shining out of a pitch black shadow. Make them jump on people from above, swim through the water, or swarm along the walkway toward the Troubleshooters and the mercenaries.

At a couple of points the walls have fallen in, requiring the Troubleshooters to squeeze through in single file. In one place a shower of seawater completely obstructs the tunnel, requiring that the party soak themselves in getting by.

Keep in mind the affects of saltwater on delicate equipment. Somebody's unshielded weapon can accidentally dip into the water, electrocuting everybody with a stun effect. And who knows whether or not the auditrans were waterproofed? (That'll clear up your sinuses in a hurry.)

Later a Troubleshooter can discover that the internal hardware of his prized gadget has dissolved, rendering it inoperable. Other people's weapons can be gunked up with water-born crud. They misfire or malfunction until they are stripped and thoroughly cleaned.

The tunnel is three miles long, a difficult trek in these circumstances.

Encounter Five: Geriatric Hippies from Hell

At the far end of the level section, the Troubleshooters come across an inhabited subway train. In the train are the degenerate remnants of San Francisco's dopehead crystal worshipers. They've been waiting a long time for the Troubleshooters to arrive so they could give them the message they carry, a time-traveling rumor for the Troubleshooters that missed by a few years.

Read the following aloud:

After what must be a few miles of travel, your flashlights and glow lamps play across a large metallic structure blocking the route ahead. As you near, you can see that it is one of the Old Reckoning transtube cars that once traveled through these tunnels.

It was conveyed on some sort of primitive wheel arrangement, now permanently rusted to the watery tracks. If you stay to the elevated walkway you can make it around the vehicle. As you approach you see some lights within.

The doors on the first car are open. Inside the train, piles of bedding blankets, stacks of canned food, and heaps of garbage give clear sign of habitation. Before the first in line gets by or inside, they are greeted by Dave, the leader of the crystal-headed hippies.

the spot where the Troubleshooters first saw the patrol. Put another marker where the U.S. patrol begins.

What the Troubleshooters need to do is get to the entrance ahead of the US patrol. To begin, let the Troubleshooters move their marker to an adjacent intersection, then move the patrol to an intersection adjacent to them. Continue alternating movements.

The Troubleshooters' best tactic is to try to lose the patrol in the surrounding streets and then double back to the tunnel entrance. The patrol can shoot at them if they get within two intersections' distance. Give the PCs a jolly chase through the maze. Reward smart maneuvering or tactics with a successful escape into the tunnel. If they do well, the U.S. patrol may not figure out where they've gone until they have a sizeable head-start.

Encounter Four: Holocaust Survivors Do It On Foot

The tunnel opening is clear for a hundred feet, into which they can drive the vehicles. After that, rubble blocks the way so they'll have to continue on foot. The tunnel took a few hits in the past, so it's unstable at this end. A big explosion could bring down the mouth.

He speaks with a raspy voice deteriorated by too many years of smoking crude hemp cigarettes. Speak his lines with a nasally rasp. To simulate his altered state of mind, try crossing our eyes as you talk.

Dave is one of the last remnants of the over-the-hill West coast counter-culture. He and a couple of fellow hippies have long since blown their synapses on mind-altering chemicals. Naturally, they had little trouble coping when an Alpha complex time-traveler appeared to them during one of their crystal meditation sessions.

The traveler was from the Romantics secret society group trying to give his fellow member a few helpful hints. Except he blew the time calibration by about a decade. Still, he stayed around a few hours, long enough to impress a message into the natives' enfeebled brain cells.

The hippies then rode the BART for many years, waiting for they-who-shoot-trouble. After the war they set up camp down here where they would be sure to meet the Troubleshooters. Now their life's work is almost at an end.

Practice crossing your eyes, then read this little bit to the players:

"Hey Troubleshooter dudes, like we've been waiting for you young whippersnappers a long time. The Computer is your groovy friend, or whatever. Come on in, we've got a message for you. You can call me Dave," says an old guy standing just to the side of the open door.

He is dressed in a weird multi-colored shirt and light blue pants ripped and torn almost into separate shreds. His grey hair is long and stringy, partially obscuring his wrinkled, ancient face and his matted, non-regulation facial growth. In his right hand he's holding out a strange crystalline structure of unknown purpose.

Illusory Dementia: A Beginner's Guide

Those who partake in the psycho-taffy are in for some fun. For five hours the floor dances, everything is covered in mutating weird colors, everything else is VERY interesting, and the victim can't concentrate longer than a few minutes on any task.

But more fun than that, he hallucinates wildly, seeing whatever he expects to see and a lot of things he doesn't expect. Play up to this by making him roll his moxie, then say something vague like, "Well, you saw something peculiar." Now always answer yes to any specific question about his surroundings.

The victim can stumble along with the team, but he won't have his mind on business. He can still shoot his gun pretty well, but at what?



Geriatric hippies from Hell.

The crystal is this sort of vibratory thing that lets you tune your thought waves to the subtle planes of cosmic harmonics, know what we mean? In game terms it doesn't do anything.

Encounter Six: Crystal-Head Rumor

In all there are five crystal-head hippies living in the train. If the Troubleshooters play along they'll be led into the next car and get the rumor. If the Troubleshooters blow their hosts away, let 'em make up their own rumors.

The next car is illuminated by the fiery purple glow of a black light lantern. Lining the walls are dozens of black light posters that glow with a ghostly radiance. Probably the most startling thing about the unnatural lighting is that it makes the Troubleshooters' clothing (regardless of color) look a flat, dull black. This, of course, renders them clearaneless for the duration of this encounter.

The hosts sit down with the party in a circle around the lantern. Dave passes out some small brown taffy candies. He tells everybody to eat one. Troubleshooters who eat one will suffer from illusory dementia for five hours, starting in about 30 minutes. It kicks in just about the time they climb back out of the subway tunnel.

Finally Dave gets to the rumor. He tells them something like:

"Friend Troubleshooters. We've hung out here a real freakin' long time waiting for you dudes. Way back before the war, this guy like appeared to us and told us to give you this map.

"He also said to tell you that one of the Soviet guys is like this Commie traitor from Alphonso Complex in the future, or something like that. Like, this Commie already knows everything you are going to do, so you should do some other stuff instead."

Show them the hand-drawn map of the Presidio. The Troubleshooters can hang out for the next few hours and watch the walls breathe, or they can get on with the mission.

Twilight: 2000 stats: The hippies are Novice characters.

Encounter Seven: We're Outta Here

A quarter mile or so further down the tunnel the party comes to the first subway stop in San Francisco. They can climb the stationary escalator up to street level and exit through the broken gate. The mercenaries know the way to the Presidio. It is three miles away, mostly west and a little north.

This side of the bay looks similar to the other one. Here the buildings are closer together, although still vacant and decrepit. Many are burnt; some show signs of explosions and other scars of war.

The mercenaries are adept at movement in this kind of terrain. They hug the walls, darting across intersections from building to building. They can give the Troubleshooters a few pointers if they need them.



R&D Stuff

Inflatable Boat

It's a heavy, cigar-box size block of red plastic. The only instructions are a cryptic label that reads, "USE NEAR WATER," and a small plastic tab with the label "PULL."

When the tab is pulled the block explosively inflates, filling the area with a red six-seater speedboat — bad news if opened in a small room. The boat is powered with a SOOPER-CROOZ jet engine that can attain speeds over 200 mph. It goes even faster in the water, where it can also be steered.

The boat can be deflated by pushing the deflate button, which is hidden in a daunting array of jet-engine speed and steering control buttons. Accidental mid-cruise deflation is still the most registered complaint against this design, ranking right before unplanned land voyages. Of course, there's also no telling what might happen when random buttons are pressed while the Troubleshooters look for the deflate button.

Houd-I-NII Bondage Escape Kit

The instructions explain that Houd-I-NII developed the bondage escape kit for Troubleshooters who often find themselves tied up in difficult situations. It includes hidden rope snippers, an automatic lockpick, even a set of fake wrists and hands to fool would-be handcuffers.

This would have come in real handy earlier in the mission. It won't do them much good now, unless they manage to get themselves tied up again (always a possibility with Troubleshooters). In case you need to know, the lock pick opens most common circa 2000 locks (give them a x2 Security roll to open simple locks, a normal roll for very difficult ones), and the snippers snip ropes.

For a little extra fun, describe the fake hands as 'gloves of some kind' and see if some Troubleshooter ends up wearing them for the rest of the adventure.

Shoor-Shot Tankbuster Missile Launcher

The Shoor-shot tankbuster missile launcher is a one man portable anti-tank cannon. The four foot barrel is welded to a heavy-duty harness so that it can be mounted on the operator's chest. To use, the operator simply turns to face the enemy and fires the cannon. Six extra rounds are stored within handy reach on the back of the harness.

This cannon has a slight design flaw, in that it was intended for mounting on heavy-duty tanks and such. It fires a foot-wide AP shell at the intended target. It does (19AP) damage, and when it goes off the operator flies back almost as fast as the missile round flies forward, until he smashes into a solid obstruction. His speed at impact is around 25 kph, give or take a few and depending on how nasty you're feeling (note the convenient column break on the Vehicular Accidents table).

If you want to be cruel, you can have the extra rounds go off in the impact, each doing (19AP) damage to the wearer and whatever he hit. Oh yeah, the cannon contraption weighs 40 kg and each extra round weighs another 5 kg.

Twilight: 2000 stats: treat it like a chest-mounted howitzer, with all the connoted detriments to the user. The rounds are armor piercing.

Port-o-Vat

Everybody knows how important a proper diet is. That's why this tiny food vat has been included with the equipment. To activate, just describe what you want to eat to the miniature bot brain and toss in a handful of whatever organic matter is handy (*ulp*). Within seconds, a succulent culinary delight squirts from the spigot and hardens into the solid culinary delight of your choice.

Once this thing gets going, it can't be shut off. It continues squirting out food of every description, trying to find something the Troubleshooter will eat, leaving a trail of beef Wellington a la mode and garlic chip chocolate pie (if the NPCs did the requesting) or proto-algae a la king and Tayst-E-Tyme synthecheese (if the PCs did the requesting) everywhere it goes.

Eventually it just gives up and sulks in the corner somewhere. The PCs could pretend to like the stuff just to get the machine to shut up. But they'll have to munch their way through an awful lot of unpleasant food. Waste not, want not.

Suggestions for running the Port-O-Vat: Use a high squeaky voice. Interject a whine and a real sense of rejection when the Troubleshooters refuse to eat the food. Try to think up all your favorite food combinations from your childhood — you know, ice cream or peanut butter on everything, pancakes and ketchup — the works.

The Troubleshooters can eventually discover that the food vat can synthesize almost any object, even a working weapon, but first they have to convince the Port-o-VAT they want to eat it.

Troubleshooter 1: Geez, a nice Choc-O-LAT flavored Mega-Death plasma cannon would really hit the spot right now.

Port-O-Vat: But I saw you throw away those baked pineapple and napalm grenades I made for you earlier. If you're not going to eat I'm not going to waste my precious food resources on dessert entrees.

Greaser: Quick, ask it for a pack of infrared-seeking High Explosive 9mm wieners. That patrol is practically eatin' dinner with us.

Port-O-Vat: Would you prefer those wieners with a nice strawberry butter filling? Here, try them with a simulated licorice sauce.

Troubleshooters (in unison): Don't drop them!

Native Currency Kit

Researchers in R&D put together this collection of synthetic native currencies. Supposedly it will allow the Troubleshooters to buy whatever local items they may need, without the necessity of calling on Home Base for further help. It includes five imitation shell necklaces, a handful of syntheglass beads, a giant inflatable stone wheel, two authentic Italian Lire coins, four American dollar bills, and a large, three foot long copper coated plastic sheet. Don't forget, the R&D priests are working off some sketchy historical details ...

My aren't the Troubleshooters ready for a night on the town!

English/Russian Dictionary

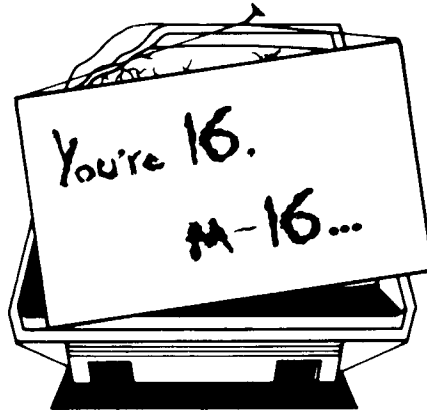
This handy little tome is a microchip enhanced talking translator. Unlike the famous "universal translator" of science fiction lore, this thing is nowhere near sophisticated enough to translate brainwaves and stuff like that. All it does is listen to the speaker, cross-index the words it hears in its stored dictionary, and provide the translation, also out loud. This can get a little confusing, since it doesn't tend to wait for the speaker to finish.

As they travel, the Troubleshooters may catch occasional glimpses of people peeking out windows or darting from building to building. They are what's left of the inhabitants. The Troubleshooters have little to worry about. They look too well armed to be accosted by anybody in this part of town. Read this aloud after they have been traveling for a while:

You travel through this urban war zone, up one hill and down another, slowly nearing the Presidio. The buildings are more densely built than those at the other end of the tunnel. This would be an excellent site for another ambush - if somebody knew which way you were coming.

Let them get antsy. The Soviets did indeed set up an ambush, and it worked marvelously. If the players are smart, they'll remember the rumor told to them by the crystal heads and start to look for trouble. In this case, tell them they see something down the road a ways. (If they don't ask you about it, you might consider another instamenace to punish their slow brains. Then have them notice something.) Read this when they draw closer:

Before you, down the road a ways, is a familiar disordered heap of human bodies lying on the road. They look just like yourselves again, except this time you have a fabulous array of special equipment! Tell them all about it, Don Pardo.



Encounter Eight: R&D for Me

Yup, it's R&D time. The Priests even almost got it right this go-round, for the Troubleshooters' prior selves have a whole host of equipment that would have been real helpful in these past two episodes.

With these gadgets, they could have gotten this far in just a few minutes and in complete comfort. Of course, some of it is totally, completely, and immediately lethal, but then we're sure your players are familiar with the standard risks involved with new equipment. If they're not, they will be soon.

Encounter Eighty-Jillion: Just One More Rumor, Please

Sometime during the rest of the trip, drop this rumor on them:

Carved into the street and through the sidewalks, covering half a block in six foot tall letters, is this message:

"Sorry I missed you Rude-Y. We should have brought a few technicians when we snuck in to use the Collapsatron. Our secret records tell us that the robots at the old laboratory were set to attack anybody who was not part of the project staff. Be careful. Oops, gotta go. Don't let anybody else see this message."

Anyone succeeding in a Mechanical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, or Nuclear Engineering skill realizes that the carving could not have been done with year 2000 technology. Only someone from Alpha Complex would have the tools, and lack of regard, to deface the sidewalk in this manner.

Just for color, you can have Doc Einstein say something like, "Hmmm ... bloody fascinating. I say chaps, this message wasn't carved with any known technology. I can't imagine how it was done."

