

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 1[/b]

"That's the last of it, we're done."

"I still can't believe you took the 26 certain payments instead of the single payment."

"It had been so long since I bought Lottery Ticket, I didn't understand how they worked. This might be better considering our age. We won't have to worry about income for our lifetime."

"I understand that, Gary, but why did you put everything you bought into a storage locker?"

"I have no intention of staying in Kalifornia, Sharon. We're going to clear a million a year, after taxes. We have enough left over this year to pay off the house and sign it over to Amy, and still move. I had everything palletized so we can rent a forklift and put it into a truck. The only things in the house I'd like to take are my guns and ammo, medicines, and our computers. I wouldn't mind taking the Hewlett-Packard printer, but it's too heavy to move."

"Fine but move where?"

"Where would you like to move to? Only Kalifornia, Hawaii and Alaska are out."

"You know those places in the Tonto National Forrest we saw? What about one of those?"

"I don't think so, there could be a fire. What did you think of Sedona?"

"Tucson wasn't too bad."

"I don't want to live in city, would outside of Tucson be ok?"

"As long as it isn't too long of a drive into town."

"Shall we go look?"

"I'll check the airline schedules."

"I am not going to fly!"

"I'm not going to drive that Daewoo all the way to Tucson!"

"We need a new vehicle and once we move, I can get a Driver's License. What would you say to buying a new Dodge RAM 3500 with a crew cab and diesel engine?"

"I don't want to drive a truck full time."

"After we move, you can get yourself a diesel fueled car, any make and model you want."

"Any make & model?"

"What do you want, a Beemer?"

"It wouldn't cost that much more than the RAM once you get it fully equipped, would it?"

"Probably not. I'd want to get a wheelchair lift for the back, winches front and back, extra generator or alternator, spare battery, bed liner and auxiliary fuel tanks. I don't really want seats in the back, just storage room. Might be smart for me to get a roll bar with sports lights for the top."

"Do you want a lot or an acreage?"

"An acreage might be nice, room to grow a beef or two and for you to have a couple of horses."

"I haven't been riding since we got married."

"But you do like to ride, don't you?"

"I used to."

"Funny, that describes my whole life, I used to... blah... blah... blah..."

"I thought your first stop after you got the money would be High Desert Storm."

"I want to wait. I should be able to get what I want in Arizona and probably far cheaper."

"What do you want?"

"With a million a year for the next 25 years? Two of everything. If you're going to dream, dream big."

And, that's how it started out. We paid off any debts we had and any the kids had. It wasn't as bad as I thought. We decided to let Amy live in our house, rent free. We got it repainted, new flooring and had the lawn re-sodded. We also got a decent sprinkler system put in so the lawn wouldn't die, again. The only thing she had to pay was her car insurance, renter's insurance and living expenses. All other bills: home owner's insurance, lights, gas, garbage and water would come to Sharon. Sharon insisted we move the HP printer, it cost ~\$10,000.

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I wasn't sure what we wanted for a house, but I took a hint from my last two fiction stories and decided to build an underground shelter that we could set a house on. Sharon shopped around the various realtors in the Tucson area and got a parcel of land about halfway between Tucson and Tombstone. It was in Cochise County, just a little outside of Whetstone on Whetstone Road, not that far from the Coronado National Forrest.

Whetstone is an unincorporated community and census-designated place in Cochise County, Arizona north of Sierra Vista. The population was 2,354 at the 2000 census.

Whetstone is located at 31°42'14"N, 110°20'53"W (31.703917, -110.347996).

According to the US Census Bureau, the CDP has a total area of 30.6 km² (11.8 mi²), all land.

As of the census of 2000, there were 2,354 people, 904 households, and 664 families residing in the CDP. The population density was 77.0/km² (199.5/mi²). There were 1,056 housing units at an average density of 34.6/km² (89.5/mi²). The racial makeup of the CDP was 84.03% White, 2.93% Black or African American, 1.23% Native American, 0.85% Asian, 6.50% from other races, and 4.46% from two or more races. 13.76% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

There were 904 households out of which 32.7% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 57.2% were married couples living together, 10.7% had a female householder with no husband present, and 26.5% were non-families. 20.7% of all households were made up of individuals and 6.9% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.60 and the average family size was 3.02.

In the CDP the population was spread out with 27.4% under the age of 18, 5.6% from 18 to 24, 25.3% from 25 to 44, 28.0% from 45 to 64, and 13.7% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 40 years. For every 100 females there were 97.3 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 95.0 males.

The median income for a household in the CDP was \$34,507, and the median income for a family was \$37,656. Males had a median income of \$32,083 versus \$25,424 for females. The per capita income for the CDP was \$16,370. About 13.4% of families and 20.0% of the population were below the poverty line, including 32.3% of those under age 18 and 1.3% of those age 65 or over.

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"What do you think of that floor plan?"

"What is it?"

"That's the house I used in several of my stories. It's a Fleetwood, Beacon Hill series, floor plan D. The reason I like it is that we could use that big room on the left as your sewing room and put in 2 fireplaces. I can convert the one bedroom into an optional study and we'll still have 2 bedrooms."

"I don't want a sliding door in the activity room."

"Then don't get it, there is an option for a regular door and window. You can also put in that optional window for more light. What I'd like to do is build a basement/shelter deep under ground and put 8' risers on it to set the home on. We can anchor the house to the rises and add those wind straps."

"We're going to have to use bottled gas that far out in the country."

"I know, but that raises a real question. Our vehicles are diesel. That means we can either have a diesel generator or a propane generator."

"Which one lasts the longest?"

"Probably the diesel, but it costs more."

"Don't worry about that, which one makes more sense?"

"If TSTHF, diesel fuel could be produced out of vegetable oils whereas I don't know where a person would get propane."

"You've answered your own question, haven't you?"

"I still want a large propane tank, just in case TSHTF. We could go for years on a large tank of gas."

"New tank?"

"We could probably get a good used, re-certified tank and have it buried. Writing my stories, I've looked around and seen all kinds of 30,000-gallon tanks."

"That sounds like a lot."

"It's probably a lifetime supply."

"How much diesel would you get?"

"Probably the same amount, 30,000 gallons and treat it. We'd also need a small tank of gasoline for things like a chainsaw, lawn mower, portable generator or what not."

"It sounds like you have it all figured out."

"I'll be honest, I have some ideas, but we've never had the money to implement them before. Things like getting the doctor to write prescriptions for a one year supply of drugs in 30 day increments we could rotate them out and keep them fresh. A few other things in the medical department too, like a 10 liter oxygen concentrator, a defibrillator and so forth."

"Bottled oxygen?"

"Maybe a couple of bottles, yes. Big bottles and a couple of small, portable bottles that could be refilled from the large bottles. I'd want to buy 2 of the ANDAIR AV-150s and one PT2 vertical blast door. We should buy several replacement filters while we're at it, bad things happen in 3s."

"Is that one of your old wives tales?"

"I guess maybe it is."

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I had no idea how hard it actually was to spend a million dollars. Think about it, how many of the various things a person might want to buy and could buy and NOT spend a million dollars. I made a list of how we spent the first million. I rounded the numbers, but it was, to say the least, interesting:

1. Paid off old house \$90,000.
2. Painted and put in new flooring \$10,000.
3. Dodge truck \$50,000.
4. Everyone's bills, \$50,000.
5. 20 acres \$100,000.
6. Basement \$20,000
7. ANDAIR including 2 AV-150, 6 filters, 1 PT2 door and shipping \$15,000.
8. Kohler 80REOZJB, diesel generator, installed \$35,000
9. 2 Used tanks \$40,000
10. New home, installed with options \$100,000
11. New furniture \$20,000
12. New Beemer \$60,000
13. The extra food \$5,000

That a lot, right? \$545,000, slightly over half of the money. I left out a few things that we didn't buy until after we moved:

14. One year supply of drugs for both of us \$15,000
15. Medical equipment and supplies \$15,000

16. Barrett M82A1 with Swarovski scope and ammo \$15,000
17. 2 ea. High Capacity Springfield Armory GI M1911 with extra magazines and 2 cases of very good ammo \$2,200
18. 2 ea. Browning High Power with extra magazines and 2 cases of very good ammo \$2,800
19. 2 ea. Springfield Armory Super Match rifles with Swarovski scopes and 20 magazines ea. And 4,000 rounds of Black Hill ammo (50/50) \$15,000
20. 2 ea. Remington 870s with mag extensions, synthetic stocks ghost ring sights and 1,000 rounds each of 00 and slugs \$2,000
21. 2 each Bushmaster A3 with extra magazines and 10,000 rounds of ammo \$8,000
22. 3 Beretta stampedes with extra .45 Colt Ammo \$2,000
23. 2 Winchester rifles in .45 Colt and extra ammo \$2,000
24. Leather \$1,000

Total \$ 625,000

Buried in there somewhere was the CD V-717, more KIO3, and even a supply of Prussian Blue. But wait, there's more:

25. 30,000 gallons of diesel \$67,500
26. Pri treatments \$1,000
27. 27,000 gallons of propane \$47,250
28. 1 Castlebrook Barn, assembled \$40,000
29. Fencing \$10,000
30. 2 mares \$3,000
31. Tack \$2,000
32. Hay, straw and feed \$3,000
33. 2 beef \$200
34. Finishing/equipping shelter \$5,000

Grand total: \$805,950

(That vertical blast door had to be installed when they poured the walls. It was only later that the contractor pointed out that the ramp wasn't practical. We still ended up with a horizontal shelter door, at least we didn't have to wait for it to come from Switzerland.)

And that didn't count the pensions, disability and trust income, around \$63,000/year. When we didn't have money, that as most of our lives, we were always hoping to win the lottery. Once we had, we found we suddenly had more friends than we knew about. They didn't know I saw the movie and had the B..! and the H.....! down pat.

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On the first anniversary of our winning the lottery, when we had the second million, we bought \$1million worth of gold and silver, wholesale. In this case, wholesale was only slightly over the market. It depended on how much you bought and where you took delivery. We'd talked it over and decided that from then on out, we would put half of each check into gold and silver. The rest would be carefully invested or spent on preparedness supplies. I wanted 3 of those 6X Raptors and found a guy who said he could get them for me at \$7,500 each. I wrote him a check.

I expect by now everyone is thinking how selfish I was. Only because I've told about what I bought and what we bought, never mind what she bought. You've seen those long armed quilting machines, right? Sue had one that cost about \$15,000, not quite top of the line. Sharon had the top of the line at 17.5 grand and it didn't even take a lot of floor space. Just a space slightly larger than our 8' kitchen table plus room to walk around it! It would handle 12' of quilt. With a hand guided quilting machine the quilt is held stationary on rods and the machine head moves the needle across the quilt in the same manner as when you write a letter or draw a picture.

The machine head sits on a carriage and moves along a table by means of wheels slotted into tracks. It can also move along the carriage resulting in a 360 degree movement of the machine head over the quilt. The quilt top is rolled onto one rod and the backing is rolled onto a separate rod and both layers are then attached to a third "take up" rod with the batting positioned in the middle. The three layers are then gently tensioned to create a smooth surface for quilting. As the quilting is completed the quilted layers are rolled onto the take up rod to advance a fresh unquilted area.

The ideal way to achieve a square flat result, with the minimum stress being placed on the patchwork top during the quilting, is to have sufficient backing fabric to be able to attach this to the take up roller by itself and then layer the batting and quilt over this tensioned base.

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Most people would conclude that we were set for life. When I wasn't typing, I was either changing out cartridges in my magazines or counting our gold and silver. We also ate out, a lot. I could have had genuine Colts, but the Berettas were fine with me. I got all 3 for the price of one Colt. Did I miss anything? By golly, I did, the suppressors, but I'll bet you knew that didn't you? Not on the Barrett, I didn't want to void the warranty. I bought one, but was afraid to install it. I had 1,000 rounds of match grade .50BMG; I wanted 1,000 rounds of .50BMG Raufoss. You'd be surprised what you can buy with 50 crisp 100-dollar bills. He said his name was John Doe, but I can tell you he was a Sergeant First Class (3 up and 2 down).

The CLOAK is a highly modified, silenced barrel assembly for the Ruger 10/22 series or Browning Buckmark Heavy Barrel rifles .22 caliber rifles. The silencer module of the CLOAK is cleverly disguised within a bored out, unported, stainless steel, heavy match barrel. The result is a silenced barrel assembly that delivers excellent sound reduction

and terminal ballistics with subsonic ammunition, but retains the stabilizing heft and original contour of today's popular .920 diameter bull barrels and delivers accuracy equal to the finest .22 LR match rifles. Available in a satin bead blast finish or Flat Black, the CLOAK is a versatile alternative to a ported barrel and integral silencer. Available as a turnkey product from Advanced Armaments. They weren't exactly cheap, but that included work on the trigger.

We won the lottery in January, 2007 and the first anniversary was at the beginning of the election season. For the Democrats, Obama was the better bet and John McCain was hanging in there for the Republicans. I had concluded a long time ago that it was six of one and a half dozen of the other. We never bothered to register to vote after we moved, hoping to avoid Jury Duty. (The list of names that is used to call people for jury service is created by combining the County's voter registration list and Arizona Department of Transportation records. Names are randomly selected from that master list by a computer program. Oops!)

So naturally, I get a summons for jury duty. I wrote on the form that I was hard of hearing and had memory problems, requesting to be excused. I got back a notice that said my excuse was unacceptable. Chit. So I show up at the appointed date and time. I caught a criminal trial, an ADW case. You probably been on jury duty and know the selection process. They pick some people to go into the court room and then the attorneys start to ask questions.

"Mr. Ott, do you have any firearms?"

"Speak up, I can't hear you."

"Do you have any firearms?"

"Oh, yeah, I've got a few. Just your usual assortment, a few pistols, some assault rifles and then there's my Baby."

"What kind of gun is your Baby?"

"Barrett, M82A1."

"I see. Do you perhaps belong to the National Rifle Association?"

"Life member since '64. Then in '97 I became a Benefactor member and in '06 became a Patron member."

"Have you heard anything about this case in the media?"

"Nope."

"Do you understand the charge against the defendant?"

"You said he pointed a gun at someone. Guns don't hurt people, people hurt people."

"Have you ever met the defendant, Mr. Martinez?"

"Hey, I ain't got nothing against Mexicans."

"I don't have any more questions your honor."

"Mr. Brown?"

"No questions your honor."

"What do you mean Preemptory Challenge, I answered all of the questions."

"The Prosecutor doesn't have to give a reason Mr. Ott, you're excused."

"How did you get out of jury duty?"

"Remember that case you got in Burbank? The ADW case where he discharged a firearm within the city limits?"

"Yes, I remember."

"It was an ADW case with a Hispanic defendant."

"And you told them about the NRA?"

"He asked. Plus he asked if I'd ever met the defendant and I protested that I didn't have anything against Mexicans."

I later got a letter saying I was permanently excused from Jury Duty due to a hearing impairment. For some reason, Sharon never got called.

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The Republican Convention selected John McCain and he selected George Allen as his running mate. The Democrat Convention selected Hillary Clinton and she selected Barack Obama as her running mate. Then the really dirty stuff began. It got so bad I quit watching the news, even Fox. I kept up by skimming the papers and wires, just like I'd always done. Didn't matter, we weren't registered. At least we weren't until we went shopping and there were people there signing up people. We both registered Republican. I think the only reason Hillary won was because of Obama. After 8 years of Bush, the public wasn't willing to go with a Republican, even a moderate.

Sharon had waited to get her Passport until it came with the chip. Mine was up for renewal in February 2009. We both had federally mandated uniform state driver's licenses and biometric passports. As close as we were to the Mexican border, we occasionally went to Nogales to shop.

A couple of times I caught some fellas cutting across our property, but when they saw the Winchester, they scooted. Yes, I was riding, and no, the horse wasn't named Selena. We were a fair distance from the border, at least 50 miles, so if they were illegals, they missed several chances at rides. Besides, we'd picked Whetstone for the remote area. Straight south of our place was the National Forrest.

The stock markets went crazy when the Democrats had the Congress AND the White House. Bush had started the draw down in July of 2007 and by the time he left office, all the troops, except for a small group of advisors, were out of Iraq and Afghanistan. An all out civil war had broken out in Iraq and as soon as Hillary was sworn in, she ordered the withdrawal of the remaining troops.

In 2006, the housing market began to slump despite what appeared to be a healthy economy. The market went over 12,000 and after the November elections began to slack off. It wasn't a rapid decline and it wasn't until the heating oil reserves were lower than expected raising the price of oil that it became important. Going into 2007 we were concerned. Then I went to the store with Sharon and spent \$1 on a quick pick and you know the rest. I gave Amy the \$1,000 it took to complete her BA and she got that job at the Lancaster Sheriff's Station.

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When we bought the hard currency in January of 2008, we hit the market about right. Gold had been hovering in the high 500s to mid 600s. A year later, the price in January was about \$800. We got the half million we planned to buy but it was substantially less than we thought we could get, in ounces. That still left us the other half and we sat down and talked about what might be a better investment than the stock market.

"One of the guys at Frugal's was talking about buying trade goods. He said gold and silver might be worthless. We could get another one year supply of drugs, increasing what we have to a 2 year supply. We have plenty of room in the barn. We could add an extra one year supply of livestock feed."

"If that's the case, we could stock up some extra food items, especially things that will be hard to find."

"What did you have in mind?"

"Coffee, cigarettes, and we could always put in another freezer and stock it."

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 2[/b]

"You know, on that TV show Jericho, they drove 90 miles just to get some Cipro. We should have both Cipro and Doxy. That letter I got from Chuck said that Doxy was the preferred treatment for some things, but only Cipro worked for others. I still have the email and I think I put it in one of my stories."

"How many cigarette cartons in a case?"

"A case is 60 cartons, so probably about \$1,800. We could get a case for me, Damon, Derek and Amy and a couple of cases of Marlboros to trade. If we're willing to pay the extra \$4 a carton, we could get them on the Res, they'd still be cheaper."

"Sit down and make a list, Gary. I'll do the same and we'll compare notes. Anything else?"

"Ammo. Maybe we could get a pretty good price if we bought it by the pallet loads. The most popular calibers would be 5.56, .308, 7.62x39, 9mm, .45ACP, 12 gauge and probably .357."

"What about other calibers?"

"We can get some .44 magnum and some 30-06. Oh, I probably ought to get more .45 Colt and some .45-70."

"You don't have a .45-70 rifle, do you?"

"Not yet. I was thinking about a Marlin 1895 Cowboy. I probably should buy a Marlin 1894 in .44 magnum too. I could get a Ruger Super Blackhawk to go with it."

"Why don't you buy some firearms for trade goods? Either the Russian or Chinese rifles would be good, they're cheap and both use that oddball ammo. You should be able to buy some good used .45s."

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I got together with a gun dealer and explained what I wanted to do. He said buying that many weapons all at once would possibly raise some eyebrows, but he'd see what he could come up with. As far as the ammo went, he suggested that if I bought enough, his distributor could offer reasonable, if not cheap, prices. I gave him a list of the calibers and told him about the Marlin rifles. He had both in stock and I took them home with me. He had to order the Ruger, but said it would only take a couple of days. He suggested a good holster with a strap and a separate belt that could be cut down to fit.

He went on to suggest the Mauser model 98 rifle in 8mm. He said if he could get a shipment of Collector grade rifles they might be cosmetically challenged (look like sh*t) but would be in good working order. Anything that wasn't he'd refurbish. He also said

the ammo was easy to come buy if I didn't mind European ammo. What the heck, I told him to try and get 100 rifles and not less than 2,000 rounds of ammo per rifle.

I suspect, but don't know, that he contacted Mitchell's Mauser's in Kalifornia and bought the rifles from them. When the weapons order was ready, I rented a Ryder truck and hauled most of it in one trip. I unloaded, with help, and went back for the rest. He had some Argentinean M1911s so I took 50 of those. I guess I should have applied for one of those collectors licenses. Sharon took care of the cigarettes and bought 2 cases of Kools, 5 cases of Marlboros and one case each of whatever the kids smoked.

She also bought army blankets, a couple of cases of razors and blades, shaving soap, combs, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hand soap and towels. Then got another chest type freezer and filled it with Black Angus beef. She must have bought 4 sides of beef, not all of it would fit in the new freezer. We spent 3 days just sealing the packages of meat in vacuum bags.

She also bought 25 cases (12 cans to the case) of coffee, 2 sizes of filters, pinto beans, long grained rice and assorted pasta plus about 30 cases of pasta sauce. We took a week or so off to catch a breather, and then got our stuff, the meds and several over the counter meds I hadn't thought of like Hydrocortisone cream, Tylenol, Neosporin, band-aids and assorted bandages.

We still had money and I bought each of the 4 kids the KI4U package, extra dosimeters, extra KIO3, Prussian Blue and a CD V-717. I called each of them and told them I planned to buy them a rifle and handgun for their protection and I'd either get what they wanted or something of my choice. Derek seemed to think the M9 Beretta was the hot ticket so that would be the handgun, I needed 5 of those. He also favored the M16A2. (I didn't.) They were illegal in Kalifornia anyway so I settled on the loaded standard M1A rifle with 20 magazines each and some of that Lake City overrun ammo. Sharon suggested that we get each family a 10/22 and a Remington 870. We invited them to come to Tucson, one family at a time.

Of course, that meant that Lorrie came with Amy, but we had expected that because Lorrie didn't drive. The M1As were equipped with a variable power scope and I had 2 cases of ammo for each rifle. There were 500 rounds of 9mm, 250 rounds of 00 buck and 10 bricks of Remington .22LR in solid and hollow point. I also gave each one of them a Rambo I and a sealed envelop containing \$500 in cash and 6 ounces of gold in 1/10 ounce coins.

The exception was Derek and Mary. In addition to the M1As, I got them each a Bushmaster A3 plus 20 magazines and 2,000 rounds of SS109 (per rifle). Derek already had Rambo II and Rambo III so I didn't get them knives.

We carefully explained to each of them that if/when TSHTF, they were to come to Tucson. Moreover, I'd keep an eye on the news and if things got to looking bad, we'd let them know. Sharon isn't the only neurotic in the family, you know.

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Whether they came to Tucson or not, the kids were prepared. I slipped each of them 10 Ben Franklins and told them to get a small gasoline generator, something to keep their refrigeration going if TSHTF. Lorrie didn't have much to say about David, I suspected their relationship was still going downhill. We had 9 grandchildren including the one I'd never met, Derek Jr.

The only places the US still had troops were South Korea and Japan. The Bush had been commissioned and replaced the Kitty Hawk. When Fox went around the world in 80 seconds all they talked about was regional conflicts and famines. After Hillary had been sworn in, I finally gave in and began to watch the news. According to CNN, the country had never been in better shape, although Lou Dobbs wasn't nearly as happy as the rest of the CNN crew. Neil Cavuto didn't sound nearly as upbeat as Lou.

We'd been hit with an inflationary spiral and the feds kept bumping the interest rate, usually ½ point at a time. The Prime Rate was at 10½. A person doesn't have to be an economist to know what that did to the housing market. If it was bad in late 2006 and 2007, by 2009, housing starts were at a record low, probably about what they'd been back in '39.

Hizbollah and Hamas had ganged up on Israel and Hamas was now using more sophisticated missiles, 4th hand Russian missiles. When I could connect to the Jerusalem Post or DEBKAFire, I tried to follow the situation in the Middle East. I also followed the London Times and the Guardian.

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"Have a nice ride?"

"No. Horses don't like me, you should know that by now. Somebody cut the fence, I've got to get some stuff and take my pickup down to fix it."

"Why would anyone do that?"

"I suppose so the steers would get out. I shouldn't be more than an hour, it's just 3 strands of wire."

"Would you like me to come along?"

"If you'd like to, sure. I think I'll take the wire back to the wood posts and run new wire between the posts. We'd better keep the steers in the dry lot for now. With Missy gone, we've lost our early warning system."

"There was an ad in the Citizen offering Rottweilers."

"They require too much attention, see any German Shepherds?"

"There are some breeders."

"I wouldn't mind having a pair of those."

"Have you every had a German Shepherd?"

"Once, a very long time ago. He was supposed to be a Shepherd-Collie mix, but you couldn't tell it by looking at him."

"What did you name him?"

"Rob Roy, Robbie for short."

"If we get Shepherds, I want them house broken and obedience trained."

"Fine by me, but I don't want them Guard Dog trained. Maybe a little, but only a little."

Sharon took care of that and got us 2 neutered male German Shepherds that were about 9 months old, house broken and had a minimum of obedience training. They would sit, lie down, and heel. They were good dogs, but not the pick of the litters, hence affordable. Their names were Max and Duke. Duke became attached to Sharon and Max my constant companion.

That day, I fixed the fence by myself and Sharon got Max and Duke. The remainder of the week was spent training me to be able to work with a trained dog. When the weather was nice, I rode my mare and when it was bad, Max and I would patrol the fence with the pickup.

Even with our exorbitant spending, we had money left over. The other half of our 40 acre plot plus the adjoining 40 acres came on the market so we dropped another 300 grand on 60 acres. You might be asking yourself why desert land would be so expensive. It came with water and mineral rights, that's why. We spent a fair amount replacing the fence up to what I called 'real' fence. Every 3rd post was a cedar post with 2 steel posts in between. While they were at it, we replaced the lower wire on our existing fence with pig wire.

The second 40 had a well and stock tank so we bought 3 Black Angus calves to feed to market weight. I had a contractor erect a sunroof so the cattle could get some shade during June through September when it was the warmest. I didn't want to breed hogs. It was easier to buy some feeders and bring them to market weight, so we discussed it and bought 6.

It turns out Max was an instinctive shepherd and once he recognized the boundaries we set on the cattle and hogs, he was good about keeping them away from the fence. I got a local rancher to seed 20 acres to produce alfalfa for hay. He planted and harvested it for half of the crop, we got 3 full cuttings. I also bought more straw for bedding and hired his son, Matt to muck the barn. About the only thing we were missing were chickens, but that only lasted until the spring of 2010 when the pullets became available.

One piece at a time, I was working in reverse. Most people my age are retired, whereas I was taking on more and more chores. My grandfather died at age 62 and my father was forced to retire at age 66. I would be 67 on 3/23/10 and was feeding cattle, hogs and chickens plus gathering and washing eggs. When the chickens got big enough, I also was blessed with butchering and plucking them. I have no idea how Sharon went about singeing the pin feathers, probably in the fireplace.

We only had 6 laying hens so it wasn't like a major poultry operation. We had about 60 chickens to butcher, figure a one year supply for the two of us. We didn't really have what a person would call a 'chicken house'. It was just a small shed with a fan to keep the air moving in the summer.

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In late July of 2010, North Korea tested a Taep'o-dong 2 which flew 12,000km into the South Pacific. Those 6 party talks were still stalled and it didn't look like they'd ever be resumed. Iran had generally ignored the west and the best estimate was they had enough Plutonium to produce about 6 nuclear weapons. The UK had decided on their next missile system to replace the Trident missiles they used on their Vanguard class submarines. Each sub carried 16 missiles and a total of 48 warheads. They were schedule to be retired circa 2024.

Tony Blair had confirmed that the Government would seek to update Britain's nuclear deterrent with a new generation of submarines that would cost between £15 and £20 billion.

The Prime Minister presented a White Paper approved by the Cabinet that recommended the replacement of Britain's fleet of four nuclear-armed submarines when they come to the end of their service in 2024.

Mr. Blair said that a new nuclear fleet would take 17 years to design, build and test so a decision would have to be taken next year.

He said that the final cost of the submarines would be between £15 and £20 billion and consume 3 per cent of the defense budget over the coming three decades.

The life of Britain's D5 Trident nuclear missiles, which are also used by the US, can be extended until 2042, the Prime Minister said, so no decision was needed on their future was needed now.

But he added that he would be writing to President Bush to seek American collaboration in developing the next generation of missiles.

In a concession to Labor backbenchers who oppose Britain's nuclear capabilities, he said that the fleet might only need three submarines, but that a final decision would depend on their design. Two submarines would not be enough to ensure that one is at sea at all times.

In another offer to rebel MPs, Mr. Blair said the plan also envisaged a 20 per cent reduction in the UK's stockpile of nuclear warheads: from 200 to 160.

"Ultimately, this decision is a judgment, a judgment about possible risks to our country and its security; and the place of the deterrent in thwarting those risks," he told the House Commons.

"The Government's judgment, on balance, is that though the Cold War is over, we cannot be certain in the decades ahead that a major nuclear threat to our strategic interests will not emerge."

Mr. Blair said that the nuclear ambitions of countries such as North Korea and Iran, and the potential connections between those regimes and international terrorism, meant that it would "be unwise and dangerous for Britain, alone of any of the nuclear powers, to give up its independent nuclear deterrent".

He criticized as naive the thought that Britain could persuade other countries to disarm by abandoning its nuclear program. "More likely, they would construe it as weakness," he said.

But he acknowledged the opposition that the Government is likely to incur in its commitment to the nuclear deterrent.

"There are perfectly respectable arguments against the judgment we have made. I both understand them and appreciate their force," he said.

"It is just that, in the final analysis, the risk of giving up something that has been one of the mainstays of our security since the War, and moreover doing so when the one certain thing about our world today is its uncertainty, is not a risk I feel we can responsibly take.

"Our independent nuclear deterrent is the ultimate insurance."

The Conservatives, on whose votes Labor may have to rely to approve the plan, offered their immediate support for a new nuclear fleet.

David Cameron said he agreed with the Government's White Paper "on substance and on timing" but urged that a decision on whether a fourth submarine is needed not be taken until 2020.

The replacement of the Trident fleet is expected to safeguard more than 15,000 jobs in Britain's defense and shipbuilding industries and was welcomed today by arms manufacturers and the submarine-building yard at Barrow, in Cumbria.

But it has already aroused significant criticism from anti-nuclear campaigners, a former Defense Minister and the Anglican Church. This summer 19 bishops and the Archbishop of Canterbury described Britain's weapons of mass destruction as "evil".

This morning the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), supported by a clutch of Labor backbenchers, launched an "Alternative White Paper", saying that nuclear weapons offered no deterrent against terrorism and that Britain should take the lead in multi-lateral nuclear disarmament by letting its nuclear program expire in 2024.

Labor rebels also spoke out against the short period of consultation before the House of Commons votes on the proposal – just three months – and the Government's intention to "whip" the vote on what should be a matter of conscience.

"If the government is really serious about taking into account the views of its own backbenchers and others, then they would extend the consultation timetable and also allow a free vote," said Linda Riordan, Labor MP for Halifax. "I suspect though, they have already made up their minds."

Michael Meacher, Labor MP for Oldham West and Royton, said: "If greater security is the defining factor, then the UK absolutely should not replace Trident. It answers no threats that we currently face and in fact creates more."

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I expect that Tony was probably in Paraguay, visiting George. There are obviously two kinds of people, the hawks and the doves. All of us want peace, but at what price? That was the separating factor as far as I was concerned, the price. I'm prepared for WW III, but if it's all the same to you, I'll pass. I can keep the equipment calibrated, just in case, but if we never have to use it, that's just fine.

After Hillary took over, we didn't hear much about Bush. Depending on which poll you believed, he was either a 'fine President' or the 'worst President in history'. He'd never be as popular as his father and we hadn't heard anything from Jeb in a couple of years. In my view, George had pretty well taken care of any chance Jeb had of getting elected President.

I can't get over how some people plan so far into the future. Blair had been talking, back in 2006, about plans for 2024. I suppose governments have to do that, airplanes and submarines take a long time to develop. CVN-21, the next carrier was only half designed in 2006. The plans were to order the carrier in 2007. With that much committed to the carrier, Hillary wouldn't dare to halt construction. They hadn't planned on ordering the next one until 2011 and the third by 2017. New Cruisers wouldn't be ordered until 2014 and 13 of the Zumwalt class destroyers had already been ordered as of 12/31/09.

With our only having troops in South Korean and Japan, I half expected Hillary to declare another peace dividend. If our military got any smaller, Cuba could invade us and take over the country. Except that Raul began making nice when it was apparent Fidel was dying. Good luck, Chavez got reelected and there was Ortega in Nicaragua. That gave us 3 Communist dominated countries in the Americas.

Young people may not remember, but Nikita said, "Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will live to bury you in your grave!" He later recanted and said, "I once said, 'We will bury you,' and I got into trouble with it. Of course we will not bury you with a shovel. Your own working class will bury you."

The only difference between a Liberal and a Socialist is the spelling, and you may quote me. Liberalism in America takes various forms, ranging from classical liberalism to social liberalism to neoliberalism. Classical liberalism (also called laissez-faire liberalism), is a doctrine stressing the importance of human rationality, individual property rights, natural rights, constitutional limitations of government, the protection of civil liberties, laissez-faire economic policy, and individual freedom from restraint as exemplified in the writings of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill.

Social liberalism is a political philosophy that emphasizes mutual collaboration through liberal institutions. Social liberalism, as a branch of liberalism, contends that society must protect liberty and opportunity for all citizens. In the process, it accepts some restrictions in economic affairs, such as anti-trust laws to combat economic oligopolies, regulatory bodies or minimum wage laws, intending to secure economic opportunities for all. It also expects legitimate governments to provide a basic level of welfare or workfare, health and education, supported by taxation, intended to enable the best use of the talents of the population, prevent revolution, or simply for the perceived public good.

In its US usage, neoliberalism is associated with some of these positions such as support for free trade and welfare reform, but not with opposition to Keynesianism or environmentalism. In the American context, for example, economist Brad DeLong is a prominent defender of neoliberalism, although he is a Keynesian, supporter of income redistribution, and fierce critic of the Bush Administration. In US usage, neoliberalism ("new liberalism") is commonly associated with the Third Way, aka social-democracy

under the New Public Management movement. Supporters of the US version of neoliberalism present it as a pragmatic position, focusing on "what works" and transcending debates between left and right, despite new liberalism's similitude to classical centre-of-left economic policies (such as has been traditional to 20th century Canada). It emerged in the 1980s as an alternative to both the heavily interventionist approach of the Democratic Party and the heavily pro-business (and often anti-government) approach of the Republican Party. Its leaders included the journalist Charlie Peters, the thinkers Robert Reich and Lester Thurow, and the politicians Gary Hart, Paul Tsongas, and Bill Bradley.

Not me, I'm a Republican, ergo, moderately conservative. Compared with Democrats, many conservatives believe in a more robust version of federalism with greater limitations placed upon federal power and a larger role reserved for the States. Following this view on federalism, conservatives often take a less expansive reading of congressional power under the commerce clause, such as in the opinion of William Rehnquist in *US v. Lopez* (handgun & ammo on school grounds-2005). A number of Republicans on the more libertarian wing wish for a more dramatic narrowing of commerce clause power by revisiting among cases, *Wickard v. Filburn* (239 bu. of excess wheat-1942), a case which held that growing wheat on a farm for consumption on the same farm fell under congressional power to "regulate commerce... among the several States..."

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I'm sure that most of you know that since 2005, grain producers have been experiencing decreasing yields. Australia lost much of its wheat crop and Louisiana is only slowly recovering from Katrina. Those areas they generally planted in rice couldn't be planted at all in 2006 because they still held sea water. It was only marginally better in 2007. Plus Minnesota had a crop problem in 2006. Iowa was in the process of building several new ethanol plants, one near Des Moines and another near New Hampton. New Hampton is 20 miles east of Charles City. There also a plant west of Charles City. The only question is, will they have enough corn for the ethanol plants?

Fifty years ago, a farmer was falling down happy if he got 100 bu/acre. Now they're disappointed if it's only 150 bu/acre, are marginally happy with 175 bu/acre and shoot for 200bu/acre. In 2004, Iowa produced 183bu/acre and in 2005 it fell off to 173bu/acre. In fact, since 1993, Iowa corn yields have not fallen below 120 bushels per acre. For the last eight years (counting 2005), state-average corn yields have exceeded 140 bushels per acre. While Iowa has not experienced a statewide drought or weather disaster over this period, the weather conditions have not been what is typically considered ideal for crop production. Some individual farms probably got 200+bu/acre. Ethanol yield was now up to 2.8 gallons/bu.

As Hillary began her second year in office, I was thinking any war we fight will be in this hemisphere. Never mind the Iowa corn, although it became important as Venezuela slowly cut off our oil; we had a bright red Venezuela, a bright pink Nicaragua and Cuba

plus that mess in México. While the Shining Path has all but disappeared from Peru, a militant faction of Shining Path called Proseguir continued to be sporadically active in the region of the Ene and Apurimac valleys on the eastern slopes of the Andes, some 300 miles southeast of Lima.

At least one-third of the South and Central American countries had some Communist-Maoist elements. Maybe that was payback for our installing those right wing dictators over the years. American foreign policy seemed to follow the Monroe Doctrine as set out by Teddy Roosevelt, speak softly... Over the years, I'd lost track of all of those dictators and most of them had eventually been deposed. If you want a different perspective, watch 'The Wind and the Lion', starring Mulay Achmed Mohammed el-Raisuli the Magnificent and Candice Bergen. It was loosely based on the Barbary Wars; at least the Shores of Tripoli part was.

If they came by land, the Venezuelans would have to pass through Columbia, and then Panama and Costa Rica before they got to Nicaragua. From there they only had to pass through Guatemala to get to México. There were more Marxists in Guatemala. Cuba had been improving its military, buying weapons system from Russia. That included MiG-29s and SU-30s. The 2 Russian planes even looked similar. They could go up against F-15s, F-16s, F/A-18s and possibly the F-22. That depended on the skill of the pilot, and I'll put ours up against the Cubans any day, we have more money for fuel, hence more training.

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Most of us had no clue they were coming. Venezuela bought its way north using oil. The same oil now went to the Chinese who paid for it with American dollars. The dollar might be weak, but at this time it was still backed by the full faith and credit of the US Government. It also fueled an immense military machine. It included missiles from Russia and China, tanks and aircraft from the Russians as well as several new Sovremenny class Destroyers and 2 Slava class CGs, hull numbers 55 and 108. The purchase price included training of the crews.

Cuba had the T-90 tanks, and more, including upgraded old Soviet-made vehicles, tricked out with cannons, special armor, guns where there once were none, special maneuvering capacity, and other combat-ready assets to improve their firepower and self-protection abilities. A BMP armored troop transport vehicle, for example, had an added turret and a gun to boot. BTRs, amphibian transport units, had been outfitted with ZU-23 double anti-aircraft cannon.

Don't discount the Cubans, they fought in Angola and other places, even in Grenada. When we took Grenada in Operation Urgent Fury, we used Rangers and Marines, more than regular forces, and almost Special Forces and part of the Special Operations Command. Don't go looking for information on the Cuban military, you'll be disappointed. Wiki was last update in maybe 2005, 5 years ago. The earlier comment about the tricked out vehicles is a quote of they're current position, reference available.