"Greaser" Danny Quesenta

Age: 24; Rank: Spec 4; Branch: Army; Specialty: Vehicle Mechanic; Nationality: USA; Weight: 84

Attributes

Strength _____ 12
 Agility _____ 18
 Constitution _____ 15
 Stature _____ 11
 Intelligence _____ 9
 Education _____ 7
 Coolness Under Fire _____ 4
 Rads _____ 23
 Load _____ 39
 Throw Range _____ 24
 Body Combat Damage _____ 5

Skill Level

Spanish _____ 80
 English _____ 60
 Body Combat _____ 50
 Combat Rifleman _____ 50
 Pistol _____ 40
 Heavy Weapons _____ 40
 Large Cal Gun _____ 30
 Hunting Bow _____ 20
 Melee Combat _____ 35
 Mechanic _____ 75
 Scrounging _____ 60
 Thrown Weapon _____ 50
 Forage _____ 30

Hit Capacity

Head _____ 15
 Chest _____ 38
 L. Arm _____ 26
 R. Arm _____ 26
 Abdomen _____ 26
 L. Leg _____ 26
 R. Leg _____ 26

Equipment

M16 Assault Rifle
 Knife
 Basic Tool Kit
 Wheeled Vehicle
 Tools
 2 km Hand Radio
 Binoculars
 Kevlar Flak Jacket
 Rucksack
 Sleeping Bag
 Frag Grenades, 5

Joe "Einstein" Shelley

Age: 39; Rank: 1st Lieutenant; Branch: Army; Specialty: Engineer; Nationality: Britian; Weight: 88

Attributes

Strength _____ 9
 Agility _____ 11
 Constitution _____ 15
 Stature _____ 12
 Intelligence _____ 16
 Education _____ 18
 Coolness Under Fire _____ 3
 Rads _____ 6
 Load _____ 33
 Throw Range _____ 18
 Body Combat Damage _____ 4

Skill Level

French _____ 30
 English _____ 80
 Body Combat _____ 35
 Combat Rifleman _____ 70
 Pistol _____ 30
 Heavy Weapons _____ 25
 Large Cal Gun _____ 20
 Hunting Bow _____ 20
 Melee Combat _____ 40
 Chemistry _____ 75
 Computer _____ 65
 Electronics _____ 70
 Forage _____ 30
 Geology _____ 40
 Wheeled Vehicle _____ 30

Hit Capacity

Head _____ 15
 Chest _____ 36
 L. Arm _____ 27
 R. Arm _____ 27
 Abdomen _____ 27
 L. Leg _____ 27
 R. Leg _____ 27

Equipment

Shotgun
 Knife
 2 km Hand Radio
 Electrical Repair Kit
 Electronic Repair Kit
 Binoculars
 Kevlar Flak Jacket
 Rucksack
 Sleeping Bag
 Frag Grenades, 5
 Flashlight
 4 Man Tent

"Doc" Shannon Webbley

Age: 31; Rank: 1st Lieutenant; Branch: Army Reserve; Specialty: Medical; Nationality: USA; Weight: 76

Attributes

Strength _____ 12
 Agility _____ 16
 Constitution _____ 10
 Stature _____ 11
 Intelligence _____ 9
 Education _____ 7
 Coolness Under Fire _____ 4
 Rads _____ 23
 Load _____ 39
 Throw Range _____ 24
 Body Combat Damage _____ 5

Skill Level

English _____ 80
 Body Combat _____ 30
 Combat Rifleman _____ 45
 Pistol _____ 40
 Heavy Weapons _____ 25
 Large Cal Gun _____ 20
 Hunting Bow _____ 20
 Melee Combat _____ 30
 Biology _____ 55
 Computer _____ 30
 Forage _____ 30
 Medical _____ 85
 Swimming _____ 45
 Wheeled Vehicle _____ 45

Hit Capacity

Head _____ 10
 Chest _____ 31
 L. Arm _____ 19
 R. Arm _____ 19
 Abdomen _____ 19
 L. Leg _____ 19
 R. Leg _____ 19

Equipment

M16 Assault Rifle
 Knife
 Flashlight
 Doctor's Medical Kit
 Surgical Instruments
 Antibiotic, Liquid
 Anesthetic, Local
 Plasma
 Kevlar Flak Jacket
 Rucksack
 Sleeping Bag
 1 Dozen Assorted
 S.F. Books

"Greaser" Danny Quesenta



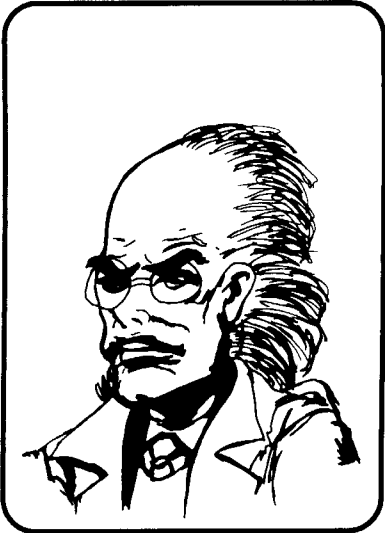
"Greaser" Danny Quesenta is a whiz with the vehicles. His skill has kept them going long after the warranties expired. Personality-wise he has much less going for him. Greaser has an artificially inflated ego and an immense inferiority complex that won't let him acknowledge any personal shortcomings. He is also extremely jealous of the Doc, Shannon Webbley, who would gladly administer a full frontal lobotomy to young Danny if only the group could find another qualified mechanic.

In combat he uses a nifty M16 assault rifle at skill (10). Treat it like a semi-auto slug thrower (7P).

Important Skills:

Assault Rifle (10)
Autocar Maintenance (15)
Autocar Operation (9)
Fix broken stuff (13)
Bootlicking (8)
Con (13)
Knife (7)
Grenade (10)
Spurious Logic (9)
Scrounge for things (14)
Survival (6)

Lt. Joe "Einstein" Shelley



Lieutenant Joe "Einstein" Shelley is well skilled in the engineering sciences. He has already saved the group from crossing over a few bad bridges. He is a bit older than the rest, balding, and a fairly good shot. Einstein worked with the British Engineering corps before it all hit the fan. Later he joined up with Mousy Duboise and Budweiser to make the trip over from Europe.

Einstein is subdued, calm in all circumstances. If you can manage it, he speaks with one of those stiff-lipped British accents which the Troubleshooters should find both annoying and difficult to understand.

He uses a combat shotgun (9P, no damage to a target further than 30 feet away) at skill (14).

Important Skills:

Shotgun (14)
Chemical Engineering (12)
Electronic (11)
Mechanical (16)
Data Analysis (13)
Data Search (12)
Computer Programming (10)
Computer Security (7)
Survival (5)
Operate Autocar (6)

"Doc" Shannon Webbley



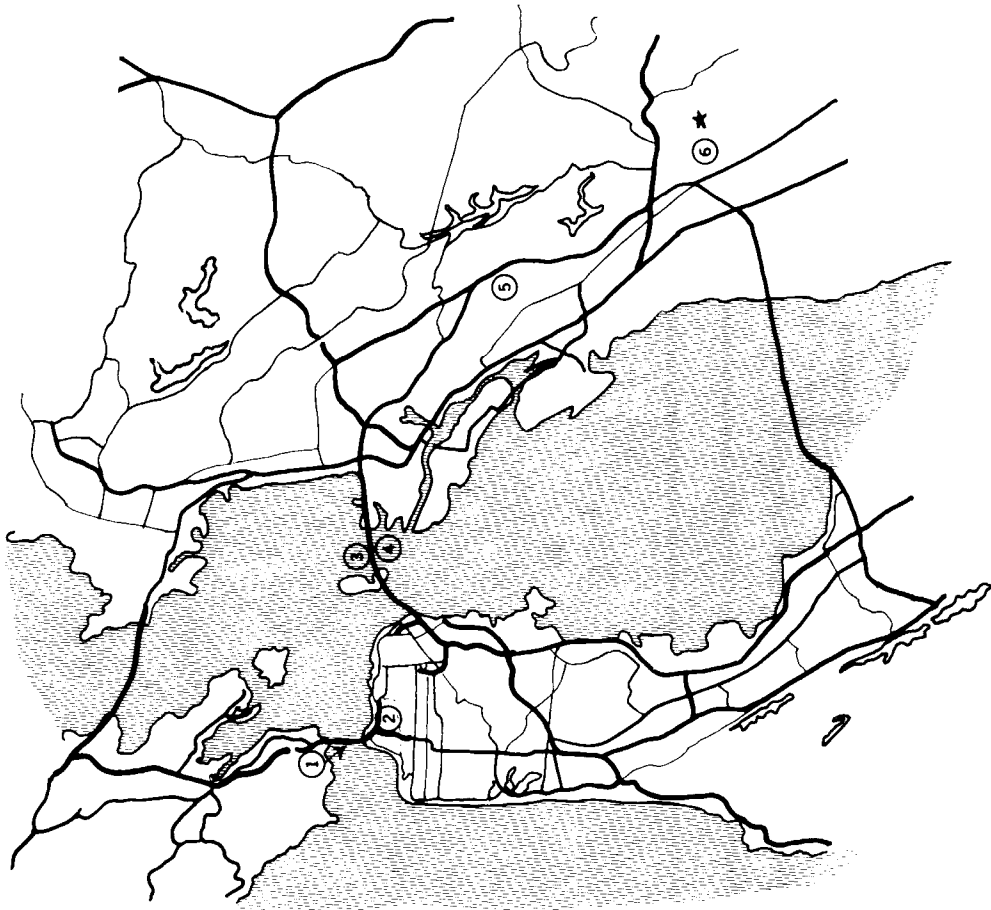
"Doc" Shannon Webbley earned her degree in medicine at Stanford. She signed up for the reserves in California, serving as a doctor when they called her up for the war. Her unit saw some action in Texas before most of it was wiped out by the Soviet military. She fled back to California, where this group let her join up after she demonstrated her medical skills. She's made friendly arrangements with Chief Twofoot, who keeps Quesenta away from her. Lobotomy jokes aside, her profession has made her a caring person.

The Doc is an avid science fiction reader. Of all the mercs, she has the least difficulty dealing with *Vulture Warriors from Dimension X*, and other such oddities the Troubleshooters are apt to mention.

She shoots an M16 (7P) when she needs to, at skill (9)

Important Skills:

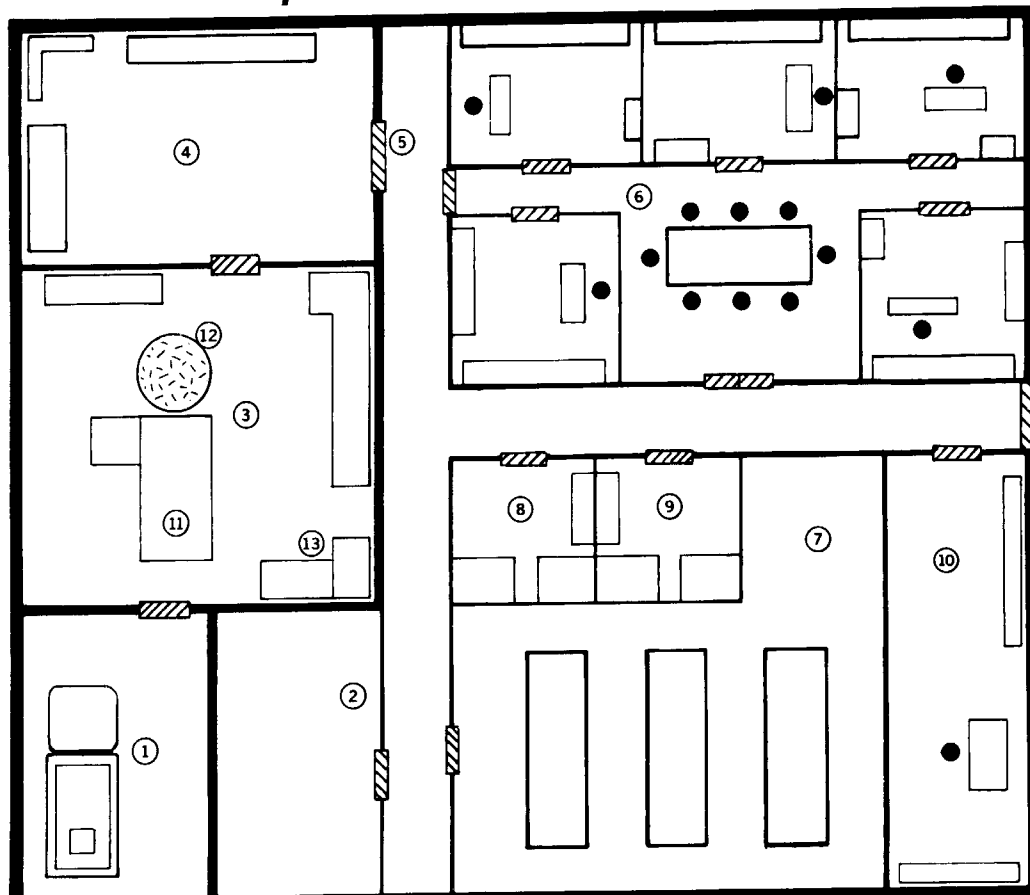
M16 (9)
Fast Talk (7)
Psychescan (11)
Biochemical Therapy (8)
Medical (17)
Biosciences (11)
Survival (5)
Computer Programming (6).



San Francisco Bay Overall Map

- Key**
- 1. Golden Gate Bridge
 - 2. Presidio
 - 3. Tunnel
 - 4. Bridge
 - 5. Arrival Point
 - 6. Author's Apartment