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 3[/b]

Our active and reserve military forces number maybe 1.4 million active duty and 1.3 million reserves and National Guard, probably less with this peace dividend of Hillary's. It is still an all volunteer military, the Dems never got Rangel's bill out of committee. I won't say we'll never have another draft, but that takes time, time we probably won't have. It takes at least 4-6 weeks to call a person to duty, 3 months to train them and you end up with a trained, inexperienced soldier, sailor, airman or marine. They'll need at least 30 days in combat to begin to become truly effective. If they're defending they're homeland, you can give them extra points for determination, but nothing beats experience.

Hillary announced she was moving troops to Florida, the Gulf Coast and Mexican Border. Sharon and I were wondering if the illegal immigration problem had really gotten that bad. I should have checked the New York Times, they leaked the real story. A building Army was moving through southern Mexico and headed our way. A small fleet, consisting of 2 Guided Missile Cruisers and 6 Guided Missile Destroyers had assembled off the western coast of Cuba, spread out, as if in battle formation. Venezuela, it was rumored had acquired IRBMs and nuclear warheads.

For those of you that don't know, China has a policy of never being the first to strike. That's one reason why their nuclear force is as small as it is. Read about it here: <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/Book2006.pdf>

"What's your opinion on the New Assault Weapons ban?"

"Sharon, Leonidas said, 'Molon Labe!' – 'Come and take them!' It took her long enough to get it through Congress. I'm glad we got the trade goods when we did, they're going to be worth their weight in gold."

"Really?"

"Figuratively. I'd rather had Garand's or M1As, but at \$300 a pop, who's complaining? They were supposed to be rack grade, but I looked them over and they're a notch or two above that. You know, if Hitler had waited about 5 years before he started WW II, we'd probably all be speaking German. The New York Times says we're going to be invaded."

"Huh?"

"Apparently Hugo Chavez raised an Army and got some of those other Commie nations in South and Central America to join in. It sounded like they have a 2 million man Army moving through southern Mexico."

"Didn't you say that the US policy regarding the use of tactical nukes had eased? Won't we just bomb them?"

"According to the paper I read at the Federation of Atomic Scientists, we have loosened our policy. However, I doubt Hillary would go for a first strike. She'd more likely go to the UN. At least she's moving troops to the border, the Joint Chief's probably threatened a Coup if she didn't."

"We have the most powerful military in the world, they wouldn't dare."

"I wonder who is backing this, China, Russia or both? Russia wouldn't commit any of its Naval Forces, but China might commit those 3 SSBNs they built. They only have 12 warheads each but if they hit our 36 largest cities, we'd be in trouble. What's more, who would we retaliate against, Russia or China? Russia has almost as many boomers as we do."

"We'd wipe them out!"

"Who? I said we might not know who launched the missiles. They will both deny it, should it happen, so who are you going to blame? The government has all these dirty little secrets that they won't share with the public. It's gotten to the point that I don't believe anything they tell us."

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The German rifle's I had in the shelter were cleaned and oiled, ready to go. I built 2 racks holding 25 rifles per side and they didn't really take a lot of floor space in the armory. There were 300 cases of 8mm Mauser, 4 pallets, out in the shed. It came 900 rounds to the case and was made in Yugoslavia. It cost \$100 per case delivered. The dealer told me that the Mauser's were one grade above Mitchell's Collector grade. The only accessory was the bayonet and sheath. All 100 rifles had been inspected, head spaced gauged and any worn parts replaced. The bores were all very good to excellent. Hey, I bought what we could afford and I'll break even or even make a small profit when TSHTF.

I don't know how long it takes to move a 2 million man Army from Yucatán to our border, México isn't flush with interstates. They have some, the National Highway system, mostly built during the past 20 years. In 2010, PDR was still contesting the election. The current President remained under heavy guard, some 3 years plus after he was sworn in. His swearing in ceremony turned into fist fights.

They made much ado about Hillary and Obama getting elected. I'll tell you, same stuff, different day. When I was born Roosevelt was President, and I lived through Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, Bush and Clinton. It has always been same stuff, different day. My grandmother had a sign that said, Democrats always get us into wars and Republicans get us out. I'm sure she

would have been disappointed in Reagan and the Bushes. Although, until the Second Iraq War, we hadn't really had a war since Vietnam. And, Ford was President when the last of our troops left. The last declared war was WW II.

"Huh doh."

"Hey Dad, how are you?"

"Same stuff, different day. How about you?"

"I have a problem."

"Maybe I can help."

"You know how I told you when I got back from Iraq that I'd never serve on the Mexican Border?"

"Yeah, I remember, so what?"

"I've been activated to go to the Mexican Border."

"Did you see that piece in the New York Times?"

"No, what did it say?"

"Hugo Chavez has assembled an Army and has moved through Central American, picking up Marxists along the way. They're in southern Mexico with a 2 million man Army. I don't believe they want you for border security."

"Ok, I'll go. Say do Sharon and you want to move to Arkansas until this is all over?"

"You've seen our set up, right? Sharon and I have been accumulating trade goods, just in case. No, I think we'll stay for now, but thanks."

"Do you have body armor?"

"Can't buy the Interceptor, it's military only. I suppose we could try to get some Dragon Skin."

"You know what I think of that, don't you?"

"You don't like it. I could probably get by with a large, I have a 46" chest. I don't know about Sharon though, XXL large, might fit."

"Try Point Blank's SPIDER line, that comes in XXL large. If you can afford it, get extra plates."

"Do you want some for Mary?"

"She'd take a large."

"I'll get on the phone and make some calls. Can't say how long it might take, but I'll put a rush on it."

"Who was that?"

"Derek. He got activated to go to the Mexican Border. I've got to make some calls. We need 16 sets of body armor."

"What for?"

"Just in case. That gun dealer supplies the police at times, I think I'll start there. I'll be back in a couple of hours."

"Mr. Ott, more ammo?"

"I need 16 sets of Dragon Skin."

"What sizes?"

"2 XXL, 4 L, 4 M and 6 S."

"I'll have to make a call."

"Ok, I'll look around."

I spotted some .308 Black Hills ammo and got a dolly. I loaded up what he had, 4 cases of match and 2 of hunting. He still had .357 and I said, "What the hell" and added it to the cart.

"Got any .223?"

"How many cases?"

"Do you have 6?"

"Sure. Anything else?"

"12 gauge?"

"Remington 12-pellet, like always? I have 2 cases, but I can get more."

"Slugs?"

"One case."

"Order me 2 more cases of 00, and one more case of slugs. I could use more .44 magnum, .45-70 and .45 Colt."

"Regular or Cowboy loads?"

"Regular. Say, 1,000 rounds of each. What's the story on the vests?"

"I should have them tomorrow or the next day. Someone mentioned having read the New York Times, what was that about?"

"They seem to think we're going to be invaded by South and Central American Marxists."

"You don't say."

"I do say. My son is in the National Guard. He called this morning and he's been activated. Rush deal, they aren't even sending them for training."

"Who is all the armor for?"

"Sharon and me. Damon and his 3 kids, Derek's wife Mary and their two kids. Lorrie and her son plus Amy and her 2 kids (and Derek)."

"The total is..."

"I don't want to know; I'll sign the check, you can fill it in."

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It was all about jumping though hoops. I had to take delivery of the vests, repack them and reship them. It would have been nice if they could have just shipped them direct from the factory. I'm a fan of the Dragon Skin flexible body armor, but I've never used body armor and Derek was all in favor of the stuff Point Blank made. It was our money so we bought what I liked. The NIJ liked it too and one General said, off the record, that Dragon Skin was 2 generations ahead of Interceptor.

To change the subject, the odds of winning the Lottery are about 1 in 175,711,536, never mind what they claim. And, just when a person finally has it figured out, they change it. We had stopped buying Lottery tickets a long time before and then, for a buck, I had over \$50 million spread over a 26 year period. The government got half, naturally. We had to have a CPA just to figure the tax returns out. Expensive at half the price.

"Hey kid."

"Hi Dad."

"Didn't leave yet?"

"Not yet, why?"

"I bought you a present. They came in today around noon, you'll have them tomorrow. FedEx. There one each for you and Mary and small sizes for the kids."

"What did you get?"

"Dragon Skin. You can wear it under your Interceptor. Better yet, leave the plates out of the Interceptor."

"I will not."

"You will not what, wear the Dragon Skin or leave the plates out of the Interceptor."

"Right."

"That mean you won't get the free jacket and hat."

"Huh?"

"When your life is saved by Dragon Skin armor, they give you a fancy jacket and hat that says your life was saved by Dragon Skin. At least try it on and see what you think. Are you going as a tanker or a maintenance man?"

"Maintenance."

"Good, you'll be behind the lines."

"We'll be within artillery range."

"You gonna take Rambo this time?"

"I think I'll take Rambo III, maybe I'll get a chance to reintroduce them to the Bowie Knife."

"Sounds good. I picked up a little more ammo, if you run out, come here."

"We're going to Ft. Huachuca."

"Get on state route 90 and come up for supper, when you can."

"I'll see. Gotta go Dad, thanks for calling."

"Bye."

"Hey, what you doing?"

"Hi Dad."

"I'm send you a package today FedEx. It contains vests for you and each of your kids."

"Ammo vests?"

"Dragon Skin, body armor."

"Why?"

"Read yesterday's New York Times? Venezuela and other South and Central American Countries are fixing to invade us."

"No way."

"Way. 2 million man army in southern México. Do you have enough ammo?"

"I have whatever you gave me."

"If I send you some money, can you get more?"

"I suppose. Maybe I'd better buy extra food, too."

"Ok, I'll send money for that too. What are you driving?"

"I got an old clunker."

"Gas?"

"Yeah."

"Can you find something used that runs on E-85?"

"I can look."

"Find one and call me from the dealer. He and I can work something out."

"Are you serious?"

"As a heart attack. Read the paper. Call me when you find a ride."

"Sharon, you call Lorrie and let her know we're sending her a package. It's for her and Amy. I'd better include some money for food, how much would you suggest?"

"Better send them \$1,000 each. Are you sending cash?"

"It's going FedEx, why not?"

"Ok, I'll tell her to look for two envelopes."

I put a grand in each of four envelopes, might as well send them all money for food. I wrote their name and 'food money' on the envelopes and finished wrapping the packages. While Sharon talked to Lorrie, I headed to Tucson, I wanted the stuff to go out today. I took a pocketful of money, I had no idea how much the shipping would be.

"I'm back."

"Where did you go?"

"Tucson. I wanted those packages to go out today so they could be delivered tomorrow."

"What did you get?"

"Here, try this on."

"What is it?"

"A bulletproof vest, Dragon Skin."

"It's a little snug and heavy as hell."

"Can you close it?"

"Yes."

"Hopefully we won't need them, but I got everyone in the family Dragon Skin body armor, plus one extra set. I picked up some extra ammo while I was at it. I sent each of the kids a grand for food."

"What did you say to Damon? I thought I heard something about a car."

"You did. I asked what he was driving and he still has that junker. I told him to go look for a good used flexible fuel vehicle. Don't worry, we'll give the other kids the same

amount of money. That's the least of our worries, unless the lottery stops paying. And even then, we have the gold and silver in the safe in the shelter."

"I never thought we'd end up living in a mobile home after we won the Lottery."

"What, you don't like the house? I think it's nice. In a way, it's good that I spread it out over 26 years, we won't go through it like most people do."

"If they keep paying."

"Yeah, I guess. We've gotten 4 payments and half of that is in the safe in gold and silver. We could go an awful long time on that, not counting the trade goods we've acquired."

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Once the Times broke the story, the cable news channels were all over it. The most critical was Fox, the 'Republican Channel'. CNN was quick to suggest it was a misunderstanding and they hoped those troops weren't in southern México for anything other than to support the Mexican government. I didn't usually watch MSNBC, I didn't care for their correspondents.

I still kept up the patrols with Max. For some reason, we hadn't seen anyone for at least a month. When it was warm enough, I put the feeder cattle on the 40 acres. There wasn't much for them to eat, but I had livestock feed and hay. They didn't really stray far from the water tank when it got really warm out. I felt sorry for Derek, it's hot at Ft. Huachuca in the summer. At least Hillary called the troops up before the invasion, that was probably Obama's idea. I figured we had most of the summer before they started to pour in, it gets hot on the Sonoran desert.

Damon finally found a car and called. I told him to cut the chit and really tell me what the car was like. It had 50,000 miles on it, was 2 years old, needed tires, yadda, yadda. I talked to the dealer and told him I was paying cash and he could cut the baloney, I wanted his bottom line. While I had him on the phone, I was looking up the blue book on the computer. He gave me a price and I reminded him that the car needed tires. Well, he guessed he could throw those in. I told him the car must be like new, he was asking high blue book. It was, he claimed, immaculate. I told him if he put on all new belts and hoses, at no charge, along with the tires, he had a deal.

I asked Damon if he'd test driven the vehicle. He admitted he hadn't. I told him to call me back when he had. Two hours later, the phone rang. When they went to start the car for the test drive, the battery was dead. Other than that, the car was fine. I told the dealer the deal had to include a new battery and my bank would wire the money to his bank. He agreed. Probably made about \$4,000 clear on the deal. You know what politicians and reporters did in their former lives? They were unemployed lawyers who sold used cars!

Sharon got to call Amy and tell her to trade cars. Any brand she wanted as long as it was flexible fuel and didn't cost more than Damon's car. I only knew one thing wrong with those flex fuel vehicles, they used a computer. Lorrie didn't drive and we'd give her cash, but there was still Derek and Mary. Mary wanted a pickup. I suggested she find one with good tires and a diesel or flex fuel engine, preferably diesel. There's no end to this keeping the kid's even, Amy's car cost 'only a little' more than Damon's. Mary's pickup was in the ballpark with Amy's car, but it needed tires, belts, hoses and so forth.

In the end, it was Damon who got a check evening things out. I suggested he buy more food and ammo and put up enough 5 gallons cans of gas or E-85 to get him to Tucson. We put Lorrie's money into gold and silver and it went into the safe. We had to pay a little more, but that's what Sharon wanted. I made up one of those spreadsheets I like to make and started to inventory the contents of the shelter and other buildings.

I used the rule of thumb that a barrel begins to lose its accuracy around 5,000 rounds, sooner if you get it too hot too often. An example is the testing that Surefire did with the M4-FA suppressor. They put 1,500 rounds through the barrel as fast as they could change magazines. The suppressor was white hot, the barrel was shot out. You can read about it on their website. For those of you with an education, they have pictures.

Because of the extreme strength and durability of the high temp alloys that are used in the M4FA, Dueck was able to reduce the weight to a mere 17 ozs. while increasing the longevity. By comparison, the average .223 can in the industry weighs 24 ozs. "We fired 1,500 rounds on full-auto as fast as we could stuff 30-round mags into the gun. We totally ruined the barrel, but the suppressor was barely even marked," Dueck said.

Sadly, the US military issues a can that can't come remotely close to such performance. The average service life of the current issue SOPMOD can is barely 5,000 rounds, according to a highly placed operator in a Special Forces unit who spoke to Combat Tactics on condition of anonymity. "It's a piece of crap, but the manufacturer has political connections, so that's why we're stuck with it," the source said.

The SOPMOD specification is for 10,000 to 15,000 rounds of service life. Surefire guarantees a service life of 30,000 rounds with its M4FA suppressor. "Honestly, we haven't been able to make one fail yet," said Dueck. "But we're being conservative and rating it for 30,000 rounds."

I don't a want to be a tattletale, but I can tell you that the Knight's Armament suppressor weighs 24oz. It seems to be the standard SOPMOD can. On the other hand, it's cheaper than a Surefire suppressor. I'm sure that 6 of theirs cost more than one of Surefire M4-FAs.

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 4[b]

Remember this: Israel should prepare itself for a possible attack on the Jewish state with non-conventional weapons, Defense Minister Amir Peretz said Tuesday. "The fact that we are today facing Qassams and Katyushas should not make us forget the necessity to prepare for bigger threats in the future that could result in a war using non-conventional weapons," he told army radio.

He was referring to homemade rockets used against Israel by Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip and projectiles launched by Lebanon's Hezbollah during this summer's war with the Jewish state.

Israel, considered the sole if undeclared nuclear armed power in the Middle East, has followed with increasing concern arch-foe Iran's nuclear program following repeated threats by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to wipe the Jewish state off the map. Or this: Russia fired an interceptor missile on Tuesday to test out the country's missile defense system, a spokesman for Russia's space forces said Tuesday. Russian forces "carried out the launch of an interceptor missile from the Sary-Shagan range" in Kazakhstan, Alexei Kuznetsov, the spokesman, was quoted by ITAR-TASS news agency as saying.

Interceptor missiles are designed to shoot down enemy missiles during an attack. The last time Russia tested one was in 2004, Russian news agencies said.

"The launch came as part of a program aimed at prolonging the service life of interceptor missiles" and to test Russia's missile defenses, Kuznetsov said, quoted by Interfax-AVN.

Or this: Six world powers meeting in Paris Tuesday said they had failed to agree what sanctions to impose over Iran's refusal to halt sensitive nuclear work, as diplomats said that Russia was blocking a deal. Top diplomats from the five veto-wielding UN Security Council members -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- plus Germany and a European Union envoy, took part in the talks.

"We made substantive progress on the scope of the sanctions, targeting proliferation sensitive activities," the French foreign ministry, which hosted the meeting, said in a statement afterwards.

"We are now close to a conclusion of this process," it added, but said there were still "several outstanding issues".

Or this: US Defense Secretary designate Robert Gates said Tuesday he no longer favors military action to stop North Korea from producing more nuclear weapons. Gates said he believes Washington's current diplomatic strategy of engaging Pyongyang through six party talks is the best course of action.

"I've changed my view on how to deal with North Korea. I believe that clearly at this point the best course is the diplomatic one," he said in his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Or this: British Prime Minister Tony Blair's proposals presented to parliament to modernize Britain's nuclear deterrent were met with skepticism in the country's press on Tuesday, which asked: Why now? Left- and right-wing newspapers alike united to question the seemingly rushed decision-making process after the government said lawmakers would vote on the issue early next year, on a decision that will affect Britons for a generation.

The right-of-centre Daily Mail, no fan of the government, while stating its support for Britain retaining an independent nuclear deterrent asked in its editorial: "Why is the nation being bulldozed into a decision without a proper debate?"

"Aren't there vitally important questions we need answered before we are committed to this huge decision for a generation to come?"

"For a start, is the case totally proven that Britain still needs a deterrent?"

The Daily Telegraph – another right-of-centre supporter of retaining nuclear weapons – similarly asked: "Why the rush?"

"Mr. Blair claims it will take the better part of two decades to build replacement submarines and the process must start swiftly," the newspaper's editorial, which usually backs the main opposition Conservatives, read.

"The more skeptical will suspect that the entire timetable has been dictated by Mr. Blair's endless quest for a political legacy as he prepares to hand over power."

Maybe you don't read: <http://www.spacewar.com/> Maybe it would be a good idea if you started. Or, maybe not, only inquiring minds want to know what they have to say. You probably don't know that Mary Shelley wrote Frankenstein during the Little Ice Age because she was bored and couldn't go out due to the cold. Someone on TV claimed that Dracula and Frankenstein were both written at the same time. I don't think so, Shelley's book was first published in 1818 and Stoker's in 1897. Her book was reportedly the first Science Fiction work and she died in 1851.

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"I get so sick of those commercials, All they do is turn me off their products."

"What, a drug commercial?"

"Yeah those too. No this was some hair treatment that's worth \$500 that you can get for \$20 bucks. At least they don't spend $\frac{3}{4}$ of the commercial telling you why you shouldn't

use it. Take the drug, except if, yadda, yadda, yadda and be sure to tell your doctor if you have this, that or the other thing. If my doctor didn't already know everything wrong with me and know the meds I was on, I'd change doctors, not pills. Ever notice how when I'd start to ask the doctor about some drug, he begins referring to all the drugs on TV? Why don't they advertise guns and knives on TV or something a fella could really use?"

"Is the shelter all done?"

"Well, yeah, we have enough guns and ammo for a civil war, food for forever, the portable generator, chainsaw, gasoline and oh, chit."

"What did you forget?"

"Radios. I forgot to buy a ham radio and antennas. We need something for personal communications too, GMRS/FRS or CBs. I sure wish I could get my hands on some of the Spearheads and some SINCGARS, but I have no idea how to get in touch with SFC John Doe. I suppose we could go with business radios. Those Motorola CP200 and the CM300 would be just the ticket. Those are the radios like the one I bought for racing, except these models have 32 channels. They're available as VHF or UHF units. I think I prefer VHF, but I drive up to Tucson and see what they have."

"Can I ride along, I'd like to do some shopping?"

"You should drive your car and we can get the radios installed while we're there. I might add a 2-meter radio too, I guess it depends on what I can find."

"When do you want to go?"

"Tomorrow, I call AES in Las Vegas and order the TS-2000s and antennas today."

"What's that?"

"It's a base station that you can use in your car. We'll have to add a second battery and another alternator to the Beemer, it draws about 23 amps."

I had to get the antenna I wanted from HRO, AES didn't carry it. I was happy now we hadn't spent all the money, between the kids and the radios, we were burning through a bunch. The utility company didn't have a 100' pine pole, they had to order it and I had to wait some more. I realized that by writing about the various options in my fiction, I had finally figured out how I wanted to do things. Tucson, hadn't been the best choice, it would depend on whether our troops could stop them at the border. What's the range of a 155mm howitzer? Really? Maybe I'd better buy another Bible.

That Senate confirmation hearing for Gates lasted about 2 minutes. The only thing they wanted to know was if we were winning in Iraq and he said, "No Sir." Then they asked

if he were going to do the same thing and he said he would be talking to military leaders. Hillary replaced him, of course, with someone who thought war was a last resort to everything. It must have been tough for her to call up the troops.

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"Hi Dad, what's for supper?"

"You should have called, we're having goulash. Sharon likes any excuse to break out steaks."

"I didn't know, sorry."

"We bought 60 acres."

"You've got more land?"

"We're up to 80 acres. We'd probably have more if we hadn't bought everyone a different vehicle. This sand is only worth about \$200 an acre, but by the time you buy the mineral rights and the water rights, it goes for about \$5,000."

"Did you buy any new guns?"

"Did I have the Mauser's?"

"What Mauser's?"

"I guess I didn't. I bought 100 Mauser 98s for trade goods. Got 4 pallets of ammo in the shed. Bought some Marlins, .45-70, .44 magnum and a Super Blackhawk."

"What barrel length?"

"The Ruger? 7½".

"Did you buy a Blackhawk, too?"

"No, but maybe I should, I have a ton of .357 magnum ammo. Maybe get a Marlin 1894C while I'm at it. Are we winning the war?"

"It hasn't started."

"We got everyone straightened out on vehicles, flex fuel or diesel."

"I heard."

"Got radios for the shelter and the vehicles."

"What did you get?"

"Kenwood TS-2000X plus SSB CBs and Motorola CM300s. Got a bunch of the Motorola VHF CP200s and some GMRS/FRS made by ICOM. Had to add a battery and extra alternator to the Beemer."

"Think you have enough radios?"

"Sure would like some SINCGARS and some of those Spearheads."

"Yeah, the people in Hell want ice water."

"When is the war going to start?"

"Probably once it cools down. Unless we nuke 'em."

"We might not do that."

"Why not?"

"I don't know, maybe Russia sold some missiles to Cuba?"

"It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States."

"Hey, I heard that live."

"You probably heard Lincoln deliver the Gettysburg Address live."

"I'm not THAT old. You may be right about nuking those people, as long as we did it in México."

"Well, I've got to get back, I wish I could stay, but I can't. My CO asked me if I wanted back on the line today. He offered me either my own tank or my own gun crew if I wanted a Paladin."

"What did you say?"

"Too late, so sad, and get bent. I'm getting too old for that front line crap, Dad. Plus, I've seen what kind of maintenance the tanks need."

"Keep your powder dry and watch your six, kid."

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It was different, yet the same. The only difference was the enemies we faced. That said, it was obvious that Russia and China were both supplying the Marxist countries in South, Central and North America. Check you maps, México is a North American Country. I was beginning to believe that the only thing that could save us from an invasion was a natural disaster because I didn't really believe that Broom Hillary would use nukes on México. It was about then that I thought of Ron and his statement, be careful what you wish for, God has a sense of humor.

Sharon hired a local to help her with the garden and me with the livestock. I'd picked up a hitch in my get along and wasn't riding now. I also had trouble deciding who was in charge, Max, Duke or Sharon. Having 80 acres was good because it allowed me to hire a contractor to put in a range. He graded a good backstop and put in a gravel covered road to the various targets. I had them set up every 100 yards all the way from 100 to 1,000 yards. I also put in a pistol range that was 50' deep. It included a power driven target system that allowed me to move the target in and out.

I wasn't really that good of a shot, but over the years, and since I'd had some really good guns, I'd learned a little patience. Getting the breathing exercise down pat also helped. But, try as I might, I couldn't really do a good job on the failure to stop drill. On the other hand, I had ammo to burn, so I spent as much time as I could stand on the range. About the best I could manage with a rifle was 2MOA. At 1,000 yards, that meant that not all of the shots were in the paper. My primary problem seemed to be managing the recoil. My first shot was always spot on, but after...

"I planted extra this year, Gary. If we do have a war, food might be difficult to get."

"What's in all of these boxes?"

"Canned vegetables, we need to get them to the shelter."

"I suppose I could use the 2 wheeler to get them to the hatch. But, you'd have to put them in the basket and lower the winch, probably 2 or 3 boxes at a time. Then I could use a 2 wheeler to move them to the shelter. Where are the potatoes and onions?"

"Out in the shed. We only put the potatoes in 50# bags, they're pretty heavy."

"We're going to have to have help."

"I thought you didn't want anyone else to know about the shelter."

"I don't. Damon's kids should be back in school or whatever, maybe he'd drive down. I want to see that vehicle of his anyway."

"Call him and see."

"Damon, this is your Dad, what are you doing?"

"Hi Dad, just taking care of my Guinea Pigs, why?"

"Sharon and I need some help down here. How about you drive down and give us a hand."

"I'd love to but my vehicle isn't running."

"What's wrong with it?"

"I had an accident."

"That's why you have insurance."

"But it was my fault and I didn't have collision insurance. Anyway, I couldn't get it fixed."

"How come this is the first we've heard of it?"

"I didn't want to upset you."

"How do you think I feel now?"

"Upset?"

"Madder than a wet hen! Whatever that means. Listen, I want you to make reservations and get on a plane and fly to Tucson. Let me know how much and I'll have Matt give you the money out of our checking account."

"I'm sorry."

"So am I. Call me back and I'll call Matt."

I was more like my father than I ever wanted to be. If it got much worse, I'd be a full fledged *sshole. I am beginning to believe that that's what having money does to a person, but I could be wrong, I usually am. I'd always wanted a Hummer, but they quit building them in 2006 and I had other things on my mind when we won the Lottery. Besides, I could buy 3 Dodge RAM's for the price of one H1 Alpha.

When Damon called back, I told him to sell the car for whatever he could get for it. I also told him to get to Charles City anyway he could and Matt would have cash for his ticket and a little spending money. I wanted him to package all of his guns and ammo and ship them to my gun dealer. He could use a gun dealer in Mason City to handle the shipment. I gave him the dealer's name, address and phone number and told him he'd be happy if he complied with my wishes.

My Dodge only had about 32,000 miles on the odometer and the dealer in Tucson did all of the maintenance. For all practical purposes, it was a new truck. After I talked to Matt, I made a service appointment to have the truck gone over and the injectors cleaned, brakes checked and belts and hoses replaced. I also planned to put on new run flat tires after the dealer finished with the vehicle.

While they were working on the truck, I picked out a new one and explained all the extras I wanted. They could move the wheelchair lift, add winches front and back, extra generator or alternator, spare battery, bed liner and auxiliary fuel tanks. I also got the roll bar and sports lights. I had taken the seats for the old truck with me and they reinstalled them. This time, I got the Maximum Cab and the 8' bed, an option that wasn't available in 2007. When the truck was ready, Sharon drove me to Tucson and I got them to remove the back seat and put them in the bed. She went home and I stayed over because Damon would arrive the next day.

That gave me time to really look around town and check out the gun dealers. There is no such thing as having too many guns. I managed to pick up 6 loaded standard M1As and extra magazines. I had them equipped with Leupold Mark 4 3.5-10x40mm LR/T scopes because they included the bullet drop compensator for a .308 in the 168 grain bullet weight (PN 54420). I also ordered and paid for 60 500-round cases of Black Hills ammo, two-thirds of it in 168 grain match and the remainder in the 165 grain SPBT, drop shipped to our home. The new pickup was getting to be expensive. I also stopped by my usual dealer and picked up Damon's guns. He only charged me \$10 a gun for a handling charge.

"Did you trade trucks?"

"Nope."

"But, you had a 2007."

"Yep."

"Did you pick up my guns?"

"Yep. They're right behind the seat in that box that's mounted there."

"What did you do with the seats?"

"They're in the truck bed."

"Why?"

"So the dealer can put them back in when I get rid of the truck."

"That box is locked."

"It just looks locked. It's not if you know the secret. I used a type of trigger lock."

"What's in those boxes?"

"You sure ask a lot of questions. What do the boxes say?"

"Springfield Armory."

"I doubt they contain Winchesters."

"You bought more M1As?"

"Damon, it's like eating peanuts or potato chips, you never know when to stop."

"I'm sorry about the car."

"Forget it. I'm not going to buy you another car. I'm going to loan you my old pickup. I'll keep it in my name and pay the insurance and keep it licensed in Arizona. If you're willing, I'd like you to drive it back home and get all of your stuff. I want you to move here."

"Why?"

"Sharon and I are getting old and need help. I'd rather pay you than a stranger. I can do it in cash, under the table and also provide you with housing."

"Live with you?"

"No, I was thinking about the low end of the Beacon Hill series, a singlewide home. Either 2 or 3 bedroom, depending on what you want. Probably floor plan A, it would give you a guest bedroom and a rat room. I'd probably get the stretch models and put one in for each of the four of you."

"Don't hurt your arm slapping yourself on the back."

"Or, I can take you back to the airport and buy you a one way ticket home."

"Are you mad at me?"

"I'm angry that you didn't call me and tell me about the accident. I'm not going to put you on foot unless you decide to go home. If you do, you're on your own. My old RAM is in perfect shape and I had the dealer go through it. I even put on new tires although the old ones still had some mileage left on them. They're in the shed because you never know when you might need a tire."

"How come you live in a mobile home when you have as much money as you do?"

"One roof is as good as another. We've been saving money every year, setting something aside in case of a rainy day or whatever."

"Are we really going to war?"

"I don't know. Ask Derek when he shows up some night for supper."

"Where is he?"

"Ft. Huachuca, just north of the border."

"How far from the border?"

"Probably within artillery range, assuming the opposition got artillery up to the border."

"Why there?"

"Main highway up to Nogales. If they're moving equipment, I'd expect them to use their major highways. That's why we built our interstate highway system. Their Highway 15 runs all the way from Mexico City to Nogales. It changes number in Arizona to I-19 that goes into Tucson where it joins up with I-10."

"How far is that?"

"About 63 miles. Whetstone is 45 miles east of Tucson. We're about 3 miles out of town."

"How far to the border?"

"Maybe 50 miles."

"You don't think maybe you should move?"

"Hey, we're close to Tombstone and Tucson. I can't think of a better place to live. It's dry and hot in the summer and pretty reasonable in the winter. If we wanted to go to Phoenix, we could be there in about 3 hours. With all the planes we have, we can bomb them back to the Stone Age. They even brought back napalm for the war in Iraq, so we can fry them if we have to. Maybe use some of those MOABs and blow them all to Hell with non-nuclear bombs. They drop those from C-130 Combat Talons."

"I don't think they built any more of the MOABs."

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 5[b]

"They didn't use any in Iraq, but that doesn't mean they haven't built some or that they are doing so at the moment. It beat the hell out of using nuclear weapons. We don't want to go down that road because I'm not so sure we really know what the other side has."

"Are you still having troubles with illegals?"

"Hasn't been anyone on the place since I got Max. You don't know about the dogs, do you?"

"What dogs?"

"We've got 2 German Shepherds, Duke and Max. Duke is Sharon's dog and Max is mine. We got them cheap because their ears didn't stand up right."

"I guess I'll stay."

"Good, how much is the minimum wage these days?"

"I don't know."

"I'll pay you the same as we paid the hired hand, \$10 an hour, is that ok?"

"Cash?"

"Cash, gold or silver, take your pick."

"So how do you get in and out of the shelter?"

"Do you remember that wheelchair lift my dad got for Gayle's wheelchair?"

"Vaguely, why?"

"I have the same setup in the back of the truck for my wheelchair. I also have a similar rig to lower the wheelchair to the shelter passageway. With that in mind, I had a chair built with seatbelt clips like are on the chair. Neither Sharon or I can climb down the ladder. I made the control with a control cable long enough so we can let ourselves down. The cover is big enough for most things to be let down to the shelter that way, but someone still has to haul them and put them away."

"What else would I do?"

"Feed the livestock and muck the stalls. I got a 2N Ford tractor and spreader to spread the manure and pull a wagon. That all the equipment we have. There are 3 Angus feeders and 6 hogs. We also have 2 horses and I'll get you one."

"No lawn to mow?"

"Desert landscaping. We're at the dealer's. Here are the keys to the truck. Follow me home."

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It made more sense to put in all the plumbing in one fell swoop. When I selected the generator, I got one that would produce ~300 amps, probably figuring on having some of the kids here some day. It burned anywhere from 2.1 to 6.1gph. At full power, we had enough fuel for 4,900+ hours. I figure we'd probably use closer to the 2.1gph and have enough power for 14,000+ hours. We had both conventional air conditioning and a swamp cooler. However, we mostly used the swamp cooler because the only time the humidity got high was during the monsoon season (winter).

We only planned to put in 1 home the fall of 2010. We wanted to wait until January to buy the other 3. Of course, we no sooner got Damon's house in than the opposing forces hit the border. I got a deal on gun safes and bought 4. I also told the Fleetwood dealer I want 3 more homes delivered come January when I could pay cash. He told me that he couldn't guarantee delivery next year because he didn't know how the war would go. He did, however, accept gold at the market price of \$900 an ounce. We ended up with all 4 homes, installed and ready to occupy.

Tucson was abuzz as they refurbished and redeployed F-14s and F-15s for bombing missions. Damon and I both proved to be right about the GBU-43s, we had some, but not a lot. The Army had tanks lined up 3 deep at the various places they attempted to cross the border. Between the MLRS, the tanks, the artillery and the bombs, the opposing force was stopped dead in their tracks.

The few times that Derek was able to get time off, he'd come up to his trailer and wash his clothes. I told him he could have Mary come out if he wanted, but he didn't. Finally when there was a lull in the fighting, she showed up about a day ahead of him. Amy and Lorrie had shown up sometime in late November, just before Thanksgiving. I was twice blessed, not only did we not have to put up with the grandchildren, we'd made a slight profit on the gold. Because it was individually packed, I could identify each purchase and the price I paid. (I used the LIFO system.)

With the initial success in the war, the markets soared and the price of precious metals fell. I was able to spend \$600,000 and acquire an additional 1,000 ounces of gold. I also purchased \$150,000 of silver (12,500 ounces). Maybe I'd better explain my thinking. In 2003, we'd kicked butts and took names. By 2006, we were losing the war in Iraq. I assumed that the worst I'd do was perhaps break even. We kept the remaining \$250,000 and the trust income in cash, just in case.

Making the profit on the gold was as much dumb luck as winning the lottery in the first place. I wasn't planning on making my fortune selling Mauser rifles and ammo either. I just wanted my investment back. It was substantial, \$60,000. However, if I had to choose between giving the guns and ammo away or needing to learn Spanish, Spanish lost.

"Hey kid, war over?"

"I wish, Dad."

"I'll bet you do. We don't hear much on the radio. I got the impression that we kicked their butts."

"We bombed and shelled them. They pulled back to regroup and reorganize. I think they'll be bringing up their SAMs. That will eliminate the low level bombing. You understand that they can track the B-2 bomber, don't you?"

"I saw a show on the History or Military Channel that showed the B-2s working their way around the radars."

"We lost a Nighthawk in Kosovo. On 27Mar99, during the Kosovo War, the 3rd Battalion of the 250th Missile Brigade under the command of Colonel Zoltán Dani, equipped with the SA-3 'GOA', downed the F-117. Reportedly the SA-3 used had been modified by Yugoslavia with thermal imaging and a laser rangefinder."

"I can't see us using a \$2 billion bomber, maybe they use more Combat Talons with MOABs."

"They ran out, but they're building more. I think we'll use the MRLS and the HIMARS. We can achieve a range of 300km with some of the TACMS rockets. They never have to leave Ft. Huachuca to fire their rockets. There are only 2 missiles in a M270 and 1 in a HIMARS."

"Well, we have the Paladin M106."

"Maybe 26-30km."

"So you think they're coming back?"

"You're kidding, right? They moved a lot of people up here and before we attacked them they had us outnumbered. ATM, we have everything patched up and ready, but I wouldn't count on it stay that way. It was mighty thin on the ammo for a while thanks to Billary and I've been working my guys in 18 hour shifts to fix things."

"Is Mary stay here or going back to Gassville?"

"She's leaving. You should give it some thought, if they broke through, they could be here in 90 minutes."

"And you can't get me anything more than what we have, right?"

"I can get you a few things, but nothing that will stand up against a tank. I checked and we don't have enough radios for our people so I can't get you those. What do you want, the usual?"

"If you read my stories, you know what I like."

"I'll see about the LAWs and hand grenades. Can't get you a heavy machine gun and Claymores are iffy, I've got one more source to check. Same source on the C-4, so you'll have to wait on that too."

"I don't suppose you have a cheat sheet on how to make a quick IED, do you?"

"Actually I do. Do you have any 155mm shells lying around?"

"Not that I know of. Can you get M136 AT4 rockets?"

"They're easier to get than LAWs. Want those instead?"

"Is the AT4 simpler?"

"Fewer movable parts. Basically point and shoot. They're color coded, I get you a chart on an index card."

"Do me a favor, if you would. I pay well, in gold for SINCGARS equipment, provided it works. The same thing goes for Spearheads, but if I don't get those, no problem. I'd like to have at least one SINCGARS for the shelter and preferably one for each vehicle. The man packs run on 12 volts, I rather have those."

"Is that what you do for entertainment at night, count your gold?"

"Not usually, it's locked up. Besides, it's a real pain in the butt for me to get into the shelter. I networked Sharon's computer with mine and the one in the shelter. The shelter computer has extra HDDs; everything on both of our computers is on the shelter computer."

"I would have thought you put in a big tower and rotor with beam antennas."

"Beam antennas have one problem, they're directional. Sure, they have a lot more gain, but you have to pay a price. Moreover, if we got an EMP, it might take out the rotor. I'm happy with what I have. The omni-direction antennas are far enough off the ground, I can hear whatever I want."

"So you'd just need a whip antenna if someone provided the SINGARS?"

"That's it. The coax is already there; when I paid that guy to run it, he suggested 6 cables of RG-213U. Some of them are spares. Say, make sure those radios are properly encoded. I'd like to listen to the war. Might give us a heads up if we need to bug out."

"You should have done that already."

"I have faith in the men and women of our armed forces."

"So do I, but I sent Mary home. We've already filled some of the body bags we brought."

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The war wasn't being fought along the entire border. Part of that border was river and much of our effort was being concentrated on the river crossings. Most people don't give much thought to bridges in normal times, but during a war, they're very important. Most of the border, from Kalifornia to El Paso, was either open or protected by the fence they never built. Yes, they passed the border fence initiative, but it never got funded.

Speaking of which, how many troops did the other side already have in the US? Were all of those illegals just looking for a better way of life? Yeah, I agree, not all of them were; some were drug dealers, others were coyotes and a few were probably terrorists. They even advertised on TV making claims about how much Hispanics contributed to the American economy.

The opposing forces got a second wind and moved in SAM installations before their second wave of attacks. Ft. Huachuca is the US Army Intelligence Center, you know, the oxymoron place. They have the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Training Battalion. Derek said they also had 'more than enough' PAC-III systems; I hope so. Sharon said that Derek was right, we should pack up and leave until the trouble at the border got settled.

"If we do that, we'll have to move anything of value to the shelter and do something to conceal the hatch."

"What, you're too cheap to get a motel in Phoenix for a few weeks?"

"There are issues, dear. We have to get someone to take care of the livestock; we'll have to take Damon, Lorrie and Amy and Phoenix isn't that far from the border. It will have to be a motel that accepts pets, we're not leaving Max and Duke here."

"I think this qualifies as a rainy day."

"When did it start raining?"

"You know what I mean."

Actually the hogs had been slaughtered and were in the freezers. The Angus cattle were right at market weight, ready to butcher. The only livestock we really had to worry about were the brood hens, er, baking hens and the horses. I suggested she find someone to board the horses and I could load a few things aboard our two trailers, with Damon's help.

"Put whatever you're not taking that has value in the shelter Damon. I want to take the portable generator, some of the medical equipment and a small assortment of guns and ammo with us. We'll lock down the hatch to the shelter and cover it over. I think our things should be ok there. What do you think?"

"I think you should put the gold and silver in a vault in Tucson."

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Hurricane winds rip apart nailed-together walls, and earthquakes shake houses so violently that a nail head can pull straight through a piece of plywood. Since we can't stop natural disasters, Bostitch engineer Ed Sutt has dedicated his career to designing a better nail. The result is the HurriQuake, and it has the perfect combination of features to withstand nature's darker moods. The bottom section is circled with angled barbs that resist pulling out in wind gusts up to 170 mph. This "ring shank" stops halfway up to leave the middle of the nail, which endures the most punishment during an earthquake, at its maximum thickness and strength. The blade-like facets of the nail's twisted top—the spiral shank—keep planks from wobbling, which weakens a joint. And the HurriQuake's head is 25 percent larger than average to better resist counter-sinking and pulling through. The best part: It costs only about \$15 more to build a house using HurriQuakes. \$45 per 4,000; <http://www.bostitch.com/> Popular Mechanic's best new product of 2006.

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Moving the gold and silver 40 odd miles to the west didn't impress me, it would just put it closer to the people trying to get across the border. Besides, we were talking a lot of concentrated weight. Had it all been gold, it would have run about 350 pounds, but much of it was silver, one ounce Liberties (also called the silver eagle) and 90% silver US coins. My final decision was to bury the hatch under 6" of soil, put down some plywood and stack some of the firewood there. It was, after all, right next to the back door and a likely place for a person to store extra firewood.

Up to this point, we'd only been attacked at our southern border, the one with México. A substantial portion of the 2nd Fleet was stationed in the Gulf. This prevented the

opposing forces from using their naval vessels until they decided to slip a wolf pack of Kilo class subs into the Gulf. The Chinese had purchased vast numbers of the Kilo class (636E) submarines from Russia. The last I'd heard, Russia hadn't finished filling China's order for 8 additional Kilos. You knew that India leased 2 of the Akula (Bars) fast attacks subs, I presume.

Meanwhile relations with Canada had continued to deteriorate. They had designated Quebec as a separate country within Canada about 4 years back. In early 2009, Canada further closed its border with the US. Some thought it was a delayed response to the US requiring biometric Passports, and requiring even Americans to show Passports to enter the country after 1/23/07. It should be obvious to any one why I longed for the old days when life was simpler. Not only were we trying to repel invaders, something that hadn't happened since 1812, we were fighting among ourselves over the right to choose v. the right to life, the environment v. the need for energy and whether or not the 2nd Amendment was an individual right.

I still think if Israel hadn't decided right at this moment in history to take out the Iranian nuclear reactors, what followed might not have happened. It started back in '06 with the Iraq Study Group. Their recommendations put our relations with Israel in the toilet. Plus they were angry that someone had confirmed they had a nuclear arsenal. Everyone knew it, but an American (SefDef Gates) confirmed it. Between Congress and the media, plus that ISG report, we ended up with our second Vietnam. The debate about who had been right and who had been wrong would continue into the 22nd century.

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We decided to take 4 rooms at a motel in Sedona, at least until we knew what was going on with the war. If we had to, we could go to Utah or even further north. The Desert Quail Inn allowed pets and had reasonable rates. We put a gun safe in each of the trailers and brought an assortment of weapons and ammo. I booked them through Orbitz. The ad said:

The Desert Quail Inn of Sedona, Arizona offers affordable luxury hotel/motel lodging accommodations in the Sedona's majestic red rock country.

Our affordable luxury accommodations feature charming southwest decor. Our king luxury rooms and Two Room Suite are equipped with in-room Jacuzzi's and fireplaces. All of our hotel accommodations offer coffee makers, hairdryer and full-size ironing board with iron.

Complimentary fresh fruit basket, coffee, tea, chocolate and USA Today newspaper are provided to all guests daily.

I saved about \$3 per room per night. Near as I could tell, they didn't have weekly or monthly rates. The rates improved when you rented 5 (not 4) rooms. Motels are the

same the world over and probably all use the same ad agency. Coffee was one of those little bags, plus 2 tea bags and 2 servings of hot chocolate. I knew and brought a case of coffee and all that other stuff they claimed came for free.

Unfortunately our bugging out like we did meant that we didn't get the stuff Derek said he'd get for us. I started to make the dirt thicker then decided if I did that, he might not leave the things when he came home and found us gone. He had our cell phone numbers, he could call us any time. No I didn't have a cell phone, but Sharon and Amy both did. She brought her lap top, and I got access to the internet so I could follow the news. When she took it back, I drove to Flagstaff and bought my own.

Anyway, I said earlier, what followed might not have happened. Israel took out the Iranian reactors. Egypt, Syria, Hizbollah, Jordan and HAMAS declared war on Israel. Syria wanted the Golan Heights back, Egypt wanted Gaza back and Jordan wanted the West Bank back. Hizbollah and HAMAS simply hated the Israelis. Iran didn't get involved, other than supplying the other countries and groups. The Israelis never lost a war that counted, up to the 34-day war. Their first bombs fell on Tehran, followed by the centers of government for Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. They might just as well use nukes, the whole world now officially knew they had them.

Immediately following, the cable news organizations stopped covering our war and started to cover the war in the Middle East. By the time they gave their first report, it was all but over. I didn't know we gave the Israelis that many cluster bombs! Eventually they ran out, but not before every Hizbollah camp and Palestinian camp was flatter than a pancake. Iran had launched missiles and one made it, hitting the Negev at Beer-Sheva north of Dimona.

"Oh, oh."

"What?"

"Israel nuked Iran, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon."

"They missed one."

"Which one?"

"Iraq."

"Yeah, huh. Well they don't have a military, all they have is a civil war."

"Officially?"

"Hillary said so."

"What's happening with our war?"

"I don't know, this one must be more interesting. I've got to get some stuff out of the trailers."

"What?"

"The survey meters, dosimeters, KIO3 and Prussian Blue. I'll ask at the office where their shelter is."

"Well?"

"They don't have one. We'd better pack up and go home."

"That's a half day's drive."

"I know it. I just hope we clear Phoenix."

"What's going on in Phoenix?"

"Jeez, Phoenix is the largest city in Arizona and if radical Muslims decide to blame us for what Israel did, they'll dig out those nukes and set them off all over the country."

"You're nuts."

"Probably, but we can discuss that when we get home. I'll go check us out, you get the girls and Damon to help pack everything. I want to be out of here in 30 minutes or less."

"The sign says 55mph when you're pulling a trailer."

"What sign?"

"The one you just flew past."

"A pickup won't fly at 70, it has to be really going fast to get airborne."

"Where are we?"

"Just getting to the Black Canyon Freeway."

"Phoenix? Already?"

"We made it. I don't see any mushroom cloud. I'll slow down to 60 until we pass the Superstition Highway."

"Is that the freeway to Mesa?"

"Yep. Once we're a little south of Phoenix, we should be in the clear, just in case."

"There doesn't seem to be much traffic."

"Strange. Maybe everyone went to church, it's Sunday. All the old folks are at Perkins eating breakfast."

"We're the old folks now."

"Well, I'm NOT stopping at Perkins."

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When we finally arrived at our place, Derek and another soldier were there just starting to put the soil back over the cover to the shelter.

"Wait, don't cover that."

"Why not?"

"You haven't heard?"

"Haven't heard what?"

"Israel nuked Iran, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. They also carpet bombed the Gaza Strip and Palestinian Camps with cluster bombs."

"We hadn't heard. I brought Randy to mount the whip on that pole and I set up the SINGARS in your shelter. I put the ordinance in the armory. There are 3 extra 12 volt SINGARS but no Spearheads. I took 4 ounces of gold."

"Go fire that radio up and see if you can get a report from your unit or anyone, it doesn't matter who."

"Where did you go?"

"Sedona. We were there for about 3 weeks when I heard about the Israel attacks."

"So why did you come home?"

"They didn't have a shelter. Hey I know you, your name is John Doe."

"Actually it's Randy Johnson. Shoot up all the Raufoss?"

"Nope. Do you have any of the money left?"

"Nope."

"Damon, please start putting all of our stuff into the shelter. Derek, can you help?"

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 6[/b]

http://www.bmw.com/com/en/index_narrowband.html?content=http://www.bmw.com/com/en/newvehicles/7series/sedan/2005/allfacts/engine_6c_diesel.html That's the information on Sharon's car, a series 7 BMW sedan with an 8 cylinder diesel engine.

"Do you want me to get on the radio or help Damon?"

"Yes, in that order."

"What's with all of the Mauser rifles?"

"Trade goods, for after the attacks."

"What attacks?"

"The terrorist attacks and for after we lose the war."

"We're not losing. They brought in Stealth Bombers and blew the crap out of them late last night. Early today, they flew in some of those Combat Talons and unloaded a bunch of MOABs. They also used a bunch of cluster bombs after that and it's all but over."

"Sez you."

"Sez me. They used CBU-75 Sadeye Anti-Personnel bombs. The Sadeye is a cluster bomb unit filled with 1,800 one-pound bomblets such as the BLU-26. The submunition is a cast steel shell with aerodynamic vanes and 0.7 pound of TNT in which 600 razor-sharp steel shards are imbedded. It can be equipped with fuses to explode upon impact, several yards above ground, or some time after landing. It is lethal up to about 40 feet. The CBU-75 has a total lethal area more than double that of a standard 2,000-pound bomb, the equivalent of 157 football fields. They used the above ground fuses."

"Ouch."

"Dad, they bombed New York. I called Mary and she's on her way. Randy, you and I have to report in."

This was one of those, 'Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition' moments. <http://my.execpc.com/~dschaaf/praise.html> Derek had to leave and that left Amy and Lorrie to help Damon unload the two trailers. They got the chair and let Sharon and me down first. She brewed some coffee and I turned on the radio and the TV. Derek was

right, two low yield bombs had been detonated in New York City. A high yield bomb was set off in Los Angeles in the harbor area and another in Puget Sound near Bremerton. One more bomb had gone off in the Chicago Loop.

Other than some possible fallout from Los Angeles, we should be ok. I put a battery in the CD V-717 and set it on the lowest range. I told Amy to tell Damon not to shut the door, we'd be going upstairs.

"You drive like a madman for almost 5 hours and now we're going upstairs?"

"They set off 5 bombs. It could have just as easily been Phoenix. The bombs in New York, LA and Bremerton make sense, but why bomb Chicago? And if Chicago, why in the Loop and not O'Hare?"

"Maybe they're not done."

Long Beach is 436 miles on a heading of west-northwest, 286.5°, from Tucson. If one assumed a wind speed of 15mph, it would take any fallout about 29 hours to reach Tucson and another 3 hours to reach us. Since the wind speed can vary, you should make a second calculation using 10mph, to get a window. The window in this case was 32 hours out to 48 hours. Allow me to make a suggestion. Identify the cities from which you may receive fallout and map them using: <http://www.indo.com/distance/> After that, you can compute the fallout windows. Some things are best done before you need the information because when you need it, the internet might be down. I used Long Beach because both harbors are in that general area.

Had I used Los Angeles, I would have gotten the following result: 455 miles on a heading of west-northwest 288.9°, from Tucson. As you can see, it didn't make much difference. Remember, with a higher wind speed, the fallout pattern will be elongated and narrow and with a slow wind speed, shorter and wider, Isaac Newton's fault. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_universal_gravitation Since the fallout pattern with higher winds is longer, the level of fallout is also higher than it would be if the wind were slower.

"Why do you have such a fixation on fallout, Gary?"

"You can't really see it and it can kill you, Sharon. There are on the order of 40,000 nuclear weapons in the world, maybe more, maybe less. We were the first to use them and it follows that sooner or later someone else will too. I mean, why build them if you never intend to use them?"

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Administration efforts to screen US-bound cargo for radioactive weapons are unlikely to stop a determined militant group from smuggling nuclear material onto American soil, experts said on Thursday.

Peter Zimmerman of Kings College, London, and Jeffrey Lewis of Harvard, who have researched the task of building an improvised nuclear device, said anyone hoping to hatch a nuclear attack on the United States would most likely build the weapon on American soil.

That would require them to smuggle highly enriched uranium from abroad. But packaging material as common as aluminum foil could shield the uranium from scanning devices meant to detect radioactivity.

Both said the most effective means of protecting against nuclear terrorism would be to drive up the black market price for fissile material by upgrading security at nuclear facilities, particularly in the former Soviet Union.

The US Navy conducted a successful test launch Nov. 21 of two Trident II D5 Fleet Ballistic Missiles (FBMs) built by Lockheed Martin. The Navy launched the unarmed missiles from USS Maryland (SSBN 738) at the Eastern Range in the Atlantic Ocean. With this two-missile mission, the Trident II D5 missile has achieved 117 consecutive successful test launches since 1989 - a record unmatched by any other large ballistic missile or space launch vehicle. The launches are part a continuing series of operational system evaluation tests conducted by the Navy to assure the safety, reliability, readiness and performance of the Trident II D5 Strategic Weapon System, as required by the Department of Defense's National Command Authority and conducted under the testing guidelines of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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"They build them because the other guy has them and they build because they can."

"Yes dear, if you say so. I think they build them because they feel threatened. Call that the third reason if you want. Russia built them because we had them. Our allies at the time were Great Britain and France. China ended up with them because Russia had them. The Israelis built some but never admitted it. South Africa built some but decided against having them. India and Pakistan, who knows? North Korea tested one but it was a dud. I guess Israel found out Iran had some and it was Katie bar the door."

"You expected this terrorist attack?"

"Attacks. Yes, since 2004. I had about given up when you got the money from that lawsuit. What made you climb aboard?"

"Mostly it was because we couldn't buy the groceries and store them for the time period between when we could buy them."

"So your reason was practical necessity and had nothing to do with being prepared?"

"That's right, was that wrong?"

"No, it works for me. I was just curious."

I hadn't thought about that. Before we won the Lottery, we only got money once a month starting with the 4th Wednesday of the month when my disability came in. Next came my Iowa pension, and then her pension. The trust distributed the income shortly thereafter. When Amy first moved in, she had food stamps. She used up her entitlement and things had been tough. I suppose that's why when we did have money, I saved half of what we got. It was what my brother had once called, 'kiss my butt money'.

At the moment, we had 2 worst case scenarios: We'd get fallout from Los Angeles; or, the opposing forces would overrun our forces and we'd get stuck in the shelter until who knew when. Look at the bright side, if we got fallout and our forces were overrun, the opposing force would get the fallout. We'd fought maybe 3 wars with México and 'won' them all. This time they had a whole lot of help.

The first was the Texas Revolution, the second was the Mexican-American War circa 1846-48 and the third was the Mexican Revolution when we sent Black Jack Pershing and George Patton after Pancho Villa. Two out of three isn't bad, they never caught up to old Pancho. At the moment we'd held them off and their losses far outnumbered our losses. We could claim we'd won until they left the border for good. The terrorist attacks had forced NCA to withdraw some of the National Guard forces to tend to the five areas attacked by the terrorists.

Derek and Randy weren't gone long, returning before we started to get fallout. I had turned on the SINCGARS and was listening when I got the call.

"Dad, this is Derek, we're coming back."

"Acknowledged. Where's the other half?"

"Should have been there, they were advised to leave yesterday and drive straight through."

"Roger. If I listen on the ham bands, what should I tune to?"

"Try 40 meters, 7.040mhz. If you get her agree on a new frequency, maybe 7.065."

"CQ, CQ, CQ this is KD6GDQ calling Mary inbound from Gassville on 7040khz."

"I'm here, Gary, go up 25."

"Roger go up 25."

"CQ, CQ, CQ this is KD6GDQ calling Mary on 7065khz."

"I'm here."

"Where are you?"

"I'm on I-10 your side of Johnson. I have a few friends and family with me, I hope that you don't mind."

"Roger. You are within 30 mikes. Your other half is inbound and should be here about the same time. KD6GDQ clear."

Mary didn't reply because Mary didn't have an amateur license. I didn't expect to see the FCC anytime soon.

"Derek this is Dad. The other half of your party is 30 mikes out on I-10."

"Roger. Thanks, Dad."

What's more, if the Army doesn't like us using their radios, they should feel free to send a Brigade or two up here. We can cook 'em some beans and rice. Even beans and rice are sometimes better than MREs. Yes, I got some but they didn't come from E Bay. These are the civilian type MREs you can order off the net. They say SOPAKCO on the case and I got them for scouting trips. The primary difference is the packaging, they're about as bad as their military cousins. The only reason I had a ham license was because after I got started writing, I happened to check the date on my license only to learn that it was expired. I was in the grace period and got it renewed.

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How do you carry your papers? We each have one of those Passport wallets. A copy of our birth certificate is inside our Passport and our other documents including the federally approved state driver's license, CCW, ATM and membership cards are in the other part. There is even a place for travel papers, when the government requires those. You laugh now, but just wait. One of these days they'll be requiring Internal Passports, Travel Documents and embedded identity chips. Never say never. I hope I die first because I'm too old to fight them.

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When Mary showed up, I found out just what she meant by "friends and family".

"All I got for you is the single wide, kiddo. But, we do have the shelter," I said.

She nodded, hunching her shoulders with a sheepish grin. "I know that I should have given you more notice, Gary, but I couldn't leave them behind. I left enough of them behind as it is."

"No problem. We got space, don't worry. I'm just not sure if I can get another shed put in anytime soon."

Mary had raided the armory at Mountain Home before she left. There wasn't much left there except for several trucks of various models. Her friends started showing up not long after she cut the lock on the gate, and her family not long after. Only Ted, her grandfather, had kicked much of a fit but that's to be expected when you're pushing 80.

From there, she had stopped off at several places along the way. Derek had promised me that she wouldn't take detours but I think he lied, because there were enough people standing around us to fill up most of Gassville, Arkansas and some of them didn't have the right accent for hillbillies. She also picked up more trucks at every stop, or so she said.

"How in hell did you get the Paladins, Mary? I mean, Jeezus..."

"They were on display in Harrison when we came through. One of Derek's old friends, Mike Weir, was loading one of them on a low-boy when we came through. Since he can drive anything in the Army's inventory, I invited him and his wife along. There isn't any ammo for them, but Mike said that Derek could fix that so we brought them."

I had to admire their scrounging. One Paladin was a coup, but a pair even with no ammo was Christmas come early. We didn't have crews for them, but we did have the "Conestoga" ammo haulers, along with four low-boy rigs, 8 HEMTT trucks (2 were even fuel haulers with a full load of JP-8 apiece for 5,000 more gallons), a couple of M113 APCs with of all things smoke generators on them, over a dozen deuce-and-a-halves and five-tons, twice that number of assorted HMMWVs, and more "redneck specials" than you could shake a stick at.

"Well, this is a surprise, but a good one. Let's get the tracks under cover, they're harder to explain," I said. "I don't think that they'll fit in the shed, though. I'll have to call someone to get another pole building put in."

"Well, I'll tell you, we got plenty here that can help with that," said Ted. "Don't we, Randy?"

"What?" said Mary's dad.

Ted didn't even look at him. He just smiled at me with every tooth and said, "You got to keep these kids busy, don't you?" with a laugh.

Since Randy was nearly sixty, I couldn't help but wonder if I was one of the "kids" he meant. He struck me as just a few sticks shy of a load. Derek didn't have much good to say about him, but you can't help family.

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We had a very Merry Christmas that December of 2010. Several cities put up Nativity scenes and said 'screw you' to the feds. Many had forgotten our roots, we were, for all practical and essential purposes, a Christian nation. The Supreme Court finally issued a ruling saying that it had had it with the 1st Amendment being used as a tool by the secularists to interfere with religion (I wasn't holding my breath that they would also rule that the 2nd Amendment was an individual right). The Administration asked for a rehearing, it was denied.

Now that the border war was over and I finally had my boy toys, I thought that I didn't really need them. Although neither New York bomb was in the immediate vicinity of the UN building, it was down wind of one. While the principal headquarters of the UN are in New York, there are major agencies located in Geneva, The Hague, Vienna, Montreal, Copenhagen, Bonn, and elsewhere. The US is in arrears with its assessments to the tune of \$1.3 billion. Few observers expect the "get US out of UN" (a pun on the initials for the United States and the pronoun "us") movement to result in the US actually withdrawing. Proposed legislation in both houses of US Congress to withdraw has been met with minimal support, and has never come close to becoming US policy.

As a result of that, and the fact that the UN building had grown too small, the UN had decided in 2010 to move its headquarters to The Hague. The US offered to pay its arrears if the UN would turn over all property it held to the US. A resolution condemning Israel for the attacks had been vetoed by the US. We also vetoed the resolution condemning the US for the use of cluster bombs. There was still little support in Congress for our pulling out. I was hoping, out of sight, out of mind. However, the US could no longer count on the UK to agree with us on some of the UN resolutions. There were several strikes against us. In our period between being 200 and 300 years old, we were at an awkward stage, not quite the same as Europe, but getting there. Coupled with that was the fact that we thought we were the sole Superpower.

With Venezuelan Army in shambles in México, the US took it upon itself to secure a better oil supply and attacked their country. Our only mission was to secure the oil, for a change we weren't interested in changing the government. Why do we always seem to get it wrong? We'd have been better off with Saddam in charge and really needed to remove Hugo. I think they must give politicians stupid shots. Saddam was a thorn in the side of Iran for years. Many questioned if the Iraqi people were better off before or after Iraqi Freedom. I don't care one way or another, Derek made it home. The last thing we needed was Marxist nations in the Western Hemisphere.

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During the late '60s and early '70s, we fought a little war on the other side of the world called Vietnam. They killed almost 60,000 of us and we killed a lot more of them. In the end, they won. In the first decade of the 21st century, we fought a little war in the Middle East. Popular at first, it quickly became unpopular because of the US policy that resulted in an occupation. Finally, in the 3rd year of that war, it cost the dominate party the Congress. Current history, right? It appeared we had won when we decimated the Hispanic forces at the border, but appearances can be deceiving.

For sure the survivors on the opposing side pulled back, way back. They dispersed and tried to blend in while they reorganized yet again. México's Army is a joke. It's mainly a Police Force used by the government of México to remain in power and quell disturbances. After the 2006 election, there were enough disturbances in México to keep the Army busy nearly fulltime. Andrés Manuel López Obrador lost the hotly contested election to Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa. Eventually, Obrador moved his movement back to Tabasco, his birthplace. While his supporters continued to disrupt México City, by blocking highways and what not, he first established himself as a legitimate member of PRD, overcoming opposing by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano.

(For anyone who doesn't know the history of México, let me say that México City was the area dominated by the Aztecs and the Mayan people lived on the Yucatán Peninsula and in Tabasco. Technically only 3 states constitute Yucatán: Yucatán, Campeche and Quintana Roo.)

Meanwhile having failed to destroy Israel and having received a nuclear licking at the hands of Israel, the Muslim extremists more determined than ever to take out their displeasure on the United States. Unfortunately, they had a problem, Canada had sealed our northern border and we had sealed our southern border, leaving only our east and west coasts open. The Pacific Muslim extremists decided to opt for the west coast and the remaining Middle Eastern Muslim extremists opted for the east Coast. What remained of the Iranian government was more than happy to provide 2 of their 3 Kilo class submarines to be used to drop of the extremists close to our shores. A large force would be assembled on ships which would be sailed to about 250 miles off the coasts. From there, the Kilos would deliver them in loads until all of their people and weapons were on the US mainland. They would be met by associates already in the US.

For inspiration, the Muslims looked to history. Hitler was able to land German saboteurs on US soil in Operation Pastorius. Their mission was to stage sabotage attacks on American economic targets: hydroelectric plants at Niagara Falls; the Aluminum Company of America's plants in Illinois, Tennessee and New York; locks on the Ohio River near Louisville, Kentucky; a cryolite plant in Philadelphia; Hell Gate Bridge in New York; and Pennsylvania Station in Newark, New Jersey. They landed two groups, one on Long Island, New York and one at Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

The Learning Network has a breakdown of coastline length by state. According to their web page, Hawaii has 750 miles of coastline (which should be the sum of the perimeter

of each of its islands). Alaska has 5,580 miles of coastline. The total perimeter of Alaska is 7,119 miles (5,580 miles of coast + 1,539 miles of land boundary). Subtracting Alaska and Hawaii, the contiguous 48 states have 6,053 miles of coastline and 6055 miles of land boundaries, for a perimeter of 12,108 miles. The Atlantic Coast is 2,069 miles of general coastline and the Pacific Coast, excluding Alaska and Hawaii, is 1,293 miles of general coastline. Add to that 1,631 mile of the Gulf coastline and you get the total excluding Alaska and Hawaii. Alaska is 5,580 and Hawaii is 750 giving a total of 12,383 miles of general US coastline. The so called tidal shoreline is far longer, 88,633 miles. <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001801.html>

You should also know that infoplease divides the Florida coastline between the Atlantic coastline and the Gulf coastline with the later being longer. With most of the Atlantic Fleet in the Gulf, that's not important. As far as I know, it is not the policy of the US to guard the coastline with the Navy, that's the responsibility of the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard faces several issues in the near future:

Lack of coverage affects many areas with high maritime traffic. For example, local officials in Scituate, Massachusetts, have complained that there is no permanent Coast Guard station, and the presence of the Coast Guard in winter is vital. One reason for this lack of coverage is the relatively high cost of building storm-proof buildings on coastal property; the Cape Hatteras station was abandoned in 2005 after winter storms wiped out the 12-foot sand dune serving as its protection from the ocean.

Lack of strength to meet its assigned missions is being met by a legislated increase in authorized strength from 39,000 to 45,000. In addition, the volunteer Auxiliary is being called to take up more non-combatant missions. However, volunteer coverage does have limits.

Aging vessels are another problem. In 2005, the Coast Guard terminated contracts to upgrade the 110-foot (33.5 m) Island Class Cutters to 123-foot (37.5 m) cutters because of warping and distortion of the hulls. Of the 40 largest navies in the world, the Coast Guard's is the 38th oldest.

Live fire exercises by Coast Guard boat and cutter crews in the US waters of the Great Lakes have attracted attention in the US and Canada. The Coast Guard has proposed the establishment of 34 locations around the Great Lakes where live fire training using vessel-mounted machineguns would be conducted periodically throughout the year. The Coast Guard has said that these exercises are a critical part of proper crew training in support of the service's multiple missions on the Great Lakes. Those raising concerns about the firing exercises have commented about safety concerns and that the impact on commercial shipping, tourism, recreational boating and the environment may be greater than what the Coast Guard has stated. The Coast Guard has extended the comment period for the proposal and is conducting a series of public meetings to allow more input and discussion.

I ask you, given a choice, would you rather have people manning machineguns who had no practice? No doubt those who would protest such actions are either liberals, environmentalists or both. Uh duh, Here's your new Abrams tank. If we ever go to war, we'll let you shoot the guns. Otherwise forget it; even target ammo is environmentally unsound. The same people who would say that would also complain about our military's lack of preparedness. Go ahead, tell me I'm wrong.

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"Is that new digital desert camouflage?"

"Yes."

"How good is it?"

"On a scale of 10, I'd give it a 9."

"We have camouflage clothing too, but it's civilian, not military."

"Woodland or desert?"

"Oh, both. We bought it in Tucson, so it's the best civilian patterns available for the area."

"How would you rate it?"

"10 on a scale of 10. You have to use the face paint that goes with the particular pattern, but if you do it properly, you blend in pretty good with the background. I got Ghillie ponchos for sniping, but I've never set them up. I figured it was better to use local materials."

"Just one?"

"For everyone, yeah. It came with instructions, but I haven't had time to read them. The Lightweight Camouflage Complete Ghillie Suit Kit includes the following:

- One 5' x 9' nylon netting.
- Seven colors of Next Generation Synthetic thread. (3.5 lbs. total)
- Complete directions on how to assemble kit into a lightweight Camouflage Ghillie Poncho.

Synthetic thread colors include : Brown, Black, Gray, Light Green, Olive Green, Tan & Dark Green.

Synthetic thread is the Next Generation in Building a lightweight Camouflage Ghillie suit, because Synthetic thread is:

Water-proof, Rot-proof, Mildew resistant, Fire-retardant, Washable, Odor-less and Non-Allergenic

Using the supplied directions, you can build a Mossy colored suit, Woodland, or use all seven colors for an All-Season suit. You can even use the materials to build a ground blind, blanket, or any other concealment device. Use your imagination, your options are endless.

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 7[/b]

Your completed suit uses only 2.75 lbs. of the synthetic colored thread. With the supplied extra materials, you can always change colors to match your terrain."
<http://www.ghilliesuits.com/>

"You didn't get the jacket and pants sets?"

"Sharon said someone wouldn't be happy if all I bought was the kits. Of course I bought the jacket and pants sets, are you happy now?"

"You go overboard on everything."

"If I hadn't you wouldn't be happy."

"I was just teasing."

"Cross your fingers or waive a flag when you do that, I can never tell."

"How high is the radiation?"

"Only 98R at the peak."

"Are you sure about that?"

"Why?"

"That means we can get out of the shelter in about 2 weeks."

"Randy has been writing down the readings every 15 minutes since we came down here, just like you said."

"It can't be that easy. Hmm, I guess it can. The table I use said 90 Rems at 250 miles. If that's the case, LA must have gotten one hell of a dose of radiation. What's the wind speed?"

"About 15mph."

"When did we begin to get the radiation?"

"You don't remember?"

"Remember what?"

"About 30 hours after the blast."

"Oh, that explains it. The average wind speed must be 16 mph."

"How do you do that?"

"Do what?"

"The math in your head."

"It's not that hard, it's simple division. $481 \div 30 = 16$. I rounded."

"What do you plan to do for the next 2 weeks?"

"Fix up my Ghillie suit. It's time because TSHTF."

"But bad things happen in threes."

"Who sez?"

"You do."

"1 in 175,711,536."

"Huh?"

"Oh, those were the odds that I'd win the Lottery. We only bought a single ticket, a quick pick. Don't tell Sharon, but we had 60 days to change from the 26 payments to a single payment."

"Why didn't you take the single payment?"

"The truth? I was afraid I'd blow it all at once and end up in jail like the other winners. Mark said we clear about a million a year this way, and I decided it was a perfect retirement plan. It's unearned income so it doesn't affect my Social Security. We don't need the trust anymore and I may suggest to Matt to not distribute the income. The will doesn't require it to be distributed and if we left it in, the trust could grow by leaps and bounds."

"You don't have to do that Dad."

"I know, but Sharon and I don't need the money. Even if we never got another cent from the Lottery Commission, We have enough set aside for the remainder of our lives. Since we have two weeks down here, why don't you get everyone's knife and make sure they really sharp. I'm going to print out the supplies inventory and make sure our records are current."

"What are you going to do with the Mauser's?"

"They may prove to be a white elephant, I should have considered the fact that most people in Arizona already have firearms. You never said what you came up with for rockets, grenades and explosives."

"There are 10 of the demolition kits. The grenades were hard to come by and we got 6 cases of the M-67 and a case each of other types, incendiary, Willy Pete, concussion and smoke. The LAWS were easier to get than the M136 AT4, but we have some of each, 50 LAWS and 20 M136. We didn't look for ammo, I assumed you had enough. It's a good thing we had some combat engineers."

"Why?"

"Because, they had some of the Marine Corps demo kits the M183. The Demolition charge M183 is used primarily in breaching obstacles or demolition of large structures where large charges are required (Satchel Charge). The charge assembly M183 consists of 16 block demolition charges M112, four priming assemblies and carrying case M85."

Funny, at one time, he spoke English. For the next 2 weeks, Derek sharpened knives, Damon inventoried supplies and Randy monitored the various radios. When we came out, there was no snow on the ground. It was, however, pretty damed cold. We checked around for any hot spots and didn't find any. Max and Duke were out and about chasing phantom sheep or something.

Mary decided to stay with us for a while; she'd checked and her folks were ok with it. She said school wouldn't resume for a while, so she was out of a job for now. You may wonder why I always try to assemble my family when TSHTF. Sharon and I are seniors, we need the protection. More than that, we don't worry so much if we know where they are. I'll have to admit that sometimes I prefer worrying to having to put up with them. Each of them having their own place made it tolerable. Damon and I had our share of fences to mend. Life is like that.

We had no idea that four boat loads of terrorists had infiltrated the nation. Neither did we know that they carried an assortment of weapons of mass destruction, including means to poison water supplies, 2 different bioweapons and 4 suitcase nukes. These guys spoke English and had American Passports complete with entrance stamps. Their

mission included bringing down the electrical grid, creating uncertainty about the safety of the water supplies and starting epidemics. These men were suicidal and they had a long list of missions. In order to blend in, the infiltrators took Hispanic identities and in addition to their native language, either Farsi or Arabic, spoke English and Spanish.

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"How long can you stay?"

"Randy and I have to get back tomorrow. He explained that we couldn't get back to Ft. Huachuca and sheltered in place in Whetstone. They told him that the main area of fall out was between Phoenix and Tucson."

"How did you explain having a SINCGARS radio?"

"Pulled it from the HMMWV and jury rigged it with a pair of 12 volt batteries in series."

"Any idea when you will be back?"

"I'll be back as soon as I can get some time off."

"Why didn't we just go into México and finish them off?"

"Orders from the top. We can't cross the border."

When Derek had returned from Iraq and transferred to Arkansas National Guard, he'd take an E-6 slot. About a year later, they signed him off on his new MOS and he got the extra stripe. He thought he had a chance at Sergeant First Class in another year when his boss retired. He'd taken all the necessary classes and had attended the next level up NCO school. The higher a person gets, the fewer the number of slots and the fiercer the competition. His enlistment was up in 2011, but I expected he'd reenlist; he'd only need 4 more years to have 20.

Given a choice, I'd rather he stay here. I'm fairly sure Mary would agree with me, I don't know because I didn't ask. The inventory showed we had enough of everything, too much in some cases. In hind sight, I wouldn't have let him leave, but we didn't know about the terrorist landings. There wasn't any information on the news indicating that the FBI, or anyone else, knew for certain who was behind the first attacks. Skeptical members of the media suggested we might never know. I speculated aloud that was the last we'd see of them (the doctor says the bite marks just below my knees should heal soon).

Four points of view prevalent among national policy circles and the academic community at various times have served to dismiss biological terrorism as nothing more than a theoretical possibility. 1) Biological weapons have so seldom been deployed that precedent would suggest they will not be used. 2) Their use is so morally repugnant that

no one would deign to use them. 3) The science of producing enough organisms and dispersing them is so difficult that it is within the reach of only the most sophisticated laboratories. 4) Like the concept of a "nuclear winter," the potential destructiveness of bioweapons is essentially unthinkable and so to be dismissed. Each of these arguments is without validity.

Of a long list of potential pathogens, only a handful are reasonably easy to prepare and disperse and can inflict sufficiently severe disease to paralyze a city and perhaps a nation. In April 1994, Anatoliy Vorobyov, a Russian bioweapons expert, presented to a working group of the National Academy of Sciences the conclusions of Russian experts as to the agents most likely to be used. Smallpox headed the list followed closely by anthrax and plague. None of these agents had so far effectively been deployed as a biological weapon, and thus no real world events existed to provide likely scenarios. However, we have had several well-documented smallpox importations into Europe over recent decades; two bear recounting.

The potential of aerosolized smallpox to spread over a considerable distance and to infect at low doses was vividly demonstrated in an outbreak in Germany in 1970. That year, a German electrician returning from Pakistan became ill with high fever and diarrhea. On January 11, he was admitted to a local hospital and was isolated in a separate room on the ground floor because it was feared he might have typhoid fever. He had contact with only two nurses over the next 3 days. On January 14 a rash developed, and on January 16 the diagnosis of smallpox was confirmed. He was immediately transported to one of Germany's special isolation hospitals, and more than 100,000 persons were promptly vaccinated. The hospital had been closed to visitors because of an influenza outbreak for several days before the patient was admitted. After the diagnosis of smallpox, other hospital patients and staff were quarantined for 4 weeks and were vaccinated; very ill patients received vaccinia-immune globulin first. However, the smallpox patient had had a cough, a symptom seldom seen with smallpox; coughing can produce a large-volume, small-particle aerosol like what might occur after its use as a terrorist weapon. Subsequently, 19 cases occurred in the hospital, including four in other rooms on the patient's floor, eight on the floor above, and nine on the third floor. Two were contact cases. One of the cases was in a visitor who had spent fewer than 15 minutes in the hospital and had only briefly opened a corridor door, easily 30 feet from the patient's room, to ask directions. Three of the patients were nurses, one of whom died. This outbreak occurred in a well-vaccinated population.

An outbreak in Yugoslavia in February 1972 also illustrates the havoc created even by a small number of cases. Yugoslavia's last case of smallpox had occurred in 1927. Nevertheless, Yugoslavia, like most countries, had continued population-wide vaccination to protect against imported cases. In 1972, a pilgrim returning from Mecca became ill with an undiagnosed febrile disease. Friends and relatives visited from a number of different areas; 2 weeks later, 11 of them became ill with high fever and rash. The patients were not aware of each other's illness, and their physicians (few of whom had ever seen a case of smallpox) failed to make a correct diagnosis.