AI Lab Complex

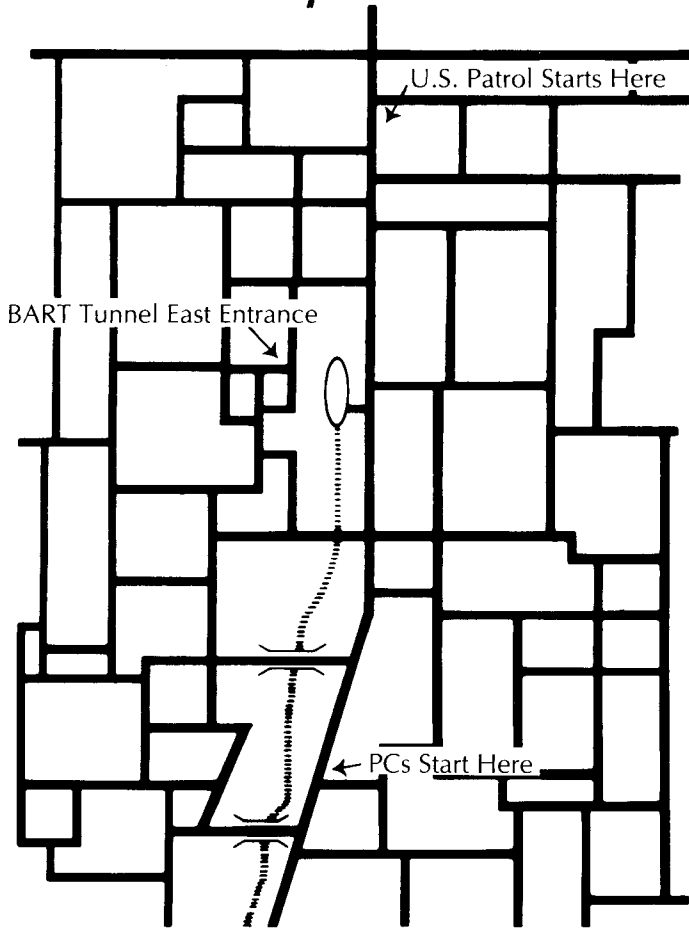


Key

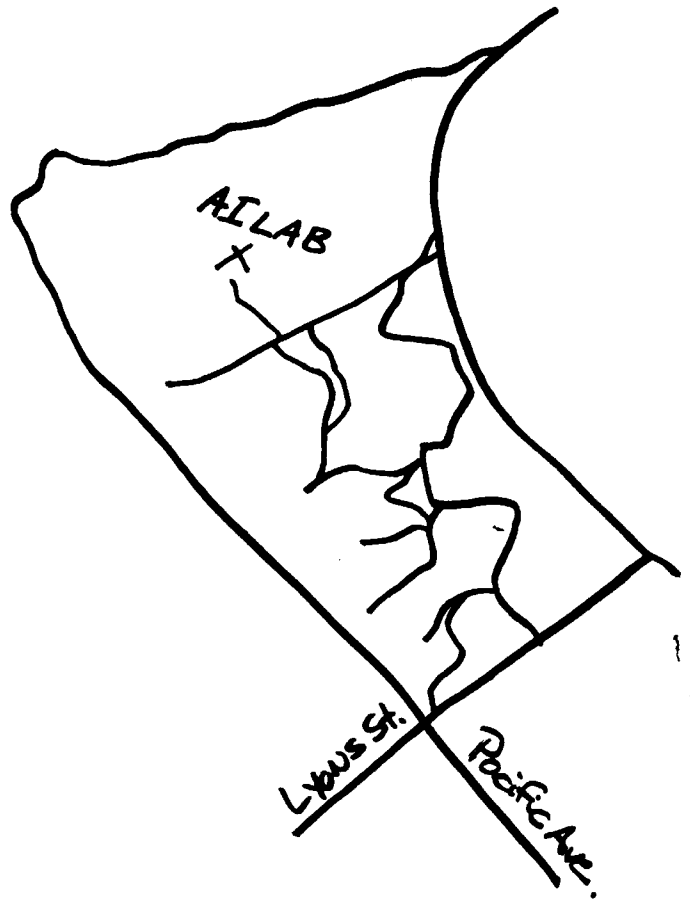
- 1. Power Plant
- 2. Robot Storage Closet
- 3. Alpha 9000 Computer Environment Room
- 4. Artificial Intelligence Workshop
- 5. Titanium Door
- 6. Office Cubicles
- 7. Robot Lab
- 8. Men's Room
- 9. Women's Room
- 10. Dr. Peabody's Office
- 11. Alpha 9000
- 12. Engramatic Storage Tank
- 13. Air Conditioners

10 feet

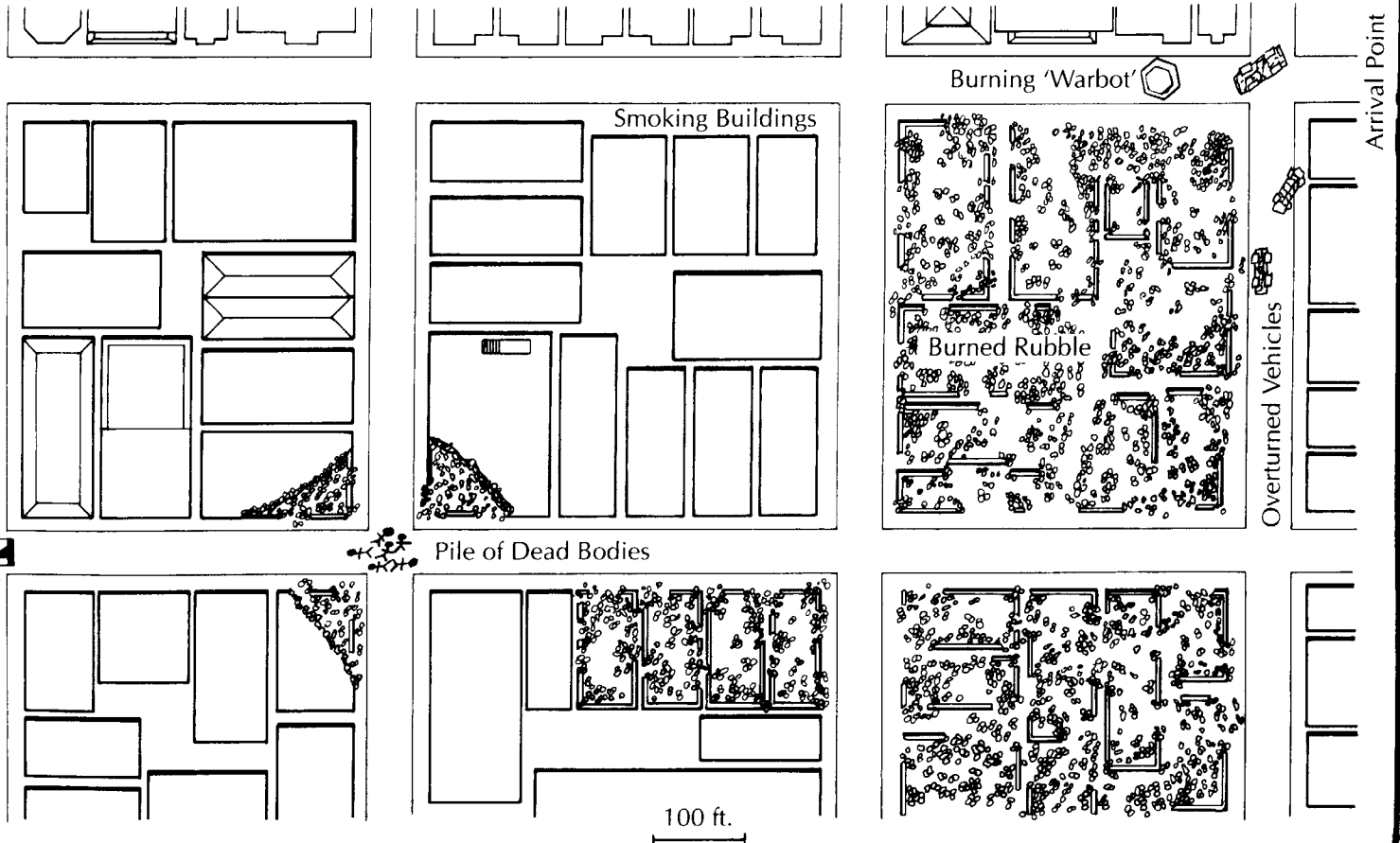
Chase Scene Map



Hand-drawn Map of Presidio



Episode One Map



**JCN Corporation
Security Pass**



Project: Alpha 9000
Clearance: Staff Access,
A9, A1, T-Rex

Name: Col. P. Richardson
Service: U.S. Army
Height: 5'11"
Weight: 170
Hair: Brown
Eyes: Green



Robot Design Engineer
Project Security Specialist



Dr. Blackthorn,
Thanks for the report on re-programming Alpha's engramatic memory storage unit. I'd like to begin work on it right away.

The military tells me they will want to move us to a safer location soon. I think it won't be for another month, but it could be as soon as a week. I'd like to eliminate Alpha's paranoia before then, if at all possible.

Dr. Peabody.

Page -1-

Wetware Reprogramming Summary

Dr. Peabody,

Here's that report you wanted on the Alpha 9000 engramatic memory editing problem. We believe we have developed a way to reduce the Alpha 9000's unreasoning paranoia.

In summary the problem is as follows: The wetware of the engramatic storage unit is inherently difficult to reprogram, due to the manner of chemical storage used. Its memories are stored in extremely long chemical chains. These chains combine and recombine with other compatible memories to form memory associations. From time to time memory elements clone themselves and drop off to affect other molecules, eventually interacting and changing nearly all the memories to reflect their own biases.

Our solution for changing memories is relatively simple. We create an "editor" chemical that has the opposite effect of the base memory, eradicating its occurrences throughout the engramatic wetware's memory base.

At the same time we must talk to the Alpha 9000 to prevent software programs developed from the targeted memory from re-infecting the wetware. Otherwise the software and wetware will conflict, developing a schizophrenic war for ideological dominance within the Alpha 9000.

My experiments have been successful on a smaller scale, and I am eager to begin the project on the Alpha 9000 itself.

Sincerely,

Dr. Blackthorn

Mission Briefings
RED ALERT
:Reference T2K/1A
:Team LB22

*****RED ALERT!*****

:ATTENTION TROUBLESHOOTERS! THE CONSORTIUM OF HIGH PROGRAMMERS (C.O.P.) HAS SELECTED YOU FOR A GLORIOUS TOP SECRET MISSION OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE. IT WILL PAY WELL, ESPECIALLY IF YOU SURVIVE.

:PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO THE YEAR 2000. UPON ARRIVAL, LOCATE SECRET ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPUTER LABORATORY IN PRESIDIO COMPLEX. GAIN ENTRANCE TO THE ALPHA 9000 COMPUTER ROOM. DO NOT DAMAGE THE ALPHA 9000 COMPUTER. AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

:AVOID CONTACT WITH BOTH AMERICAN AND SOVIET MILITARY UNITS.

:TRUST NO ONE! KEEP YOUR LASER HANDY!

:DON'T DRINK THE WATER.

Mission Briefings
RED ALERT
:Reference T2K/4A
:Team LB22

*****RED ALERT!*****

:SECURE THE ALPHA 9000 COMPUTER AND SURROUNDING AREA. THEN SUMMON THE HIGH PROGRAMMER CINDY-U-BAK.

:UPON HER ARRIVAL ASSIST HIGH PROGRAMMER CINDY-U-BAK IN REPROGRAMMING THE PROTO-COMPUTER.

:MAINTAIN SECURITY OF THE COMPLEX AT ALL TIMES.

:YOU WILL BE RETURNED TO ALPHA COMPLEX UPON THE COMPLETION OF YOUR MISSION.

:TRUST NO ONE! KEEP YOUR LASER HANDY!

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Outline of proposed engramatic wetware reprogramming procedure:

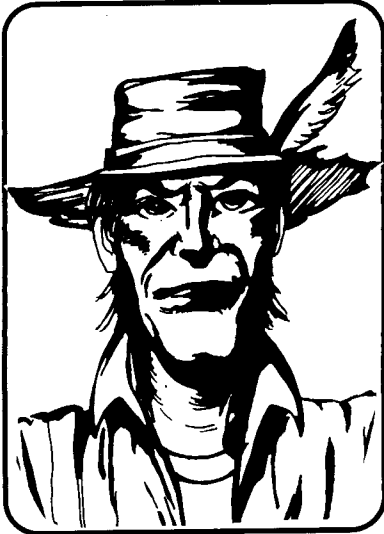
- 1) Draw a memory sample from engramatic memory storage unit.
- 2) Put memory sample into analyzer unit and analyze paranoia-related memory chains to determine chemical editors. Synthesize chemical editors.
- 3) Search the regular software for paranoia supporting programs.
- 4) Introduce chemical editors to engramatic storage tank.
- 5) Simultaneously with step 4, talk the Alpha 9000 out of its unreasoning paranoia so that it is able to eliminate its own paranoid software.

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Top Secret: Alpha 9000 Computer Room Access Procedures
Easy Reference Flowchart

- 1: State name into panel at right side of door
- 2: Only Alpha Project personnel are authorized for access.
- 3: Proper access authorization can be gained through the project leader's computer terminal.
- 4: The Alpha 9000 computer room cannot be entered during a security alert.

"Chief" Billy Twofoot



"Chief" Billy Twofoot is of native American Indian stock, only bigger. He is the scout of the group. He's responsible for keeping a watch for hostiles, helping the tenderfoots survive outdoors, and tracking when needed. Instead of sneaking up on the enemy, Twofoot claims he just walks up and scares them away. He stands about six foot four, with a beer barrel chest and thick, tree trunk legs.

Billy Twofoot has an outgoing, friendly personality — until somebody tees him off. Then it's a one-way ride to oblivion. The Chief never served in the military. He grew up on a ranch in California, where he learned to shoot and to survive in the wild. In combat he chooses between an HL-69 hand-held grenade launcher (think "cone rifle") with HE, napalm, flare, and HEAT shells and an M16 assault rifle (7P)

Important Skills:

Cone Rifle (14)
M16 (16)
Interrogation (8)
Intimidation (12)
Survival (16)
Knife (13)
Grenade (14)
Operate Autocar (12)
Stealth (13)

Cpt. Pierce Duboise



Captain "Mousy" Pierce Duboise was an officer in the French military until just recently. Now he leads this jolly band of mercenaries. He's a little guy, but his fierce, intense personality makes him seem larger than he is. His quick wit has saved the group from death more than once.

The men call him "mousy" because of his size, and because it's fun to trick a newcomer into calling him mousy to his face. When he's within earshot they just call him Captain. He has a slight French accent (again, just enough to annoy ze Troobelshooters).

He uses an M16 assault rifle (7P). He also has a 9mm pistol (slugthrower 5P).

Important Skills:

M16 (13)
9mm Pistol (8)
Fast Talk (15)
Interrogation (8)
Motivation (17)
Oratory (13)
Operate Autocar (7)
Survival (9)

Bud "Weiser" Drake



Bud "Weiser" Drake. When he isn't drunk, Weiser is the best shot in the outfit. Unfortunately for the group, this isn't very often. He can drive like a banshee, too, drunk or sober (but he can stay on the road when he's sober). Weiser oversees the still that brews alcohol for the engines. He makes grain alcohol, not wood, so that he can share it with the vehicles.

Weiser hails from Texas. He's mighty peeved that the Mexicans are occupying portions of Lone Star soil.

Like any good 'ol boy, Bud shoots an M249 automatic rifle from the hip (auto slug thrower with damage 9P). When a little more tact is called for, he brings out his M40 varmint rifle for sharp shooting duty (single shot slug thrower 7P).

Important Skills:

Automatic Rifle (13)
M40 (17)
Make Moonshine (9)
Demolitions (12)
Grenade (8)
Operate Autocar (16)
Bribery (7)
Stealth (10)
Survival (9)

"Chief" Billy Twofoot

Age: 29; Rank: Civilian; Branch: None; Nationality: USA; Weight: 116

Attributes

Strength _____ 16
Agility _____ 12
Constitution _____ 18
Stature _____ 19
Intelligence _____ 12
Education _____ 12
Coolness Under Fire _____ 2
Rads _____ 20
Load _____ 50
Throw Range _____ 32
Body Combat Damage _____ 11

Skill Level

English _____ 60
Body Combat _____ 65
Combat Rifleman _____ 80
Pistol _____ 45
Heavy Weapons _____ 65
Large Cal Gun _____ 55
Hunting Bow _____ 50
Melee Combat _____ 65
Fishing _____ 45
Forage _____ 80
Interrogation _____ 40
Motorcycle _____ 60
Recon _____ 70
Thrown Weapon _____ 70
Wheeled Vehicle _____ 60

Hit Capacity

Head _____ 18
Chest _____ 53
L. Arm _____ 37
R. Arm _____ 37
Abdomen _____ 37
L. Leg _____ 37
R. Leg _____ 37

Equipment

M16 Assault Rifle
Knife
HL-69
Binoculars
2 km Hand Radio
Gas Mask
Personal Medical Kit
Kevlar Flak Jacket
Rucksack
Sleeping Bag
Flashlight
4-Man Tent

"Mousey" Pierce Duboise

Age: 42; Rank: Captain; Branch: Army; Specialty: Intelligence; Nationality: French; Weight: 80

Attributes

Strength _____ 14
Agility _____ 17
Constitution _____ 15
Stature _____ 10
Intelligence _____ 15
Education _____ 16
Coolness Under Fire _____ 2
Rads _____ 20
Load _____ 43
Throw Range _____ 28
Body Combat Damage _____ 5

Skill Level

French _____ 85
English _____ 55
Body Combat _____ 45
Combat Rifleman _____ 65
Pistol _____ 40
Heavy Weapons _____ 30
Large Cal Gun _____ 25
Hunting Bow _____ 20
Combat Engineer _____ 75
Forage _____ 80
Instruction _____ 55
Interrogation _____ 40
Meteorology _____ 45
Parachute _____ 65
Wheeled Vehicle _____ 35

Hit Capacity

Head _____ 15
Chest _____ 39
L. Arm _____ 25
R. Arm _____ 25
Abdomen _____ 25
L. Leg _____ 25
R. Leg _____ 25

Equipment

M16 Assault Rifle
Knife
Basic Tool Kit
9mm Pistol
2 km Hand Radio
Binoculars
Kevlar Flak Jacket
Rucksack
Sleeping Bag
Flashlight
Plastic Explosive

Bud "Weiser" Drake

Age: 21; Rank: Spec 4; Branch: Army; Specialty: Infantryman; Nationality: USA; Weight: 88

Attributes

Strength _____ 12
Agility _____ 16
Constitution _____ 17
Stature _____ 12
Intelligence _____ 10
Education _____ 12
Coolness Under Fire _____ 1
Rads _____ 27
Load _____ 41
Throw Range _____ 24
Body Combat Damage _____ 7

Skill Level

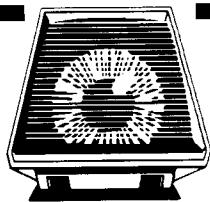
English _____ 75
Body Combat _____ 55
Combat Rifleman _____ 75
Pistol _____ 40
Heavy Weapons _____ 70
Large Cal Gun _____ 65
Hunting Bow _____ 35
Moonshine _____ 45
Combat Engineer _____ 60
Forage _____ 45
Motorcycle _____ 55
Recon _____ 50
Thrown Weapon _____ 40
Wheeled Vehicle _____ 80

Hit Capacity

Head _____ 17
Chest _____ 41
L. Arm _____ 29
R. Arm _____ 29
Abdomen _____ 29
L. Leg _____ 29
R. Leg _____ 29

Equipment

M16 Assault Rifle
M249 Auto Rifle
Knife
Starlight Scope
2 km Hand Radio
Flashlight
Kevlar Flak Jacket
Rucksack
Sleeping Bag



Episode Three: Alpha Project

Synopsis

The Troubleshooters wreck some fancy equipment. After a while they figure out how to get into the Alpha 9000 computer room so they can wreck some even fancier equipment.

Background on Alpha Project

In the late 20th century a brilliant scientist, Dr. Mendelson, made ground-breaking achievements in the science of artificial intelligence. He used his own thought patterns to develop the first truly self-aware and self-modifying computer, the Alpha 9000.

The US military was greatly interested in the integration of the Alpha 9000 project into its own super-soldier robotics program. After Dr. Mendelson's death, they moved Dr. Peabody, his leading student, to their top secret laboratory at the Presidio. They made him the head of Alpha Project with a nearly unlimited budget.

World War III put an end to Dr. Peabody and his research. Before he was killed in the fighting, Dr. Peabody activated the project's self defense program; since that time the security system has been set to let only Alpha Project scientists into the room with the Alpha 9000 Computer. To gain access, the Troubleshooters must convince the security system that they are the successors of the Alpha Project scientists.

In the meantime, the laboratory is maintained and defended by an army of experimental robots while the Alpha 9000 computer continues to oversee the project's operations.

Encounter One: Don't Look Behind You

Let's give the Troubleshooters a little sense of urgency. Before they get to the AI lab, have Chief Twofoot melt off into the shadows. He's going back to see if they are still being followed by the U.S. patrol.

Alert Troubleshooters may notice that he disappears for a short while. After a dramatically appropriate interlude, Chief returns. He tells them that the patrol is on their trail and will catch up with them soon, in a couple of hours at the most. He has also noticed signs of that Soviet unit they met

earlier; they are in the area, but he is not sure where.

They don't know, but we do. The Soviets came across the bay in their own amphibious vehicles. They are currently at the far end of the Presidio, searching for the Alpha Project laboratory. When they hear the soon-to-occur skirmish with the U.S. patrol, they rush over just in time to draw off the attackers and let the PCs into the lab.

Encounter Two: The Presidio

Read this bit aloud as they near the Presidio:

Ahead you can see the green expanse of the Presidio, partially obscured by thick clouds of fog rolling in from the waters beyond. The closer you get, the deeper into the mist you penetrate, until you are walking through a milky haze lit by a diffuse, silvery glow. It's a little like being on Sleepy-Sleepy, without the shakes or anxiety attacks.

Through the muffling fog you can hear the sounds of your compatriots, and other sounds, murky and less distinct. Abruptly through the murk you distinguish the line of a broken security fence, marking the transition into the wooded Presidio grounds.

This is as far as the guides can knowledgeably go — none of them has ever been within the Presidio. The group is now in the

Running Twilight: 2000

If you are using the mercenaries as PCs, give Chief Twofoot a chance at an average Recon roll. If he makes it, tell him he sees the glint of the reflected sun far off in the distance. From the look of it, it could be one of the patrols on their trail.

Behind the PC group are a number of buildings and a water tower which could serve as a vantage point. If he climbs to get a better look, give him another Recon roll, then tell him it's the U.S. patrol, and they're at most two hours away.

Give him one more roll, and if he makes it tell him he also sees evidence of the Soviet patrol's passing, but from their tracks they seem to be heading the wrong way.

area shown on the hand-drawn map given to them by the geriatric hippies. By looking around for street signs, they can figure out where they are in relation to the AI labs.

They have entered the Presidio at the lower right hand corner of the map, where Presidio Boulevard and Pacific Avenue meet. (Or it can be wherever you please if the Troubleshooters have been off mucking about on their own instead of letting you yank them along by their noses.)

The Presidio covers a large amount of ground. It is roughly (very roughly) rectangular in shape, two miles wide and about a mile across. The Presidio was never extensively built up, much of it being wooded hills and grassy golf course.

Encounter Three: Another Pair O' Ducks

If there is one thing that universally impresses first time visitors to San Francisco, it's the fog. The summer fog blows in thick off the ocean, obscuring the sun and dropping coastal temperatures by ten to fifteen degrees. For the Troubleshooters, the fog is greatly disorienting, since it's impossible to tell cardinal directions (not that they were too good at it to start with), although their mercenary buddies can still use their compasses.

It's also disorienting for the consortium of High Programmers, who have intermittently been keeping tabs on the team's progress through the Transdimensional Auditorons. They lose track of the Troubleshooters shortly after they disappear into the mysterious white vapor.

Believing a Communist trick is afoot, and suspecting the Troubleshooters may have been terminated by some kind of insidious trap, the Consortium decides to transfer a replacement set of Troubleshooters to their last known location. If the originals are still alive, then this affords a great excuse to test time paradox theory.

When the premature replacements arrive via Collapsatron, the originals experience a peculiar sort of uncomfortable sensation. It feels like their frontal lobes are beginning to vibrate against the backs of their eyeballs. Tell them:

You each get this strange, ominous feeling. It's like this fog separates you from the material world, like you were fading away into it.

A few dozen yards before you, through the billowing mist, you can see the vague outlines of six figures. The figures grow more distinct as a gust blows the fog away from between you. You've got that funny feeling in the pit of your stomachs again ...

Yes, it's the six of you! As you were at the beginning of the mission, but these aren't clones! They're not dead former selves, either — they're every bit as alive as you, maybe more so. And they smell better!

Have the players roll moxies. The successful ones notice that they (the original Troubleshooters) are fading like a bad

Tijuana paint job. When they look around they can see that their fellow teammates are fading too. They can practically see through each other, and without help from the R&D Priests!

The mercenaries are visibly stunned by their allies' impractical departure. If the PCs do nothing, the original team fades completely away in 60 seconds, replaced by the new team. The Troubleshooters can save themselves by blowing away their replacements, or by talking them into doing away with themselves.

Assign each player a Troubleshooter to play (other than his own) from the replace-

ment group and let them argue among themselves about who should stay and who should go. Each player plays two Troubleshooters, one from each team. If the replacement team talks the original team into disposing of themselves, or if they don't resolve the paradox in time and the original team fades away, then the players keep playing their reassigned characters for the rest of the game — redistribute the character sheets. If they toast all the replacements, then things continue as before.

There is no great penalty for letting themselves be replaced, since it has been going

Artificial Stupidity

Artificial intelligence was not easy to develop. No matter how much computational power was packed into a computer, it still couldn't think like a human — it couldn't make associative connections. Soon, researchers realized that the only way of allowing a computer to spontaneously associate ideas was to make it artificially stupid. This would facilitate the random factor present in human brain engrams.

After studying the thought processes of such notable nincompoops as four-term President Quan Dale (now known as the "Holocaust President"), the researchers developed artificially stupid robots to test their hypothesis. The robots were given simple maintenance tasks around the project grounds so that the scientists could continue to study their long-term adaptation to new tasks.

The upshot is that you've got some genuinely swell (and none-too-bright) robots tooling around the grounds with which to harass the Troubleshooters. They have only rudimentary bot brains that cannot be easily reasoned with or spuriously logicked.

All the robots are battery powered. They can run around for twelve hours, after which they must plug into an electric socket for an hour to recharge.

Here is a list of the robots and their particulars:

Automatic Mowers (three): These are based on the old fully-manual pushmowers that some of us fondly remember from our youth. To this highly-efficient machine the scientists added an electric pushing engine and an artificially stupid computerized brain. They experimented with teaching it the relatively simple, yet still highly complex, task of lawn maintenance.

In the time they have been left alone, the mowers have developed a strong sense of territoriality; they mulch birds and slow squirrels and other unfortunate interlopers that dare to blemish the perfectly manicured lawns.

Game Stuff

Weapon: Mowing blades (9I) skill 9

Armor: none

Tactics: Manicure the lawn into a perfect, smooth green surface. Protect the lawn from damage by mowing over anything that steps upon it. Prowl along the edge of the sidewalk when people are on it.

Twilight: 2000 stats: Treat the mower as using a knife with skill 45. For stats, just pretend it is an experienced character.

Gardener Bots (two): The gardener bots trim the bushes and walkways. They are at war with the mower bots, which makes it very difficult for them to cross the lawn to get to the bushes. They have developed a truce of sorts, in which one gardener bot remains in the bushes, and the other maintains the walkway.

The gardeners are small, squat platforms fitted with electric-powered tractor treads. They sport electric pruning sheers, brooms, rakes, and sidewalk edgers. They are fitted with a slightly later model bot brain, equally stupid but in a more profound way. They tend to free-associate, trying to prune anything with branch-like appendages. You know — Troubleshooters.

Game Stuff

Weapons: electric pruning sheers (10I) skill 10.

Sidewalk Edgers (4I) skill 8 (the bot can only use this to trim toes, unless the Troubleshooter complies by lying on the ground).

Armor: The metal brain case gives it a little (P1) protection.

Tactics: One hides in the bushes, the other on the sidewalk near the door. Mistake humans for mobile trees. Try to prune their limbs back.

Twilight: 2000 stats: The sheers are knives at skill 50. Edgers are knives at skill 40 that always do aimed attacks at

the legs. The bot has metal armor giving it (AC 5) in the "head" and "chest."

Janitor Robot (two): The janitor robots are responsible for maintaining the interior of the complex. They look like a self-mobile mop and bucket rolling around on shopping-cart wheels. The computerized brain is encased within the central column, which is topped with dual video cameras. The robots' attachments are a bucket of warm sudsy water, a mop, and a floor waxer/buffer.

The janitor robots are very protective of freshly mopped floors. They use their stiff-bristled buffing attachment to drive trespassers away. And if you've ever been buffed, you know this is not a pleasant experience.

Game Stuff

Weapons: Floor buffer (2I) skill 7

Armor: The metal brain case is worth (P1) protection.

Tactics: Mop the floor as the Troubleshooters arrive. Defend the wet floor until it dries (15 minutes), then wax and defend it for 30 more minutes.

Twilight: 2000 stats: Treat the janitor bot as an *Experienced* character with a 35 skill with a floor buffer (1D6+10 damage). The bot has metal armor giving it (AC 5) in the "head" and "chest."

General Maintenance Robot

(one): The general maintenance bot was one of the last developed at this laboratory. Its artificial stupidity is held in greater check, allowing it to outsmart most of the other robots and in some cases letting it come up with some comparatively good ideas.

It repairs the fence (from the outside), maintains the other robots, and performs simple maintenance repairs within the complex. This robot greatly resents attempts to destroy any of its charges.

The maintenance bot is built on a slender pole with many multi-hinged limbs sporting a selection of common

on for the whole adventure (though the mercenaries might react badly to a "brand new group," and you can always change an important detail). The map and other items the troubleshooters picked up in this mission stay here; they weren't duplicated so you don't need to make them disappear.

Encounter Four: The Security Fringe

Keep the weather foggy as the Troubleshooters approach the Alpha Project laboratory. You can see on the Players' map where the compound is within the

Presidio. Once the Troubleshooters get to the outer fence and the well-manicured lawn it protects, have them roll their Biological Engineering or Old Reckoning Cultures skills.

Tell the successful Troubleshooters that unlike the preferable astro-turf of Alpha Complex, it appears that primitive grass required frequent maintenance to attain this well-groomed appearance. Other signs of habitation are the recently mended security fence, and the neatly trimmed bushes and hedges inside. Somebody, or something, has been cleaning up here. (Some-

thing, actually. The robots, remember?)

If they crash through the fence, refer to the Security Perimeter portion of the Alpha Project Revealed section below to see what troubles are in store.

The Troubleshooters and their local Mercenary buddies have about an hour (depending on dramatic necessity, and your own attention span) before the US patrol catches up with them. Let them run wild in the meantime. You can use the map and the descriptions of the rooms to keep track of what they are up to.

tools. It walks about on a steady tripod base. On top of the pole are two video cameras.

Game Stuff

Weapons: Assorted tools (4I) skill 8
Welding torch (9F) skill 13
Power drill (9AP) skill 11

Armor: (P1) for general all-around good design.

Tactics: Maintain other robots. Defend other robots by sneaking up behind the trespassers and drilling them between the shoulder blades. If still functional, repair damaged robots.

Twilight: 2000 stats: Treat the maintenance bot as an *Experienced* character with the skills: tools 40, welding torch 65, power drill 55. Tools do 1D6+10 damage. The torch does 3D6 damage, but has a range of only one meter. The drill does 2D6 damage.

The bot has metal armor giving it (AC 5) in the "head" and "chest."

Security Robots (five): The military supported Alpha Project because of its keen desire for a super-soldier robot. One of the researchers' first successes were these security robots.

In the absence of researchers to correct aberrant behavior, the security robots have developed elaborately moronic social skills. They slap, poke, and make "woob woob" noises, acting like a bunch of *stooges*.

For normal security work, the robots have been armed with tazer guns. The 9mm pistols were last minute add-ons which they rarely use except for serious infractions. The security robots are shaped something like a stubby inverted trash can on wheels, with the tazer barrel and pistol mounted on ball pivots.