One of the 11 patients was a 30-year-old teacher who quickly became critically ill with the hemorrhagic form, a form not readily diagnosed even by experts. The teacher was first given penicillin at a local clinic, but as he became increasingly ill, he was transferred to a dermatology ward in a city hospital, then to a similar ward in the capital city, and finally to a critical care unit because he was bleeding profusely and in shock. He died before a definitive diagnosis was made. He was buried 2 days before the first case of smallpox was recognized.

The first cases were correctly diagnosed 4 weeks after the first patient became ill, but by then, 150 persons were already infected; of these, 38 (including two physicians, two nurses, and four other hospital staff) were infected by the young teacher. The cases occurred in widely separated areas of the country. By the time of diagnosis, the 150 secondary cases had already begun to expose yet another generation, and, inevitably, questions arose as to how many other yet undetected cases there might be.

Health authorities launched a nationwide vaccination campaign. Mass vaccination clinics were held, and checkpoints along roads were established to examine vaccination certificates. Twenty million persons were vaccinated. Hotels and residential apartments were taken over, cordoned off by the military, and all known contacts of cases were forced into these centers under military guard. Some 10,000 persons spent 2 weeks or more in isolation. Meanwhile, neighboring countries closed their borders. Nine weeks after the first patient became ill, the outbreak stopped. In all, 175 patients contracted smallpox, and 35 died. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol4no3/hendrsn.htm>

On April 2, 1979, there was an unusual anthrax outbreak which affected 94 people and killed at least 64 of them in the Soviet city of Sverdlovsk (now called Ekaterinburg), roughly 850 miles east of Moscow. The first victim died after four days; the last one died six weeks later.

The Soviet government claimed the deaths were caused by intestinal anthrax from tainted meat, a story some influential American scientists found believable. However, officials in the Carter administration suspected the outbreak was caused by an accidental release of anthrax spores from a suspected Soviet biological weapons facility located in the city. The US believed that the Soviet Union was violating the Biological Weapons Convention signed in 1972 and made their suspicions public. But the Soviets denied any activities relating to biological weapons and at numerous international conferences tried to prove their contaminated meat story.

It wasn't until thirteen years later - 1992- that President Boris Yeltsin admitted, without going into details, that the anthrax outbreak was the result of military activity at the facility. During those thirteen years, while an intense debate raged within the international scientific and intelligence communities on whether the Russians were telling the truth, the Soviet Union continued its offensive biological warfare program unabated.

Around the time Yeltsin admitted the military facility was responsible for the incident, Russia allowed a team of Western scientists to go to Sverdlovsk to investigate the outbreak. The team visited Sverdlovsk in June 1992 and August 1993 and included Professor Matt Meselson.

Although the KGB had confiscated hospital and other records after the incident, the Western scientists were able to track where all the victims had been at the time of the anthrax release. Their results showed that on the day of the incident all the victims were clustered along a straight line downwind from the military facility. Livestock in the same area also died of anthrax. After completing their investigation, the team concluded the outbreak was caused by a release of an aerosol of anthrax pathogen at the military facility. But they were unable to determine what caused the release or what specific activities were conducted at the facility.

In May of 1991, President George H.W. Bush unilaterally committed the United States to destroying all chemical weapons and to renounce the right to chemical weapons retaliation. The Congress has since passed legislation requiring the destruction of the entire stockpile by 31Dec04. Official US policy is to support the Chemical Weapons Convention as a means to achieve a global ban on this class of weapons and to halt their proliferation. On 29Apr97, the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force, augmenting the Geneva Protocol of 1925 by outlawing the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

The first successful use of chemical agents by terrorists against a general civilian population was on 20Mar95. Aum Shinrikyo, an apocalyptic group based in Japan that believed it necessary to destroy the planet, released sarin into the Tokyo subway system killing 12 and injuring over 5,000 (12 heavily contaminated patients died. 980 were mildly to moderately contaminated, with 500 of those requiring hospitalization. 5,000 people can be counted as casualties even if they only THOUGHT they were sick). The group had attempted biological and chemical attacks on at least 10 prior occasions, but managed to affect only cult members. The group did manage to successfully release sarin outside an apartment building in Matsumoto in June 1994; this use was directed at a few specific individuals living in the building and was not an attack on the general population.

In 2001, after carrying out the attacks on 9/11, the organization al Qaeda announced that they were attempting to acquire radiological, biological and chemical weapons. This threat was lent a great deal of credibility when a large archive of videotapes was obtained by the cable television network CNN in August of 2002 showing, among other things, the killing of three dogs by an apparent nerve agent (that's the background).

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Of the 3 weapons of mass destruction, probably the easiest to use is a bioweapon. The first mention of something going on came on CNN, which reported an outbreak of

disease in several cities. The CDC was called in and discovered primary pneumonic plague and smallpox.

Yersinia pestis used in an aerosol attack could cause cases of the pneumonic form of plague. One to six days after becoming infected with the bacteria, people would develop pneumonic plague. Once people have the disease, the bacteria can spread to others who have close contact with them. Because of the delay between being exposed to the bacteria and becoming sick, people could travel over a large area before becoming contagious and possibly infecting others. Controlling the disease would then be more difficult. A bioweapon carrying *Y. pestis* is possible because the bacterium occurs in nature and could be isolated and grown in quantity in a laboratory. Even so, manufacturing an effective weapon using *Y. pestis* would require advanced knowledge and technology. Currently, no plague vaccine is available in the United States. Research is in progress, but we are not likely to have vaccines for several years or more. IIRC, you can treat plague with streptomycin, among other antibiotics.

There are two clinical forms of smallpox. *Variola major* is the severe and most common form of smallpox, with a more extensive rash and higher fever. There are four types of *variola major* smallpox: ordinary (the most frequent type, accounting for 90% or more of cases); modified (mild and occurring in previously vaccinated persons); flat; and hemorrhagic (both rare and very severe). Historically, *variola major* has an overall fatality rate of about 30%; however, flat and hemorrhagic smallpox usually are fatal. *Variola minor* is a less common presentation of smallpox, and a much less severe disease, with death rates historically of 1% or less.

Smallpox can be prevented through use of the smallpox vaccine. There is no proven treatment for smallpox, but research to evaluate new antiviral agents is ongoing. Early results from laboratory studies suggest that the drug cidofovir may fight against the smallpox virus; currently, studies with animals are being done to better understand the drug's ability to treat smallpox disease (the use of cidofovir to treat smallpox or smallpox reactions should be evaluated and monitored by experts at NIH and CDC). Patients with smallpox can benefit from supportive therapy (e.g., intravenous fluids, medicine to control fever or pain) and antibiotics for any secondary bacterial infections that may occur.

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We didn't have any IV streptomycin. All we had was Cipro and Doxy. However, a ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, I chained the gate shut and hung a sign that said, 'Beware the Claymore Mines'.

Streptomycin, is taken two to four times daily, in one to four gram doses, equally spaced throughout the day. It can be used in combination with tetracycline until the person's fever breaks. Then the tetracycline can be continued alone. Otherwise, streptomycin should be used consistently for a week to ten days. Doxy is in the tetracycline family, IIRC. (Two newer classes of tetracycline are Doxycycline and Minocycline . Brand

names for these tetracyclines include the Doxycyclines-Vibramycin, Vibra-tabs, Monodox and Doryx; and the Minocyclines called Minocin.)

As of 2004, your government had enough doses of smallpox vaccine to vaccinate everyone in the country, or so they claim. Damon and I got our N-100 masks plus latex gloves and went looking in Tucson. The kids who had never been vaccinated for smallpox needed at least 3 sticks. Those of us that had previous vaccinations need 7 or more. Money talks and bullsh*t walks, but there is nothing better than a gun when you really want cooperation. We only took enough streptomycin for our crowd and I got stuck giving the smallpox shots. And I paid gold for everything we took.

"Dad, did you really put out Claymore mines?"

"Nope, but I did transplant a few small bushes that sort of look like they could be hiding Claymores. Don't know if they'll believe the sign, but they'll have to check those bushes just to be sure. That should give us time to stop anyone trespassing."

"We're going to stand guard?"

"Do you want 6 to 12 or 12 to 6?"

"I'll take 6 to 12. What about Mary and her gang?"

"I'm already counting on their help, if they will. In any case, they can back us up if we get visitors."

"How do you suppose the disease outbreak started?"

"If we'd only gotten one and not both, I'd have figured a traveler brought it into the country. Two suggested something more deliberate, maybe it's the same terrorists who set off the nukes. Who knows, maybe I'm just being paranoid."

"Gary, Derek's on the phone."

"Hey kid, what's up?"

"I didn't know if you heard, there are outbreaks of smallpox and pneumonic plague."

"Damon and I went to Tucson and picked smallpox vaccine and streptomycin. The gate is chained and locked and we're not planning on going anywhere. Have you been revaccinated for smallpox?"

"Earlier today. We haven't reengaged the opposing force. The word is these outbreaks weren't an accident. MOPP 4 sucks, too."

"Damon and I figured that. If it had only been one, maybe... But two makes it unlikely. I figured it was that bunch of terrorists that set off the bombs."

"Can't be, they caught them 3 days ago, in Atlanta."

"Why wasn't there anything about that on the news?"

"I heard they were delaying announcement of their capture until they finished questioning them."

"Enemy combatants?"

"More like they don't exist until the questioning is over. Maybe not even then, Dad."

"When are you coming home?"

"I have no idea. Not until they confirmed our shots took."

"When do you figure WW III will start?"

"I don't know, but I do know I'm not looking forward to it. Say, have you had any trouble getting food?"

"Not recently. We drove to Tucson and went to Costco. Now that you mention it, their prices were higher and there were several things they were out of. We went to Sam's Club and filled in. I was noticing that we were over stocked on some items."

"Is it stuff you could trade?"

"Trade food? I suppose, if it won't keep. Now you have me curious, why are you asking?"

"The chow halls have been trouble getting supplies and a couple of times we had to eat MREs."

"Come home if you get hungry, we have plenty of food."

"Ok, gotta go."

"Bye."

"Sharon, Derek just said the military has a food shortage."

"You weren't paying attention the last time we shopped."

"What do you mean? I kept track of everything we bought so I could add it to the inventory I keep."

"True, but you didn't write the checks. The price of food was up maybe 15 to 20%."

"Maybe you'd better make a list and Damon I should drive up to Tucson and shop. I'll get a printout of the inventory and you can mark down the quantities you think we should have. Derek said something about trading food, so keep that in mind, you can't eat gold and silver."

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 8[b]

She spent an hour making the list. When I looked at it, I realized we'd need both pickups and 2 trailers. I called Matt and asked him to raise the ATM charge limit for a week so we could stock up on food. I asked Sharon to do the same thing with our local bank account. Just in case, I pulled out 2 bundles of \$100s. My scab had fallen off and so had Damon's, indicating we had smallpox protection. We'd have to count on the N-100 masks for protection against the pneumonic plague, if it were around. I pulled out a box of the extra heavy latex gloves. Not that it would do any good, but we both began prophylactic dosages of doxy.

"You ready?"

"Not really. The problem is as old and weak as you are, I get to do most of the heavy lifting. Plus we can't carry in the grocery stores."

"Fine we'll make a different first stop. We can pick up a pair of Walther PPKs in .380. They're small enough to hide in the middle of our backs."

"Are you sure?"

"What they don't know can't hurt us."

"That only solves one problem, I'll still get stuck doing the lifting."

"Look at the list, it isn't all heavy."

"It will be in the quantities she's listed."

"I guess we'll have to take someone to help us."

"That's not very smart. It's just increasing our exposure."

"There aren't many alternatives. I suppose we'll have to take some of these big rednecks with us. Call Carrie and tell her to get the kid's vaccinated. If she doesn't have the money, we can have Matt give her what she needs. I want the kids down

here. He can give her some money to buy more food and her having 3 less mouths to feed can't hurt. Anyway, the kids are old enough to decide on their own if they want to live with you."

"What do you want them vaccinated for?"

"Everything. Most vaccinations don't last for forever. While we're in Tucson, maybe we can get the other vaccines and vaccinate everyone here on the acreage. The regular vaccines shouldn't be that hard to get if I talk to the family doctor."

"Do you know what the regular vaccines are, Dad?"

"Vaccine preventable diseases include: Anthrax, Bacterial meningitis, Chickenpox, Cholera, Diphtheria, Haemophilus influenza type b (Hib), Hepatitis A & B, Influenza, Measles, Mumps, Pertussis, Pneumococcal pneumonia, Polio, Rabies, Rubella, Tetanus and Yellow fever. I know that they use Doxy as a prophylactic for malaria. As far south as we are in Arizona, that could be important. I had the shot for pneumonia, I think that's a once in a life shot."

"You're sure you want to risk going to Tucson?"

"I'm sure. I could be wrong, but I'm sure."

"Let me look at that list again."

"Here."

"We already have all of these things."

"Right, we're going for trade goods."

"How are you going to trade with anyone if you won't let them get near the place?"

"Good question. We'll figure out something and if we don't, we just won't go to the grocery store for a few years."

"Pampers?"

"Yeah. How old is Britney?"

"Nineteen. Oh."

Britney didn't need permission to come. Aaron would be 18 on January 29th, he only needed permission for a short time. When I called Matt, I asked him to give the kids enough money to buy a good used vehicle so they could drive down here. I was

splitting hairs and knew it, Carrie could try and keep them there until they were 21; I almost wish she'd have tried.

Damon thought it would take 3-4 weeks for the kids to get their shots, find a car and drive to Whetstone. It was probably selfish of me to want them in Arizona, but selfish isn't illegal. Having two boys that age would surely make us more secure. When we got to Tucson I helped load the trucks and trailers, toilet paper, paper towels and pampers aren't too heavy.

There are problems with storing some things. Flour doesn't keep well and sugar draws moisture. Sharon had the impression that some of the baking mixes didn't keep well and became toxic. We use Krusteaz (Continental Mills) products and their shelf life varies. Stored at or below 70°, the shelf life in months is: pancake mix – 24; muffin and brownie mix – 18; and their other products – 12 months. Crisco didn't store well in our garage when we lived in Palmdale, it got too hot. We'd have been ok, if we'd turned the office into a pantry. Shelf lives are based on storing food at room temperature which is defined as 70°. I think what she was referring to was that fact that some foods contain oils or fatty acids which can go rancid. I'm not sure what a trans fat is, I think it may be transmission grease.

"Well, it's been 4 hours, have the answer yet?"

"What was the question?"

"How are we going trade if we have to stay isolated?"

"Gee I don't know, maybe at gun point? Actually, we won't be trading until we have too."

"Did you actually believe anyone would trade for a Mauser?"

"Hey that's a good rifle. Take one of them out to the range and try it. Don't be bad mouthing it until you have."

"What caliber is it?"

"8mm, about .315."

"Kick bad?"

"You a wuss? Not much more than my rifle. That Mauser action is the finest action there is. Mitchell's Mauser's are Mauser K98 rifles, known as the Model 48. They are classified as 'military-new'. After the Germans were driven out of Yugoslavia, production continued for a time under the then communist regime. The rifles were built on German tooling but are of a more robust construction, because the Yugoslav

factories did not experience the materials shortages that cheapened the later German production. Get some ammo and try one of them out."

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"Well?"

"Not bad. Mind if I keep it as a backup?"

"You can have it unless someone wants to buy it. I'll even throw in some ammo."

"What about the bioweapons?"

"What about them? Absent a carrier they should die out."

"Who do you think did it?"

"My money would be on the Muslim Extremists. I seriously doubt that that bunch at the border would do it, they might end up infecting their own troops."

"What if they were vaccinated?"

"There's no vaccine for pneumonic plague."

"But you have treatments, right?"

"That's why you and I are taking Doxy, as a hedge. I don't know if it works or not unless you get the plague."

"You don't like the Muslims, do you?"

"I hate all extremists, regardless of their stripe. Sharon and I had a long talk with Dr J about that. He's from Iran and he doesn't like them either. I think I managed to get him convinced before we moved that it was when, not if, so far as TEOTWAWKI was concerned."

"Do you totally believe that?"

"At least TEOCAWKI, if not TEOTWAWKI. Historically speaking, this reminds me of the late 19th century. Unfortunately, we have WMDs now. If it gets bad enough, modern technology could be obsidian arrowheads."

"When is it truly going to warm up?"

"When all of the dirt and smoke settle out of the air. We're lucky being this far south, imagine being in Minnesota. I saw one estimate that it could take 10 years or more."

http://www.livescience.com/forcesofnature/061211_nuclear_climate.html
<http://www.newsmax.com/archives/ic/2006/12/12/110348.shtml?s=ic>

"Dad, this is sort of like being in Ft. Apache. Bad guys to the south, who knows where the diseases are and who knows whether those terrorists will set off more bombs?"

"Don't you think they'd have set them off if they had them?"

"What if they got more? Did you notice how many more people were in Tucson when we went shopping? I think people up north waited for the fallout to decay and then came south."

"There were? I didn't notice. Good, that means I'll have a market for my Mausers."

"Do you know what a white elephant is Dad?"

"Sure, a white elephant is a supposedly valuable possession whose upkeep costs exceed its usefulness, and it is therefore a liability. The term derives from the white elephant of East Asia, which is high-maintenance and has no practical use, but is considered sacred in Burmese culture (and therefore cannot be neglected or abandoned). A common elephant is expensive enough to maintain, considering the amount of food and water it requires. Thus it is considered a good idea to gift a white elephant to an enemy in the hope of bringing them to financial ruin. In Sri Lanka the term is also used to imply that something is good to look at on the outside but is in fact only a waste of resources. Those rifles don't qualify because I also bought ammo."

"Right Dad, if you say so."

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A recent study shows that some antidepressants are more likely than others to give rise to suicide attempts. The drug least likely to give rise to suicide was Fluoxetine (Prozac) while the drug most likely to give rise to suicide was Venlafaxine (Effexor). I'm not worried about it. I take Sertraline (Zoloft). It's one of the SSRIs and the study showed that they weren't a big problem.

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"If you stand around waiting for WW III, all you'll accomplish is getting old."

"What makes you say that? Russia has more weapons than we do and China probably has more than they admit to."

"Damon for 40 or more years, we had a cold war. We didn't nuke the Soviets and they didn't nuke us. You know about Mutually Assured Destruction, don't you?"

"MAD?"

"That's the one. We could kill them 50 times over and they could kill us 60 times over. The doctrine assumes that each side has enough weaponry to destroy the other side and that either side, if attacked for any reason by the other, would retaliate with equal or greater force. The expected result is an immediate escalation resulting in both combatants' total and assured destruction. It is now generally assumed that the nuclear fallout or nuclear winter resulting from a large scale nuclear war would bring about worldwide devastation, though this was not a critical assumption to the theory of MAD. The doctrine further assumes that neither side will dare to launch a first strike because the other side will launch on warning (also called fail-deadly) or with secondary forces (second strike) resulting in the destruction of both parties. The payoff of this doctrine is expected to be a tense but stable peace."

"That's crazy."

"Not it's not, it's MAD. Did you ever go to global security and check and see how many ER nukes we had?"

"ER?"

"Neutron bombs. They don't have much physical yield, but they kill people. That preserves the infrastructure so we can go in later and take their stuff."

"We don't have any of those, the last were dismantled in the '90s."

"Really? I guess that explains why we didn't nuke the opposing force with ER weapons."

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Many of the founders of the country were Free Masons. In fact it was a Free Mason (Ben Franklin) who suggested to the writer of the Declaration of Independence (Thomas Jefferson) that he should use the term Inalienable Rights instead of the term Scared Rights in the Declaration of Rights. There is no proof, one way or the other, that Jefferson was a Free Mason, although John Hancock, Ben Franklin, George Washington and Paul Revere were. Was Sam Adams a Free Mason? Is it true that the Boston Tea Party, attributed to the Sons of Liberty, was actually done by a Masonic Lodge? Sorry but you will never know for sure, fifty six men signed the Declaration of Independence. It can only be shown that nine of them were Free Masons. The Da Vinci Code is a book and a movie, nothing more.

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It looked like it would be some while before supplies of food would run out and people would begin to look for a means to protect themselves. My best guess was 2nd quarter,

2011. For the interim we hunkered down and made sure no one got onto the acreage. When Damon's kids arrived we equipped them and got them on the range. Aaron and Eric were into shooting guns, but Britney wasn't. I asked Mary to take her under her wing and get her used to the Bushmaster A3 and one of the spare Browning High Powers I'd picked up. Thank God all Mary's folks had brought their own gun collections with them, and God bless the Arkansas hillbilly for knowing what gun control really means.

A word on handguns. John Browning invented the Browning High Power and the M1911. He didn't invent the Beretta model 92F. He also invented the M2 machinegun; you know, the one we've been using for almost 100 years. Over the years, most of the changes to the M1911 have been cosmetic. Ditto for most of his guns. I like the Browning High Power and the M1911, but not the 92F. We only had them because Derek liked them.

We should have known the Israelis were going to let loose on the Arab neighbors. There was an article in the Jerusalem Post:

The clock is ticking, yet no one wishes to hear it. The countdown to a nuclear Iran has begun, and with each passing day the nightmare scenario draws ever closer to becoming a reality.

In just a few months' time, if all goes according to plan, the tyrant of Teheran will preside over a celebration of terrifying, and history-altering, significance.

His goal, as he has stated repeatedly in recent weeks, is to complete the installation of thousands of centrifuges, the devices used to enrich uranium, by the end of March 2007.

This will give the ayatollahs the ability to start producing nuclear weapons, and to spread nuclear terror far and wide, threatening the existence not only of Israel, but of Western civilization itself.

The would-be Hitler of Persia has already made it abundantly clear that he plans to wipe Israel and its millions of Jews off the map. And last week he told Western leaders that their turn would soon be next: "If you do not respond to the divine call," he warned, "you will die soon and vanish from the face of the earth."

Three months. That's all we've got. That's all that stands right now between the world as we know it, and one in which the Persian executioner will be able to put his finger on the nuclear button.

This can not be allowed to happen. The danger is too great, the peril is too real.

Now is the time for all those who love Israel to stand up and be counted. Now is the time for pro-Israel Christians everywhere, and especially in the US, to rise up and cry out on behalf of God's people.

Storm the heavens with your prayers, and the White House with your pleas. Speak out now and urge US President George W. Bush to eliminate the Iranian nuclear threat once and for all.

By now it should be clear: Nothing less than US military action is going to deter Teheran from pursuing its nuclear goals. Threats of sanctions and finger-wagging have failed to do the job.

Europe is hopelessly weak and conciliatory, and the United Nations is completely inept. There is one man, and one man alone, whom God has put in a position to stop Iran, and that man's name is George W. Bush.

But the President is under attack, as the media and his critics do their utmost to tear him down. They hate him and everything he stands for, and will stop at nothing to spoil his remaining time in office.

The President is a good man, and a man of faith. He knows what needs to be done; but like any leader, he also needs to hear from those who put him in office.

And that, dear Christians, is where you come in to play.

With your size and your influence, and yes, with your faith, it is you who can make a difference at this critical juncture for Israel and the West.

Many of my fellow Jews in the US are largely silent, afraid to be seen as leading the charge. It is as if they learned nothing from the Jewish people's horrific experience in Europe over six decades ago, when silence in America made possible extermination across the sea.

But you know better than that, and you are not afraid.

On issues that you care about, you have demonstrated an impressive ability to affect US policy, mustering the passion and power necessary to shape debate. Now, more than ever, is the time to do so again, for the threat to us all is very, very real.

Flood the White House and Congress with your concerns. Let them know that you fear for Israel and its safety. Urge your elected officials to hit Iran hard, and soon. Not merely with criticism, but with bombs as well.

Because unless the US Air Force goes into action, the mullahs of Teheran will jeopardize everything we hold dear.

Israel, as you know, is the "apple of His eye" (see Deut. 32:10 and Zech. 2:12). And God has made clear in His Scripture what He expects from people of faith at times such as these, when Israel is in danger.

"You who make mention of the Lord," says the prophet Isaiah (Chap. 62: 6-7), "do not keep silent, and give Him no rest until He establishes and until He makes Jerusalem unto a praise in the earth."

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," says the Psalmist, in Psalm 122. "They that love thee shall prosper."

These aren't just guidelines or recommendations from books of old. They are a command to each and every one of us, Jew and Christian alike, to stand up and speak out when Israel is under threat.

I have no doubt, not one iota of disbelief that God will save His people Israel. Deliverance comes from Him, and Him alone. But each of us must do our part to help bring it about.

And you, dear Christians, now have the power, and the opportunity, to do so. To move the President's heart, and to save Israel and the West from a truly diabolical fate.

So please, don't tarry - we dare not delay. The clock is winding down, the alarm bells are ringing. Raise your voices in prayer and supplication. The time to do something is now, and there is not a moment to waste.

I can overlook the Zionist zeal, it didn't make the article any less valid. It was an old article, from sometime in late 2006 or early 2007. You could tell, Hillary wasn't Queen, yet. They'd waited, until the world couldn't condemn them, but it did anyway.

+++++

We still had the internet although you couldn't reach some cities and would get the 404 error message. Ammoman had quit updating his website twice a day. I assumed they got sick with one of the plagues. And, not to change the subject, but I'll bet they wished they had the ER bombs back. A few of those and our troubles on the border would be over, although the cluster bombs had worked pretty well.

Terrorized Iraqi troops in 1991 called exploding US cluster bombs 'steel rain.' Such cluster munitions can either be dropped from aircraft or fired inside artillery shells. The 'parent' bomb breaks apart as it nears the ground, spewing forth sub-munitions [or bomblets]. The widely-used CBU-87 1,000 pound cluster bomb leaves a footprint of 458 meters; its wind-corrected version, the CBU-103, has a footprint of 183 meters. The footprint is measured by the area covered by bomblets. Each bomblet [BLU-107] in the CBU-87 injures people in a 152 meter radius. The bomblets drift down to earth with a

small parachute. Though most explode upon impact, many do not. The reported 'dud rate' varies from 8 – 22 percent.

Another cluster bomb, the CBU-105, is a 1,000 pound wind-corrected version that was first used on April 2, 2003, when a B-52 dropped six of them on "an Iraqi tank column heading south out of Baghdad." The CBU-105 contains 40 'SADARM' bomblets. Incredibly, each has its own radar, and has a killing footprint of 150x360 meters

The Iraqis didn't attack our tanks in the second Gulf War. For all of its power, the M1A2 Abrams has a shortcoming, you have to refill the fuel tank every 4 hours. What they did instead was to wait for the fuel convoy following behind and take it out. That's not as big a problem these days, as we finally replaced the AGT 1500 engine in the Abrams with an upgraded LV50-2, which was developed originally for the Crusader. The new engine is 20% plus more fuel efficient and had 40% plus fewer moving parts.

Trying to figure out how we found ourselves in this situation was hard. Who would have thought that South and Central American Countries would take us on – head on? The first terrorist attack came as no particular surprise. We knew if terrorists ever got their hands on nukes, they'd use them, on us. A double whammy attack using bioweapons, neither of which were anthrax, did come as a surprise. No problem. We had plenty of time to figure it out, we weren't going anywhere.

"You figure out the rifle and that scope yet?"

"Are you volunteering to be a target grandpa?"

"No Aaron, I'm not. That M1A doesn't kick too much does it?"

"Some; I can handle it."

"You like the Tac-Force chest harness?"

"Kind of heavy with 8 mags and 6 grenades, grandpa."

"Rifle is heavy with a scope and 2 mags, Aaron."

"It would be if I was old, like you. When can we go to town?"

"Whetstone is only significant because of its insignificance, Aaron. The town has:

- Median house value significantly below state average.
- Black race population percentage below state average.
- Hispanic race population percentage below state average.
- Median age above state average.
- Foreign-born population percentage significantly below state average.
- Renting percentage significantly below state average.

- Percentage of population with a bachelor's degree or higher significantly below state average.
- Population density significantly below state average for cities." <http://www.city-data.com/city/Whetstone-Arizona.html>

"Grandma and you fit right in."

"We do. It's the rest of the family that doesn't really belong here. Maybe once we win the war and the bioweapons die out, you can all go home."

"We'll cross that bridge when we get to it."

"What, you don't think this is over?"

"Bad things happen in 3s, grandpa."

"We've had 3, the war, the nukes and the bioweapons."

"I count 4. There were 2 bioweapons."

"Don't say that. If we've had 4, we have 5 more to go. It doesn't jump from 3 to 6, it jumps to 3 times 3. Besides, don't kid yourself, if we do have a global thermonuclear war there aren't many people who will survive. With enough warning, we would, but what would we find when we came out of the shelter? Haven't you noticed that the background radiation level has been higher since Israel nuked the Middle East?"

"How high?"

"Barely measurable, that's not the point. Imagine what this country would be like if it was nuked by Russia or China. Anyway, who is to say that the terrorists don't have more weapons? I said that if they had them, they would have used them. I'm wrong about s often as I'm right. Don't get old, Aaron. And when you do, don't take your insulin and forget to eat. Sometimes I go somewhere and don't know why when I arrive."

"Do you need a keeper, grandpa?"

"Are you volunteering?"

"I will, but only if you promise to listen to me when I tell you something is wrong."

"All you have to do is hand me a candy bar and a full strength coke, buddy. If it's my blood sugar, as soon as the sugar does its magic, I'll be ok."

I doubt Aaron knew what he was getting into. I'd do just fine for a time and then get busy and forget to eat. At least the symptoms were easy to recognize, I'd turn brutally

stupid. If you ask me my name, I'd have to think about it because my brain had ceased to function.

"What are you doing home? Is the war over?"

"They withdrew, Dad. Our satellites show they're in full retreat."

"Did we do something different?"

"That's just it, we were expecting another attack. They're moving south as fast as they can pedal. Something funny is going on."

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 9[/b]

"What's the Defcon status?"

"At the border, 2. The rest of the country is at Defcon 3. The threat level is overall orange with some locations being red."

"What about the plagues?"

"They're getting that under control. Don't you monitor the ham bands?"

"That's why I went to the shelter. Thanks. Anyway, when I got there, I couldn't remember why I went. Aaron volunteered to be my keeper."

"I'm looking for a word here, help me out. It means what is happening."

"Sitrep?"

"That's it. Can you give me a Sitrep?"

"I just did."

"Oh, that's right, the enemy is in full retreat, we're expecting another terrorist attack and people are getting over the smallpox and pneumonic plague."

"Right."

Dementia: The loss of mental functions – such as thinking, memory, and reasoning – severe enough to interfere with a person's daily functioning. Dementia is not a disease itself, but rather a group of symptoms that may accompany certain diseases or conditions. Symptoms also may include changes in personality, mood, and behavior. Dementia is irreversible when caused by disease or injury but may be reversible when caused by drugs, alcohol, hormone or vitamin imbalances, or depression.

Senility: A term meaning "old," once used to describe elderly diagnosed with dementia.

Age, diabetes and depression can lead to dementia. That said, if you're 68 years old with diabetes and diabetic neuropathy plus suffer from depression, the odds are you're well on your way to becoming senile. Generally what happens these days is the family waits until they can't take the odd behavior anymore and put the senior in a 'rest home'. Before they had such places, the family gave the senior his/her own bedroom and put up with the odd behavior. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rest_home

Most Hospitals and Skilled Nursing Facilities prefer to use regular insulin rather than the long release type like Humalin 70/30. Their standard is to take your blood sugar level every 4 hours and give one unit of regular insulin for every 5 points your blood sugar is above 200. The normal range for blood sugar is 70-110, hence they maintain you with a high blood sugar level which can only further your dementia. Worse, take it from someone who has been there, they use dull 10 penny nails to prick your fingers to get that little drop of blood. Trust me when I say that there comes a time, after enough hospitalizations, that you'd rather die then go to the hospital again.

It didn't dawn on me, or Derek for that matter, that there might be a reason besides a feeling of defeat that caused the South and Central American countries to pull back from our border. It has often been said that there is one thing worse than a global thermonuclear war, the aftermath. Even if you're a preparedness freak, as I've been accused of being, you still have to eventually come out of the shelter.

When the EAS tone sounded on the TV and radios, we thought it was just another terrorist attack. Not this time! According to the Vice President, NORAD had detected incoming missiles and had launched on warning. He was so busy giving instructions about taking shelter and what not that he completely forgot to mention who was attacking. The next thing I knew, I was being herded into the shelter by Aaron.

"Dad, you go put on a movie. Damon will monitor the radios and survey meters and I'll make sure we're bundled up."

"What's happening? Sitrep?"

"World War Three."

"I knew it. We should have never let the Japanese set up a Defense Ministry and start teaching Patriotism in their schools."

"It's not them, Dad. It either has to be Russia or China."

"Really? I'm going to put on that movie."

"What are you going to watch?"

"The Day After. Tell Damon to be sure and ground all of the antennas."

I got the movie going, sat down in my easy chair and promptly fell asleep. The next thing I knew, Sharon was shaking me and telling me to take my insulin because supper was ready.

+++++

Derek adds his two bits here.

What Dad never found out, mostly because I never told him, was that I had acquired several Rock Island Arsenal contacts when I was overseas. The Arsenal has several liaison offices on post from defense contractors. Most of those offices send representatives to conflict areas like Iraq to help with fielding their systems. Since I had been a part of one fielding I had access to the compound on LSA Anaconda and made several friends back in 2005. Since then, I had helped with fielding other systems because of those contacts – I was requested in some cases because of a partially underserved reputation for intelligence.

The big and small of it was that I had inside men at Rock Island Arsenal. Like I said, I didn't tell Dad this because I didn't think he needed to know.

Things change, don't they?

I got on the phone and dialed up "Joe", an old friend of mine that still worked out there. Joe served in Desert Storm, retired, and took a job at Rock Island after that. He worked at the rail yards organizing loads to go out at the Army's request. Not a bad job to have, and the pay was pretty good, too.

"Rail head, this is Joe."

"Joe, this is Spence."

"Oh, sh*t."

"Now, relax, Joe, I don't want much this time."

"Yeah, right, like the time you wanted me to reroute a load of tanks to the siding in Cotter."

I had to laugh. "Joe, that was a joke, I swear."

"Joke, hell, I had a lot of explaining to do. Only the siding number saved me that time."

"You got your tanks back, didn't you?"

Joe laughed. "Yeah, but still..."

"So stop worrying. Besides, nobody who knows about this favor will care, and nobody who cares will know."

The phone went quiet for a while. "Where to, Spence?"

"Fort Huachuca."

A pause. "How many units?"

"Lets go with 6 sets, all small and ante. Plus as many sets of indirect as you can part with."

Another pause. "Anything I should know about?"

"Just a present for a tired old man."

"Sh*t. I'm coming, too."

"No, Joe. You stay there for now. Just tell the gang to pre-mob. I'll call you when it's time to move. I might need another few sets."

"Like hell you will. I'm moving them now, but don't ask again. Biliary is sending inspectors through here in a week and I ain't gonna be here. If we head for Tucson, will we get there?"

"Yeah, you will. Follow the white rabbit. He'll be carrying a M1A."

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The train arrived about two days later. It wasn't much to look at, really; just a long string of flatbed cars with metal shipping containers on them. What was inside would drive Dad nuts once he found out about it. I didn't think that he should know, though. No one man should have all the information because if he was lost, so was everyone who was counting on him.

Dad would argue with me about it. I hoped that I could outlast him. He's a stubborn old codger when he wants to be and he expects to be told everything. What I don't tell him he usually finds out anyway if anyone else knows.

When I checked the manifests I found out that Joe had outdone himself. For starters, I asked for the small arms and ammunition, plus some man portable ordnance, for 18 days of combat at brigade strength. He sent complete combat resupply sets. That meant MREs, medical supplies, Concertina wire, pickets, batteries, and every other standard combat consumable on top of all that ammo and ordnance. The icing on the

cake was that the top of the manifest said that this was the first of 7 "flips", meaning that Joe was sending 6 more trains. Bless his pointy little head.

"What are you up to, Spence?"

I turned around. Sure enough, Randy had found me again. I couldn't go anywhere without him turning up sometime.

"Just looking at something for some people I know."

Randy's eyes widened. "Are you out of your mind, Staff Sergeant? If the officers find out about this, they'll shoot you!"

"F*ck 'em and the horses they shot on the way here, Randy. Look around you. You think you're gonna see any of those empty-headed occifers around here? I bet you a case of beer that all you'll find here in a few weeks is a bunch of "we regret" letters that need to be written because they won't let us pull out to the same area of safety as they are in."

"I know that you don't like officers, Spence, but this is a little overboard. How the hell are you going to get this out of here, anyway?"

"Let me worry about that."

"At least cut me in, then. If you think it's that bad, I want to help."

"Fine, Randy. Get a few together that are worth saving and let them know. Have them redeploy this to caches as ordered. Sign it 'Colonel Patton' when you need to have written orders."

"Wilco, Sir."

"Knock it off, Randy. The idiot that signed that order didn't ask me if I wanted to be an officer. That's why I won't wear the bars."

+++++

The dosimeter that I was wearing had topped out nearly an hour ago. We still had a few hours of driving to get back to the shelter, too. Randy had already collapsed once, but he'd been out stashing more often than I had anyway. Dad was going to skin me alive when he found out about the dosimeters. This was the second one that I had maxed in the last three months. My hair was nearly gone by now, and I don't think that Mary needed to remember the pill anymore. I'd have to ask Dad if I wanted to know how dead I was, and I wasn't going to ask him in any case. Sharon was worried enough to suffer an angina attack a week after she found out, and I worried more about Dad's health than hers.

"Sir, you better get out of this mess and into the decon lab," a private told me.

"It's 'Sarge', not 'Sir', Private, and just finish this up yesterday so that we can both go."

"Alright, Sarge, but I can do this by myself. I don't need you to watch over my shoulder."

The thing was that the private was right. I was suffering from a combination of radiation sickness and a disease much older: command responsibility. My pride was getting in the way of me making good decisions about my own health and I never let a stash go without either Randy or I watching over the emplacement. We rotated the kids through the digs in shifts so that they wouldn't get too much radiation and rigged a pair of conexes (Army speak for those metal shipping containers) into a field decon lab for MOPP suit exchange and a good shower to remove particles on the skin. I stayed out, though, until the last private was inside the decon lab before I would go in myself.

Randy did the same, and didn't tell me that he was making two runs to my one until he started barfing inside his mask and collapsed. The medic didn't know how long he would be sick or if he would make it, but he wasn't much older than the kids we were watching and only a field medic besides. I had a couple of bottles of KIO3 from Dad "just in case". They had helped a lot, but I would have given my left nut for a honest to goodness army doctor.

But doctors are officers, and all the officers had left weeks ago when the radiation got too high. I had never served with a bigger pack of pantywaists in my life. The only ray of sunshine about it was that they called back to tell us not to come, since they were all showing signs and symptoms of some sort of mystery illness and had quarantined themselves. The radios went silent a week later, so karma must still work.

"Done, sir."

I raised an eyebrow behind my mask.

"Whether you like it or not, you are our commander. That means that as far as we're concerned, you're an officer. Now get into decon before I carry you there."

"Sergeant, I might knock you back to corporal for that."

"I'm a private, so I ain't worried about it."

"Not no more you ain't. Move out, Sergeant."

+++++

I'd really love to tell you what happened next. I now think that Sharon or someone was slipping me Xanax in my food and/or coffee. I ended up sleeping most of the next 100 days. They'd wake me up, I'd take my insulin and eat. Within an hour, I'd be sound asleep again. Finally, one morning, they woke me up, and I went through my usual routine. Meds, breakfast, shower and I wasn't sleepy. They must have cut my meds the previous night and eliminated them today. Having not really used my muscles for 3 months or more, I was a bit on the weak side. Derek said the above ground radiation level was 55mR and it was time to leave the shelter. I strapped on my Beretta .45 Colts and rode the lift to above ground. I sat and waited for them to lift my wheelchair, I could barely walk. It was cold, too, must have been below freezing. Once I had my wheelchair, I probably broke the speed limit getting into the house. It was warm so, obviously, someone had been up and raised the furnace temperature to ~75°.

"Aaron, would you start fires in the fireplaces? I'm cold to the bone."

"Yes, grandpa."

It wasn't long after that that Sharon brought me a cup of hot chocolate. It must be the fat in the drink, a couple of cups and you're warm to the core. I was sitting in the den in front of the corner fireplace and finally got warm. I looked out the window and the sky was cloudy. The clouds sort of had a strange color to them, more brown than gray.

"Did I just sleep most of the time we were in the shelter?"

"Yep. We spiked your drinks and kept you out from under foot."

"Sitrep?"

"We got the crap kicked out of us. Both China and Russia unleashed nuclear weapons. Off hand, I think all 3 countries were bombed back into the Stone Age."

"Did anyone try to start my truck?"

"Not yet. No. Besides, the battery is probably frozen."

"There are several new batteries in the storeroom in the shelter. There should be plenty of diesel fuel for now. We'll have to scavenge for more. As long as we can get fuel, we'll have electricity and there's enough propane for several years."

"Dad, the diesel fuel will probably be bad. We could use the JP-8, though, it doesn't freeze."

"I have a few barrels of Pri-D, that's not a problem. I also have cans of Pri-Ocide. This should have never happened, they forget what Hiroshima and Nagasaki looked like. Let's talk about this salvage operation. I want you boys thinking outside of the box. We have enough ammo to wear out the barrels on all of our rifles. If you get more ammo,

get rifles to go with it. Second, don't limit yourselves to modern weapons, archery equipment is just fine and if you can find some swords or anything, bring 'em home."

"Awful cold to work on your pickup outside."

"Fire up the kerosene heater and warm up the machine shed. You can get both trucks in there and get 'em running. Once you do that, try heading back towards Tucson. Look for fuel tankers first. Mind you watch the radiation, it could be dangerous out there."

"What are you going to do, Dad?"

"Get my Super Match, 20 mags of ammo and guard the fireplace. You can take Aaron with you and leave Eric with me to haul the firewood. And just so you know, I'll be fixing my own food and beverages from now on."

By the time they got the tractor started, the trucks pulled into the machine shed and the batteries swapped out, it was lunch time. True to my word, I fixed myself some macaroni and cheese and a cup of hot chocolate. We had 50 packages of Kraft Mac & Cheese and there were 15 boxes in each package. If I wanted variety, I could always open a can of Spam.

I have simple tastes, my mother usually served boiled potatoes, fried round steak and green beans about 4 nights a week. On the weekend she'd either fry chicken and have mashed potatoes and gravy or potato salad. On other weekends, she'd cook a 7-bone roast with onions, potatoes and carrots. When I got married the first time, we cooked beans on Saturday and goulash on Wednesday. Joyce would bake homemade bread and the vegetable was usually a fresh lettuce salad. After that, it got complicated, Sharon and I had far different tastes. She hated round steak, cooked tomatoes and it goes on. One dish she made was truly outstanding, meat loaf. Another was fried chicken with smashed potatoes and gravy.

If I had boxed mac and cheese, Spam and breakfast cereal, I could live forever. Sometimes I'd add a few peas to the mac and cheese and other times spam. The things I learned to hate over the years was fried pork steak and chops.

After lunch they thought they should get out and have a look around. They promised to stop as soon as the radiation level reached 100mR.

"We're ready to go, Dad."

"Hey, let's be careful out there. SINCGARS frequency is channel 1000, CB is channel 15 and the 2 meter radio is already set. If that doesn't work, switch to 10 meters."

"How many channels are there on the Ham radio?"

"How many do you need? They're all preprogrammed into the memory. There's sheet on the dash with the standard frequencies I use on every band. If 2 meters doesn't work, go to 10, then 20, 40 and finally 80. You can talk around the world on 80 meters."

That ended my senior moment, for the moment.

+++++

When they weren't home by dark, I started to get worried. I tried all of the radios, one after the other. Nothing, nada, zip. I could understand that if they weren't following the radio protocols written on the paper on the dash. It was worse than waiting for Derek to get home from Iraq. When I saw headlights coming, I eased off the safety on my M1A. They left with Damon's pickup and a trailer; they return with the pickup and trailer loaded and driving a propane delivery truck. We needed diesel, not propane, but what the hell, we'd need it someday.

"Where have you been?"

"We hit a pharmacy, broke in and took all the drugs, bandages and anything else we might need. The propane truck had about 2,500 gallons on it and I figured we'd better bring it home."

"Any trouble?"

"No why?"

"I called on the radios for over an hour, didn't you flip the switch to turn on the outside speakers?"

"What switch?"

"I'll show you before you go out tomorrow. I don't suppose you kept the meds segregated, did you?"

"Some what, we used empty boxes and put 2 or 3 shelves in each box. The refrigerated goods are in the ice chest, warming up. Sorry, we didn't find much food."

"How far did you go?"

"We got to the outskirts of Tucson. The radiation level there was ~100mR. Damon has a notebook with locations and things we might want to recover. We also located a fuel depot and plan to go back there tomorrow and see about picking up some diesel fuel."

After they parked the truck out of the way, we unloaded the pickup and trailer. For now, the stuff was stored in the entrance to the shelter.

"How are you doing Dad?"

"You scared 3-4 years off of me and I can't spare the time. Got my focus back, though."

"In that case, you should feel free to reengage the safety on your rifle."

"Sorry. Let's eat and start to sort the stuff you brought home."

"All of it?"

"Nah, we'll just sort out the stuff that goes in the refrigerator and I'll sort the rest tomorrow. Did you see anyone in town?"

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 10[b]

"All of it?"

"Nah, we'll just sort out the stuff that goes in the refrigerator and I'll sort the rest tomorrow. Did you see anyone in town?"

"There were a few people out."

"Once I get the meds sorted, I'll share what we can't use. Many of the people in Whetstone are seniors. Maybe they'll share their food this coming summer when their gardens come in."

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The real tourist spots were Tucson and Tombstone, before the war. Tombstone wasn't a bad place to hit after, if you wanted single action firearms. The local gun stores catered to out of town visitors and there were probably several hundred 'cowboy' guns in the town. I'd done a quick mental inventory the time we'd visited after our move, just in case.

At the moment, I was focused on acquiring as much diesel fuel as the boys could find. It would be nice if they could find another generator or more parts for the one we had. The average life of a diesel generator is ~15,000 hours before it needs a rebuild, call it 2 years. The one we had used a John Deere engine, hopefully, they'd find enough parts to completely rebuild it. With all those moving parts, sooner or later, something would fail and we'd really need the second generator.

Linus had his security blanket; my security blanket was our preparations.

Strange how when they got me off the drugs, my head cleared and I, 'we', got organized. Always one for making lists, there was the scavenging list I'd put together,

just in case TSHTF. It was the 3 'F's', food, fuel and firearms (security). Food was self explanatory, fuel provided lights and transportation and security didn't need any discussion. Unless you lived in town and had a shelter. The question then became who did you let in. Rod Serling covered the issue pretty well on Twilight Zone, so I won't reopen the wound. It was shown during season 3:

The Shelter

Writer: Rod Serling

Director: Lamont Johnson

A group of neighbors turns into a hostile mob when they try to invade one family's bomb shelter, believing a nuclear attack is imminent.

CAST: Larry Gates, Peggy Stewart, Michael Burns, Jack Albertson, John McLiam, Jo Helton, Joseph Bernard, Moira Turner, Sandy Kenyon, Mary Gregory.

More than anything, that show proved the point, 'What they don't know, can't hurt you'. That was high on my list of 'Rules to Live By'. I found that, in most things, if one was good, two was better and three couldn't hurt. I suppose now that the world has ended, we won't be getting any more of the Lottery payments. Still, we had all of those trade goods... not to mention half of the money we'd cleared since we'd began receiving payments. On the other hand, you can't eat gold and silver.

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"That's 6 tankers, almost 100,000 gallons, Dad. Is it all right if we look for something else now?"

"Did you find the spare parts for the generator and possibly a second generator?"

"Spare parts, yes. Second generator, yes but it's bigger, rated at 230kw. The filters are interchangeable."

"Oil?"

"Twelve drums, so far, but we're still looking."

"If that's the case, I think it's time to go to Tombstone."

"What's in Tombstone?"

"Boot Hill. More importantly, there are several gun stores and a hat store. Face it, Tombstone is a tourist trap. I figure most of the ammo we find will be cowboy loads."

"Do we really need more guns?"

"Would you rather someone else got them and used them against us?"

"There's that, I suppose. Anything else?"

"Seeds. I have plenty of heirloom seeds, but don't have any hybrids. Couldn't hurt to collect all the seeds and bedding material you find. If the sky doesn't clear up, we're going to have to build a greenhouse just to grow a garden."

"Greenhouse?"

"You know, a wooden frame covered with plastic to trap what little heat we get from the sun."

It was a daily grind, our looting. That's what it was, you know. True, we didn't take TVs, much liquor and the sorts of things typical looters took, but it was still looting. Strategic reallocation does have a more positive ring to it, doesn't it? It seemed that we weren't the only people doing the same thing, not everyone in Arizona lived in a big city. Arizona only had 3 real civilian targets, Palo Verde, Phoenix and Tucson. Prime military targets included Luke AFB and Ft. Huachuca. 'They' didn't strike Holcomb and I assumed they figured the generation plant would run out of coal and soon shut down. It was offline immediately, for whatever reason.

The only time I ventured out was the trips they made to Tombstone. Call me silly, but I wanted to hit the hat store, it isn't every day you can get a Stetson at that large of a discount (100%). Derek already had his Stetson, it was from his days with the 1st of the 113th. I'd post pictures if the net were still up.

Some of the guns we found in Tombstone were .44-40s. They were, at best, problematic. We ended up storing them with the Mauser rifles, to be used as trade goods. Anything we found in .45 Colt, we kept. I wasn't enamored with the Brisley grips and the Beretta Stampedes we found in the Brisley grip and their break top Laramie's all became trade goods. Ditto for the Ruger Vaqueros. The true Colt Single Action Army in case color we kept. The old expression, 'Beggars can't be choosers' was totally ignored, we could be and could afford to be. Then again, we weren't really Beggars.

The boys eventually even made it to Bisbee and Douglas, but didn't find themselves to be welcomed. Tough!

Maybe I'm assuming you're already familiar with the map of Arizona. If you aren't, let me tell you that the cities, or what remained of them, were in the same place they've always been. I wouldn't write a survival tale with us living in a big city. Fifty miles down the road was just fine. Unfortunately, it was 50 miles west of Whetstone and that's why they kept me doped up for 100 days, 7 to the 4th power.

It warmed a little as we passed into spring. That let them frame up the greenhouse using 2x4s from a lumberyard. They also found a couple of rolls of plastic and a pre-

hung door. That's where being raised by their Grandfather Spencer came into play, they had a greenhouse at the Plant Introduction Farm in Ames.

"Nice. How warm is it in here?"

"Just short of 80°, Dad. We built tables and have all of the seeds planted."

"Is it going to get warm enough to plant the stuff outside?"

"We already planted the spuds outside. As we move the sets out, we'll have room for some of the miscellaneous things, like lettuce."

"Did you plant beans, rice and elbow macaroni?"

"We planted beans, rice and wheat. Maybe you'd better go rest for a while."

I couldn't sneak one thing by them, try that I might. We'd have macaroni, but I wasn't sure if it would bend.

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There is a vast difference between a rolled or laminated pasta and an extruded pasta. First it is important to understand the different processes utilized to make an extruded versus a rolled or laminated pasta.

Extruded pasta is formed by virtue of force. A worm or screw housed within a barrel turns at a continuous rate forcing mixed pasta dough down this barrel. Once the product reaches the end of this barrel, it encounters a die. An "extruder" die is usually a flat object of substantial thickness with various openings on its surface. The shape of these openings determines the shape of the final product. Extruded pasta is the type of pasta commonly seen on the grocery store shelves (Barilla, DeCecco, Ronzoni, etc.).

Rolled pasta is formed by passing mixed dough through a set of adjustable opening rollers several times to form a continuous sheet of pasta dough. Each time this sheet is passed through the rollers, the space between the rollers is decreased making the sheet thinner. The force applied by a set of rollers strongly integrates the sheet giving it resiliency and strength. Once the sheet reaches the desired thickness, it is passed through a set of cutting rollers. These rollers are not adjustable and determine the final width of the product.

Rolled pasta is superior to extruded pasta in many ways. Some of these ways are as follows:

- Rolled pasta is up to 50% less dense than extruded pasta. This makes the final cooked product lighter or more delicate.

- The thickness of the final product is completely adjustable with a rolled product. One could make pasta that is almost transparent. With an extruder, you are limited by the die. The final product is always the same thickness and shape as the openings in the die.
- Rolled pasta cooks in 1/2 to 1/3 of the time that it takes to cook extruded pasta.
- Rolled pasta is known to be more porous and therefore holds sauce better.
- During formation, extruded pasta experiences a great deal of pressure, heat (from friction) and twisting (from the motion of the worm). In many cases, water is used to cool both the product and the machine. These factors cause internal stress on the pasta which leads to a compromised product quality. This compromised quality explains why extruded pasta does not hold sauce as well as rolled pasta and also why expensive drying units are necessary to dry extruded pasta.
- Vast fluctuation in recipe formulations are possible when you are producing a rolled pasta. Such gourmet ingredients as cracked pepper, basil, grilled radicchio, etc. can be laminated into the dough. Ingredients such as these would clog up die openings and render an extruder useless. <http://www.pastamachines.net/faq.html>

We had 2 machines, one for extruded pasta and one for rolled pasta. They were bottom of the line commercial machines that would make more pasta in an hour than we could eat in a month. The machines gave us one advantage. We could produce our own trade goods in the form of pastas. Provided, of course, we could get enough wheat. That 'machine shed' had more in it than just a Ford 2N tractor. Need jars? Lids? Anything? How about a Mauser rifle?

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It's pretty hard to sell pasta unless you can sell pasta sauce. Consequently, we grew a lot of tomatoes, onions and garlic. We also had a nice herb garden set up in the greenhouse. Out in the machine shed, we had a row of propane burners set up, and for each a 4 1/2 quart All American Pressure Canner. Pasta sauce would go in quart jars and each canner held 19. Each batch would use 114 quarts. Let me tell you, that would take a lot of tomatoes. We had a recipe:

4 lbs Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
 1 teaspoon salt
 4 tablespoons olive oil
 3 garlic cloves finely minced
 1 medium onion finely chopped
 1 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves chopped
 1/2 cup fresh flat leaf parsley chopped
 Red pepper flakes to taste
 Black pepper to taste
 1 pinch sugar

Peeling tomatoes: Drop tomatoes into a pot of boiling water for 1 -2 minutes. Take them out of the pot and immediately drop into ice water. After they're cooled a bit you will be able to peel the skin off with the help of a paring knife.

Place chopped tomatoes in a colander, sprinkle with salt, and let drain for 30 minutes.

Heat oil in a medium sauté pan. Sauté onion in oil for 5 minutes. Add garlic and red pepper flake for last minute. Add tomatoes, basil, salt, pepper and sugar. Allow to simmer slowly for 30 minutes. Add parsley at the end. Adjust seasonings to your taste.

It made 3-4 jars of tomato sauce.

The ladies had to adjust from the cooking environment to a canning environment and then they were set. Everybody not working on canning was out in the garden harvesting tomatoes. I had some baskets and when one of them got full, I left it sit and moved on. One of the younger, stronger people would get it to the machine shed. We had Sharon, Lorrie, Amy and Mary working in the machine shed and it wasn't air conditioned. We had 4 floor fans running to try and help out. Two sucked heat from the cooking area and 2 blew cooler air in the other direction, setting up a nice air flow.

The summer of '11 didn't get that hot on the Sonoran Desert. Thank God. Towards the end of summer, I sent Damon and Aaron east to New México, looking for chili peppers. One of the local folks had set up a cheese operation and I'd tasted a sample. Stuffed in an Anaheim chili, it would make the best Chili Rellenos ever. They got Poblano chilies, different from the New México or Anaheim chilies. We didn't do so hot on growing rice. Fortunately, someone else in Whetstone had a bumper crop. Our dry bean crop was measured in bushels and included pinto, great northern and navy beans. We traded them by the pound, packed in paper lunch bags.

Derek claimed that the only way to really know war was to be there. I'd lucked out during Vietnam, I hadn't had to go 'over there'. My lack of actual experience probably explained why most of my stories contained little direct action. I learned, though, there was nothing quite like that feeling you got the first time someone fired on you. Hard to describe, really; kind of a combined feeling, 1 part abject (wretched) terror; 1 part anger; stirred together and served over the ice flowing in your veins. If the SOB had killed you, you'd have never had the experience, hence the anger.

That probably explained why I took 4 shots from my Super Match before I found the target. One 168 grain JHP bullet was enough to kill the guy, but I shot until he stopped moving. Overkill? Probably, but if I had it to do over, I'd put 5 rounds in him again. One to kill him and 4 more for scaring me out of 5 years of life. How dare he! It was even worse when he was a she. I turned 68 last birthday and mostly stayed home guarding the home place. That's what they do with you when you lose your strength and mobility, you guard the home place.

It came early, before we even had the tomatoes planted. I guess the people saw 4 singlewides and a doublewide and figured with that many people, we must have food. We did, hundreds of pounds of it. It was trade goods and we had it to trade. We even had a little to give away, from our scavenging operation. They didn't ask. The first I/we knew was when a bullet buried itself in one of four uprights supporting the canopy over the front deck. What if I hadn't been clumsy and hadn't dropped a round of .308 ammo? Just as I bent over to pick it up, bam, the 4x4 exploded.

I slammed to the deck, behind my wheelchair and reached for my Super Match which was leaning against the right arm of the wheelchair. My Tac-Force chest harness was draped over the back of the chair, giving me 8 magazines in addition to the one in the rifle and the 2nd in the buttstock pouch. I managed to pull the harness off the chair and belly crawl to the edge of the deck. Damon had stacked filled sandbags, 2 deep and 2 high around the edge of the deck. I set the rifle in the groove between 2 bags and found my target. Like I said, my first 4 shots missed; the next 5 didn't.

The boys were home and rolled out loaded for bear. Derek and Aaron had M1As, Damon an 870 loaded with buckshot. I was taking rounds in the sandbags, but the other guy wasn't sure where I was shooting from. Derek spotted him and spent one cartridge on the man. It should have ended there, but their teenaged son open fire and Aaron got him. All because they were apparently too proud to ask. For all I knew, they'd asked before and had been turned down. We defended ourselves, God can judge us all.

In a previous story, I'd murdered 4 men. The Bible says, 'Thou shall not murder'. Moses found out the penalty for murder, as did I.

Yippee-yi-ya, yippee-yi-yo,
Ghost riders in the sky

I wonder what Ron is doing right now? In fact, I wonder if he's still alive out there in the People's Republik of Kalifornia? I hated to leave my partner, but hey his parting shot was, "Remember, the first drink is the drunk." Good advice, I took it.

That attack was the first of the year. After that, I got stuck on guard duty, guarding the home place, like I said earlier. Ted joined me, seeing as he was older than dirt; Derek divvied up the shifts riding the perimeter amongst the few dozen guys that Mary had brought to us, so that at least a half-dozen were out riding picket at a time. I guess the bad guys have rules too, no one attacked now that we were prepared for it. That spring day, when 'it' happened, Max had been inside. Good thing too, he might have attacked and gotten shot for his trouble. After that he stood guard duty with me, I needed all the help I could get.

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Where I was before the detour was canning tomato sauce, pizza sauce or spaghetti sauce, call it what you will. Most days we got a full batch and maybe a couple of canners extra, that was up to the sun and the tomatoes. There were green beans and corn to can too, usually they did 12 canner loads a day (2 batches). We even had beets although I don't know why, we didn't buy beets from the grocery store when there was a grocery store. Sharon decided to sandbox the carrots, we were using up the jars. Celery could be preserved by washing and slicing it. Then you could freeze it or dehydrate it, either method worked. It was our first time preserving celery so we did it 50/50.

We had green beans, lima beans, pinto beans, great northern beans and navy beans. Wait, I forgot the kidney beans, Sharon liked those in her chili. We probably had several hundred cubic feet of methane too, but that's another subject. All I can tell you is to soak them overnight, it helps.

One facet of being human is that no one likes being taken for granted. Our parents did it to their parents, we did it to ours and our kids do it to us. There probably was a time in America when that didn't happen; it was before my time. Everyone gets an education, be it from a public/private school or the school of hard knocks. The lessons that were the hardest to learn may well be the ones we learned best.

A person had to wonder about a President who claimed a 4th generation war was winnable. Yeah, by the insurgents. We learned that in Vietnam and the Russians learned it in Afghanistan. In light of the global thermonuclear war, I had an unsettling thought in the back of my mind; we might get to find out first hand. Right here in the good old US of A. We could thank our lucky stars Derek had some up close and personal experience with 4th generation warfare.

We left those 3 bodies lay right where they were. By canning time what remained of them were mummified. Of course, the critters got to them, so the remains made for a gruesome warning. Collected their guns and added those to the trade goods. Over the summer, I managed to unload about a dozen of the Mausers, right there in Whetstone. Traded a Mauser, bayonet and a case of ammo for things we hadn't found, like calves and pigs. Those .44-40s? Gave them away with the cowboy ammo we'd found in Tombstone. We still had a few trespassers, all headed south. Max and I let them go, I didn't want to waste the ammo.

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Right after the war, there was a problem I hadn't really anticipated; nobody trusted paper money any more and there wasn't a lot of gold and silver in circulation, at least, not in Whetstone. We had a family meeting to discuss that and I told everybody about Percy and his Mission. We had bags of 90% silver coins and a fair amount of silver and gold bullion coins, a grand total of \$2.5 million less recent spending at the original market price. Hey, Jerry, how are things in Nevada?

"One of you want to be a banker? Amy, you have that lap top and I have a copy of Microsoft Money. It would have to be an old fashioned bank, savings accounts only. We have to do something to get some gold and silver into circulation, anyone have any ideas?"

"Dad, how about we hire some people to help us with security? We could also ask Mary's family for more help with the garden. Maybe plant them bigger."

"I'll think about it."

Three days later, while we were replacing the post that exploded the day before, I agreed with the suggestion. Such had been suggested by Jerry D. Young in is outstanding work, Percy's Mission. Gary's mission didn't have the same ring and we only had 80 acres, of sand.

The first step was to buy a real tractor and some good used farm equipment, using gold, silver and food to pay for it. Then we located a small school bus and had transportation for the folks in Whetstone who wanted work. We paid in food and silver. The rule of thumb on money turnover is that for every dollar you spend, it turns over a minimum of 8 times.

I arbitrarily valued the gold at \$1,250 an ounce and the silver at \$25 an ounce, that 50:1 ratio. After we got the ball rolling, Ted, Max, and I started to pull guard duty. What with being the main source of the money and an executive, it just didn't seem fair. It did, however, permit me to be useful. I had the cowboys guns in a Laredoan rig and my .45 auto in a model 1942 shoulder holster. In the window rack was my Super Match, an 870 and my 1895 Marlin Cowboy in .45-70. If it had held more, I'm quite certain I've carried more.

Mostly, Max and I ended up patrolling the 80. Each circuit was 1½ miles, a ½ mile up, ¼ mile across, a ½ mile down and ¼ mile back across. But then, we were only going about 10mph and only did ~ 1 patrol an hour. While a person could see the entire 80 from the front patio, you couldn't really see the fences. I kept one of the extra loaded standard M1A on the front porch so I didn't have to take the weapons out of the pickup.

Max and I still saw the occasional contrail, had to be military jets. Almost always, they we up north. Sometimes, it would look like a flight of fighters, generally a Squadron or more. There would frequently be a couple of larger aircraft, probably tankers. Every time I saw a flight, I began to wonder, who's invading us, this time? The military had dispersed from the border areas, I was guessing they were reassigned to cities for cleanup.

Why was I wondering? There hadn't been a radio or TV broadcast since the war. If there had, we hadn't been able to pick them up. Of course, it hadn't been quite a year yet, so maybe a station would get back on the air soon. It sure would be any of the Tucson stations, that's for sure. If they hadn't been blown to hell, I was pretty certain

their electronics were fired. No internet meant no survivalist websites. Have to tell you, I visited several, and some of them sort turned nasty. No names, of course, but I had noticed a certain element on some I'd been visiting the longest. Radical elements, and I told you how I feel about extremists.

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Let me tell you why this was TEOCAWKI and not Armageddon. The latter is out of the Book of Revelations in the Bible. It tells, in a sort of code I guess, about the end of times and the battle between good and evil on the plain of Har Megiddo. That couldn't happen yet, Hillary had only been in office 3 years, come January. That plain was probably bathed in radiation from the Israeli attacks.

Israel is an interesting study. It was formed after WW II, to give the Jews back the country that God gave Moses. Problem was, it was already occupied. There were the Jordanians, Palestinians and the British, just to name a few.

The State of Israel is a country in the Western Asian Levant, on the southeastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. It borders Lebanon on the north, Syria and Jordan on the east, and Egypt on the south-west. It has a population of over seven million people. Israel declared independence in 1948 and is the world's only Jewish state, although Israeli citizens include many other ethnic and religious backgrounds. Israel is the most industrially developed country in the Middle East and the region's only liberal democracy.

The first historical record of the word "Israel" comes from an Egyptian stele documenting military campaigns in Canaan. Although this stele which referred to a people is dated to approximately 1211 BCE, Jewish tradition holds that the Land of Israel has been a Jewish Holy Land and Promised land for three thousand years. The land of Israel holds a special place in Jewish religious obligations, encompassing Judaism's most important sites (such as the remains of the First and Second Temples of the Jewish People). Connected with these two versions of the temple are religiously significant rites which stand as the origin for many aspects of modern Judaism. Starting around the eleventh century BCE, the first of a series of Jewish kingdoms and states established intermittent rule over the region that lasted more than a millennium.

In what is called the Diaspora, the Jews were deposed of their state and spread throughout the world. Between the Roman destruction of Judea and the re-establishment of a Jewish state with the independence of Israel in 1948, all Jews were considered to be living in the Diaspora (although there were always Jews living in Palestine). Currently, the term refers to Jews living outside of Israel. Zionism, as we know it, began in 1896.

Many Arabs, opposed to the Balfour Declaration, the mandate, and the Jewish National Home, instigated riots and pogroms against Jews in Jerusalem, Hebron, Jaffa, and Haifa. As a result of the 1921 Arab attacks, the Haganah was formed to protect Jewish

settlements. The Haganah was mostly defensive in nature, which among other things caused several members to split off and form the militant group Irgun (initially known as Hagana Bet) in 1931. The Irgun adhered to a much more active approach, which included attacks and initiation of armed actions against the British, such as attacking British military headquarters, the King David Hotel, which killed 91 people. Haganah, on the other hand, often preferred restraint. A further split occurred when Avraham Stern left the Irgun to form Lehi, which was much more extreme in its methods. Unlike the Irgun, they refused any co-operation with the British during WW II and even attempted to work with the Nazis to secure European Jewry's emigration to Palestine.

These groups had an enormous impact on events and procedures in the period preceding the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, such as Aliya Beth (the clandestine immigration from Europe), the forming of the IDF, and the withdrawal of the British, as well as to a great degree forming the foundation of the political parties which exist in Israel today.

The State of Israel was proclaimed on 14May48, one day before the expiry of the Palestine Mandate. Israel was admitted as a member of the UN on 11May49. There's more, but you can read it at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel> if you're interested. There are more Jews in the US than Israel, a fact. Israel has the second largest population of Jews and Russia the third largest population. The US and Israel are close, both having more than 5 million, while Russia has ~ 1 million. That may explain their power in the US, about one-third of all Jews in the world live in the United States.

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 11[/b]

A person has to figure that the US, China and Russia weren't the only targets. I believe that Russia had Europe in its sights as well as the US. I don't have any proof of that, I hadn't gotten any radio calls from Europe and wouldn't have understood them unless they were in English. I also assumed that most of Russia and northern China were under about 10' of snow. Just a guess, following the assumptions about nuclear winter.

It was overcast most of the summer of 2011. I'll bet it didn't get much above 70° in Whetstone. There was a nominal increase in the humidity, that really helped the garden. We wound up hiring 10 local heads of families (men) for extra guard force and 10 more (women) to help with the garden and later, canning. I didn't have a copy of Jerry's story to remind me how Percy did it, and everyone knows about my memory.

I did recall how Percy traded food and other things for labor. Some of it had been actual labor and some promised labor. Good idea, I borrowed it. We weren't the richest family in the Whetstone area before the war. When the war came, that ended the Lottery payments, too. After the war, that 2½ million in gold, silver and pre-65 coins probably did make us the richest family. I sure didn't broadcast how much gold and silver we had, preferring to insert it into the local economy a little at a time.

It was on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, 16Nov11, when it occurred to some people that we'd put a lot of gold and silver into the economy and must have more.

That was the day of the second attack, round about 1:30pm, local time. Max and I were just finishing up a patrol when Derek alerted the guard force. I was pretty loaded down with guns, 3 handguns, a shotgun, plus 2 rifles. Thank God Damon had the foresight to gather empty sandbags and stack them about 3 deep all the way around our house, the 4 singlewides, and the newer houses that Mary's dad Randy had managed to build with help from some of her cousins. On good days, we sent out salvage crews to find whatever building materials and fuel they could find, especially singlewides. Most days they came home with enough to keep us adding on, giving us another reason to hire locals: construction without heavy equipment is labor-intensive.

I can tell you that after the set to last spring, we knew that 2 sandbags deep didn't quite cut it. He had Aaron and Eric helping and they had scavenged a lot of those sand bags. They did two rows on each building first and then added a third layer. They actually had a 4th layer on the side of our house that faced the road. Sharon didn't really like the boxes with LAWs and M136s sitting next to the windows, but I couldn't have cared less.

Randy Johnson hadn't hung around long after we exited the shelter, he said he had places to go and people to see. Can you believe them keeping me doped up for 100 days? I plan to forgive them, in about 10 years!

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Getting back to Har Megiddo, the last major battle fought there was in WW I. The Battle of Megiddo of 19Sep18 – 21Sep18, and its subsequent exploitation, was the culminating victory in British General Edmund Allenby's conquest of Palestine during WW I. His forces made a massive push into the Jezreel Valley from the west, through the Carmel Ridge, then engulfed the Turkish (Ottoman) forces in the valley (mentioned as the site of the Battle of Armageddon in the Book of Revelations) and on the River Jordan. When he was made a viscount, Allenby took the name of this battle as his own, becoming the First Viscount Allenby of Megiddo. Viscount, as a rank in British peerage, it was first recorded in 1440, when John Beaumont, 1st Viscount Beaumont, was made one by King Henry VI. The word viscount corresponds in Britain to the Anglo-Saxon shire reeve (root of the non-nobiliary, royal-appointed office of Sheriff). Thus early viscounts were not originally normally given their titles by the monarch, nor hereditary; but soon they too tended to establish hereditary principalities lato sensu. Why do you care? With Europe gone, there might not be (m)any Viscounts left. Beside, Allenby isn't as famous in the US, but his Lieutenant is, T. E. Lawrence (of Arabia).

Amy and Lorrie think 'History' is a class you have to take in High School. Damon and Derek are far better with history, but I set down much of history in my stories. I guess I figured they'd rather read my stories than a history book. History is very important, ask George Santayana. Or, read my stories and you encounter his famous quote many times. If the truth be told, I'm not a great historian but I knew a few things and had Encarta on my computer. Plus, before the war, a person could always look things up on Wiki. I don't really talk this way all of the time, but those Wiki authors sure do.

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Where was I? Oh, yeah, 16Nov11, the day of the second attack. It wasn't a family of 3, this time; more like a Platoon of very experience men. It later turned out they had women with them, but we didn't know that until after the battle. Max and I were egressing (getting out of) the pickup when Max growled. It was that low growl a dog sometimes does when there's danger near. I tried to act nonchalant and opened the back door of my pickup and retrieved my weapons.

"Hey kid, tell everyone Max is growling."

Derek looked at Max and saw where he was looking. Derek began to move faster and in about 60 seconds, everyone with a gun was at the windows. That included our small guard force, now up to 12 folks from Whetstone. Just as the door slapped me on the *ss, that group of people opened up. We have six windows on the front of our home, it faces the road. There are 2 more windows in the activity (quilt) room and only a bathroom window on the other end.

The women were at our house, gossiping and drinking coffee. That's ok, after that first attack, I kept plenty of guns and ammo in the house. The guard force was using the machine shed for their office/break room. The machine shed, like the barn and other buildings had at least 3 rows of sandbags. Didn't have any windows, but the door was large.

By the time I got into the house and ready to shoot, all of the windows were taken. I was forced to go to the quilt room and move a sewing machine and then just hope someone got into my line of sight. I looked, but there weren't any LAWs rockets in Sharon's room, I had to go get 3. Actually 2 LAWs and 1 M136, they're a little bigger, like 84mm v. 66mm.

The M72-series LAW is a lightweight, self-contained, anti-armor weapon consisting of a rocket packed in a launcher. It is man-portable, may be fired from either shoulder, and is issued as a round of ammunition. It requires little from the user--only a visual inspection and some operator maintenance. The launcher, which consists of two tubes, one inside the other, serves as a watertight packing container for the rocket and houses a percussion-type firing mechanism that activates the rocket.

The M136 AT4 is a lightweight, self-contained, anti-armor weapon consisting of a free-flight, fin-stabilized, rocket-type cartridge packed in an expendable, one-piece, fiberglass-wrapped tube. The M136 AT4 is man-portable and is fired from the right shoulder only. The launcher is watertight for ease of transportation and storage. Unlike the M72-series LAW, the M136 AT4 launcher need not be extended before firing. The system weighs approximately 15 lbs and is man-portable. The M136 AT4's warhead uses an extremely destructive, 440-gram shaped-charge explosive that can penetrate more than 14 inches (35.6 cm) of armor.

Like I'd ever get a chance to shoot one! I did by golly, they tried to flank us and Damon moved to the master bathroom window and I got to shoot all 3 before I resorted to using my Super Match. I wasn't quite as excited as the last time, but it was close. I'd only practiced on stationary targets and these guys were moving. I was already praying and once I got my rifle to my shoulder, I started spraying. I had slipped the scope off, it was just in the way.

Sharon made herself useful by passing out extra loaded magazines. You have to figure, if I had 9 M1A rifles, I had to have a bunch of T-57 magazines. Call that a big bunch, I swear I bought Ammoman out. I kept 80% of them loaded with 18 rounds each and every 5th day the magazines would get a day off. She had loaded that 20% with 20 rounds each and passed them out. At the same time, she collected the empties and started to reload them.

The first attack lasted seconds, this one minutes. Several minutes! The whole time, I was yelling quotes out of movies, like John Wayne in True Grit – Fill your hands, you son of a b*tch. I must have gone through about 15 movies before it was over. They had automatic weapons, we didn't. We had rockets, they didn't. Derek had a M203, I didn't know that. I heard something chugging away real loud, like a big door being slammed about 3 or 4 times a second, from the barn. I wasn't about to try and toss a M67 grenade out the window, I could mess up and blow myself up.

"Did we get them all?"

"Why don't you just walk out there and see, Dad?"

"Get on that handheld and have the guard force go look, I may be senile, but I'm not stupid."

"Did you get to shoot your rockets?"

"Only 3, I ran out and switched to my rifle. Say, where did you find the M203?"

"Ft. Huachuca."

"Anything I should know about?"

"I made a call when TSHTF, Dad. An old friend of mine who didn't make it down here, along with several others he was going to pick up along the way. He did manage to send along a present for you from Rock Island, though."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I did, when we were in the shelter for 100 days. You said no thank you. It took most of that time to find homes for all of it, too. That's why I ain't overgrown like you."

Now, I love my boys, but they can be the dumbest two kids I ever met. Derek's hair had fallen completely out and hadn't come back, but I didn't think much of it before since his mom's dad was nearly bald when he died. Now I noticed that what I thought were age spots on his head from sun exposure looked more like skin lesions that had healed. "You went out in that mess for too long, didn't you?"

He shrugged. "Someone had to do it, and you weren't in any shape for it. Damon has enough problems as it is, I figured. So, yeah, I put on my MOPP gear and nosed around until I got it all stashed."

"Damit, kid, have you ever heard of radiation sickness?"

He smiled. "I love you too, Dad. Thanks for saying that it was ok for me to go out and do it."

"I did?"

"You did."

"I changed my mind."

"You'll change it back."

"I will not."

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The bottom line was that they weren't all dead when the guard force checked, but they didn't take long to fix that. Then they started to back track the men. They found a group of women, about 2 dozen. Their hands were tied behind their backs using cable ties. More about them later.

You'd have thought by now that someone from the government would have shown up. Best guess, they were too busy trying to rescue the survivors in the major coastal cities that were bombed. Never mind that most people in major coastal cities either died in the attack or got an overdose of radiation. Poor areas are always the last to get aid – New Orleans is a prime example. I suppose we can't blame them, we've never had a global thermonuclear war before. I doubt even the emergency plan conceived by FEMA made allowances for that.

I remember watching a show on TV, and I don't know why it comes to mind. Anyway, it was about the nuclear arms race. We did the Manhattan Project because scientists were worried that Germany would get the A-bomb first. At one point during the Cold War, the Russians had ~11,000 nuclear weapons and we had twice as many. Then, in the middle of the first decade of the new century, Russia deployed the Topol-M missile.

We should have seen it coming... Russian President Vladimir Putin and Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov recently visited the Teikovo strategic missile division, which placed the first regiment of unique mobile ground-based Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missiles on combat duty.