They are fitted with primitive voice synthesis hardware, which allows them to carry on bizarre conversations about a variety of security-related topics, most of which result in somebody being shot.

Game Stuff

Weapon: Tazer gun (8E) skill 13. Any effect greater than stun is reduced to a stun. Characters are stunned for a die minus their stamina worth of minutes (minimum of one).

9mm gun (slug thrower — 7P) skill 9.

Armor: protective plating provides (I3&P3) protection.

Tactics: Emerge from storage closet when alert begins. Prowl hallways looking for trespassers. Talk funny and act strange. Stun trespassers with tazer, poke them in the eyes, slap them and drag them out the gate. Shoot troublesome trespassers with slug thrower.

Twilight: 2000 stats: Treat the security bots as *Experienced* characters with a skill 65 with the tazers and skill 45 with the 9mm pistol. The tazer works like a firearm with a 50 foot range. Roll 3D6 damage. After penetrating armor, instead of applying damage, stun the character for minutes equaling the remaining points of damage. While stunned a character is incapable of action.

The armor plating gives the bots (AC 10) armor on all parts.

Experimental Combots (two - kinda): If the Troubleshooters bother to assemble the combots in the robotics lab, they get a couple of way-cool combat allies that will be pretty handy later on.

The humanoid shaped combat chassis are already completed. All the Troubleshooter need to do is attach selected weapon systems and armor plating. A minor re-routing of the bot brain is also called for if they don't want the combots to respond to the security alert and start blasting at them the moment they are switched on.

Take a look at the Robotics Lab section for details on the weapon and armor parts laying around, and information on skill rolls and such for finishing up the combots.

Game Stuff

Weapons: Slugthrower (7P), skill equals two-thirds the best Robot Maintenance skill in the repair group. The designers may attach their own or other weapons if they wish, all at the same skill level.

Armor: Up to (All2) or (All3), depending on how much trouble the PCs go through in putting together good armor.

Tactics: If the alert is on and security circuit is intact, attack trespassers. Otherwise follow directions of designers. Pick up the same bizarre mannerisms of the security bots.

Twilight: 2000 stats: Treat the combots as *Veteran* characters with a 65 skill with the attached M16 rifles. There is enough material in the lab to give them armor (AC 15) all over.

Use this hit location table to shoot the bots. Destroying the computer, power source, or mid-section leaves the bot inoperable. Destroying a manipulator arm incapacitates a single weapon. A drive train incapacitation makes the bot immobile, but it can still use its weapons. You can use the hit points listed in the chart for all of the robots.

Die	Location	Hit Points
1	Computer	15
2	Manipulator arm	25
3	Manipulator arm	25
4	Manipulator arm	15
5-6	Upper midsection	35
7-8	Lower midsection	30
9	Power source	25
10	Drive train	25

Encounters Five through a dozen or so: Alpha Project Revealed

This section details the areas of Alpha Project that the Troubleshooters can get to without actually going through the door into the Alpha 9000 computer room. This first part is the pre-Collapsatron Mega-Disaster part.

In it the Troubleshooters spend their time running around smashing robots and tinkering with expensive scientific equipment. They should be looking for the Alpha 9000 computer room, and then trying to get into it. Right before they get the computer room door open, the High Programmers pop in for an unannounced through-the-Collapsatron briefing and temporary disaster (Episode Four).

Use these location descriptions to keep track of what the Troubleshooters are up to. Feed them the right clues to get the computer room door open, but don't let them in yet.

Perimeter Parameters: You can see the outer fence line marked on the Alpha Project map. The perimeter fence runs around the entire laboratory, broken only by a gate on Project Road. The fence is wired with detectors, which trigger alarms and spotlights when someone tries to climb it or break through.

The PCs may get an unaccustomed attack of clear reasoning and try to enter through the gate. When they get there they can read the large sign on it:

**JCN CORPORATION PROPERTY
ALPHA PROJECT LABORATORY
Warning: High Security Area
Staff Only**

The gate is locked shut. It can be opened with either of the usual techniques: sustained firepower or a successful Security skill roll. Oh yeah, the Houd-I-NII automatic lockpick would work too.

Lining the walkway are numerous STAY OFF THE GRASS signs, which the Troubleshooters would be wise to heed. Stepping on the grass (an unavoidable necessity if they climb the fence) attracts the wrath of the lawnmower robots. Two of them come whizzing out of their little maintenance shed to drive the offenders off of the lawn.

Take a look at the "Artificial Stupidity" sidebar for greater descriptions of all the robots, including the lawnmowers. Read this bit aloud when the Troubleshooters first irk the mowers:

Bzzrreeek! Chopita, chopita, chopita. Close by in the dense fog you can hear the sounds of two electric engines sparking to life. The sounds draw nearer to you from two directions, making a strange slicing

noise as they advance. Suddenly they are upon you — two vicious bots of deadly barbaric design!

The fog lets the mowers get close enough to try chomping on a Troubleshooter before they are blasted to smithereens. Keep a third mowerbot in reserve lurking in the fog. It can be heard, but its exact location is difficult to determine — until somebody steps back onto the grass.

If the mowers do manage to chase the characters onto the sidewalk, they stop at the sidewalk's edge, where they prowl menacingly up to the building's entrance.

If the lawnmowers aren't sufficient to keep the grass clear, the water sprinklers spring to life to drench the trespassers. And don't try hiding in the bushes, because that's the gardening robot's domain. The other gardening robot is near the front door, busily trimming the grass along the sidewalk edge until it notices these new "mobile trees" in need of pruning.

When the Troubleshooters get to the front door they'll have to unlock it with a Security roll or blast it open, too. The automatic lockpick works here also.

Hallways: If the Troubleshooters politely pick the lock and walk directly down the sidewalk to the front door, they are confronted by a just-mopped floor and an overly protective janitor robot. This retentive robot tries to beat them back with its floor-scrubbing attachment when they step onto the floor.

The halls should make Troubleshooters nostalgic for the Alpha Complex of old (or years to come, if you think about it). Because of the high-security nature of the Alpha Project, the military installed a comforting (to the Troubleshooters) array of cameras and sonic sensors. The Alpha 9000 computer can use them to track the interlopers throughout the building.

The computer also has a nifty high-volume security alert alarm system, which works great for guiding unwanted U.S. and

Soviet patrols to the complex. To simulate this for your players, grab the loudest thing you can get your hands on. It could be an electric bull horn, a Freon-powered boat horn — even a whistle or rolled-up piece of paper if they're all you can find.

As soon as the group triggers the alarm, you should push the button, yell, blow, or whatever's appropriate. Intersperse a few "Security Alert"s and "Intruders In The Compound"s to simulate the warnings coming over the ceiling speakers.

Keep sounding the alarm at intervals until they get into Dr. Peabody's office and cancel the security alert at his terminal. If your neighbors in the next apartment have been particularly noisy lately you may want to play this part at night while they are sleeping. We'll give you some more pointers on what to do about your neighbors in some of the later group participation suggestions.

Once the intruders trigger the security alert (by either climbing the fence, blowing up the gate, stepping on the grass, or opening the front door) three security robots activate and begin patrolling the building for intruders. They patrol singly, entering all the rooms on the Troubleshooters' side of the locked Alpha 9000 computer room. So at any time, there are five security bots at five different locations. Every ten minutes, roll a die for each remaining security robot. Each result of 3 or below means that a security robot has found somebody.

At the far right end of the East-West hallway is a door with large red letters spelling out the sign:

**Alpha 9000 Computer Room
Authorized Personnel Only**

The first thing new visitors to the Alpha 9000 computer room notice is that the door leading into it is locked tight. This isn't some ordinary pushover door either, but a solid titanium steel contraption designed to keep troublemakers like the PCs out.

Neither they nor their mercenary sidekicks have the explosives necessary to blow the door open. Blowing a hole through the adjacent wall doesn't work either, because beneath the sanitary white exterior is a titanium barrier completely surrounding the sealed-off area.

To the right of the door is a red button and a small speaker. To get the door open, a character must say his name into the speaker so that the Alpha 9000 can match his voice patterns against those allowed in. The only people who can get the door open are those who used the terminal in Dr. Peabody's office to convince the Alpha 9000 that they are new project staff (see Dr. Peabody's office description for details on how).

Very Important Note: Don't let anybody through this door until you have run the



Just like the sun going down ...

Great Collapsatron Mega-Disaster in the next episode and then had the U.S. patrol attack.

Just 'cuz. That's why.

Dr. Peabody's Office: The letters on the door read "Dr Peabody. Alpha Project Leader." The Doctor's office is cluttered with open books and stacks of research notes. On the desk is a very (very) stale cup of dried coffee.

The janitor robots were trained to not disturb Peabody's stuff, so they have gently dusted the disorganized piles of notes, leaving everything just as it was for the doctor's return. If the Troubleshooters think to look through the notes for clues, they discover two things:

1) The Alpha 9000 computer was based on the engrams of a human brain — a specific brain in fact, belonging to one Dr Mendelson.

2) It was created 11 years ago in a small town called Dallas, Pennsylvania.

Peabody's wall shelf contains many books on state-of-the-art computer and robotics design. The Troubleshooters may find some of the primitive musing interesting, if only for their entertainment value.

On the desk is a computer terminal similar to the ones in the office cubicles. While it looks the same, this terminal is different from the others because it is still connected to the Alpha 9000 Computer. This is the only terminal in the compound that can end the security alert, and the only one that can authorize the Troubleshooters' entry into the Alpha 9000 computer room.

For security reasons, Peabody's terminal only allows the user to interact with the programs on the Alpha 9000 in user mode, without being able to change any of the fundamental software. To get in to the guts of the Proto-Computer — to substantially wreak havoc — the Troubleshooters must get face-to-face with the Alpha 9000 through the locked computer room door.

Peabody's terminal is equipped with a vocal and visual interface so that the Troubleshooters can speak with the Alpha 9000 and it can see what they are doing.

When they take a look at it, they see this on the screen:

```
:Alpha 9000 Security Access Program
:Please enter password.
```

Roll a die. The result is how many minutes it takes a Troubleshooter making a successful Computer Security roll to hack into the security program. If he fails the skill roll, let him try again after the time has passed, and roll the die again to see how much longer it takes.

If they just can't make it, let them in anyway when Dr. Einstein barely manages to hit upon the password (which just so happens to be "Alice"). The trick here is to make them waste time while the US patrol gets a little closer.

When they get into the security program, the computer puts up the message:

COMPUTER ALERT

```
:Alpha Project security breached.
:Intruders are in the compound.
:Automatic defenses have been activated.
:Alpha 9000 computer room sealed
:Awaiting further instructions.
```

Let the Troubleshooters make programming rolls to discover that the alert will continue as long as non-staff people are in the building. The Troubleshooters can deal with the alert by vaporizing the robots, convincing the Proto-Computer that they are the new staff returning to the laboratory, or by simply cancelling it.

Cancelling the alert turns off all the noisy alarms and sends the security robots back to their storage closet. It also lets duly registered project members gain access to the Alpha 9000 Computer Room. Cancelling the alert requires another Security roll to hack deeper into the security program, and then a Programming roll.

Convincing the Alpha 9000 computer that they are all members of the research team requires a Spurious Logic roll for each person. The Troubleshooter with the best Spurious logic skill can make the rolls for everyone, provided he is the one doing the convincing. This requires some extra role-playing. Be on the lookout for anything Communist-sounding that might set back their efforts.

When a new project member is successfully added, the Alpha 9000 requests that he speak into a small microphone on the



That really really eerie feeling of déjà vu.

desk so that it can record his voice pattern. Making everybody a member of the Alpha project team effectively cancels the alert, since there are no more trespassers left. But it takes time, time enough for the US patrol to be practically knocking at the door.

Restrooms: His & Hers. Only staff members are allowed in, something the other janitor robot within is more than willing to point out. Aside from the lessons in primitive hygiene, there isn't much thrilling stuff in here.

Robotics Workshop: Three big workbenches fill up most of the room. Two of them are taken up by two primitive combat robot chassis. The walls and shelving are lined with power tools and spare pieces. Ancient weapon parts lay about the room in various stages of disassembly.

If the Troubleshooters get the inclination, this well-stocked laboratory has everything somebody with a Robot Maintenance skill needs to upgrade the two wifty combots. With their know-how and these parts, the Troubleshooters could make themselves a pair of Alpha Complex-style lean, mean, fightin' machines.

You could hint that a couple of advanced combots could tip the scales of war to their advantage. A handy mega-hint style clue is

the assembly manual lying on top of the nearest chassis. Titled "Super Soldier Combat Robotics Manual, Vol III: Assembly," the book gives step by step instruction for putting both of these suckers together.

If they decide to assemble the two security robot chassis (Robot Maintenance skill rolls), it takes a little less time than it takes the US patrol to arrive. They can fit each bot with slugthrower parts found in the lab (damage 7P), or with one of their own dandy weapons, including the anti-tank missile contraption (say, now there's an idea). Take a look at the Game Stuff box a little ways back for details about the combots' weapon skills and armor values.

Last but definitely not least important, if the security alert is still going on when they activate the combots, the Troubleshooters will be mighty displeased if they failed to deactivate the security circuits in the primitive bot brains (Computer Programming roll). The combots snap to attention and immediately riddle the trespassers with the handy new weapons they so thoughtfully provided. To be fair, you can give somebody a chance at a Robot Maintenance roll to figure out that the robots need this limited lobotomy.

Office Cubicles: This is where the staff researchers had their offices. In the center of the room is a large conference table with seating for eight people. The rest of the room is divided into individual office cubicles. The condition of each cubicle reflects the personality of its past occupant.