The Russian Strategic Missile Force has received over 40 Topol silo-based ICBMs since 1997. However, unlike these earlier missiles, the mobile, hard-to-detect and interchangeable Topol-M ballistic missiles, which are immune to electromagnetic impulses, can be launched from a wide area.

R&D and deployment costs were reduced because the new missile system retains the main engineering solutions of its predecessor.

Moreover, the Topol-M can breach any existing anti-ballistic missile shield, including the highly expensive US National Missile Defense system.

It is therefore hardly surprising that Topol-M missiles will soon be the mainstay of Russia's Strategic Missile Force and replace other missiles that have been serving for over 20 years.

The Topol-M missile has a lift-off weight of 47.2 metric tons, a range of over 6,000 miles and carries a 2,640-pound warhead.

The Russian Armed Forces, which suffered an all-out crisis in the 1990s, are now receiving new strategic offensive arms under an ambitious modernization program. Just like most other major powers, Russia is focusing on qualitative, rather than quantitative, military development in accordance with the global military-political situation.

The United States has withdrawn from the 1972 ABM Treaty and resumed tests of tactical nuclear weapons. It also continues to stockpile (instead of destroying) nuclear warheads and Minuteman ICBM's, which it launches as drones for missile interceptors. Moscow, which is worried about these and many other factors, must react accordingly. Russia's rearmament program is largely motivated by tougher competition between the great powers for unimpeded access to raw materials, energy and science-and-technological resources.

US representatives attending a conference that was held simultaneously with the NATO summit in Riga discussed the possible use of power politics for dealing with countries which allegedly threaten European energy security. NATO can use its powerful military leverage and strategic potential to attain this goal.

In this situation, Moscow has no choice but to rely on military force to defend its national interests. Consequently, Russia is attaching priority to maintaining and upgrading its strategic nuclear deterrent forces and aerospace defense system.

The Russian Army has adopted Topol missiles; the Air Force is overhauling its strategic bombers; and the Navy has ordered Borei-class ballistic missile submarines.

On 19Mar06, Derek's birthday, Severodvinsk witnessed the keel-laying ceremony for the third submarine to be built under the Borei project, the Vladimir Monomakh. Deputy Defense Minister Gen. Alexey Moskovsky said that the Defense Ministry will create an infrastructure to provide comprehensive maintenance for the country's new Borei-class nuclear submarines. "We are coming to realize that not only the weaponry itself is important, but its life cycle is, too..." Nuclear submarines' maintenance should cover every stage of their life cycle, from development through salvage, Moskovsky said. Construction had already begun on two other submarines of the same type. As of early 2006 it was reported that the first such boat was to be commissioned in 2008 [a two year delay from estimates reported a year earlier]. Navy Chief of Staff Adm. Vladimir Masorin said that the navy hadn't yet determined how many Borei-class submarines would be built within a decade, but added there would be "more than four or six. ...

There will be as many of them as necessary to fully modernize the sea-based strategic forces". Each new Borei-class submarine will be equipped with 12 Bulava missiles, which have a range of 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles). Masorin said that the navy will conduct several test launches of the Bulava missile 2006 and in 2007. The construction of Borei-class submarines, designed to carry Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles, is part of the Russian navy's current modernization effort.

The Bulava (SS-NX-30) is the submarine-launched version of Russia's most advanced missile, the Topol-M (SS-27) solid fuel ICBM. The SS-NX-30 is a derivative of the SS-27, except for a slight decrease in range due to conversion of the design for submarine launch. The SS-27 has is 21.9 meters long, far too large to fit in a typical submarine. The largest previously deployed Russian SLBM was the R-39 / SS-N-20 STURGEON, which was 16 meters long. Russian sources report that the Bulava SS-N-30 ballistic missile can carry ten warheads to a range of 8,000km. Other sources suggest that the Bulava probably might have a range of 10,000 km, and is reportedly features a 550kT yield nuclear warhead. Apparently up to six MIRVs can be placed at the cost of offloading warhead shielding and decoys.

Ten warheads? Right, and we retired the 50 Peacekeepers with 10 warheads each. Our D-5 missile were only capable of carrying 8 warheads. Good old George had no idea what he was getting us into back in 2003. You remember, though, how Russia supported Iran, right? You remember how upset they were about their eastern border and their concern over China?

We all know how Dubya was about things like this. In the first place it was a secret; in the second place he always seemed to find a way to funnel money from one project to another with no one the wiser. In this case, there was a bunch of money set aside for updating our warheads and still more set aside for training the Iraqis. Hillary had to know, but she may have been worried about the Russian buildup. And you all thought the Cold War ended.

Do you remember that article back in '06, or was it '07: The Bush campaign in Iraq was defeated on Nov. 7. At the end of the day 17 percent of Americans stand with the President in pursuit of an imaginary "victory in Iraq" (see whitehouse.gov). On Nov. 7 Republicans garnered not one Senate, House or gubernatorial seat from Democrats. Not even one, suffering massive, nationwide losses despite the fact that Republicans broke all of their fund raising and voter contact records this year. Analyses of these election results range in imagination and defensiveness, but the obvious problem Republicans faced was being registered in the same political party as Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice, Wolfowitz, and William Kristol.

Odd things happened during and since the election. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was fired on Nov. 8 (I don't think anyone has been able to make sense of that), the 10 wise (and bipartisan) men (and lady) descended from on high with the Iraq Study Group, ... er ... uh, I mean the Hamilton-Baker report. Iraqi President Talabani beat President Bush to rejecting it, while Iran nosed in at 3rd accepting it. Newsweek's poll has 68 percent of Americans in agreement at least with the report's now best known line: "The situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating."

The need for a course change in Iraq is obvious, but the President depressingly seems to have re-emerged with old rhetoric ("we'll succeed unless we quit"), a new Iraq review group of his own, and Rumsfeld still whispers from the shadows. The odd optimism on which politicians and their chroniclers forever sup now directs a dreamy gaze at a next friend of Dad, Robert Gates, who if anyone was listening said point blank, "There are no new ideas on Iraq." The partisan character of American political society (including the fourth estate) has burdened us all with maddening and scurrilous semantic folly, - 50 ways to not say "stay the course," (stay on the bus Gus, keep the same plan Stan), nor "civil war" ... er ... uh I mean sectarian strife.

The only hope for genuine progress away from the Iraq debacle requires reflection at two points so far not addressed by major figures in political and media industrial complex. The search for a course change has not been conducted at deep enough levels. Two things must change before we will see better analysis and sound new policy direction. We must be willing to examine at the most basic and foundational levels the following:

1. The thinking that allowed invading Iraq to seem reasonable to some. And related to that,
2. Our present goals in Iraq: What made invading Iraq seem reasonable to some?

In short it is the obsolete and antediluvian notion that one can, in this day and age "defeat an enemy" militarily.

There are countless ways to come to the conclusion that sanity and good old fashioned military campaigns parted ways quite some time ago. Spiritual people know that political, social, economic instruments designed for the systematic and substantial

dissolution of resentment, and the resulting curative of reconciliation is the only path to lasting peace and genuine freedom. But thankfully even military minded people (who somehow retain operative categories that include things like "defeating" other human beings) have equal access to the fact that an army cannot "defeat" a global network of ideologically driven opponents who do not value their own lives, nor those of civilians. By the grace of God both the tree-hugger and the weapons procurement specialist can easily come to the same conclusion that should be obvious to all. Sending in an army to "defeat enemies" in the 21st century is like rubbing two wet sticks together to bring the dawn.

What do we want now?

The second area that must be reformed fundamentally before we can have hope to move past our current tragedy in Iraq requires a deeper examination of our present response, our present goal.

Current rhetoric revolves around the question, "how soon can US troops withdraw from Iraq" without creating an unacceptable level of regional destabilization.

This is the wrong question and wrong set of goals. The current debate over increasing or decreasing troop strength in the short term occurs in this invalid context of seeking a way out of Iraq.

The real question should be "How can we bring about the good we meant for Iraq that in part contributed to our harebrained and calamitous decision to invade Iraq?"

All the reasons we erred as we did are still in place. We still should want a wonderful and bounteous life for all Iraqis and all people in the region. Americans properly are not on anybody's side in particular, that's the whole original point of America.

For this reason, the only cure or repair for the horrible missteps and imbroglio over which we now stew as a nation, is NOT how to we get out of Iraq, but how do we STAY IN IRAQ.

We know only too well that militarily is surely NOT the way to stay in Iraq. Hopefully we know or will soon know soon that the freedoms we enjoy in an American and Western style way must surely be possible in other cultural types of ways as well. And we should know that the blessedness of America must carry some obligations as a nation and a people to help create opportunity for others far and wide.

Just how to stay in Iraq is the right starting point and starting question to find the path America and the whole world is looking for in these days. As soon as we embrace a positive response and a truly American purpose at the ground of reflecting on our current difficulties, answers and visionary policy will begin to flow.

He never said, but I'll bet he was a Democrat. (Frank Kaufmann is the executive director of the Inter Religious Federation for World Peace. The opinions here are his own.)

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About those women, you know, the ones our guard force found tied up when they back tracked the bad guys. I'm not good with ages, but I'd say 16 to about 30 years of age. The younger ones were single and some of the older ones were married. They said they came from Oro Valley, north of Tucson. In late August, a group attacked their town, killing most everyone and taking a few of them prisoner. I'd imagine you can speculate why.

Originally, their group had been larger, over 30. Two of them tried to escape and were caught. Those two were gang raped to death. The others had managed to anger someone and that got them killed. I wanted no part of interviewing those women, it was better that Sharon, Amy, Mary, and Pat (Mary's mom) did that. Oro Valley was a large community, but the war took care of that. Out of a population of ~30,000, fewer than 200 people were alive by August. The community is only 6 miles from downtown Tucson.

Apparently, this bunch of men had been headed for Tombstone, they knew about the gun stores. They'd sent a spy into Whetstone to do a recon and had learned about us. We were supposed to be billionaires, have enough food to feed an army and only conventional weapons. Surprise, surprise, surprise. The only thing they were close on was the amount of food we had; and, that would only accommodate a very small army. These guys had been scavenging and had come upon a location, where they had secured weapons and ammo (Navaho Depot?). The punks were apparently out of east LA originally.

They were given a choice, return to Oro Valley or move into the empty homes in Whetstone. Each of them was given a Mauser rifle and a case of ammo. I kept the bad guys' weapons either to use or as trade goods. To that end, I had Derek go through them and select the best ones for our use. There were a few like new and several hadn't been taken care of. Derek checked everything, including the magazines. Instead of mounting the M203s on our A3s, he mounted them on the M16A2s. We kept the full auto rifles for trade value, but they wasted too much ammo for anything else.

I couldn't see much future for the US. We literally had the crap kicked out of us, both China and Russia, I'm guessing based on the number of weapons based on what Derek heard on the ham bands. The bands were quieter than I had expected, another reason why I suspected we'd been hit very hard. Two attacks in a 6-7 month period also suggested that there weren't a lot of people out there. It was just a combination of factors, nothing I could put my finger on.

It's a long way to Flagstaff, about 4-5 hours. Of course we'd have to bypass Tucson and Phoenix, making it a bit further. Just west of Flagstaff on I-40 is Navaho Army Depot. I hadn't really thought about that until this second shootout. It is a munitions storage site, and since we hadn't seen anything or the Arizona National Guard, maybe we could risk a trip up there to see what we could find. Even one more attack just might be too much for us and our small guard force. Maybe we could even the odds with a couple of M2HB machine guns, a few M240s and some of those M249s. We had the one M2 that Derek finally told me about, but whatever else he had come up with he wasn't telling me. I gave up trying to talk about it after arguing with him once; the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree, and he is my son.

We'd had expended a fair portion of our rockets, I wasn't the only person to use them. Moreover, the sign was pure bluff, we had explosives but none of the Claymore mines.

If we were going to go there, it had better be quick, we would probably be seeing snow fairly soon. They could take most of those trucks that Mary had brought with her.

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 12[/b]

The Arizona National Guard wasn't a tank outfit. Nevertheless, I'd settle for a convoy load of ordinance. A person can never have too many LAWs, M136s, M18s or 40mm grenades. Add to that the machine guns I'd mentioned earlier and a large quantity of ammo and spare parts and you have the beginning of that small army I'd mentioned. We could work to turn our small community into a group capable of protecting themselves, for both the near term and the long term.

Say, it occurs to me that they might even find some more Hummers up there, maybe we'd ought to make sure we sent enough people. We could always call in some of those markers we accrued promising labor in exchange for whatever, we'd doled out.

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You know about Operation Opera, you just don't know that you do. Remember that Iraqi reactor the Israelis blew up, Osiraq? That was Operation Opera. The French and the Iraqis were about to fuel the reactor and Begin couldn't permit that. They'd spent a year trying to find a diplomatic solution, to no avail. They put 2 2,000# Mk84 bombs on each of 8 F-16s and use a flight of 6 F-15As as air cover. Fourteen of the bombs exploded destroying the containment facility.

The US finished destroying the reactor during the Gulf War. Three days into the Desert Storm air raids, 56 F-16s attacked the facility followed by F-117 raids three days later. The facility, one of Iraq's most fortified targets, was not fully destroyed until another raid, when 48 F-117s targeted the facility 7 more times for over a month along with 17 F-111Fs weeks later. Only 19 days into the strikes did the US DIA find the site to be "severely degraded".

When Ronnie Ray-Gun heard about the bombing, he was shocked. Pressed to make a comment, he said, "Boys will be boys." In June 1991 Dick Cheney gave Major General David Ivry, then commander of the Israeli Air Force, a satellite photograph of the destroyed reactor. On the photograph, Cheney wrote, "For General David Ivri (sic), with thanks and appreciation for the outstanding job he did on the Iraqi Nuclear Program in 1981, which made our job much easier in Desert Storm."

That's probably why as of 31Dec06 classified documents more than 25 years old automatically became unclassified. Willy signed the law and Dubya granted the last 3-year extension in 2003. When these things pop into my head, I write them down before I forget them, again. If your FBI file is more than 25 years old, it's public information. J Edgar probably has his panties in a knot. Did I miss anyone? 600 yards...

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A friend had done some research on the sarin incident in Tokyo. If nothing else, it proved that using chemical weapons was, at best, a long shot. Whenever I think of chemical weapons, I remember Desert Storm and all the trouble the troops went to MOPP up. The last time, excluding Saddam, that anyone made extensive use of chemical weapons was in WW I. Nerve gases didn't really come along until later, but stop and think how simple the equipment was during WW I. Canvas gas masks? The gas weapons used during WW I included Lewisite, Mustard gas, phosgene gas, chlorine gas and several others including tear gas.

On 19Apr93 the FBI injected non-lethal CS grenades into wooden buildings during the Waco Siege. None of the Davidians left their building, however. CS is flammable and may have helped fuel the fires which later started. All the buildings within the site burned to the ground but few members tried to escape. Several of the bodies recovered after the raid had lethal doses of cyanide, a byproduct of burning CS.

During basic training, I was exposed to CS and tear gas. The CS was optional, but I got lost in the CS shack on the obstacle course. CS Incapacitant Spray is used as a temporary incapacitant, to subdue attackers, or persons who are violently aggressive, by many police forces. The chemical reacts with moisture on the skin and in the eyes causing a burning sensation and the immediate forceful shutting of the eyes. Reported effects can include tears streaming from the eyes, running nose full of mucus, burning in the nose and throat areas, disorientation, dizziness and restricted breathing. In highly concentrated doses it can also induce severe coughing and vomiting. I must have gotten a dose and a half, I puked for 10 minutes. Derek laughs at me every time we talk about it because he's done push-ups in every chamber he's ever been through, and he stayed in longer than I did on my one trip. I ought to bop him in the nose for it.

Supposedly, the US eliminate all chemical weapons as of 31Dec04. I rather doubt they did and anyway, things like tear gas will always be around, gas in this class are used to disperse riots, etc. Foreign governments won't accept our word on it anyway since they categorize CS and tear gas as chemical weapons and the US doesn't.

For whatever reason none of the freed hostages wanted to return to Oro Valley, preferring instead to relocate in Whetstone. Their decision was never explained to my satisfaction, but as long as they weren't on the acreage, they weren't my problem. Whetstone already had a higher ratio of females to males; 24 additional women shouldn't be a major problem. Sharon explained our work for food and supplies program. I told them the rifles and ammo were free, provided they learned to use them. If they needed additional ammo, they could work out something with Sharon to work it off. A few years back I had learned a hard lesson and didn't even want to get to know these women.

More than once I yearned for a drink, Especially a Margarita made with Grand Marnier and Cuervo 1800 or a very dry Martini made with Bombay Sapphire gin. I like my martinis about 24 to 1, why ruin good gin by diluting it with cheap wine? Ron was like a nightmare, every time I thought of a drink, I see his face and wagging finger. Having only a dozen years or so sober, put me right in the category of people who went out and drank themselves to death. The sad part was we had the liquor, under lock and key. Derek had the only key and he wasn't about to unlock it so I could get drunk. He still wouldn't drink in front of me, either, unlike his brother.

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The trip to Navaho Army Depot was done in late November, right after Thanksgiving. First, they had to find a snow plow. Chris, one of Mary's cousin's husbands (or something like that) made one out of scrap metal and Kevin, one of her friend's husbands hooked it up to the truck so that it could be controlled from inside. They also put the seats back in my pickup, they were taking a lot of vehicles, 6 people to a vehicle in addition to the snowplow which held 3 people. They wouldn't let me go, I was responsible for the home place. I gather up all the rockets we had and divided them equally among the windows in the house, it was too cold to sit on the front deck. Did the same thing with the 40mm grenades, just in case. I also made sure every 20-round magazine had 18 rounds and the 30-round, 27. The springs could rest when they got back from their road trip.

Derek somehow mounted at least one machine gun on every pedestal mount on those trucks and even came up with a few more rockets and 40mm grenades from somewhere, but he still wouldn't tell me where they were stashed. He's real stubborn like that sometimes. At the top of Derek's shopping list was anything he could find with a Bushmaster cannon. It worked itself down from there, Mk-19 40mm grenade launcher, M2HB, M240 and M249. He said he wanted M1114s and they could mount any of the foregoing in the gun mount. I didn't know what he was expecting, maybe the Navajo Nation to invade us. Beside, this was Apache Country, Geronimo fought his last campaign in this area. This came to an end on 4Sep86, when Geronimo surrendered to United States Army General Nelson A. Miles at Skeleton Canyon, AZ. Skeleton Canyon is located 30 miles northeast of the town of Douglas, AZ. That's actually not far from here, maybe 40 miles.

I figured on 3-4 days, when they weren't back after 6 days, I did what I'm good at, worried. Derek had given me enough practice to last 2 lifetimes. I agreed he should try the Army, never intending he make a career of it. They didn't have enough BDUs to go around so the people in civilian clothes were labeled, civilian labor. Like he'd run into the entire Arizona National Guard when he got to Navajo Depot. He had a cover story, just in case. He was with the Arkansas National Guard assigned to the border at Ft. Huachuca. His Company commander, a Captain, sent him and a civilian contingent up to get replacement vehicles, weapons and ordinance.

We didn't know, but the odds favored Flagstaff having not been hit. All it had was the airport and the Depot west of town. There was no way that Russia and China could destroy all the airports in the US. And, even if they did, C-130s and C-17s could land just about anywhere, even on a stretch of highway. The C-17 can take off and land on runways as short as 3,000 feet and as narrow as 90 feet wide. Even on such narrow runways, the C-17 can turn around by using its backing capability while performing a three-point star turn. As of early 2002 US Transportation Command had identified a requirement for a further 42 C-17s. A contract for the additional 42 aircraft could be worth about \$5 billion and extend production through 2011, resulting in a total buy of 222 aircraft.

The Hercules has been around since the '50s. The later version, the J model, needs a minimum of 1,800' for takeoff and 1,400' for landing, only slightly better than the C-17. We have 514 of the C-130s, give or take, on active duty, with the Air National Guard and the Reserves. That doesn't count the few remaining C-141s or the C-5s. Man, that Starlifter was a handsome airplane. There were 20 Reserve aircraft stationed at March and Wright-Patterson. Last I knew, the Galaxy Active force and Reserve, C-5A, 60; C-5B, 49; and C-5C, 2. Based on a recent study showing 80 percent of the C-5 airframe service life remaining, AMC began an aggressive program to modernize the C-5. The C-5 Avionics Modernization Program began in 1998 and includes upgrading avionics to Global Air Traffic Management compliance, improving navigation and safety equipment, and installing a new autopilot system. Another part of the plan is a comprehensive re-engining and reliability improvement program, which includes new engines, pylons and auxiliary power units, with upgrades to aircraft skin and frame, landing gear and the pressurization system. I ran across this BOB list somewhere:

Kifaru E&E
Kifaru EMR with Bladder
Pockets inside and out as needed

- *Bear spray (extra large size)
- *Bic lighter
- *Flashlight mini-mag with lithium batteries, red lens, LED and switch conversion
- *Food, misc, hot chocolate mix, ERG mix, coffee creamer sugar ramen
- *Food, MRE, stripped (4)
- *FRS radios (2) with lithium batteries, headsets, cases

- *GPS mapping type with lithium batteries
- *Headlamp Petzl LED with lithium batteries
- *Individual First Aid Kit
- *Radiation Meter Nuk-alert
- *Radio 2 meter handheld with AA battery pack
- *Spare Batteries AA, AAA lithium
- Balaclava poly
- Bandana
- Belt, nylon money
- Binoculars pocket
- Bivi bag Goretex
- Blast match / cotton balls with petroleum jelly
- Boonie Hat
- Boots Danner Acadia
- Braided wire 10'
- Camo digital or realtree 2 sets pyrethrum treated (in ziplock bag)
- Camo net 10x10
- Camo stick (suitable for environment)
- Candle long burning
- Canteen 1 qt GI soft with cover, stove, cup, drinking cap device, water purification tabs
- Carabiners, locking D black (2)
- Cash Paper, gold, silver Paper \$20x10, gold 1/10 oz x 10, 1/4 oz x5, 1/2 oz x10 1 oz x 10 Silver \$0.10x10 \$0.25x10 \$1x10
- chapstick with sunscreen 2
- Compasses, orienteering (Silva Ranger) (2) Huntsman (1)
- Cook kit titanium, with lexan flatware small
- Copies of ID: Passport, drivers license, Soc Security Card, ATM, AMEX, CCW's Medical License in around the neck carrier
- Duct tape (small roll)
- Eyeglass repair kit
- Eyeglasses, spare
- Fishing Kit, small
- Flashlight nightstar
- Foot powder small can
- Gaiters goretex
- Gloves leather work
- Gloves, flight 1 pr
- Gloves, nitrile, 4 pr in ziplock bag
- Goggles with clear and tinted lenses
- HD Contractors trash bags 4
- Insect Repellent lotion
- Jacket and Pants Goretex camo digital or realtree
- Jacket and Pants Pile (Vac packed)
- Jak-strap for mini-mag
- KI tablets btl

Knife, Large, (Cold Steel Kukri) with sheath and sharpener
Map case
Map plotter multi scale
Maps Delorme atlas and others local plus surrounding states
Mask N95 4
Matches lifeboat (sewing needles and thread added)
Multi-Tool, Wave or Crunch with tool bits
Parachute cord 50'
Pencil (mechanical) Pen (space) Note pad (waterproof)
plastic tie-wraps
Playing Cards, deck
Polar Pure
Radio Grundig Mini-world AM/FM/SW
Rapelling line 100' 6mm with 2 5' chafe guards
Razor / shaving cream small tube
Sandals Teva
Shoes, cross trainer New Balance
Shovel Cold Steel in sheath
Signal mirror 2x4" glass
Sleeping bag synthetic small (20-degree) (Wiggys?)
Sleeping Pad, thermarest shorty
Snare wires
Soap Bar (hotel size) in ziplock bag 3
Socks poly lightweight (liner) 3
Socks synthetic medium wt pr 3
Solar Shower adapter for water bladder
Space rescue blankets 2
Spoon plastic long
Stove MSR multi-fuel with .5L fuel bottle with windscreen
Sun glasses & chums
Sun screen SPF 30
Tactical Vest with Level III armor, digital desert
Tarp shelter
Toothbrush and paste
Towel small (wash cloth)
TP 2 small rolls in ziplock bag
Trioxane 3 packs
T-shirts coolmax brown 2 Vac packed
Tyvek jumpsuit full coverage
Underware coolmax 2 Vac packed
Underware long polypro brown bottom med Vac packed
Underware long polypro brown top med Vac packed
Universal gun cleaning kit
Water filter and prefilter
Water, liter bottles (filled, commercial, to fill camelback)
Webbing 9/16" 10 feet 2

Wet wipes indiv packs (2)
wrist watch wind-up or kinetic
Ziplock bags 2.5 gal 1 gal 1 qt (2) pt (2)

The items marked with an asterisk are those that are perishable. We also keep a small box of assorted ammo in each vehicle. We were at a public shooting range in Los Angeles the day the Rodney King riots started (we lived in LA), and shot up all our ammo. Now we have an emergency supply that we rotate out every 6 months (the vibration of driving can cause the powder grains to become broken, making them smaller, and increasing pressures to potentially dangerous levels).

5.56 SS109 1 battle pack + 20 rnd tracer
12 ga 50 rnds total, in bandoleer shot slug buck tracer and breaching
.357 18 rnds 125 JHP +P+ 6 rnds 158 gr +P+ 6 Corbon, 6 Tracer 6 shot
.45 50 Rnds corbon
.22 LR 200 rnds CCI minimag HP
9mm 50 rnds 6 tracer 44 Corbon
.308 1 battle pack + 12 tracer, 12 APIT
7.62x39 1 battle pack + 12 tracer
.38 Spcl 158 gr +P 12, 6 shot, 6 tracer, 6 corbon (Won't tell you who this is.)

Here's his second list:

Here's what goes in my primary BoB, all the time. Some are permanently installed, some are removable.

Installed Equip:

5th wheel hitch and wiring
Alarm system lojack
Banks Performance upgrade - full package
Batteries Deep cycle Optima (2)
Batteries Starting Optima (2)
Battery isolator - relay type
Bed liner - spray in
Bug shield
Captains Chairs 2 with adjustments, swivel, arm rests, head rests sheepskin covered
Class V trailer Hitch
Compass electronic flux gate
Cross-bed tool box / fuel tank 101 gal
Dash mat
Dual alternators 160+ AH Leece-Neville/Prestolite
Dual fuel filter / water separator installation
Electric power distribution buss, 8 outlets
Evans coolant system (waterless coolant)
Fire Extinguisher mounted in cab 2A:10BC
Fog lights white wide angle low mounted

Front mount trailer hitch receiver and tow hooks
Gooseneck map light
GPS with Map (built in)
Inverter 2KW with battery conditioner / charger
Jumper cable plug in front and rear
Laptop holder
Large aftermarket brakes
Locking fuel caps (keyed alike)
Off-road driving lights white narrow high mounted
Push Bar / Grill guard, wrap-around
Radio AM/FM/CD
Radio HF 706MkIIIGS
Radio Satellite
Rifle Rack
Security box in cab, combo lock
Shore power connection with cable
Side steps
Skid Plates
Spare tire mounted (second)
Tires - large offroad mounted 6 (2 spares)
Tool box under-hood ammo box in battery tray
Tool boxes side mount (2) stainless diamond plate
Utility lights, rear
Water / Fuel can holder
Winch 12,000 lb electric with front bumper
Winch portable hitch mount (rear)

And in my BoB trailer:

- *batteries spare AA AAA D C etc
- *Bug out bags qv
- *Coffee ground 3 lb can (3)
- *Deep cycle battery optima (2) with cables, charger, inverter
- *Food Freeze dried 3 mo supply
- *Food MRE 4 cases
- *Food Walton 1 year deluxe, grain mill, 4 gallons cooking oil
- *Fuel 50 gal stabilized
- *Medical pack
- *Medical resupply pack
- *Medical supplies
- *non-dairy creamer bottle (2)
- *Oxygen pack
- *Seeds, heritage non-hybrid
- *Water 20 gal 2.5 gal containers, 30 gal 15 gal barrels

Air compressor 12 vdc
Bicycle Mountain with trailer (2)

Bucket plastic 2.5 gal (4) 5 gal (6), gamma lids (4)
Camo net set with poles, spreaders (3)
Camp kitchen with accessories
Camp sink Reliance
Can opener - hand type 2
Chain Saw Stihl 16" in case, with spare chain, chain sharpener, oil,
spare tools, fuel can, plank cutter
Chemical toilet with accessories, tp, enclosure
Coleman (brand) fuel 4 gal
Construction tools Hand saws hammers square nails cordless tools
Cook kit flatware coffee pot dutch oven cutting board utensils
Cots XL folding (2) with mosquito nets, spreader bars
Engine Oil (truck / generator) 1 gal jugs 4
Extension cords HD
Eyeglass repair kit
Fire extinguishers 2A10BC (2) 10A40BC 2.5 gal PW
Flags - US, Gadsden, Red Cross medical,
Flood lights 500 w with stands 4
Folding camp chairs (4)
fuel transfer pump electric 12vdc with hoses
Fuel transfer pump hand
Generator oil/air/fuel filters
Hoyles encyclopedia of card games
Ice Chest Med, Lg
Insect repellent
Insecticide area spray
KI Pills bottle (4)
Lg Tent (4 person 3 season stand up)
Liquid permytherin
Paper goods towels, tp, plates, cups, plastic flatware, plastic trash bags
Pioneer tools (Shovels, axe, pick, mattock, hi-lift jack)
Plastic 4mil 10' wide roll
Plastic poly tarps 6x9, 5x8, 10x12, 12x20
Playing Cards, deck
Portable Antenna Set / Flag mast
Pri-D 6 qts
Pri-G 3 qts
Propane tanks 20# 3, bottle fill adapter, camp poles, hoses
RO water purifier large hand operated
Roll-Up Tables (2)
Rope sets
Sand bags empty 100
Security chest locking with class 200 padlocks (2)
Sleeping bags synthetic 0-degree 2
Sleeping pad roll up inflatable 2
Soap, hand, dish, bleach, hand disinfecting gel, shampoo, etc

Solar Shower 5 gal, enclosure
Spare tire and wheel (mounted), spare tubes wheel locks
Sterilizer (canner)
Sterilizer (hot dog)
Stove 2 burner, propane/gas, heater, small bbq stove stand camp oven
Table 6' folding plastic
Tent Fly 12x12
Tent Wall 8 person with fly
Tools, gardening including shovel, ax, pick, rakes, etc
Tools, hand, carpentry in chest
Tools, hand, mechanical, in tool bag
Trailer spare parts - lamps, jack, lug wrench etc
Very heavy security chain and class 200 padlock, carry bag (secure trailer)
wash basins plastic 6
water filter - garden hose mount, with 10' feed hose attached
Water Hose (drinking water) 75'
water purification filter large (Berkey)
water transfer pump 12vdc marine with hoses
water transfer pump hand
Wet Wipes jar (2)
Zori hot tap propane water heater / shower pole

His third list: My 'portable' medical kit:

Pack Contera ALS

Diagnostic Module:

Applicator stick cotton tip 2's sterile
Band aids asst size in ziplock bag, 50
Betadine 1/2 oz btl in ziplock
BP Cuff Tycos Palm
Cover, thermometer disposable
Dental floss small spool
Den-Temp Kit
Flashlight, mini-mag light LED conversion
Gloves protective P2 XL in ziplock bag
Hand sanitizer gel 2 oz
Headlamp Petzl Tikka deluxe with 3 lithium AAA batteries
Holster, nite-eyz
Jac-strap (headband for mini-mag)
Kit Med-Surg Inst and Supply w/ supplies
Mask / eyeshield disposable
Multi-tool Gerber in sheath
Notebook waterproof Rite in the Rain 4x6
Organizer Conterra Deluxe
Pen black ball point Fisher Space Pen

Pencil wooden #2
Pocket otoscope diagnostic kit
Polar Pure btl in ziplock
Pt report book / organizer
Scrub brush, betadine scrub
Soap bar small (hotel size)
Space blanket
Space sleeping bag
Spare AA lithium batteries 4/pk
Spare AAA lithium batteries pk/4
Spec Ops Forces Med Hdbk
Stethoscope Littman Master Classic
Thermometer hypothermia digital (replace battery annually)
Tissue indiv pack
Tounge blades indiv wrapped zip lock
Trauma shears
Wilderness Medical Associates Field Guide

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 13[b]

Airway Management Module:

Airway kit case
BVM Ambu SPUR
ET tube 6.5; 7.5l 8.5 2 ea
Forceps Macgill
Laryngoscope set peds handle, 3,4 Mac, Miller, 5 Mac blades
NP airway set
OP airway set
Pocket mask
Pulse Ox Nonin Onyx 9500 in otter box
Stylet ET tube
Surgilube 3gm foil pack in ziplock
Syringe 10-12 ml no needle

IV / Parenteral Module:

Alcohol swabs indiv foil wrapped ziplock 20's
Angiocath 14 ga 1 1/4"
Angiocath 14 ga 3 1/2"
Angiocath 16 ga 1 1/4"
Hetaspan 500 ml
Intraosseous cannula
IV Admin set
IV pressure infuser/organizer
IV start set
Needle IM 20 ga x 1 1/2"
Needle SQ 23 ga x 1 1/8"

NS or LR 1000 ml bag
NS or LR 500ml bag
Saline flush syr 10 ml
Saline lock
Sharps container small
Syringe 3 cc
Syringe 5 cc
Tourniquet phlebotomy

Dressings - Wound Management Module:

Bandage Coban 3"
Betadine wipe indiv foil wrap in ziplock
Blister Kit Second Skin
Catheter Foley 16 Fr
Cervical collar
Chest tube 28 Fr, 36 Fr
Dressing field lg (11x11)
Dressings field or Israeli 4"
Dressings field or Israeli med (6")
Elastic bandage 2"
Gloves surgical sterile 8.5 indiv wrapped
Kerlix or Kling 4.5"
KTD
Multi-Trauma dressing 10x30"
Organizer, Eagle half-cube red
Quick Clot dual pk
SAM splint
Scalpel #11 disposable sterile
Sponge 2x2 2's
Sponge 4x4 2's
Staple remover disp
Stapler Skin 5 staples disp
Steri-Strips 1/4" x 3"
Syringe 60 cc irrigation/suction
Tampon OB Brand
Tape athletic waterproof 1 1/2"
Tinct of benzoin amps
Tourniquet one handed
Trauma pad 5x9"
Triangular bandage
Vaseline gauze 3x36" ziplock
Water Gel Burn dressing 4x16"

The pharmaceuticals that go with that:

Acetaminophen 500mg 24's NSAID OTC

Aspirin 325mg tabs NSAID for pain, fever, inflammation, cardiac OTC

Betadine Sol 4 oz bottle topical antiseptic OTC
Bisacodyl (Dulcolax) 5mg PO Laxative OTC
Caffeine tablets (No doze) 12s' caffeine headache, stay-awake OTC
Chap Stick hot weather in ziplock lip balm OTC
Clotrimazole oint 1% (Lotrimine) 1/2oz Fungal skin infections OTC
Clotrimazole sol (Lotrimine) 10ml Fungal skin infections OTC
Diphenhydramine (Benedryl) 25mg 24's antihistimine OTC
Eye drops (Visine or equal) 15ml btl minor eye irritation OTC
Famotidine tab 10 mg Pepcid-AC blister pack Gastric reflux / heartburn OTC
Ibuprofen (Motrin) 200 mg 50's NSAID for pain, fever, inflammation OTC
Instant Glucose 25gm tube hypoglycemia tx OTC
Loperamide (Immodium) 2mg 12's diarrhea OTC
Loratidine 5mg (Claritin) allergies OTC
Meclazine chewable (Bonine) 16's motion sickness, dizziness OTC
Oxymetazoline (Afrin) Nasal Spray 0.5oz btl nasal congestion, non sedating OTC
Robitussin DM 4oz btl cough OTC
Robitussin lozenge indiv wrapped 25's cough OTC
Sting-eze btl 15ml sting relief OTC
Sudafed 30 mg tab 24's allergic rhinitis, congestion OTC
Triple-Antibiotic oint 15ml tube antibiotic oint OTC

Acetazolamide (Diamox) 500mg tab For edema Rx
Amoxicillin Clavulinate (Augmentin) 875mg tabs Penicillin, animal bites Rx
Azithromycin 250mg 6 tab Z-pack Macrolide Antibiotic Rx
Ceftriaxone (Rocephin) inj dry with sterile water for mixing, 1 gm kit 3rd Gen Cephalosporin Antibiotic Rx
Cephalexin (Keflex) 500mg tab 30's 1st Gen Cephalosporin Rx
Ciprofloxacin 250 mg First gen fluoroquinolon Rx
Cyclopentolate oph sol 2 ml 1% Cyclogel Corneal abrasion or snowblindness Rx
Dexamethasone (Decadron) 4mg/ml 25 ml vial For cerebral edema Rx
Dextrose 50% 25gm pre-fill diabetic hypoglycemia Rx
Diazepam (Valium) 10mg tablets 30's Benzodiazepam, sedation / muscle relaxation Rx
Diazepam (Valium) inj 5mg / ml 10 ml vial Benzodiazepam, sedation / muscle relaxation Rx
Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) preload 50mg /1ml allergy - longer action than epi Rx
Droperedol 2.5mg/ml 2ml vial Sedation / nausea Rx
Epinephrine 1:1000 1ml amp Allergy Rx
Epi-Pen autoinjector 0.3ml For anaphylactic shock Rx
Etomidate inj 2mg/ml 10ml vial anesthesia induction Rx
Fluocinolone acetonide cream 0.025% (Synalar) 15 gm tube topical rash Rx
Furosemide (Lasix) Diuretic Rx
Gatifloxacin (Tequin) 400 mg tabs 30's 4th Gen Fluoroquinolone Rx
Lidocaine 1% 50 ml vial local anesthetic Rx
Lidocaine 1% with Epi 50 ml vial local anesthetic Rx

Metronidazole (Flagyl) 500mg tab 30's Intra-abdominal infection, Giardia, UTI Rx
Naloxone (Narcan) 0.4mg/ml 10ml vial Opiate antagonist for accidental OD Rx
Nifedipine (Procardia) 10mg tab 100's HAPE, Ca⁺⁺ Channel blocker, HTN Rx
Nitroglycerine spray 0.4ml dose Angina Rx
Phenytoin (Dilantin) inj 50mg/ml 1gm vial anti-convulsant Rx
Piperacillin/tazobactam (Zosyn) IV Penicillin Rx
Pralidoxime 1gm vial dry organophosphate poison Rx
Prednisone 20mg tab 100's Corticosteroid, inflammation Rx
Promethazine (Phenergan) 25mg/ml 10ml vial nausea Rx
Provigil 200mg 30's awake-aid Rx
Silver Sulfadiazine Cream 1% 85gm jar Topical Burn treatment Rx
Tetracaine Opth sol 0.5% 1ml dropper tube Eye injury - painful exams Rx
Thiamine HCl Inj 100 mg/ml 2 ml amp for refeeding after starvation Rx
Trimethoprim (160mg) / Sulfamethaxazole (800mg) (Septra DS) 30's
Sulfonamide Rx
Vancomycin 1gm dose IV vial Rx
Water sterile 20ml vial Rx
Zolpidem (Ambien) 10mg 30's sleep aid Rx
Loreazepam (Ativan) anianxiolytic Rx Sched IV
Morphine Sulfate inj 10 mg/ml 1 ml amp Pain relief, serious Rx Sched II
Hydrocodone 10mg / Acetaminophen 500mg (Vicodin) tabs 30's Pain relief Rx Sched III
Ketamine 50mg/ml 10ml vial procedural sedation Rx Sched III date rape
Versed inj 5mg/ml 10ml vial sedation (rapid) Rx Sched IV

And finally, since I work about 450 miles away from home, I have rented a public storage facility that I have equipped as an emergency shelter - my wife and I can hunker down in it for up to a month if necessary, with water, food, medical, NBC, weapons, commo, etc. It's within walking distance of where I work, and within walking distance of a few other key locations I may need to get to in a disaster. When my wife worked in Los Angeles we had a similar shelter set up for her, closer to her hospital.

We check and rotate the equipment 2x a year.

The bagged concrete is set up to make a very small, but very high-PF fallout shelter.

- *Batteries AA, AAA, C, D
- *Battery deep cycle
- *Battery powered lantern LED / fluorescent with batteries (3)
- *Duct tape 12 rolls
- *Eye glasses spare
- *Fire Extinguisher 2A:10BC
- *Fire extinguisher pressurized water 1
- *First Aid Kit, Trauma
- *Food 2 persons / 4 weeks canned, dried, coffee, canned milk, etc
- *Fuel stabilized & sealed 5 gal cans
- *Generator Honda 1000 gasoline engine driven, spares, oil, exhaust pipe

- *Gloves Nitrile XL 1 box, SM 1 box sealed in plastic bag
- *Radiation meter Nuk-Alert
- *Throw-away cell phone
- *Water, 20 gal in 2.5 gal containers, 30 gal in 15 gal containers 1.5 liter bottles case/12
- *Wet Wipes indiv packs (6)
- 12 VDC fan (2)
- Battery charger - floater
- Bed - old twin/full with frame, box springs
- Binoculars 7x35 with case
- Blanket, wool, vac packed 2
- Bug out Bag complete 1/Person
- Camp Sink
- Can opener hand type (2)
- Chemical Toilet self contained with accessories including TP
- Cook set & Utensils
- Cot, folding XL with accessories 2
- Deep cycle battery with maintainer
- Eyeglass repair kit
- Foot powder small can
- Funnel and transfer pump fuel hand powered
- Gray water drum plastic 15 gal
- Hacksaw and blades, 6,10" Crescent Wrench, Vise grips, multi tip screwdriver, Hammer, kit
- Heater propane 2 burner
- Hoyles encyclopedia of card games
- Insecticide spray can
- Inverter 12VDC to 120 VAC 400 w
- Junk furniture: dresser, book case
- KI Tablets btl
- Locking storage cabinet (office type)
- Map Set, N. America, in ziplock bags Delorme / local and surrounding states
- Mask MBU/2-P sized 1 ea with carrier, 4 filters in cans
- Mask N95 bx of 20
- matches kitchen (strike anywhere) in coffee can 2 boxes
- Parachute cord 100'
- Piddle packs (12)
- Pillow and pillow case in double plastic bags
- Plastic bucket 5 gal with lid (2)
- Plastic dish pans
- Plastic dropcloth 10x20 2 ea
- Plastic tarps 12x10
- Playing Cards, deck
- Propane tank 20 lb (2)
- Radio, AM/FM/SW, wind-up, with ext antenna kit
- Razor / shaving cream (small)
- Roll-up solar panel

Shower enclosure
Sleeping Bag, synthetic (2)
Sleeping pad, self-inflating
Sm 12 vdc refrigerator
Solar Shower 5 gal
Spare clothes in vac pack Pants, shirts, socks underwear
Sports bra coolmax 2
Stove 1 burner propane, 1# propane bottles (12)
Suit NBC J/List sized 1 / person
Table, chairs (2) folding camp
Tactical vest with Level III armor (2)
Tampax box in ziplock bag
Toiletries - tooth brushes (2) paste, bath soap, razors, shaving cream, etc
Towels bath (2) in ziplock bags
Trash bags Contractor HD roll (2)
Universal Gun Cleaning Kit (Otis)
Wind-up alarm clock

Weapons (in VPI bags, in metal cabinet)

Rifle - SKS / 7.62x39 plus ammo

Handgun .22LR Ruger Mk I with 3 magazines, Tokarev 2 ea, with 3 magazines each, ammo

Mountain bikes, 2, with tire pump, tire tools, spare tubes green slime, kevlar tires, saddle bags and rack, helmet, elbow pads
Bike trailer

Bagged concrete to make F/O shelter - 8x6x5'H
2x6"x6' for o'head supports

And, I thought I was prepared. A friend shared those lists with me and I was pretty impressed. I knew the man who had prepared the lists, but I wasn't planning on bugging out and I couldn't quite get all of the meds. There are some drugs that most doctors simply won't write prescriptions for because they're too dangerous in inexperienced hands. I'd imagine whoever this fella is, he's a doctor because he has a medical license; or did you miss that? There are a few things not on his list, like where he buys his seeds. <http://www.arkinstitute.com/>

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On the 7th day, they finally pulled in. I was up to giving some serious thought to taking some Xanax for something besides sleeping. They had flatbeds and closed semi trailers. There were M2 and M3, Bradley fighting vehicles. They also had HMMWVs, all appeared to be the M1114 that Derek said he'd wanted. Each Hummer had a different setup, we kept one of each and the remainder went into Whetstone, our first line of defense from the north.

"What took you so long?"

"Fixing up the M1114s, Dad, we had to add the extra armored glass in the doors and on the outside of the turrets."

"Oh, like you had your HMMWVs in Iraq?"

"Exactly. It's like I told you, you can't roll the windows down, but you have an extra layer of protection."

"Do we need more than one Bradley?"

"No, we're going to keep one of the M2s and give one M2 and both M3s to Whetstone."

"That will make for one heck of a police department, if they decide to form one. How did you do on ammo and ordinance?"

"Everything you and I wanted and more."

"What didn't I want that you found?"

Land mines cause about 26,000 casualties worldwide every year. Although most of these casualties are the result of the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of mines, they have caused antipersonnel (AP) mines to be severely stigmatized by the international community. As a leader of the "responsible" international community, the United States has chosen to pursue the regulation of AP mines. In setting a standard that we hope others will follow, the President announced a significant change in US policy for AP mines on 16 May 1996. The US unilaterally undertook not to use, and to place in inactive stockpile status with the intent to demilitarize by the end of 1999, all nonself-destructing AP mines not needed to train personnel engaged in demining and countermine operations, and to defend the United States and its allies from armed aggression that crosses the Korean Demilitarized Zone.

The US views the security situation on the Korean Peninsula as a unique case and in the negotiation of this agreement will protect the right to use AP mines there until alternatives become available or the risk of aggression has been removed. This policy eliminated the use of M14 blast AP mines and M16 bounding fragmentation mines outside the Republic of Korea. It did not affect the use of self-destructing mines or command-detonated weapons (M18 claymore).

"What would you like? M-14, M-15, M-16, M-18, M-19 or M-21 mines?"

"We don't need any M-15s, M-19s or M-21s, no one is going to attack us with tanks."

"Are you sure?"

"Well, uh, not totally. You got rockets, right? I want an XM29."

"They never fielded that."

"Yeah, so? I didn't say you could supply it, I just said I wanted it. Man with some of those HEAB rounds, we could keep a company off us."

"Would you settle for an Armalite AR-10A2 with attached AG G36 grenade launcher? How about an H&K UMP in .45 ACP with suppressor?"

"Do I have to choose?"

"You want both?"

"No I want a XM-29, but I'll settle for what you offered."

"I even managed to land a few CROWS equipped HMMWVs and a couple of Avengers, plus one very used M6 Linebacker. The boys think that they can get it fixed if the parts we scrounged are the right ones."

"Jeezus, kid, did you leave anything behind?"

"Only my mistress."

"What's the matter, you too old to fight a tank?"

"Please, Dad. They still guzzle too much gas for what we need them for, and besides which there wasn't even an old style HET to bring it with."

"I still think it's because you think you're too old. You love tanks."

"There wasn't any 120mm ammo except training rounds, Dad."

"Too bad, kid."

"Tell me about it. I had to spike it with a couple of thermites. Took me a while before I could see through the tears."

I knew about those wood boxes they unloaded, 15 LAWs rockets per wooden case. The first time I ever saw a LAW rocket was, hmm, I don't remember. Nonetheless, my hobby was reading Army Field Manuals. Some nights TV got pretty boring, when we still had TV. Most of the time, I watched one of the Discovery Channels or National Geographic. One thing people can't take away from you is education. Oh, and the History Channel, that's important, I wanted to know who won WW II. One of the things I

found irritating was the assumption that you didn't already know who won the battle and the war.

You knew that we got the idea for nuclear weapons from Hitler, right? You knew that Hitler developed nerve gas but didn't use it against us because there was no indication that we'd developed it too (we hadn't). He assumed we had it and the government kept it out of the papers. He didn't get nuclear weapons because we destroyed his access to heavy water. I'd watched thousands of hours of WW II footage, over and over, just trying to find out who won. I assume we did because JFK was a jelly donut. "Ich bin ein Berliner". Kennedy should have said "Ich bin Berliner" to mean "I am a person from Berlin." By adding the indefinite article ein, his statement implied he was a non-human Berliner, thus "I am a jelly doughnut". The statement was followed by uproarious laughter (an urban legend, Kennedy was correct).

They hadn't made any of the M-14s & M-16s since 1972, does anyone know what the shelf life of an AP mine is? The only reason they hadn't all been destroyed was we still used them in Korea and for training EOPs.

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A day late and a \$ short:

The UN nuclear agency has issued guidelines for first responders to a nuclear or radiological emergency following a terrorist attack, an accident or theft.

"Responders generally have no experience with radiation emergencies, as they are very rare," UN International Atomic Energy Agency incident and emergency head Warren Stern said Friday.

The agency has created web pages and a series of publications to offer practical guidance to first responders – typically local medical, police and fire brigades – on how to deal with accidents and incidents involving nuclear or radioactive materials.

The guidelines range from setting up safety perimeters, evacuating the public assumed to be contaminated to ensuring there are no armed people or explosives in the area.

The new web pages and reports cover different types of emergencies, including uncontrolled dangerous radioactive sources, the misuse of dangerous industrial and medical sources, public exposures and contamination from unknown origins, malicious acts and transport emergencies.

Inadvertent inhalation or inadvertent ingestion of radioactive material dispersed by an explosion or fire, or limited stays near the source in an unexploded so-called radiological dispersal device, have the potential to produce injuries in minutes.

Responders "can benefit a lot from practical guidance about what's known about radiation, and how to deal with accidents and incidents involving nuclear or radioactive materials," the agency said.

Right, now if they had just put that out earlier, it might have done some good. The UN only put it out after Kofi Annan left. Ban Ki-moon, a South Korean, became the new Secretary General and a few days they issued that advice. Didn't really matter, days after the terrorists attacked New York, we effectively withdrew from the UN. There was too much going on: the war with México, Central and South America, clean up after terrorist attacks, residual illness from two bioweapons, and clean up after the war.

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L'audace, l'audace, toujours l'audace! - "Audacity, audacity - always audacity!" – George S. Patton quoting Frederick the Great. Patton was hero to me and especially Derek. He was, as described in the movie, a pure warrior. In the coming days without the government to help restore order, we'd have to show our own audacity. Even after the trip to Navajo Army Depot, we weren't heavily armed. We could mine the entire acreage and settled for setting the mines around the buildings. The outer most rings of AP mines were Claymores, followed by the Bouncing Betties and finally the M-14s. Outside the AP mines we set what we had of the AT mines. Damon and his boys, with some help from the others finished the 4th layer of sandbags.

We were ready to begin another 4th generation war. All military historians know who fought the first 4th generation war, Abraham when he rescued his nephew Lot circa 1250 BCE. He attacked at night from two directions, decimating and unprepared enemy. Derek and I – I was having a good day – discussed the weapons available to us, a M2 Bradley, 4 Hummers and more ammo and ordinance than we could use in 3-4 battles. He said he'd prefer to use 2 vehicles only, the M1114s equipped with the Ma Deuce and M240. The target: Ft. Huachuca. Why? Darned if I know, he didn't explain.

I had one fleeting thought, the Mexican Army had recently been reequipped with a licensed version of H&K's G36. No doubt, some of them were also equipped with G36 40mm grenade launcher. Him and his love for the 5.56mm NATO round would probably drive me crazy, someday. Derek claimed that the intelligence staff had departed the area leaving only a small guard force protecting the captured weapons. I hadn't figured on the Mexican Army leaving behind any of their new rifles. I think I told you in a previous epic (sounds better than babble) they replaced their G-3s with the G-36. The G-36 uses 2 magazines, a clear plastic 30-round and the 100-round Beta-C.

Now get this, they were going to allow me to go with them. It was only later I learned that all they wanted me to do, with Aaron, is guard the HMMWVs. Stop and think for a moment, I had a bunch of those 5.56mm rifles equipped with 40mm grenade launchers, with more on the way. If I wasn't careful, I'd have more 5.56x45mm rifles than 7.62x51mm rifles.

Derek adds his two bits again here.

Dad always worried too much. I reminded him of this often, but I might as well have told him that he drove too fast for all the good it did me. It was going to be hard enough to do this without having to worry about my back. Dad and Aaron had perhaps the most important job on the whole mission. I still think sometimes he forgets that he's pushing 70 and a little feeble. The last thing I needed was for him to be shuffling along while we were sneaking into a facility that might have been re-secured. I could hear his feet scraping across the carpet from the other side of his house, and I was partially deaf from too many explosions in my Army career. As for Aaron, he was there to guard Dad as much as the vehicles. I had explained it to him earlier, and he felt a little puffed that I would trust him with guarding Grandpa.

It is so easy to inspire the young, isn't it?

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 14[/b]

Did you ever get the feeling you were being humored? I knew that I shuffled, I had since the diabetic neuropathy had gotten bad. That Christmas after Derek was back from the sandbox and had come to visit, I 'took' him to see the A-12, and SR-71 display at Plant 42. Let's say he drove and I gave directions. We had shopped that day, getting targets, a can of Breakfree, a bore snake and a Springfield Armory military sling for my loaded standard. Anyway, he wanted to see the whole display at Blackbird Park. It was locked up. So we parked and walked around the fence.

I made it from one end to the other and about ½ way back before I sent him for the car. We hit High Desert Storm, the Gun Shop and Santa Fe Gun Galleria before we found the sling. I got instructions for proper installation of my new sling from a web site: <http://www.turnersling.com/sling.htm>

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But, that was then and this is now. Dam that kid! His heart was in the right place, but he put his brain on vacation, getting himself overdosed on radiation. Not enough to be fatal, but enough to ruin his day and several days to come. That MOPP gear only gives you a minimum of protection, what was he thinking? He was no doubt thinking of us, I never got into his face about it the way I wanted to. He wouldn't say what they had put up, but it must be a lot.

Anyway, having gotten what they wanted from Navajo Depot to supplement what Mary and her family had brought, those Mauser rifles seemed to lose their importance. I was giving them away to anyone in Whetstone who wanted one. I wasn't giving the ammo away, I had to get back some of my investment. Still, between the folks in town and what we were growing on the 80, we were in pretty good shape, all things considered.

"Aaron, I'll bet your uncle Derek told you to keep an eye on me, right?"

"You and I are supposed to protect the vehicles, grandpa."

"Aaron, I may be slow, but I'm not stupid. Just because I can't walk doesn't mean my brain doesn't still function, occasionally. If you were really guarding the vehicles, you wouldn't be hanging on me like a bad cold. Chill out, I'm ok, I promise. Besides, if we do have to shoot, we have the Surefire suppressors."

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Every military base I have seen in over 15 years of service has some features that are always the same. First, while there may be lots of vehicles all over there is only one truk. That's the official name of the ball at the top of the flagpole where the post colors are flown (that's the US flag to civilians). Every post has at least one exchange also. An exchange is a general store that sells everything but food, including civilian vehicles.

Every post has a back gate, too. Since 9-11, lots of those back gates have been barricaded, replaced with fencing, secured with several strands of Concertina wire, and even mined at times. None that I know of was left without at least locking it with enough chain to support a logging operation for a month. They were usually under some kind of surveillance, too.

Nukes took care of the video cameras and other alarms, though. The back gate to Fort Huachuca might as well have been standing wide open.

Most people call them bolt cutters or lock cutters; I call them "tankers' lock picks". One snip and a minute to unwind the chains and we were in. With me was a couple of "good ol' boys" that had been poaching deer and sneaking their personal property out of unpaid rental storage for years and another whose summer job in high school was joyriding. I don't approve of theft myself, but reformed thieves made really good scroungers.

The post was deserted to the casual observer, but I noticed that Old Glory was waving gently at half mast, and upside down. Any patriot; any past or present member of the uniformed service; any Boy Scout or Girl Scout for that matter could tell you that the combination was not allowed. Either they were flown upside down to signal distress or at half mast to show respect for the dead, not both. Furthermore, the post colors left with the last man on post, or if that wasn't possible were destroyed by the last man using the materials buried under the monument at the base of the flagpole. Fort Huachuca was occupied by someone who either didn't know how to fly the flag or someone who did and wanted attention.

I began to bet on the latter when I saw the perimeter around Post Headquarters. Two 6 strand concertina barriers with construction pickets installed for stability surrounded the building at 100 meters from the walls. Every window was filled with sand bags and sand bags were piled into a barrier wall at least four bags thick. It looked just like

defenses I saw in Iraq. The ground between the double barriers didn't look quite right, either. It was too lumpy and had too many bushes.

The fortifications followed published military procedure for hasty improvement of a defensive position, though. Hmm.

"Everyone take cover outside the perimeter."

"What?"

"Get down and shut up. Something isn't right here."

The guys got down behind the large brick and marble marker that the post headquarters sign was bolted to. They might know deer poaching, but they sure didn't know about spreading out and hiding behind things that weren't likely to attract fire. Deer didn't shoot back, after all.

I walked up carefully, holding my rifle over my head to show that I was friendly.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

"Lieutenant Ott."

"Advance and be recognized!" I walked forward slowly.

"Halt!"

"What do you mean, halt? I took a grand total of five steps!"

"Take two steps right, sir. Just like drill and ceremony."

Weird. I took two steps to the right.

"Advance and be recognized!"

"I thought that I just did that!"

"Continue, sir. You were about to trip a 'bouncing betty'. Doubt we'd recognize you after that."

I glanced down. Sure enough, there was the trip wire to my left. I got that familiar chill that comes only from knowing that you nearly died from lack of attentiveness. I would have pissed myself if it had been my first time.

"Come on, sir. It's safe to walk straight forward from there. No mines along the tulip bed."

Carefully, I stepped forward through the flower bed, using the stepping stones to keep my feet out of the loose earth. It was the easiest place to put more mines, and so not the first place that someone would try as an avenue of approach. Sweat ran down my forehead into my eyes.

“Halt.”

I stopped.

“6 ways to die out there, sir.”

It was part of a simple challenge and password system used when passing through someone else’s lines called a “running password”. Designed to make things simple without compromising security, the proper response would add up to a number designated for that day. In a pinch, the challenge was simply a number. The real challenge was figuring out what number to say back. Easy enough when you have time to think; difficult while you are taking fire.

“I haven’t had the signal instructions today, soldier. I have my ID, and that is all. I am going to place my weapon on the ground and slowly get it out. Please don’t open fire.”

“Roger, sir. Slowly, and get rid of the pistol too. Use two fingers.”

What else could I do? If they had a weapon pointed at me, I would die before I could draw a bead on them. I divested myself of all weapons and even dropped my grenade bandolier. I then drew out my military ID and my dog tags.

Only when they were out did someone step out from behind the sandbag barrier. His face was done up in city colors to match his ACUs and he pointed a Beretta at me. He also had a sniper net over his head, making identification impossible at more than 3 feet.

“Welcome back, sir. I hope that you find the headquarters adequately defended.”

“Randy?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Randy, you (long string of unprintable words here), you scared me sh*tless!”

“Thank you, sir. Who are the three amigos out behind the marker?”

“Just a couple of friends from back home. Who’s here?”

“Everyone you left to keep an eye on things. We’ve had some challenges from Mexican forces here, but most of them give up after the third landmine.”

“Any others come down to join you?”

“Just some crusty tanker and his family. Carried a Lee-Enfield rifle of all things, and drove the rustiest car I’ve ever seen. They were looking for you, so I gave them a room and assigned him as armorer. I’ve never seen anyone work so hard before, though.”

My heart leapt into my throat. “Bill Phillips is here?”

“How the hell did you know his name?”

“I’ve known Bill since Korea, Randy. He’s real good people. He knows Joe, too. They were supposed to come down together.”

“Joe from Rock Island?”

“Yeah.”

“He’s gone, sir. I’m sorry.”

Just like that, my heart fell into my toes. Joe was a good man, and a really good friend. “What happened?”

“Billary’s troops caught up to them in Kansas. Bill had car trouble and pulled off onto the shoulder to fix it. He sent Joe on ahead in case Bill got caught. Instead, Joe and company drove into an ambush.”

“What the-“

“The President has declared martial law and forced through an act that suspends elections until the current crisis is over.”

“Really. Hmm, I guess Tocqueville had it right after all.”

“About what?”

“The American Republic will endure until the day Congress discovers that it can bribe the public with the public’s money. In other words, our government remains free until the powers that be realize that they can vote themselves more power and keep the public happy by giving them some of their own money back.”

“That’s why we like you, sir. You have all the answers.”

“Not really, Randy. If you want all the answers, you’ll have to ask Dad. I do.”

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Randy had every last man from our old outfit that wasn't fooled by Biliary, which was nearly all of them. He also had their families, as much as he was able to assemble. Some of the guys were from places like What Cheer, Iowa, that had absolutely no strategic value to attract a nuke. Others were from places like Oakland, California, that no longer existed. One was even from George, Alaska, an unincorporated town of 50 named for the founder and town mayor, George Hastings.

The full count was 182 soldiers and 367 dependants. Dad had his army, if he wanted it.

Bill oversaw the loading of every scrap of usable material that we could carry away and the collection of the rest into the ammunition dump. While he did that, Randy showed me the trains that Joe had gotten to Fort Huachuca. The railhead was absolutely bursting with every class of supply but Class VI (luxury items like booze). Then, I saw the consolidated motor pool.

If I was my father, I would now tell you that "wet dream" is the common slang for nocturnal emission, an unprovoked release of bodily fluids made by men (especially young men) who need more sexual outlet. He would also tell you that it is a normal part of growing up.

I am not my father, though, so I can tell you that a "wet dream" is any situation where an unexpected bonanza arises without any effort on the part of the recipient, specifically when that bonanza fulfills a lifelong dream.

The first vehicle I saw in the motor pool was an M1A3 main battle tank with the name "Agony Express" written on the bore evacuator. The next several were heavy fuel haulers of the kind that drag 16,000 gallons or so of JP-8.

"That's the name of my old tank, Bill."

"I know, Spence. It's the only one that we could get working, and we had to drop in an engine that Joe sent to do it."

"Joe sent you an engine?"

Bill smiled. "Not just any engine. The XL-1800A."

There was only one XL-1800A. It was a test engine, a diesel presented for primary analysis by Aberdeen Proving Grounds in the spring of '09 in response to a last-minute executive order by Dubya that he neglected to relay to Biliary's political team. The XL-1800A passed all the tests with flying colors when tested. It was powerful enough to get the Abrams up to 60 MPH and keep it there for hours, and reliable enough to go 3000 hours between overhauls. It even kept the noise down to a whisper thanks to special

mufflers without surrendering power. Best of all, it could get 2.2 miles per gallon. That meant on an XL-1800A equipped Abrams with 504.5 gallons of fuel capacity there was a maximum range of around 1,109.9 miles, roughly four times the range of an Abrams with the stock AT-1500 engine in it.

Billary didn't want it, of course. It sent the wrong political message to other countries and allowed us to extend the service life of the Abrams past the M1A3E2 that we currently fielded. The fact that Joe had the test model meant that it was probably scheduled for destructive testing. At Rock Island, that meant that testing continued until some ridiculous method for ruining the engine succeeded and gave a reason to Congress to reject the appropriation. I used to understand the President's decisions with things like this in an obtuse way, since the engines would probably be sold to the DoD for around \$2 million apiece. In a war that you want to win, though, you don't reject good technology to save less than 1% of the defense budget.

Maybe that's why Dad didn't think that we would win as a nation.

The tank would help, though. Dad would probably tell me that it was a white elephant worse than his Mausers, but I still wanted it. When General Dynamics Land Systems did their last upgrade, they replaced the original M256 main gun with the M256A1 and the experimental engine. German Leopard tanks first mounted the M256A1, which had a 55 caliber length barrel instead of the 50 caliber length of the M256. Longer barrels make more muzzle velocity and better accuracy as a rule, so the M256A1 coupled with the improved digital targeting system based on the one in the M1A2 Abrams gave the new system a maximum effective range of 8,000 meters, or roughly 5 miles. The new engine improved fuel efficiency and reliability in the M1A3E2.

This new M1A3E3 that Bill and Randy had built would be far and away more reliable and have much longer legs than the previous tank. The only problem would be getting parts for it, and I didn't want to think about that just yet.

Maybe I should rename my baby "White Elephant". Dad would probably think that was appropriate.

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"One tank? Where are the other 3?"

"I only have the one, Dad. It's a M1A3E3, though."

"Is that good or bad? I seem to remember that you preferred the M1A1 to the M1A2 and M1A2SEP. My God, did you steal a military Depot? Got anything for me in that pile?"

"I might have a bayonet for your Springfield."

"Who gives a sh*t, I don't have a bayonet lug."

"Do you have a field hospital?"

"No."

"Now you do. You will need to hire a doctor, though."

"What kinds of supply did you get?"

"Everything but Class VI, so we have no booze."

"Chit. Must not be too good at scrounging."

"No, Dad, Randy and the boys drank it up during the hundred days."

"Oh, ok, well..."

"One of the boys used to work at Jack Daniels, though."

"God, I haven't had any of that in, whew..."

"And you won't. He'll be brewing fuel for the vehicles and medicinal alcohol."

"Jack Daniels is medicinal."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah..."

"If you know where we can get Agave, we could brew up some tequila. I remember you liking José Cuervo as much as the next man."

"Yeah, but José doesn't like me anymore, kid. I'm old, you see, and it doesn't sit well on my stomach."

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Once the convoy got home and everyone was busy unloading stuff I sat down with a map and an inventory of the supplies we left behind. Randy had marked known and suspected positions of Mexican forces on the map for me. Just a few miles down the road from Fort Huachuca was a battalion sized element of infantry with armor support. Beyond that, he had suspected positions for at least a division more. Dad was going to have a fit.

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Jack Daniel's

Bombay Sapphire
Jose Cuervo 1800
Chivas Regal
Courvoisier
Drambuie
Grand Marnier

That's Dad's idea of a fit, and mine too. He could have the other five so long as I got the Chivas and Drambuie. Back in the late 80's he had shown me how to make a Rusty Nail, and it was still my favorite mixed drink. On the rocks? Yeah, sure, I'll sit over on those rocks while I drink my Rusty Nail straight up. Ice is a perfectly good waste of the water I need the next day to recover from the drinking binge, since like Dad I can't open a bottle of Drambuie without killing it. It's my one weakness when it comes to drinking.

Dad would probably take the bottle of José and the Grand Marnier and disappear long enough to mix himself one big Golden Cadillac. I would probably find him late that week under the stairs of the barn, dead with a big smile on his placid face and still smelling of tequila, too.

Honestly, I don't think that he'd take a drink if you offered him one, but he might smell it for a second. That's more than enough temptation for him in my book, and I worry about the old duffer more than I should. After all I am his son, and that makes worrying a perfectly acceptable hobby to while away the hours. I even had to instruct him in the proper use of his rifle sling; muzzle up in the sunshine, muzzle down in the rain, and unslung if you expect action. He groused about having to carry the rifle in his hands while walking, especially after we fitted him with his full combat rig. I laughed and said, "Told you so," and assigned him to a nice seated position whenever possible. Shoot, if he threw himself into the prone position he complained about all his new aches and pains for a week at least.

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I don't complain, it wouldn't do any good. After listening to others complain for years, I took to hating complaining. Yeah, rolling out of the wheelchair when that family showed up the spring after the war beat the stuffing out of me, but, I didn't complain. I just applied Mineral Ice in all the places that hurt, put Band-Aids on everything that was bleeding and kept my mouth shut. I assumed that should I say anything, I'd have to listen to their lists of ails, not a thing to do when you have a M1A rifle in your hand.

I had taken my last drink on January 1, 1999 and never looked back, it hurt too much. Like most drunks, I'd waited too long to sober up. A man's body has a way of getting even, I can assure you. Enough of that, I wasn't happy to learn we might have some of that Latin Army on US soil. What idiots, or, maybe not. What was left of the military as dispersed carrying out the whims of her majesty, Broom Hillary. We had enough supplies and people to defend Whetstone against all comers, unless they brought in Arty and Armor. We had some, a few self propelled artillery pieces and one tank.

Those 4 Bradley's didn't add much and to tell the truth, we didn't even have an aerial balloon we could run a camera up on and scope out the distant roads.

By this point in time, my role had been relegated to that of provider. We had food and money to share and because of Derek's friend, we could equip the whole town of Whetstone. I suppose you might consider me to be the proprietor of Ott Enterprises. You want it? If we don't have it, we'll try and get it, shipping and handling are extra. About the only thing we didn't have was medical staff even though we had the equipment that makes up a M*A*S*H Unit. In the past, I employed a practice that served rather well.

"Damon, can you spare a minute, I need something?"

"What now, Dad?"

"I need a couple of physicians, a few nurses, a dentist, a dental assistant and an Optometrist."

"Have you checked the Sears catalog?"

"Right, under medical supplies. Listen, Derek got us a hospital and all the supplies we need, how about you do the hiring?"

"Make them an offer they can't refuse?"

"Dam it Damon, I said hire 'em, not kidnap 'em."

"How do I do that?"

"You know how most people in the medical profession are, codependent. They have an overwhelming desire to help humanity. To do that, they need a proper place, equipment and a reasonable expectation that they can earn a living. We can offer hard money, food and housing. Tell them we have a complete M*A*S*H Unit but no staff. Explain that it's a whole community of people, with the military people, we're almost back up to the original population. You can also tell them that this is a very secure location."

That might be stretching it a bit, but there were about 200 military personnel, the townsfolk and Mary's family. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if some of those dependents would be able to help out with a security, a little. Most of all, I wanted a real doctor to examine Derek and assess his condition. He appeared to be getting better, but I recalled reading somewhere that depending on the level of exposure, that sometimes happened just before a person really got sick and died.

MOPP'd up, he shouldn't have gotten any of the radioactive Iodine, Thallium or Cesium. It was probably a healthy dose of ionizing radiation, specifically, gamma radiation. The suit would stop alpha and beta particles, but gamma were the penetrating particles,

that's why we had a shelter. It had been a few months since the war, we planted a crop and harvested some. They'd stripped Navajo Depot and then turned to Ft. Huachuca, where they had a lot of stuff stashed. I guess that may be an understatement. It was something on the order of 7 trainloads of stuff.

I was happy to be back at the acreage, I sort of lost my shadow, Aaron, as long as I didn't leave the house. There were roadblocks on the freeway exits and on 90 south, just south of south Whetstone Road. I don't know where Derek found the butter bar he was wearing. It was rather poetic him being an officer, as much as he disliked officers.

I guess I should have thought to send Damon up to Sedona and see if he could find Flight ER Doc. On the other hand, the less I managed the situation, the better the results. I really needed to get my butt planted in a chair in front of the radios and find out what was going on in the world.

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 15[b]

I had corresponded with the doctor a few times, getting permission for this or that and looking for information. The one thing we had in common was that we both took a stab at Patriot Fiction. His story, Paradise, should be required reading on salvage operations. In that, if nothing else, we agreed. After TSHTF, it would be necessary to locate and reallocate scarce resources.

The average grocery store has about a 3 day supply of food and they depend on delivery trucks to keep their shelves filled. Our nearest grocery store was in Benson, 3 miles to the east, a Safeway. That's the real exit for Tombstone, Arizona route 80. We were straight north of the Fort, on 90. Both roads joined I-10 within a couple of miles of each other. In the past, we got traffic going to the Fort and to Kartchner Caverns. You want pictures? Go here: <http://www.caves.org/pub/journal/PDF/V61/v61n2-Hose.pdf>

It didn't matter, no one was much of a tourist these days.

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While Dad set off on his plan to acquire a medical staff I organized several convoys to recover the remaining materials from Fort Huachuca. I remember how much the lieutenants used to gripe about making convoy manifests, patrol plans, and briefings. Now it was my turn and the only saving grace was that I had no higher headquarters unless you count Dad. Blessings come in all shapes and sizes, I guess.

I sent two flatbeds, four HEMTT cargo haulers, four 5 tons, and four 2½ tons to move cargo. For escort I sent two CROWS equipped M1114s with M2HB machine guns and five M1114s (two with M249s, two with M240Bs, and one with a Mk19). The CROWS vehicles only carried four crew but the other five HMMWVs each carried five and the other trucks had two apiece. Total compliment? 61 counting myself. Dad hollered at me for going every time. I tried to tell him that a leader has to lead from the front.

"Like Custer?"

"Come on, Dad. I am not Custer even though I'm cav."

"I don't care, Derek. You are volunteering again!"

"No, Dad, I'm leading. These idiots look to their officers to provide guidance and set the example. God help them, but I'm the officer right now. They can handle the convoy by themselves but I'm not going to allow them to get into the sh*t without me right there beside them."

Yeah right. Custer screwed up when he split his forces, sending Reno one way to start the fight and Benteen another. Custer was arrogant, Derek wasn't. He hadn't wanted to command in the first place, that made a big difference. Oh well, they had more firepower in their small unit than the entire 7th Cav. and Indians had at the Little Big Horn. I stayed home and tried to duck Aaron, my new, fulltime driver.

"No you don't, grandpa, you're not going anywhere unless I drive you."

"I was just checking the engine, Aaron, I wasn't planning on going anywhere."

"Where did you get keys?"

"It's my pickup, I have spares."

"Let me have them."

Why not? I had 3 spare sets of keys, primarily because I was so forgetful. I was waiting for Damon to show up, with our medical staff. Aaron should have gone with him, as a bodyguard, but Eric had substituted. They were carrying a small portion of our medical stores, a little gold and silver, and food. My thought was that if they found doctors, those doctors wouldn't abandon their current patients until they'd done all they could do.

I finally got a call on 10 meters, "Whetstone base, are you there?"

"That depends on who you are."

"It's me, Dad, Damon."

"Damon who?"

"Damon Paul Ott."

"Ok, if you say so, how's the mission going?"

"Haven't found a dentist, but I have 3 doctors, 10 nurses and the Optometrist."

"Don't worry about the dentist, they have one in Benson. I should have checked first, but it didn't occur to me."

"Is Derek there?"

"Negatory, he took a Platoon sized element of people and several vehicles off somewhere to save the world."

"He what?"

"They went to the Fort to recover more matériel."

"He take his tank?"

"Nope, it's sitting out front. We don't have a crew, so..."

"It's going to take me about a week to get these people organized and moved. We're going to need more housing units."

"Not a problem, I checked and there are several empty homes in Benson and still a few in Whetstone. I hope you didn't promise them large salaries."

"They're thankful to have a place to treat the ill, Dad."

"They'll have the Benson Hospital plus our MASH Unit. If you can find more people, we could probably use them."

"How big is that hospital?"

"22 acute care beds, 4 with cardiac monitors."

"Did it already have a staff?"

"Seven doctors."

"I'll tell our new people they'll be taking the MASH Unit, Dad."

"Fine, when Derek gets back, I'll have them set it up."

"Roger, Damon clear."

"Whetstone base, clear."

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How had this happened? I had some down time and began to reflect on what had gone wrong that had culminated in WW III.

After defeating fascists and communists, can the West now defeat the Islamists? On the face of it, its military preponderance makes victory seem inevitable. Even were Teheran to acquire a nuclear weapon, Islamists have nothing like the military machine the Axis deployed in World War II nor the Soviet Union during the cold war.

What have Islamists to compare with the Wehrmacht or the Red Army? The SS or Spetznaz? The Gestapo or the KGB? Or, for that matter, to Auschwitz or the Gulag? Yet, more than a few analysts, including myself, worry that it's not so simple.

Islamists (defined as persons who demand to live by the sacred law of Islam, the Shari'a) might in fact do better than the earlier totalitarians. They could even win. That's because, however strong the Western hardware, its software contains some potentially fatal bugs. Three of them - pacifism, self-hatred, complacency - deserve attention.

Pacifism: Among the educated, the conviction has widely taken hold that "there is no military solution" to current problems, a mantra applied in every Middle East problem - Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, the Kurds, terrorism, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. But this pragmatic pacifism overlooks the fact that modern history abounds with military solutions. What were the defeats of the Axis, the United States in Vietnam, or the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, if not military solutions?

Self-hatred: Significant elements in several Western countries - especially the United States, Britain and Israel - believe their own governments to be repositories of evil, and see terrorism as punishment for past sins. This "we have met the enemy and he is us" attitude replaces an effective response with appeasement, including a readiness to give up traditions and achievements.

By name, Osama bin Laden celebrates such leftists as Robert Fisk and William Blum. Self-hating Westerners have an outsized importance due to their prominent role as shapers of opinion in universities, the media, religious institutions and the arts. They serve as the Islamists' auxiliary mujahadeen.

Complacency: The absence of an impressive Islamist military machine gives many Westerners, especially on the Left, a feeling of disdain. Whereas conventional war, with its men in uniform, its ships, tanks and planes, and its bloody battles for land and resources, is simple to comprehend, the asymmetric war with radical Islam is elusive.

BOX CUTTERS and suicide belts make it difficult to perceive this enemy as a worthy opponent. Like John Kerry, too many dismiss terrorism as mere "nuisance." Islamists deploy formidable capabilities, however, that go far beyond small-scale terrorism:

- A potential access to weapons of mass destruction that could devastate Western life.