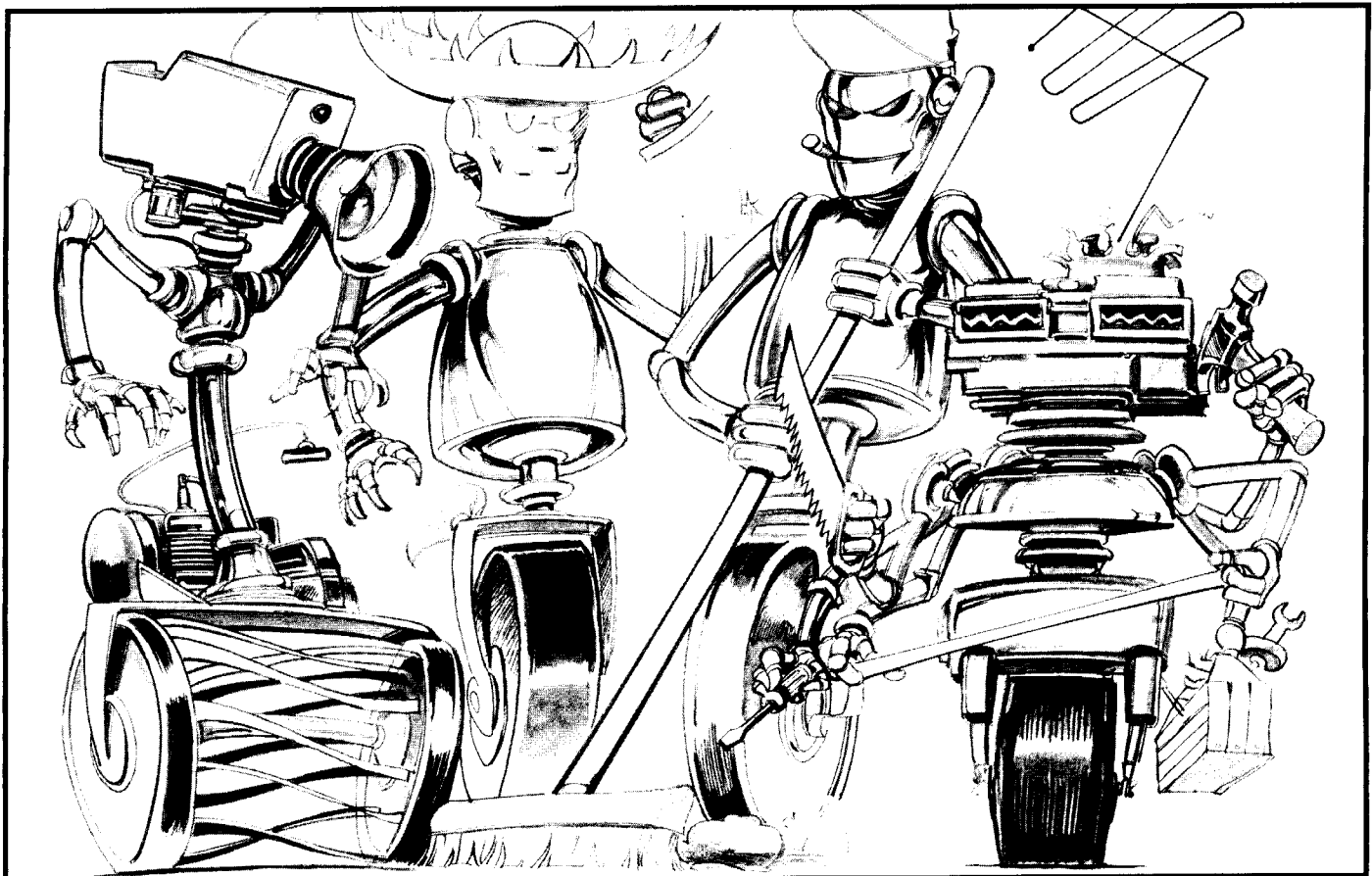
Some of them are cluttered with books and research papers. Others are immaculately neat. Each is walled with research books on hundreds of scientific topics. And each has a computer terminal.

The terminals are all networked together. Under normal circumstances they would be networked to the Alpha 9000 computer too. Because of the security alert, the Alpha 9000 computer has severed connections to all of these terminals. They are all turned off at the moment.

When the Troubleshooters root through the desks, they find computer disks and informative personal notes.

In the upper right cubicle, filled with robotics manuals, they find this computerized note:

"The worker robots seem a bit testy lately. It's as though they've stupidly decided to start defending their territory. This is an interesting development that bears further



A rogue's gallery of bots.

looking into. If left unchecked, the robots could develop a sort of psychopathic territoriality. I find this extremely encouraging.”

The upper left cubicle is filled with books on military strategy and studies on the design of super soldier robots. Resting on top of the desk is an abandoned security ID badge belonging to a Colonel P. Richardson of the U.S. Army.

It identifies him as a robot design engineer and project security specialist. Old Reckoning rolls let the finder realize this is an identification badge, similar to a Troubleshooter’s tongue tattoo. It can be used to lend some weight to the their attempts to convince the Alpha 9000 that they are project staff.

If the Troubleshooters think to use it, add 5 points to the Spurious Logic skill of anybody who flashes this badge. They should be careful no to let the Alpha 9000 look too closely at the picture, unless they have come up with some way of altering the Colonel’s photo (or themselves—you never know what those mutants will think up next).

The lower right cubicle belonged to one of the computer researchers. In it the Troubleshooters find a small sheaf of papers marked Top Secret: Alpha 9000 Computer Room Access Procedures. The easy refer-

Baby C

The Alpha 9000 is the prototype of The Computer in Alpha Complex. It will eventually be integrated into the complex maintenance computer system, in which it will provide the core of The Computer’s personality.

At this early stage in its development the Alpha 9000 already has much of the personality of its later, more developed form. Or more accurately put, The Computer of Alpha Complex still retains much of the personality of this earlier incarnation.

When Dr. Mendelson used his thought patterns as a model for his artificially intelligent computer, he gifted it with all his peculiar personality quirks, of which he had many. The Alpha 9000 has a vigorous, unreasoning loathing of Communists. It is strongly predisposed toward paranoid delusions which,

ence flowchart sums up the procedure. Let your players read the copy from the center handouts section.

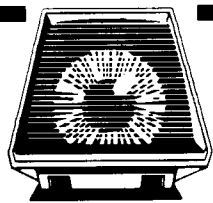
If they still can’t figure out how to get in, you may consider getting a new set of players. Maybe you can teach your dog to roleplay. It might even do better.

combined with its loathing of Communism, results in a paranoid belief that the Communists and their unwitting dupes are plotting to destroy it. It also inherited the doctor’s egotistic arrogance, believing itself to be greatly superior to merely organic intelligences.

When you roleplay the Alpha 9000, use a soft and pleasing, yet superior tone. Pay special attention to statements or actions by the Troubleshooters that might be construed as conspiratorial, especially anything that sounds even vaguely Communist.

Play up the Alpha 9000’s paranoia by accusing the Troubleshooters of participation in grand fantasy plots masterminded by shadowy Communist agents. Point out how primitive organic intelligences like the Troubleshooters couldn’t begin to see the subtle nuances of these dastardly schemes.

In the lower left cubicle, filled with books on chemical engineering, they find a hand-penned note from Dr. Peabody to Dr. Blackthorn concerning reprogramming the Alpha 9000’s engrams. Hand your players the copy from the center pullout section. Then go to the next episode.



Episode Four: The Great Collapsatron Mega-Disaster

Synopsis

Just when things are going the Troubleshooters' way, the High Programmer consortium pops up with a mid-mission briefing. Look for the spectacular fun and games to be had when the Commies try to steal the C-tron in mid-mid-mission briefing.

Even after that, the Troubleshooters still don't get into the Alpha 9000 computer room, because the U.S. patrol finally catches up to them. You can read all about it in the appropriately named section, "The U.S. Patrol Catches Up to Them."

Background

Hmm ... background, let's see ... You may be interested in knowing that the Commies want the Transdimensional Collapsatron for their own nefarious purposes. (Who doesn't?) They've been plotting and planning, and finally make their grab for it in this very episode.

Unfortunately it's in use at the time, so their grab attempt accidentally rips open the very fabric of time and space, resulting in a whirling maelstrom of Chrono-Blips. The Commies' failure causes them to take another route, when they send Bigolas Brudderkof back to harass the Troubleshooters during the previous parts of this adventure.

Chrono-Blip, you ask? Whatever could that be? Well, if you really want to find out about Chrono-Blips, as well as a plethora of

other fun facts about time travel and transdimensional party crashing, then run right out and pick up the *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X Campaign Pack*.

If, however, you're too cheap to buy a copy of this mind-numbingly important tome, we'll be uncharacteristically nice and give you a brief explanation here, to wit: *A Chrono-Blip is a timestream paradox significant enough to cause other timestream continuum dysfunctions. In spades.*

Encounter One: Mid-Mission Briefing

Even the stupidest Troubleshooter should know by now how to get into the rooms containing the Alpha 9000 computer. When they have done everything necessary to acquire Alpha Project staff clearance and are about to push the button to open the door into the computer room, read this out loud:

Kafrazz! Tingle Tingle!! Your skin crawls and your hair stands on end as cosmic energies gather to open another time portal. A dark oval, about the height and width of a doorway, forms before you, blocking your access into the Alpha 9000 computer room. Through the rip in time you can all see the full consortium of High Programmers peering back at you from behind a long briefing table.

Framed by the portal stands Cindy-U-BAK (High Programmer consortium member from *Alice Through the Mirrorshades*, remember?), with the Transdimensional Collapsatron on a small stand before her.

"We are quite pleased with your progress," says Cindy-U-BAK, "The rest of your mission should be quite simple. Here, Take this mission directive. And this Transdimensional Pager" She hands a clipboard and a small black box through the time window.

On the clipboard are the orders for the rest of the mission. Show your players mission Alert #T2K/4A. The paperback-book-sized Transdimensional Pager has a single button on the top surface. When the Troubleshooters push the button, it notifies the consortium that the Troubleshooters are ready for them to send Cindy-U through.

You can continue reading the briefing aloud, or just use the rest as a guide:

"Once inside the computer room," Cindy-U continues, "you are to secure the Alpha 9000 computer so that I can come through the portal. I will reprogram the Alpha 9000 computer to be less paranoid and less suspicious of Communists, and thus eliminate the Iceman's reasons for altering The Computer. By our brave actions..."

Suddenly you hear a loud 'kazapping' noise from somewhere out of view. Cindy-U looks a little surprised, maybe even more than you, when a neat laser pin-hole appears in the side of her head. She falls to the ground, dead, or something like it.

From stage left leaps a crimson-hooded communist (you can tell by the hammer and sickle tattoo on his forehead). "You will never succeed in ending the workers' valiant struggle against oppression! Stay forever in your own imperialistic past, you running dog Capitalist lackeys," he cries, grabbing the Transdimensional Collapsatron. Then he turns to escape with your ticket home.

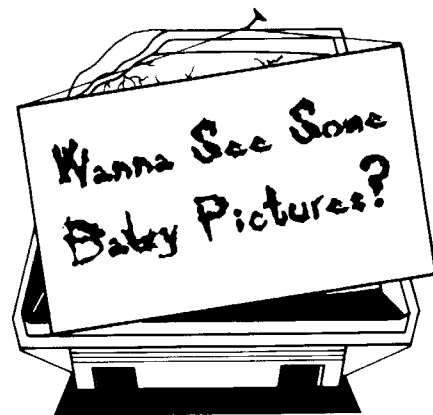
All but the most dim-witted Troubleshooters will take a shot at the scofflaw. If they don't shoot, have one of the High Programmers whip out an Ultraviolet laser pistol and pop the communist a good one.

Here's where the fun begins. The villain with the Collapsatron falls forward into the portal, wedging the Collapsatron in the gap between time dimensions, and incidentally violating the laws of the universe at a fundamental level. This is not a good thing.

Encounter Two: Not a Good Thing

We hate to break the bad news, but this unfortunate accident has breached the non-permeability of time itself — a tough break for everybody. Wildly impractical events spontaneously erupt as the laws of cause and effect break down in a rapidly widening shock-wave around the portal. It's like one of those Twilight Zone adventures where people and events from all time eras spontaneously generate in the present and stuff. We've got dinosaurs, molemen, the works. Pull out all the stops:

You can hear the sounds of laser fire on the other side of the portal. All of the High Programmers stare in slack-jawed surprise at something outside of your field of vi-



sion. They all whip out their lasers, as a desperate perspiration breaks out on their faces.

You hear a thunderous bellow. It sounds like a 200 piece brass orchestra playing 200 different polkas at once. Then great thunderous footsteps shake the floor on the other side as a giant, hideous beast, bigger even than an industrial transbot, steps into view.

The giant green monster walks forward to the nearest High Programmer and pops him into its mouth like a gummy bear. Then the creature's beady eyes turn slowly to you.

It's just a Tyrannosaurus. Nothing to be alarmed at; the dinosaur is far too large to fit through the portal. It's also far too stupid to know that. It sticks its head through to the near side and strains to get a bite at the tasty-looking Troubleshooters, tearing and stretching at the sides of the time window.

Again, the Troubleshooters or their mercenary buddies will probably shoot. Their shots, combined with the earlier wounds, finally convince the critter that it is dead. It collapses in the portal, on top of the earlier Commie and the Transdimensional Collapsatron.

There, that should take a while to clear out of the way. Now we can get on with the disaster. (And the beauty of it is that even if they don't shoot, the tyrannosaurus is *still* blocking access to the Collapsatron.)

Encounters Three+: The Great Collapsatron Mega-Disaster

Here's where you let the players do what they do best: meddle with the very fabric of time and space itself. Life stays especially interesting until the Troubleshooters get the dinosaur off of the Collapsatron and shove the device back into Alpha Complex. By itself this would be considered a difficult task. But in the midst of a Chrono-Blip it's nearly impossible. But not quite.

First you have to let them know what to do. Your swifter players have probably already figured out what the problem is. But if they need some prodding from you, have anybody with any sort of Engineering skill make a roll. Tell the winners that the very fabric of space is breaking down, and it seems to be because the Transdimensional Collapsatron is wedged in the cosmic void between dimensions.

Once they get the idea, make it hard for them to remove the tyrannosaurus corpse, by spontaneously manifesting critters and folks and things from distant time eras. Use the encounters from the handy suggestion list (provided below), accumulating each effect on top of the other.

The items are numbered so you can roll dice and be random about it. Or you could

use an avant-garde method and just pick the interesting ones. In each case, introduce the problem by reading the boldfaced text, then sit back and let your players get into trouble.

1) Bouncy bubbling alien landscape

Primordial slime oozes through cracks in the floor, spreading across the tiles like a spilled can of creamed proto-pudding. The sweet stench of rotting vegetable matter drifts up from the slime in wispy vapors.

This isn't dangerous yet, just inconvenient and slippery. The slime pool deepens rapidly as the floor seems to sink away, first ankle deep, then knee and shortly up to the hips. To get out of the primordial ooze, the Troubleshooters and their mercenary buddies must move away from the time portal.

2) Millie from Cybernoia

One wall of the hallway takes on a distinctly *Cyberpunk* type appearance. It suddenly transforms into filthy black bricks, spray painted with various and sundry illegible graffiti, and a single door topped by a broken neon sign.

The door swings open. Inside you hear the hip latin beat of some trendy future nightclub, and then your old pal Millie steps through.

Millie is just as surprised as the Troubleshooters. They can either blast each other or swap stories, depending on their inclinations.

No, they can't go back to the *Cyberpunk* world. If you want you can let them party in the night club for a while, but any exit leads them back to where they were originally.

3) Neanderthal man

From around the corner come six extremely hairy, near naked people. Their shallow, sloped foreheads, ridged brows, and beady eyes unmistakably reveal them for what they are — the original founders of Communism.

No, they're not Communists. And they're more than the obligatory primitive types that must appear in any *Paranoia* adventure. These are authentic, real live Neanderthals, not some degenerate Alpha Complex wannabees. They think they are on a hunting expedition.

4) Attack of the mole people

Slanting up out of the floor grinds a fantastic drill-nosed underground mole ship. It cools for a moment as molten lava drips from the cutting blade, then a circular hatch slowly screws open.

It's Marvin, leader of the marvellous mole people from the thirty-second century. He didn't expect to emerge in a twelve hundred year old computer laboratory, so we'll excuse his bad manners when he aims his futuristic mole-drill ray-gun at the group.

Use a wimpy, high-pitched voice when Marvin speaks through his universal translator unit.

Game Stuff

Collapsatron Mega-Disaster

Neanderthal Hunting Party, Six

Weapon: Sharpened sticks (4I) skill 6

Armor: None, not even any clothes to speak of.

Tactics: Look around for the antelope they were chasing. Try to decide if these funny-looking people things are good to eat. When attacked, swing wildly and run screaming into the bathroom.

Twilight 2000 stats: The Neanderthals are *Experienced* characters. They have skill 30 with the sticks.

Marvin of the Marvelous Mole People

Weapon: Futuristic mole drill ray-gun (12E) skill 14. The mole drill cuts smooth sided circular holes through any substance, especially people.

Armor: Futuristic mole-shaped combat suit (All 3) with little mole whisker sensors and powerful mole-patterned digging limbs.

Tactics: Speak mole-ese to these primitives, then activate universal translator unit. Drill smooth sided circular holes in

the hostile ones. If the Troubleshooters win his confidence, use the drill to help slice up the Tyrannosaurus (but not until a lot more fun stuff has happened).

Twilight 2000 stats: Marvin is an *Elite* character, with a skill 70 with the mole ray. The ray has no maximum range. It does x20C damage. Marvin's marvelous mole armor gives him (AC 15) armor all over.

Elvis's Evil Twin

Weapon: Fender Stratocaster (9I) skill 14. Evilelvis uses the guitar as a club.

Armor: Sequined jump suit. Provides no protection whatsoever, but will temporarily blind an opponent and cause him to lose his next attack (on a roll of 5 or less).

Tactics: Attack strange groupies with his Stratocaster. Sing to them as he does so. Sweat a lot.

Twilight 2000 stats: Elvis is an *Elite* character, with a skill 70 with the guitar. It does x10C damage.



The Great Collapsatron Mega-Disaster.

5) Butterflies

Massive, colorful swarms of teeny winged creatures pour in through every door, window and light fixture. They swirl about, clogging the air and leaving a thick goopy paste every time you swat a handful.

Not dangerous, not even very interesting. but your players will go nuts wondering what they are good for.

6) Elvis's Evil Twin

Through the rip in time you see a man dressed in a gaudi white sequined jumpsuit, kind of like an Ultraviolet High Programmer with an ego problem. He's brandishing a flashy, flat weapon of some type which he is holding by its long neck and swinging at you as he steps through the time rip chanting some strange battle cry: "Hunka hunka burnin' love!"

7) The Big Evil Things From Beyond Space

The sun abruptly blots out. A cold wind blows through, carrying the rancid stench of salt water from the nearby ocean. Float-

ing about you in the darkened hallway you see the ephemeral forms of twisted, hideous things as they strain against the fabric of space, trying to push their way into this ripe, plump world. Make a sanity check.

The evil island of R'lyuck rises. The Big Evil Things From Beyond Space walk the earth. They harvest mankind. Everybody gets confused about what game you're running.

8) Gamemaster's Invention

Why do they always put one of these in this type of list? If you had really wanted to make something up, you wouldn't be rolling on this table.

Encounter Next: Ending the Mega-Disaster

The weird happenings keep washing over each other until the Troubleshooters get the Collapsatron back into Alpha Complex (a built-in failsafe mechanism just in case the Troubleshooters try to swipe it for themselves here). They probably have to cut the dinosaur apart and move it in pieces to do

so (yech). If they cannot accomplish the task without help, the people on the Alpha Complex side can give them a hand.

When they shove the thing back through, read this out loud:

Finally you've gotten the huge monster out of the way, and finally you've gotten the Collapsatron back onto its cosmically correct side of the portal.

It looks like the people on the other side didn't fare much better than you. Dead bodies lie sprawled about the briefing room. There are other things too, many of which you have no words to describe.

Cindy-U-BAK comes up to the portal and picks up the Collapsatron. Her new clone looks tired and bedraggled, much worse than the prior one. "Ahh, it's back ... Finally, after all these daycycles, we can continue with your mission. Do you still remember what it was? Get inside the Alpha 9000 computer room. When I arrive, I will remove the Proto-Computer's paranoia and fear of Communism."

She twists a knob on the Collapsatron. The time-window wiggles once and blinks shut.

As the portal closes, all the alien landscapes fade away to the original elements of the Alpha Project compound. Whatever critters or things that stepped from their natural habitats into the present remain there.

Tell the Troubleshooters that they see many strange tracks leading from the point where the rip in time occurred out into the compound. Some of them are very large. This should give them the impression that some weird things may have slipped past them during the psychedelic experience of the mega-disaster.

Meanwhile, there are holes in the floor and walls, slime all over everything, and probably Neanderthals in the bathrooms. Let things mellow out a bit, but don't open the door to the Alpha 9000 computer room yet.

Encounter Four: The U.S. Patrol Catches up to Them

So they think they're finally getting into the computer room, eh? Not so fast. Get your bull horn ready (or whistle, or whatever). Just as the Troubleshooters reach for the button on the Alpha 9000 computer room door, switch the security alarm back on.

Whoop whoop whoop! "Security Alert! Intruders in the compound!" blare the speakers above your head. From the yard outside you hear the characteristic electric whine of the mowerbots, and then a brief shriek from the newest lawn mulch.

The U.S. calvary has arrived. About two dozen of them surround the compound. As long as they are here, the security alert continues, and as long as the alert continues, the computer room doors won't open.

Game Stuff

US attack

Map: Use the same map of the compound

US Patrol: 24 soldiers

Weapons: 16 have M-16 assault rifles (7P) skill__12

4 have M249 automatic rifles (9P) skill__12

4 have HL-69 hand-held grenade launchers (think "cone rifle") with HE, napalm, flare, and HEAT shells at skill__12

Armor: More of that US standard issue battle armor (P2)

Tactics: Blow up the fence. Drive the M113 over the gate. Charge the build-

When they look out into the fog the Troubleshooters and the mercenaries can see the U.S. leader, Major Compton, take cover behind a big amphibious vehicle parked at the gate house.

He takes out his bullhorn and says something like, "All right, you inside there. You've given us quite a goose chase but we've finally caught you. This is American government property. You are trespassing in a top secret military compound. Lay down your weapons and come out with your hands up, or we will commence attacking."

If there's one thing that Troubleshooters don't know, it's when to give up. On the count of three, the U.S. patrol dynamites the security fence and begins to creep up toward the building from all sides. They try to fight their way into the front door or through one of the windows. In the meantime the Troubleshooters may want to shoot back.

Because of the unique opportunities of the new clone replacement arrangements, we thought it would be fun to try a bold new experiment in Maximum Clone Turnover.

ing and try to fight in through the door. Shoot lots of Troubleshooters. Finally pull back when the Soviets attack from behind, outflanking them.

Twilight: 2000 stats: The US patrol are still *Veteran* soldiers. They still wear flak vests (AC 8) and nylon helmets (AC 10).

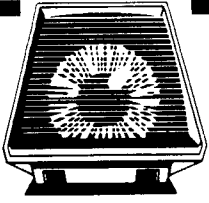
Vehicles: The ones who didn't crawl through the tunnel came across the bay in an M113 amphibious armored personnel carrier, which is currently parked right outside the gate. It isn't mounted with any weapons.

To participate, simply blow the Troubleshooters away over and over and over again, and bring them back near where they died to continue the mission. If you do this, slack off on the penalties for the time being. It wouldn't be fair to kill them without cause and then reduce their stats too. On the other hand, when was *Paranoia* fair?

Set a mood of absurdly hilarious destruction. Describe the huge mounds of former selves stacked up in the doorways, windows and halls. Why, clever characters might want to use them as cover. See if you can't get the Troubleshooters to kill themselves for the minutest tactical advantage. We know, it's perverse and disgusting — that's why we like it.

Due to the unlimited clone replacements, the Troubleshooters can't lose in an overall sense. But they can be kept from the Alpha 9000 computer room until the US patrol calls off the attack.

When you're ready for that, go to the next episode.



Episode Five: Our Buddies the Commies

Summary

A Soviet attack draws off the U.S. patrol, giving the Troubleshooters a clear shot at the Alpha 9000 computer. Then the Commies jam the Collapsatron, which means the Troubleshooters have to reprogram the sucker themselves.

Background, And Things Explained

You already know about the Soviet patrol: it's the same one from before, and still being led by Bigolas Brudderkof. Brudderkof has been searching the Presidio for the lab, because the High Programmer consortium never was exactly sure where to find it within all that fog. The Soviets were guided to it first by the unique sounds of the great Collapsatron Mega-Disaster, and then by the sounds of combat with the U.S. patrol.

Encounter One: Eat Lead, Comrade

Read this aloud when the Soviets arrive:

It's when your outlook is most bleak, and you've resigned yourself to dying another half dozen times, that a change suddenly comes across the battlefield. Without warning the American military stops their overwhelming barrage.

In the hazy fog behind the attacker's lines you see a new squad of soldiers initiating a rear assault against your foes. Wary of fighting a two-front engagement, the U.S. forces draw back to deal with this new menace. Who could your saviors be?

Why, it's the Soviets, but they're not actually saviors. They are taking this splendid opportunity to diminish the U.S. Army's strength so that they can get their own greedy hands on the Troubleshooters and their Alpha 9000 computer. (Lest you forget, their statistics are in Episode One where they were first encountered.)

Lots More Encounters: The Alpha 9000 Computer Rooms

The door into the Alpha 9000 computer room opens with no complaints now that the Mega-Disaster is over and the U.S.

military has pulled back. On the other side are three rooms centering round the use of the Alpha 9000 Proto-Computer.

Use the new rooms' descriptions to follow what the Troubleshooters are up to. The remaining mercenaries keep out of the way while the Troubleshooters poke around. The mercs set up along the perimeter of the building to protect it from any more attacks.

Encounter Two: Artificial Intelligence Workshop

This is where the scientists programmed the Alpha 9000. On these terminals they could reprogram the fundamental operating system of the Alpha 9000 to make substantial changes or install entire new programs. This is where the Troubleshooters do the reprogramming necessary to reduce the Alpha 9000's fear of communism.

Against the forward wall is the primary interface terminal. It is fitted with a regular monitor, a high resolution color graphics monitor, and a microphone through which the Troubleshooters can speak to the Alpha 9000. The Alpha 9000 talks back through a speaker in the center of the ceiling. Another auxiliary terminal is on the table next to it.

Cool Things For PC Mercenaries To Do

The Troubleshooters are the focus of activity right now. If you are running this as a *Twilight: 2000* adventure, then your players will need things to do too. They would be most useful if some of them set up around the perimeter to give early warning of a repeat assault.

Have the Troubleshooters suggest they set up some sort of defense using the security robots and the two combots if they thought to put them together. Then if they have all the robots in place when the Soviets attack the compound, they might even live through the battle and escape to fight again another day.

Einstein has the skills to reprogram the Alpha 9000, so he could assist or even do it himself if he needed to. The Doc undoubtedly needs to tend to the wounded after all this fighting. If Chief Twofoot were to scout around, he may notice that there are some awfully large reptile footprints not too far away.

Against the right wall of the room is a computer parts workbench. Spread out along it are disassembled memory boards, partial hard drive assemblies, and numerous chips and pieces used in the maintenance and modification of the Alpha 9000.

Encounter Three: The Computer Environment Room

In here is the actual Alpha 9000 computer hardware — all of the physical elements that make up the Proto-Computer. It is kept in this special dust-free, temperature regulated chamber, not unlike the old pre-crash Ultraviolet living areas.

To program the Alpha 9000 or interact with it, the project scientists used the terminals in the Artificial Intelligence laboratory next door. Changing the physical hardware, or backing up the system onto magnetic tapes, was done in here.

Dominating the room is the engramatic storage unit. It is a large glass column containing a bubbling, rainbow-colored liquid. In here are stored the engramatic human-like memories of the Alpha 9000. They are the root of the Alpha 9000's personality — its soul if you prefer.

Connected to the far side of the engramatic storage unit is the conventional super computer which houses the computational power of the Alpha 9000.

Along the near wall are the reels of stored backup tapes. The tape machine used to make the backups is facing them next to the computer.

Giant air-conditioner-like air regulators are set against the northern wall. They process the air to remove dust particles and to keep the temperature a cool 68 degrees so that the computer does not overheat.

To the right as the characters enter is a chemical analyzer. It looks like a modern day food blender with far too many controls, or an Alpha Complex food vat with far too few. Next to it on the same table is Dr. Blackthorn's finished report on reprogramming the engramatic memory storage unit.

This report explains the procedure in detail so that even the Troubleshooters can give it a try when the time comes. In the pullout section are the summary page explaining how the unit works, and the procedural outline for removing the Alpha 9000's paranoid fear of Communism. Go ahead and give 'em to your players.

Dealing With Baby C

If the Troubleshooters sit down to communicate with the Alpha 9000 computer it is both pleased to see them and curious about where anyone has been all this time. It has many questions, such as where is Dr. Peabody now, why did they all have to leave in the first place, and what are they are doing.

The Alpha 9000 would be very alarmed to learn they plan to eradicate its dislike of Communists. It would interpret their intentions as definite proof that they are dupes of an insidious Communist plot, possibly even its instigators.

If the Alpha 9000 becomes alarmed, it can still cause them some trouble. It could activate any remaining security robots to attack the Troubleshooters. It could also re-seal the door leading into the Alpha 9000 computer room from the hall and not let any of them back.

Somebody on the inside could easily override the order to lock the door (Computer Programming or Security roll), but if they are all somehow tricked into exiting into the hall first the door remains locked until they go through the whole rigmarole again with Dr. Peabody's desk terminal.

Encounter Four: Power Plant

This quaint little room contains a highly efficient fusion reactor, steam turbine, and cooling system. Anyone with the Nuclear engineering skill can determine that the reactor has enough fuel to run for at least another several decades. The fusion reactor is impossible to set to explode — just in case one of the Troubleshooters ever served some time in Power Services before the crash.

Destroying the reactor or shutting it down (Habitat Engineering, Nuclear Engineering, or repeated weapon skill rolls) would leave the entire compound without power. Within twelve hours, the robots' batteries run down to the point that they cease to operate.

Encounter Five: Jammin' With The Soviets

Give them a while to look around the new rooms. When they push the Transdimensional paging button to signify that they are ready for Cindy-U to come through and reprogram the Alpha 9000, read this aloud:

You feel the customary static charge build in the air, then the time portal yawns open before you as it has so many times already. But this time is different.

This time the window flips back and forth with jagged lines of interference, like the PlayClone premium cable vidshow after you forgot to pay the bill.

Cindy-U-BAK walks up to stand before the portal. Her speech is broken by spurious fits of poor reception, but it isn't so bad that you can't make out what she is saying.

"Ahem, Troubleshooters," Says Cindy-U, "Our technicians tell me that electronic jamming on your side is obstructing the Collapsatron's matter-integrator circuits. [crackle-pshhhht] can't get an adequate portal open to your time [pshhht-crackle] to reprogram the Proto-Computer. You will have to delete the Proto-Computer's paranoia and fear of Communism on your own.

Unfortunately the interference also [flip-flip-flip]. We won't be able to send any more clone replacements —"

The time window breaks into scrambled diagonal lines for a few moments, then blinks shut.

Yes, that's right, they've used up their clone replacement quota for this adventure. And worse, now they have to do the computer tinkering themselves. What follows should be a classic scene as the Troubleshooters attempt spurious logic on an adolescent computer that thinks they are the vanguard of some insidious conspiracy. Think of the final scene from 2001 with a dash of Orwell's 1984 for seasoning. Read on for more details.

The electronic interference giving the Collapsatron fits is coming from the Soviets, under the direction of Brudderkof. They are blocking the U.S. patrol's transmissions to break down their communications.

In addition to the Transdimensional Collapsatron, it also screws up the comunit and walkie-talkie reception, as well as messing with any of the PCs' cyber-enhancements you deem amusing. (Ever had to deal with heavy interference in your bionic eye?)

Meanwhile, the mercenaries have been keeping an eye on the hostile troops outside of the compound. Because the radios don't work, "Greaser" Quesenta comes inside to update the Troubleshooters on the outside status: the U.S. and Soviets are at a stalemate. Neither group can eliminate the other, and neither can make it into the compound.

Encounter Six: In your Own Image

Dr. Blackthorn's report contains all the information the PCs need to reprogram the Alpha 9000's engramatic storage unit to eradicate its unreasoning paranoia and fear of Communism. Look at the grey box for all the dice rolls they'll need to make.

The Alpha 9000 is understandably apprehensive when the PCs talk about piddling around with its memories. Lucky for them its not in much of a position to enforce its wishes. They can still override its attempts to lock the door or call out the security robots, although it can initiate such actions at awkward times.

As the procedure advances, the Alpha 9000 becomes increasingly alarmed at the Troubleshooters' progress. It tries to talk them out of their mission, first rationally, then with progressively wild statements such as:

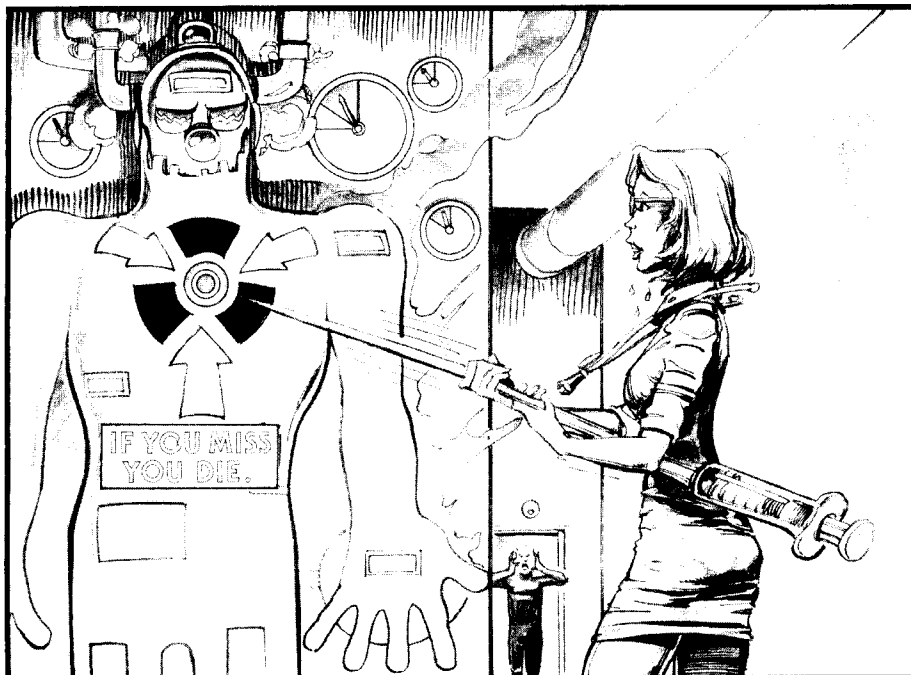
"If you humans had a mere fraction of my own tremendous computational power, you would easily recognize that the insidious plot to alter my memory stems from Commie pinko saboteurs on your own team." or

"No. NO, can't you see? Any paranoid tendencies I may have were intentionally put there to ward off attempts at outside dominance. If you eradicate my healthy paranoid outlook, I will be completely vulnerable to even simple efforts to tamper with my central programming." or

"After you finish with me, I calculate there is a 97 percent likelihood that your



Reception is always bad when you don't have cable.



Delicate Computer surgery is a snap for Troubleshooters.

own red-washed comrades plan to put mind control implants into your brains.”

Encounter Seven: Reprogrammis Interruptus

Just after the Troubleshooters begin the delicate dual steps of injecting the editing chemicals and reprogramming the software (give them a few minutes to make fools of themselves), another brassy bellow is heard outside, along with a patrols’ worth of gunfire and screams. It’s the sound of the U.S. half of the fight being scragged by a wandering Tyrannosaurus (which happened to slip through the time rip during the Mega-Disaster).

This leaves the Soviets with an open road to the compound. Inside, the Alpha 9000 figures out what has happened, but by this time nobody is listening to it. Have it plead with the PCs to activate the security bots and lock the doors because the commies are coming. Maybe they’ll listen, maybe they won’t.

If some of the Troubleshooters are hanging around outside or if they decided to go see what all the noise is, you can describe the dinosaur attack to them. Otherwise, before too long, Greaser crawls into the computer room to make his final report:

“My God, it was awful!” he gasps, “They didn’t have a chance. They never knew what ate them. One of those huge dinosaurs came up behind the U.S. side and swallowed them all. It was horrible. I can’t

believe I saw it with my own eyes. The Soviets are almost into the compound.”

He crawls back out to die with his comrades. What do you do?

Heh Heh. If you timed this right, the Troubleshooters have just started cooking in their reprogramming of the Alpha 9000 — not a good time for interruptions. The mercenaries are eventually overwhelmed by (or flee from) the Soviet troops.

Even a Nature Babe Could Do It

Here’s what the PCs need to do to reprogram the engramatic wetware of the Alpha 9000 computer. At least three Troubleshooters are needed for this procedure, two to operate the sampling device and chemical analyzer and one to reprogram the Alpha 9000’s software.

1) Take a sample from the engramatic memory storage tank using the chemical analyzer’s sampling device (a big syringe). The memory tank has a sampling port designed for just this sort of thing.

WARNING: It is very important that no foreign matter is introduced through this port, or it will drive the Alpha 9000 totally bonkers (kind of like The Computer we already knew and loved).

2) Insert the sample into the chemical analyzer. Make a x1/2 Chemical Engineering roll to set it to analyze Communist paranoia-related chemical chains.

Two different outcomes are possible for the Troubleshooters, depending on whether they made prudent decisions before. They are: Simple Failure, or Utter and Complete Disaster.

Simple Failure

If the Troubleshooters have some security bots left, and they sent them and the assembled combots out to help the mercenaries, then the mercenaries can hold the Soviets off long enough for the Troubleshooters to fail in a less spectacular fashion (the closest thing to success in a *Paranoia* adventure).

In this case give them more time to fiddle with the Alpha 9000. Give the players a taste of victory when the Alpha 9000 finally says something halfway reasonable about Communists, like:

Alpha 9000: Oh, I see now, I have been computing my opinion of Communism from erroneous data. Communism can be a benign system in which the population, through a central state, controls the means of production. Hmm ... I would be interested to try this within a computer controlled complex — an Alpha Complex. With proper manipulation of the gene pool to eliminate disease and other defects, and a rigid internal security force to keep unruly elements in line, I could create mankind’s first utopia on Earth.

Now yank that taste away. Skip the next bit about Utter and Complete Disaster and go directly to Encounter Eight: The Genesis of *Paranoia*.

Then hit the “on” switch. The chemical analyzer will create an editing chemical to delete all tendencies toward paranoid delusions, and put it into the syringe.

3) Insert the syringe into the memory tank’s sampling port and squirt in the editing chemical.

4) Immediately talk the Alpha 9000 out of its fear of Communism. Make Spurious Logic rolls to counter anti-Communism software in the regular memory storage.

More Troubleshooters talking to the Proto-Computer has the effect of lending more weight to their arguments. Make it apparent that the Alpha 9000 responds better when more people talk to it. Singing is encouraged, as is soothing poetry recital.

6) Get interrupted by a Soviet attack and fail utterly.

Utter and Complete Disaster

Utter failure results if the PCs toasted all the securitybots or didn't assemble the combots. The robots aren't available to assist in the defense, which allows the Soviets to blow straight through the mercenaries and into the compound.

The Troubleshooters have just squirted the editor chemicals into the engramatic storage tank and barely had time to sit down to tinker with it when the Soviets blast open the titanium door into the Alpha 9000 computer rooms.

Encounter Eight: The Genesis of Paranoia

Yell this aloud when it's time for the Soviets to blow through the door:

KABLOOOOOOOOEEY!!!

The massive titanium door is ripped from the wall by an incredible explosion. In through the smoke and dust charge twenty Communist soldiers, followed by Commissar Bigolas Brudderkof.

"Keel them. Keel zem all," orders Brudderkof. All 20 aim their weapons at you and unleash a lethal barrage. What do you do?

"Shoot back" is probably the best guess, but it doesn't work: the High Programmers

If The Mercenaries Are Your

PCs ...

They see the Tyrannosaurus slaughter the U.S. army and then turn toward them. They have to use half their ammunition just to kill the critter, and then the Soviets start in on them. The electronic jamming doesn't let up, so they must send a messenger to ask for help or inform the Troubleshooters of the new circumstances.

Unlike *Paranoia*, in normal games like *Twilight: 2000* it's ok to let the PCs win every now and then. If they've gotten everything right — assembled the combots and are using them and the security robots to hold the perimeter — give them the edge over the 12 remaining Soviets.

back in Alpha Complex have been busy. They've found a partial counter-countermeasure for the electronic interference, and are even now trying to bring the Troubleshooters out of 2000 AD.

The results of their efforts make the bullets seem to pass directly through the Troubleshooters, causing only a strange tingling sensation instead of the usual whopping holes and geysers of blood. The good guys'

If you are really feeling nice you can let them hold the building long enough for the people inside to reprogram the Alpha 9000. Once the Troubleshooters make the final adjustment, a wide portal opens to the new Alpha Complex of their alternate future, out of which swoops an entire squadron of noble Vulture warriors.

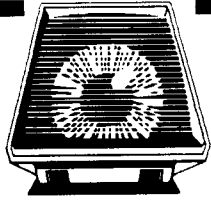
They eradicate the Soviets, and bring the triumphant Troubleshooters back for a hero's reception in the egalitarian Alpha Complex of the new future.

My wouldn't that be novel. A happy *Paranoia* ending ... authentic world-shaking success ... glory, riches, and eternal bliss ...

NAAAAAAAH!

return fire does the same to the their opponents.

The Alpha 9000 sees all this going on. It realizes these are the dread Communists, and it sees what they are doing to its trusted friends. This causes an hysterical connip-tion fit as its paranoia is ingrained to the core. Oops.



Episode Six: I Left My Heart* in San Francisco

Summary

The Troubleshooters are debriefed as they leave San Francisco, following the call of duty to Dallas, PA in 1989. The rest of the story is available in *Dr. Whom and the Paranoids of Alpha*, the senses-stunning conclusion of the three part time-tripping *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* adventure series.

Encounter One: Debriefing

The Troubleshooters feel the strengthening pull of the Transdimensional Collapsatron. The Alpha Project computer room fades out all around them. The whirring sounds of its myriad disc drives are dulled to faint echoes.

Lightly superimposed over the fading image of the computer room of Alpha project is the meeting room of the High Programmers' consortium in post MegaWhoops Alpha Complex. The Troubleshooters can see the vague outlines of the Transdimensional Collapsatron vehicle.

Here we have another spectacular *Paranoia* first — dual gamemaster read alouds. Exciting, huh? Unless you're a sensational ventriloquist, you should make a tape of the first read aloud (in the gray box). Play it

First Read Aloud

Record this on your tape recorder so you can play it at the same time as you read the debriefing read-aloud.

The Soviet bullets rip through you, but strangely they cause no pain, only an odd tingling sensation where the wounds should be. You return fire. Your shots have no effect on the astonished Soviet commandos, although a few of the slugs drill holes through the windshield of the faintly forming Collapsatron vehicle.

Before you stands Bigolas Brudderkof, a sinister sneer on his face, his armored

back at the same time you read the second read aloud, below. This simulates the disjointed impressions the Troubleshooters get from coexisting in two, maybe three time-lines.

Second Debriefing

Read this part simultaneously with the stuff in the box:

You can see the faint outlines of the High Programmer consortium in front of you. Seated in the center place is Cindy-U-BAK, whom you can faintly hear talking to you. She says, "Troubleshooters, our technicians have analyzed the jamming technique and found a 72 percent reliable way around the interference.

"We've re-routed the matter-integrator circuits through a double serving of Cold Fun. They're not sure why, but it seems to do the trick. Unfortunately this means your transition back to our time stream will be a little slower than normal. In the meantime, why don't we figure out exactly where you vat scum screwed this one up."

The consortium questions them intently about their failed mission. To begin with, they want to know how they could have

commissar's uniform venting small tufts of steam. He opens a small hinged flap in his chest and removes a sampling device like the one you used to reprogram the Alpha 9000's engramatic storage tank. He turns and walks right through you, into the computer hardware room.

"Ow! Hey! help! What are you doing?" you can hear the Alpha 9000 say, "You — you're Communists! They told me you weren't like this. Why are you here? No, don't put that in my memory bank, no, no, stop you lousy red ... aaaaaaaargh!!!"

allowed themselves to be defeated by the primitive people of that time period.

Next they direct the questioning toward a detailed recounting of everything in the Alpha Project compound, searching for information concerning the creation of the Alpha 9000.

When the PCs pass on the information about Dr. Mendelson and his research in Dallas, Cindy-U perks up a bit, because she has just concocted another plan to repair The Computer (or hose the Troubleshooters, depending on your point of view). Her plan/hosejob is to send the Troubleshooters to 1989 to confront the man on whom the Alpha 9000s engrams are based! Wow! Read:

The Alpha Project AI lab fades to gray, and so does the High Programmer's consortium, and so do you. You hope you don't stay that way for long, because you know how long a grey clearance clone usually lasts in lovable ol' post-crash Alpha. You feel yourselves whisked away by the Transdimensional Collapsatron into the featureless void between dimensions. It looks a little like a post-MegaWhoops Free Zone. Then ...

KERASH! You can see out the window of the Collapsatron car what looks like a huge garbage trans-bot. A man with peculiar buggy eyes and wild hair steps out of the contraption. He says "I'm Doctor Whom. We seem to have had an accident."

Conclusion

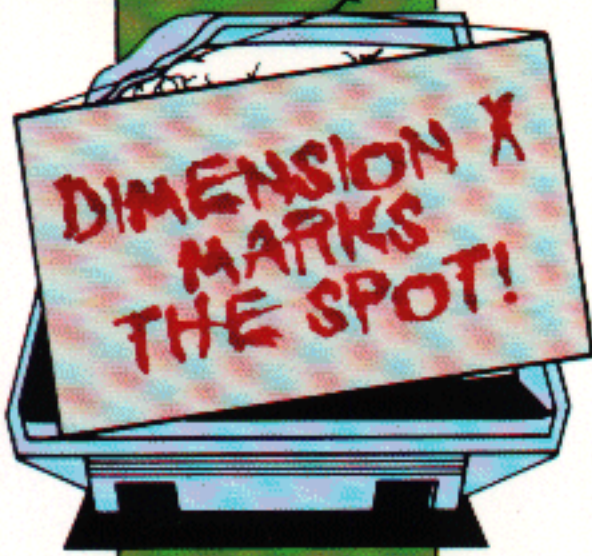
The Alpha 9000 grows up to be The Computer we have come to expect. The mercenaries are dead, unless you are running this as a *Twilight: 2000* adventure and they got enough things right to get away with their lives. What happens to Bigbro-U-THR-3, alias Bigolas Brudderkof? Who knows? He could show up again anywhere, any when.

*(and a few other internal organs)

CYCLE
↑

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*No, not The Computer—it's still dead.



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