- A religious appeal that provides deeper resonance and greater staying power than the artificial ideologies of fascism or communism.
- An impressively conceptualized, funded and organized institutional machinery that successfully builds credibility, goodwill and electoral success.
- An ideology capable of appealing to Muslims of every size and shape, from Lumpenproletariat to privileged, from illiterates to PhDs, from the well-adjusted to psychopaths, from Yemenis to Canadians. The movement almost defies sociological definition.
- A non-violent approach - what I call "lawful Islamism" - that pursues Islamification through educational, political, and religious means, without recourse to illegality or terrorism. Lawful Islamism is proving successful in Muslim-majority countries like Algeria and Muslim-minority ones like the United Kingdom.
- A huge number of committed cadres. If Islamists constitute 10 to 15 percent of the Muslim population worldwide, they number some 125 to 200 million persons, or a far greater total than all the fascists and communists, combined, who ever lived.

Pacifism, self-hatred and complacency are lengthening the war against radical Islam and causing undue casualties. Only after absorbing catastrophic human and property losses will left-leaning Westerners likely overcome this triple affliction and confront the true scope of the threat. The civilized world will likely then prevail, but belatedly and at a higher cost than need have been.

Should Islamists get smart and avoid mass destruction, but instead stick to the lawful, political, non-violent route, and should their movement remain vital, it is difficult to see what will stop them.

On the other hand, Israel didn't see it that way, they finally nuked 'em. As you may recall, no mention was made of Israel nuking Saudi Arabia. The Saudis, faced with eminent destruction, gave up their nuclear weapons; they only had the ones they bought with their oil money, 3 to be exact.

In 2003, members of the government stated that due to the worsening relations with the US, Saudi Arabia was being forced to consider the development of nuclear weapons; however, so far they have denied that they are making any attempt to produce them. It has been rumored that Pakistan has transferred several nuclear weapons to Saudi Arabia, but this is unconfirmed. In March 2006, the German magazine Cicero reported that Saudi Arabia had since 2003 received assistance from Pakistan to acquire nuclear missiles and warheads. Satellite photos allegedly reveal an underground city and nuclear silos with Ghauri rockets south of the capital Riyadh. Pakistan has denied aiding Saudi Arabia in any nuclear ambitions.

The US had its own group of Pacifists, called the Federation of American Scientists. The organization had been started by the scientists who worked on the Manhattan Project. It had been a good source of information when I began writing fiction, so long as I avoided the editorials.

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I had concluded years before that WW III was inevitable. There had been a buildup of missile testing during the first decade of the 21st Century. The Ghauri rockets that the Saudis had come from Pakistan and they could easily reach Israel. The Arms Trade hadn't been limited to conventional weapons, thanks to Khan.

With that in mind, winning the Lottery had been, well, fortuitous. I guess I should have taken the single payment, but hindsight is 20/20. The thing was, that as long as Sharon had what she wanted, I could blow money to my heart's content. I made both good and bad decisions; overall, we were prepared. The key to surviving anything bad that happens is a combination of preparedness and good luck. Without the preparedness, you're screwed. Even with it, you could be if you have bad luck. Example: a nuclear warhead going long on its target and hitting your acreage southeast of Whetstone. Trust God and the odds that it won't happen, that's all you can do in the end.

I wasn't a soldier, but my son was. I won't claim he'd seen it all, but he had done tours in Korea, Kosovo and Iraq. He and I had long discussions about the difference between Marines and Soldiers. They had difference missions and different attitudes. The closest the Army came to the attitude of the Marine Corps was perhaps found in the 82nd Airborne. The 82nd was the Army's quick reaction force, expected to be engaged with the enemy within 96 hours.

Marine units were kept on amphibious units and part of every Carrier Battle Group. If we had a CSG in the area, they would be boots on ground first. Their Rules of Engagement were at variance with the Army, except for the 82nd. I'll ask Derek to explain that when he gets back from the Fort.

In the CNO Guidance for 2003 Admiral Vernon Clark stipulated that the terms "Carrier Battle Groups" and "Amphibious Readiness Groups" would no longer be the standards terms and that they would be replaced by Carrier Strike Groups and Expeditionary Strike Groups, respectively, by March 2003. The goal being to find ways to effectively produce naval capability in a more efficient manner.

Under this initiative, Cruiser-Destroyer and Carrier Groups are designated as Carrier Strike Groups (CSG) and aligned directly under the numbered fleet commanders. This realignment gives key operational leaders authority and direct access to the people needed to more effectively accomplish the Navy's mission. Formerly, Carrier Group (CARGRU) and Cruiser-Destroyer Group (CRUDESGRU) staffs were under the administrative authority of the air and surface type commanders (TYCOM). With this new initiative, authority and control will come from the numbered fleet commanders who

are responsible for the training and certification of the entire Strike Group. The organizational structure to support the Carrier Strike Groups focuses more on placing Strike Group commanders under the authority of the certifying officer, or the numbered fleet commander.

Under this concept, the warfare distinction of either the air-side or the surface-side is removed and is unified as Carrier Strike Groups.

The carrier strike group (CVSG) provides the full range of capabilities that were present in carrier battle groups. It remains the joint task force commander's premier power projection option. However, because surface combatants will be needed for Expeditionary Strike Groups and Surface Action Groups, the number of ships escorting the carrier would be reduced.

In the new concept, the CVSG would deploy with three or four surface combatants, all Aegis ships. With the introduction of an improved E-2C Hawkeye aircraft and CEC, these ships would provide the group with sufficient defense against the most likely air, surface and subsurface threats.

In larger scale conflict or higher threat scenarios, combining multiple CVSGs with SAGs and ESGs would provide the level of combat capability, power projection and force protection required. This consolidated group is known as the expeditionary strike force (ESF).

It is important to note that there really is no real definition of a strike group. Strike groups are formed and disestablished on an as needed basis, and one may be different from another. However, they all are comprised of similar types of ships. Typically a carrier strike group might have:

- a carrier – The carrier provides a wide range of options to the US government from simply showing the flag to attacks on airborne, afloat and ashore targets. Because carriers operate in international waters, its aircraft do not need to secure landing rights on foreign soil. These ships also engage in sustained operations in support of other forces.
- two guided missile cruisers – multi-mission surface combatants. Equipped with Tomahawks for long-range strike capability.
- a guided missile destroyer – multi-mission surface combatant, used primarily for anti-air warfare (AAW).
- a destroyer – primarily for anti-submarine warfare (ASW).
- a frigate – primarily for anti-submarine warfare (ASW).
- two attack submarines – in a direct support role seeking out and destroying hostile surface ships and submarines.
- a combined ammunition, oiler, and supply ship – provides logistic support enabling the Navy's forward presence: on station, ready to respond.

The Carrier Strike Group (CVSG) could be employed in a variety of roles, all of which would involve the gaining and maintenance of sea control:

- Protection of economic and/or military shipping.
- Protection of a Marine amphibious force while enroute to, and upon arrival in, an amphibious objective area.
- Establishing a naval presence in support of national interests.

Aside from the renumbering of the Strike Groups, the actual change will directly affect only the administrative chain of command for the 14 CSG staffs. The ships and hardware remain administratively under their current platform TYCOM.

Strike Group commanders remain accountable to the numbered fleet commanders for integrated and sustainment training, and to the TYCOM for materiel readiness and unit (basic) level training of Strike Group units. The CSGs have been renumbered with respect to Navy tradition, with even numbers on the east coast and odd numbers on the west. To preserve their current recognized role as training groups, CSG 1 and 4 have retained their numbers.

Carrier Groups (CCG) and Cruiser-Destroyer Groups (CCDG) will be renamed commander, Carrier Strike Groups (CCSG).

CCG numbers will carry over to the newly formed CSGs, including CCG2, CCG4, CCG6, CCG8, CCG1, CCG3, CCG5, and CCG7. CCDG will be renamed as follows: CCDG2 to CCSG10; CCDG8 to CCSG12; CCDG12 to CCSG14; CCDG1 to CCSG15; CCDG3 to CCSG9; and CCDG5 to CCSG11.

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Ballistic missile defense programs around the world are going to have their work cut out for them: At least eight nations went all out in developing their own offensive ballistic missile programs in 2006, a new survey says. "According to a preliminary count, eight countries launched more than 26 ballistic missiles of 23 types in 24 different events," the Strategic Security Blog of the Federation of American Scientists reported Friday.

North Korea was not on the only ballistic missile-developing nation to experience test failures in its 2006 missile testing, the SSB report noted. Russia and India did too.

However, "the United States demonstrated a very reliable capability including the 117th consecutive successful launch of the Trident II D5 sea-launched ballistic missile," the SSB said.

The SSB noted the extensive ballistic missile testing activities of the United States, Russia, France and India, and dryly noted that they reflected "yet another double standard in international security." It recommended "that initiatives are needed to limit

not only proliferating countries from developing ballistic missiles but also find ways to curtail the programs of the existing nuclear powers."

"The ballistic missile flight tests involved weapons ranging from 10-warhead intercontinental ballistic missiles down to single-warhead short-range ballistic missiles. Most of the flight tests, however, involved long-range ballistic missiles and the United States, Russia and France also launched sea-launched ballistic missiles," the report said.

Russia's sea-launched Bulava intercontinental ballistic missile failed in two consecutive test launches, suggesting significant problems with the program, the SSB noted. However, it cautioned that "tests of five other missile types shows that Russia still has effective missile forces."

The United States test launched eight Minuteman III and Trident II missiles, the report said. "The first ICBM flight-test signaled the start of the deployment of the W87 warhead on the Minuteman III force," it said.

As previously documented in these columns, the report noted that China finally test fired its long-delayed DF-31 ICBM and India tried to test fire its ambitious new Agni III ICBM. The SSB report linked China and India's efforts to produce their own indigenous ICBM systems and said these developments "raised new concerns because of the role the weapons likely will play in the two countries' targeting of each other." Dems may welcome CRS report on Navy BMD ship spending.

A new Congressional Research Service report urges Congress to critically reassess the US Navy's plans for building highly expensive ballistic missile defense cruisers and destroyers.

The report, issued last Wednesday, does not question the need for such ships. But it suggests that far cheaper ways of building them be developed or explored. And it suggests that the US domestic shipbuilding and industrial home base would benefit from having a larger number of less ambitious, less costly ships being ordered and built instead of the Navy's current designs.

The report was issued after the Democrats won control of both houses of Congress in the Nov. 7 mid-term elections and before the new 110th Congress meets for the first time on Jan. 4. It therefore comes at a key moment to influence the potentially sympathetic thinking of the new incoming Democratic committee chairmen on these issues.

Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., the next chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Rep. Henry Waxman, the next chairman of the House Government Reform Committee, have both made clear they are critical of the unprecedented defense spending that exploded during the six-year stewardship of former Defense Secretary

Donald Rumsfeld with no restraint from the Republicans who ran Congress during that time.

China closely watches Japan's BMD spending.

Japan's plans to dramatically boost its spending on BMD systems is being closely watched by neighboring China.

The official China Daily noted Friday that Japan's BMD spending is due to rise by 30.5 percent in Fiscal Year 2007 to \$1.56 billion, according to Japanese official figures released Wednesday.

The report noted that the overall Japanese defense budget was not growing. On the contrary, it was due to drop by 0.3 per cent to \$40.7 billion in the next fiscal year from April 1, compared to \$40.6 billion this year, the report said.

The China Daily quoted Liu Jiangyong, a Japan expert with Tsinghua University, as saying that North Korea's missile and nuclear tests in 2006 gave the Japanese government the justification to dramatically expand its spending on BMD. "The military cooperation in research and deployment between the United States and Japan has also reached a point where they are thinking of something new and bigger," Liu told the newspaper.

Jin Canrong, associate dean of the School of International Studies at Renmin University, told the China Daily that Japanese leaders believed their country was more at risk from North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs than any other. The United States was still too far away to be directly threatened by the North Korean systems and North Korea had always expressed suspicion towards Japan unmediated by the high trade levels and immigration between South Korea and Japan.

"Many Japanese politicians believe that pouring more money into ballistic defense is a good way to ease worry and win more votes among the public, especially after the (North Korea)'s bold military maneuvers," Jin told the newspaper.

I should point out that the US warheads struck within 1 meter of their designated Aimpoint.

Here's another article I copied to my computer:

North Korea may have gotten all the attention, but all the nuclear weapon states were busy flight-testing ballistic missiles for their nuclear weapons during 2006. According to a preliminary count, eight countries launched more than 26 ballistic missiles of 23 types in 24 different events.

Unlike the failed North Korean Taepo Dong 2 launch, most other ballistic missile tests were successful. Russia and India also experienced missile failures, but the United

States demonstrated a very reliable capability including the 117th consecutive successful launch of the Trident II D5 sea-launched ballistic missile.

The busy ballistic missile flight testing represents yet another double standard in international security, and suggests that initiatives are needed to limit not only proliferating countries from developing ballistic missiles but also find ways to curtail the programs of the existing nuclear powers.

The ballistic missile flight tests involved weapons ranging from 10-warhead intercontinental ballistic missiles down to single-warhead short-range ballistic missiles.

Most of the flight tests, however, involved long-range ballistic missiles and the United States, Russia and France also launched sea-launched ballistic missiles.

[b]Whetstone – Chapter 16[b]

The Putin government's reaffirmation of the importance of strategic nuclear forces to Russian national security was tainted some by the failure of two consecutive launches of the new Bulava missile, but tests of five other missile types shows that Russia still has effective missile forces.

Along with China, Russia's efforts continue to have an important influence on US nuclear planning, and the eight Minuteman III and Trident II missiles launched in 2006 were intended to ensure a nuclear capability second to none. The first ICBM flight-test signaled the start of the deployment of the W87 warhead on the Minuteman III force.

China's launch of the (very) long-awaited DF-31 ICBM and India's attempts to test launch the Agni III raised new concerns because of the role the weapons likely will play in the two countries' targeting of each other. But during a visit to India in June 2006, US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, downplayed at least the Indian issue saying other countries in the region also have tested missiles. In a statement that North Korea would probably find useful to use, Gen. Pace explained that "the fact that a country is testing something like a missile is not destabilizing" as long as it is "designed for defense, and then are intended for use for defense, and they have competence in their ability to use those weapons for defense, it is a stabilizing event."

But since all "defensive" ballistic missiles have very offensive capabilities, and since no nation plans it defense based on intentions and statements anyway but on the offensive capabilities of potential adversaries, Gen. Pace's explanation seemed disingenuous and out of sync with the warnings about North Korean, Iranian and Chinese ballistic missile developments.

The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) seeks to limit the proliferation of ballistic missiles, but that vision seems undercut by the busy ballistic missile launch schedule demonstrated by the nuclear weapon states in 2006. Some MTCR member countries have launched the International Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile

Proliferation initiative in an attempt to establish a norm against ballistic missiles, and have called on all countries to show greater restraint in their own development of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction and to reduce their existing missile arsenals if possible.

All the nuclear weapons states portray their own nuclear ballistic missile developments as stabilizing and fully in compliance with their pledge under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to pursue nuclear disarmament in good faith. But fast-flying ballistic missiles are inherently destabilizing because of their vulnerability to attack may trigger use early on in a conflict. And the busy missile testing in 2006 suggests that the "good faith" is wearing a little thin. From Vandenberg to Kwajalein... our Minuteman III have a CEP of only 3 meters (average shot).

Why is that important? Well, I'll tell you... if you had been paying attention, instead of protesting the war in Iraq, you could have been prepared. France placed an order worth 7.9 billion euros (10.4 billion dollars) for six nuclear-powered but conventionally armed Barracuda class attack submarines, marking one of the main French weapons programs for coming decades. Japan has conducted a secret study showing it will need three to five years if it decides to develop nuclear weapons. Russia tested a 19-year old intercontinental ballistic missile Thursday as part of a move to prolong effectiveness of old Cold War stockpiles, the defense ministry said. The SS-18 Satan missile was launched at 11:20 am (0820 GMT) in the Orenburg region south of the Urals, successfully reaching its target in the far-eastern Kamchatka region, defense ministry spokesman Igor Kostyshin told AFP.

The year 2006 was the year the Bush administration reluctantly concluded al-Qaeda was only a small part of a global challenge, which is as ideologically motivated as communism was against freedom during the 45-year Cold War. America's enemies took advantage of a quagmired US in Iraq to advance their quest for membership in the nuclear club. North Korea blasted its way into the club to become its ninth member and Iran was well on its way to becoming number ten. North Korea has rejected New York as a venue for talks on US financial sanctions which it insists must be lifted before any further nuclear negotiations, a South Korean newspaper reported Monday. Chief nuclear negotiator Kim Kye-Gwan was speaking Saturday, Dong-A Ilbo newspaper reported, the day after a week of six-party nuclear talks ended in Beijing without any apparent progress.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is facing heavy criticism for cold-shouldering Syrian peace overtures. Over the past three years Syrian President Bashar Assad has been signaling a desire to resume the peace process. Last week his foreign minister, Walid Mualllem, added the words that Israel has always sought. He talked of negotiations without pre-conditions. Russia has expanded its global navigation satellite system (Glonass) with three satellites, a spokesman for the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos) said Tuesday. A Proton-K rocket carrying three modernized Glonass-M satellites lifted off at 23:18 Moscow time (8:18 pm GMT) Monday from the Baikonur space center in Kazakhstan. The satellites were put into orbit early Tuesday.

It will take a lot more than a "surge" of 30,000 or 40,000 American troops to "bring peace" to Baghdad: 10 times that many probably could not do it. An important article by Sabrina Tavernise published in The New York Times Saturday explains why, although US policymakers appear blind to its obvious lessons. The article's title tells all – "District by District, Shiites Make Baghdad Their Own." Remember the optimism that greeted the new millennium? Communism was a fading memory, US air power had just won a war in the Balkans, and threats to national security seemed so modest that a new administration in Washington decided to take some risks to transform America's military into an information-age force. Back then, the active-duty component of the US Army – the full-time, professional warfighters – totaled 482,000 soldiers.

Vladimir Putin has prevented Russia's implosion using methods he learned in the KGB. His game plan is logical. He knows Russia can only survive post-communism by becoming a centralized oligarchy – or risk splitting further. Putin is emulating a long Soviet tradition: state-sanctioned tyranny in its most efficient form. The United States demanded in deadlocked talks that North Korea take steps to give up nuclear weapons within two months including freezing a reactor, a Japanese press report said Wednesday. Kyodo News said the United States made the demands during six-nation talks on ending North Korea's nuclear program that ended in stalemate last week in Beijing. The number of dead in the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia are unknown and will probably remain unknown; such is the confusion around this latest war being played out in the Horn of Africa. International aid workers speak of more than 800 people wounded since the fighting took a turn for the worse when Ethiopian warplanes began strafing and bombing Somali positions just before Christmas.

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During that timeframe, Gerald Ford died. He had said our long national nightmare was over. When he died, our long national nightmare was just beginning, again. It didn't matter what Bush did in Iraq, it was Vietnam all over again. I suppose, for more than any other reason, when we won the Lottery, we bolted from the PRK to Arizona. The news hadn't been good for a long time and was only getting worse. Sorry that I got to musing about our move to Arizona, but I wanted you to understand my thinking.

This is in regard to 2 Meter Short-Range Operations incorporating a repeater which is the most reliable form of short-range comms in my AO. The 70cm band is popular in other parts of the country such as the North East portion of the United States but not real popular in my AO.

The FCC states (basically) that anyone can transmit on any HAM Frequency and at any time if there is an emergency and for emergency purposes. My personal definition of an "Emergency" ranges from your teenage daughter getting a flat tire on the bad side of town at night to an injury auto accident. All areas in the USA are different so I am speaking from the perspective of my area, the area I am most familiar with.

Here is some basic tips that may help and it is far better to go through the operations portion of the learning curve at your own convenience than try to do it in an emergency situation. I have been involved with a "bad" attempt from a Non-HAM Operator who was clueless on simple 2 meter duplex (Repeater) operations. The poor young lady was panicked and could not give enough helpful and exact information to help us help her quickly. Her husbands' (A licensed Technician) radio was not set for the Repeaters' PL tone, she could copy us but her transmission was weak and not very audible We had to try to work long range higher power Simplex Operations and it was difficult to say the least. It took hours to find her and her husband who had fractured his collar bone. He did not have the foresight to show her how the radio worked or to have the proper settings for long range Repeater operations. The story had a happy ending but it could have resulted in a much worse situation.

So, this is what *I* do if I am out with someone who is not familiar with the gear..

In our study guides for the HAM tests there are some basic guidelines on just HOW to properly install and wire your Mobile 2 Meter Radio. It states to wire the radio directly to the vehicles' battery, mostly to avoid all the electronic noise in most auto electric systems. The reason I mention this is you do not need to have the cars' ignition on as the properly installed radio by-passes all switches, just turn the radio on and it is good to go. When out in the field I will hide a door key outside ON the vehicle then hide the ignition key inside the vehicle. I always lock up when leaving a vehicle in the bush. With the radio directly wired to the battery my partner can just open the door and turn on the radio without fumbling with the ignition, a little detail that could prove painfully tedious in a crises.

I always take a moment to show how this radio works. It seems they are all a little different so I will have to be a little vague and generic on the exact description. I start out simply by stating "Turn the radio on here, I have the frequency, tone and setback already set on the repeater and I keep the Frequency written on a piece of card stock that is taped just above the radio on the dashboard". If for some reason the Frequency "jumps" (Mr. Murphy is very active in the Radio World!) out of its' setting it is written down so all a non-operator has to do is turn the dial and be back on the Repeater. This is very important! If you do not have the radio on a repeater that is being monitored by a Team (SATERN/ARES in my case) your radio will be next to worthless. You have to comm with the right people and people who are there.

Okay...Lets walk through it. Turn on radio, check the Frequency, depress the PTT switch (Press-to-Talk) on the mic and talk as if you are on the telephone. Remember to keep the PTT switch depressed until you are finished talking.

Now, what do you say?

Again, simply talk into the Mic as if you were on a telephone. Try to be as clear and exact in terms as you can and be prepared to repeat the same statement(s) several times. Generally you will be way out in the bush and they will not receive you as well as

a City call. I would say "Break Repeater 89. (146.890 Mhz, we say .89 as it is economical and precise) I have an emergency, my friend gm3 has a broken ankle near the XXXXXX river, I had to leave him and come to use his radio. I need help moving him and getting him to a hospital. We are at GPS coordinates XXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXX." Another reason GPS is so important!

Try to give the most clear and accurate description of your situation that you can. I have heard scared folks say there were scared and that is fine, in fact I appreciate it as it helps even more in telling me your EXACT situation and how best can I assist. A scared person needs counseled and reassured the situation is now under control and we are on our way and please stay on the Repeater.

I have heard transmissions like this and there is a huge effort to jump in and help. You may get double transmissions so be ready for that also. Make sure you receive then wait about 5 seconds before transmitting again. Someone else my offer something like "I am just 5 miles away, are you near the gun-range?"

You can get some good practice before hand. We have a custom/method when we are on the radio "Please Standby for Third Party Traffic" which in English means someone without a license is getting ready to talk on my legal station that I am controlling. RadioRay has talked to my 8 year old son on 20m at a distance of 1005 miles! Reddogs' son and my son comm'ed recently together on 2m via a Repeater. I won't mention how proud the Daddies' were!

Like everything else in our craft, it is complicated only if you make it so. So practice now while you can, ask that HAM you know to help you on OJT radio experience. A good Operator will take the time to show a Non-Operator how to make an emergency call on his/her radio. It is peace of mind and just one more layer of protection. A good Operator will always remember to preset his/her radio and insure that it will be hard to knock it off frequency, key locks are great for this.

Again, do not be intimidated by how many knobs or switches are on the radio, you have it on and you have it working. If you can it will help to practice an emergency call and make non-transmitting practice runs. We are making our practice calls with our new Team Members and moving ahead with earning Tickets.

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The War to Save the Western World
Written by Richard Bentley
Thursday, December 28, 2006

It has been called the war on terrorism, but the name given to it is a misnomer. We are in a cultural world war, although many people are in denial. We had a wakeup call on 9/11, and most of us woke up for a short while. It will be my goal to wake those of you

who have fallen back to sleep, realizing that when people are sleeping, they don't want to be awakened.

Here are the ABC's of the "War to Save the Western World." A. The human side of the equation; B. The religious side of the equation; and C. The war between the liberal, modern world and 7th Century ideals'

A. The Human Dynamics

Nowhere have whole peoples seen their situation reversed more visibly or more painfully than the peoples of the Islamic world. In medieval times, Europe lagged far behind the Islamic world in science, mathematics, scholarship, and military power.

Even such ancient European thinkers as Plato and Aristotle became known to Europeans of the Middle Ages only after their writings, which had been translated into Arabic, were translated back into European languages.

Today that is all reversed. The number of books per person in Europe is more than ten times that in Africa and the Middle East. The number of books translated into Arabic over the past thousand years is about the same as the number translated into Spanish in one year.

Fewer than 400 industrial patents were issued to people in the Arab countries during the last two decades of the 20th century, while 15,000 industrial patents were issued to South Koreans alone.

Human beings do not always take reversals of fortune gracefully. Still less can those who were once on top quietly accept seeing others leaving them far behind economically, intellectually, and militarily.

Those in the Islamic world have for centuries been taught to regard themselves as far superior to the "infidels" of the West, while everything they see with their own eyes now tells them otherwise. Worse yet, what the people of the whole world sees with their own eyes tells them that the Middle East has made few contributions to human advancement in our times.

Even Middle Eastern oil was largely discovered and processed by people from the West. After oil, the Middle East's most prominent export has been terrorism.

Those who look at the world in rationalistic terms may say that the Middle East can use some of its vast oil wealth to expand its own educated classes and move back to the forefront of human achievement. They did it once, why not do it again?

All sorts of things can be done in the long run, but you have to live through the short run to get there. Moreover, even the short run, as history is measured, can be pretty long in terms of the human lifespan.

Even if the Islamic world set such goals and committed the material resources and individual efforts required, they could not expect to pull abreast of the West for generations, even if the West stood still. More realistically, it would take centuries, as it took the West centuries to catch up to them.

What will happen in the meantime? Are millions of proud human beings supposed to quietly accept inferiority for themselves and their children, and perhaps their children's children?

Or are they more likely to listen to demagogues, whether political or religious, who tell them that their lowly place in the world is due to the evils of others-the West, the Americans, the Jews?

If the peoples of the Islamic world disregarded such demagogues, they would be the exceptions, rather than the rule, among people who lag painfully far behind others. Even in the West, there have been powerful political movements based on the notion that the rich have gotten rich by keeping others poor-and that things need to be set right "by all means necessary."

These means seldom include concentration on self-improvement, with 19th century Japan being one of the rare exceptions. Lashing out at others is far more immediately satisfying-and modern communications, transportation, and weaponry make it far easier to lash out destructively across great distances.

Against this background, we may want to consider the question asked by hand-wringers in the West: Why do they hate us? Maybe it is because the alternative to hating us is to hate themselves.

B. Religion

These conflicts have ancient roots, but they seem to be gaining new forces as modernity spreads and deepens.

As bin Laden understands it, the "crusade" America is alleged to be leading is not against Arabs but against the Islamic nation. Bin Laden couldn't have been clearer: "Our call is the call of Islam that was revealed to Muhammad. It is a call to all mankind. We have been entrusted with good cause to follow in the footsteps of the messenger and to communicate his message to all nations."

This is a religious war against "unbelief and unbelievers." That line is a fundamentalist, religious one. And it is an Islamic one. It would be naïve to ignore in Islam a deep thread of intolerance toward unbelievers.

There are passages as violent as this: "And when the sacred months are passed, kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them; and seize them,

besiege them, and lay wait for them with every kind of ambush.” “Believers! Wage war against the infidels as are your neighbors, and let them find you rigorous.”

There are just three choices available to non-Muslims: 1. Convert to Islam; 2. Submit to Islamic rule; or 3. Be killed.

Since Muhammad was, unlike many other religious leaders, not simply a sage or a prophet but a ruler in his own right, this exploitation of his politics is not as great a stretch as some would argue.

Let's look at fundamentalism. It has attracted millions of adherents for centuries, and for a good reason. It elevates and comforts. It provides a sense of meaning and direction to those lost in a disorienting world.

As modernity has advanced, and the certitudes of fundamentalist faith seemed mocked by an increasingly liberal society, fundamentalists have mobilized.

Middle Eastern fundamentalism has been challenged by the pace of social change. If you take your beliefs from books written more than a thousand years ago, and you believe in these texts literally, then the appearance of the modern world must truly terrify. If you believe that women should be consigned to polygamous, concealed servitude, then Manhattan must appear like Gomorrah. If you believe that homosexuality is a crime punishable by death, as the fundamentalist Islam world believes, then a world of same-sex marriage is surely Sodom.

To Islam, what is truly evil and unacceptable is the domination of infidels over true believers. There is little room in the fundamentalist psyche for a moderate accommodation.

The secular totalitarianisms of the 20th century were discarded lies. Today's conflict is against a more formidable enemy than Nazism or communism.

Islamic fundamentalism is based on a glorious civilization and a great faith. It can harness, co-opt, and corrupt true and good believers if it has a propitious and toxic enough environment. It has a more powerful logic than either Stalin's or Hitler's godless ideology.

We have to somehow defeat this without defeating or even opposing a great religion that is nonetheless extremely inexperienced in the toleration of other ascendant and more powerful faiths. It is hard to underestimate the extreme delicacy and difficulty of this task.

What is really at issue here is the simple but immensely difficult principle of the separation of politics and religion. We are fighting not for our country as such. We are fighting for the universal principles of our Constitution--and the possibility of free religious faith that it guarantees.

C. The Liberal, Modern World versus 7th Century Ideals

After 9/11, when asked what would be the solution to fighting terrorism, a female pacifist said to me, "Just give them what they want." Let's start with a few things we know they want:

- Women are to remain indoors.
- When they go out, women must be completely covered up, even in 110 degree temperatures.
- Women are to receive no education.
- If women have outside-of-marriage sex, they will be stoned to death.
- There will be no practice of any religion other than Islam.
- In order to advance in society, one must be a practicing Muslim.

Are any of these things acceptable to anyone in the Western World?

Are there just a relatively few who want these things? It is estimated that 10% of Muslims support Al-Qaeda. In a democratic political campaign, that would be a pretty insignificant number. But in hard numbers, it amounts to 130-140 million people, the approximate population of Russia, or half the population of the United States. Politically, the rest of the world is made up of four groups:

1. Pacifists and Appeasers. While a small group, they have developed the habit of being able to organize and demonstrate at the drop of a hat. One would think that having experienced dealing with the schoolyard bully in school that they would realize how ineffective this approach has been.

It is safe to say that pacifism has accomplished literally nothing in the history of mankind in fighting fascism and totalitarianism. The most famous appeaser, Neville Chamberlain, said on the eve of the Munich conference in September, 1938: "How horrible, how fantastic, how incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks because of a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing!" He brought back to Europe a "deal" with Hitler that would give us "peace in our time."

2. Political Opportunists. This group is composed of people who in the United States and outside of the United States who find it politically beneficial to undermine or attempt to undermine efforts to fight the war on terrorism. This is not only wrong-headed, but also extremely dangerous in today's world.

3. Those in denial. Their big proposal to fight the global war on terrorism is to add 100,000 "first responders" to the ranks of firefighters and emergency medical personnel in cities and towns across the United States. In other words: Wait until the terrorists strike us again and then do a really, really good job of cleaning up the mess afterwards.

Of course, our brave firefighters, cops and emergency personnel need better training and equipment to respond in the event of another attack. But responders, no matter how courageous, prevent nothing. Dialing 911 is not the solution to stopping another 9/11.

The federal prosecution of the 1993 World Trade Center bombers in our civilian court system demonstrated the pitfalls of prosecuting the War on Terror like an episode of the former television show “Ally McBeal”-a pathetic courtroom comedy. The trials gave the bin Laden network a multi-million-dollar, tax subsidized defense team, free translation services, and access to information that was allegedly used by Islamists “to become more adept at eluding surveillance.”

The Bush administration has moved beyond reactively serving terrorists with their legal papers to proactively busting sleeper cells, detaining enemy combatants before they set off their bombs, setting up military tribunals, and deporting Arab and Muslim illegal alien suspects. What are the alternatives being offered? Buying more walkie-talkies and playing “People’s Court” with Islamic mass murderers.

The prophet Muhammad said: “I have been commanded to fight against people until they confess that there is no God but Allah and that I am His Messenger.” The radicals see themselves as continuing a conflict that’s gone on for 14 centuries. It started long before economic issues ever existed and will continue long after they are solved.

Radical Muslims are using core texts of Islam that are deeply rooted in Islamic theology, tradition, history, and law to justify their actions, and those radical Muslims are able to recruit and motivate terrorists around the world by appealing to these core Islamic texts. As far as the radical, violent element of the religion go, they are very deeply rooted, and we are naive in the extreme if we don’t recognize that.

Islam is unique among religions in having a developed doctrine theology in law that mandates violence against nonbelievers. Non-Muslims are not to be given equality of rights, but denied various jobs because they’re not allowed to hold authority over Muslims.

4. The fourth group is composed of those leaders and countries willing to fight the war for the Western World. International institutions and alliances are capable of meaningfully addressing the terrorist menace. There must be a willingness of free nations, when the last resort arrives, to restrain aggression and evil by force.

Our commitment must be to the global expansion of democracy, and the hope and progress it brings, as the alternative to instability and hatred and terror. The stakes in that region could not be higher. If the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation and anger and violence for export.

These terrorists target the innocent, and they kill by the thousands. And they would, if they gain the weapons they seek, kill by the millions and not be finished. The greatest

threat of our age is nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons in the hands of terrorists and the dictators who aid them.

Despite what the news media constantly berates as a failure, the United States has had considerably more success in turning Iraq around than we have had in turning the ghettos around with our 40-year "War on Poverty." Is the appeasement route satisfactory? Appeasement is the short term solution of temporarily getting the aggressors off your back, hoping they will kill you last.

Everyone points to Ghandi and Martin Luther King where pacifism has worked. In the case of Ghandi, it was an internal struggle within India against a colonial power. In the case of Martin Luther King, it was an internal effort for equality within the United States. Neither Ghandi nor King would have lived long enough to have us even know their names if Stalin, Hitler, Milosevic, or Hussein had been leading Great Britain or the United States.

Whetstone – Chapter 17

Can anyone name a single situation where pacifism has worked in international affairs? When has appeasement ever worked to stop a dictator? Did appeasement stop Hitler? Did delays in use of force have any affect on Milosevic? In Bosnia? In Kosovo? Would Israel even still exist if they were pacifist in 1948? In 1956? In 1967? In 1973? Today? Did the arms inspectors and pacifists help the 1,000,000 innocent Iraqis that Saddam Hussein killed (600,000 under the age of 5)?

Did a pacifist United Nations help the 700,000 Tutsis slaughtered in Rwanda? Did turning a "blind eye" stop the chopping off of limbs in Sierra Leone? Did inaction save the 2,000,000 Cambodians killed by Pol Pot? Did the Buddhists' pacifism help them in Tibet against the Chinese Army? Did the pacifist movement in the United States in the late 1930's save 6,000,000 Jews? Is anyone convinced that the Islamist terrorism is going to go away anytime soon?

They didn't "get mad" at us because of the war in Iraq. In 1993, they bombed the World Trade Center in New York the first time. This was before President Bush was even governor of Texas. In 1998, they bombed the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. That was four years before the Iraqi war and 2½ years before Bush was President.

In 2000, they bombed the USS Cole, killing US sailors. That was two years before the Iraqi war and before Bush was President. On September 11, 2001, 19 Muslim Arabs flew airplanes into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, killing 3,000 innocent men and women at their jobs. This was 1½ years before the Iraqi war. Living in denial or "hating Bush" is not going to make that go away. Does anyone think that denial will make us safer?

This is a war. It is a war that may last for our lifetimes. While one death is too many, the soldiers who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last five-plus years might well be saving hundreds of thousands of lives in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and other major cities in the United States.

Do we wait until we are attacked again? Do we wait for those who want us to fail to support us? Do we elect those to protect us who think we can persuade the Islamists to “play nice” or “give them what they want”?

It is time to be aware of the greatest threat to peace in our lifetime: Islamofascism.
<http://www.chronwatch.com/content/co...864&catcode=13>

On December 25, 2006, the Japanese newspaper Sankei Shimbun published a government document dated December 20 about Japan's intention to develop small nuclear warheads. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki immediately refuted the report's authenticity, saying, "The government does not know anything about the existence of the document." Nevertheless, the question of a Japanese nuclear bomb remains open. There were more articles on my computer, but you get the idea... it wasn't ever a question of if, but only when.

Living in the PRK, the land of fruits and nuts, I supposed that some of my readers had difficulty accepting my rather recurrent theme, a series of events generally terminating in WW III. I felt there would be some event that would loosen the strings on nations' nuclear arsenals causing a regional nuclear war and a respondent terrorist attack on the Great Satan, us. Once the genie was out of the bottle, some marginal event would lead to WW III. There were several possibilities, including a Pakistan-India exchange or less likely, an attack by China. However, if China opted to grab Taiwan, all bets were off. Hundreds or thousands of warheads would be exchanged, ending civilization as we knew it.

100 million megatons – the amount of energy released by the asteroid that hit Yucatán and wiped out the dinosaurs. The name of the crater was Chicxulub and it caused the K-T extinction. That produced an equivalent to nuclear winter that probably lasted for thousands or 10 of thousands years. Our more recent exchange was nothing by comparison, hence the aftereffects wouldn't last nearly as long.

For my part, my life expectancy could be measured by the available medications. It wasn't that I took that many, it was more how necessary they were. I needed insulin, additional oral diabetic drugs, control for a sensitive digestive system and something to keep my hypertension in check. And don't forget the blood thinners, Plavix and Ecotrin. I could substitute to an extent, Actos and Amaryl for Avandaryl, eliminate the Plavix when it was no longer available and try various other anti hypertensive's, although from years of trials, we found that Diovan HCT worked best. Also, most any SSRI would work once we could get the dose adjusted. My big worry was the Xanax, it was necessary to turn my brain off, hence was number one on my list of meds.

Diovan was an ARB and there were others: Atacand, Avapro, Avalide, Cozaar, Hyzaar, Benicar and Micardis. Some contained a diuretic and some didn't, I use Diovan HCT 160/12.5 BID. Angiotensin II receptor blockers can be used to treat heart failure in some people who cannot tolerate ACE inhibitors or who have kidney disease from diabetes (diabetic nephropathy) and in people with type 2 diabetes. I'd never been prescribed an ACE inhibitor. But we did have 10 new doctors coming in.

Despite any assertion to the contrary, I knew I wouldn't live forever. If we could establish an operating recovery system with the things to provided for our needs and reasonable security, we'd more or less be back where we started. Just exactly that would be on the evolutionary scale of civilization, I couldn't say. As long as we could keep the machines running, it would remain close to our starting point, minus advanced communications and advanced medical treatments. So many of our communications systems depended on satellites, I doubted we'd have our former level of phone service, or internet. Conversely, as long as hams could generate the necessary electricity, we'd have some communications.

+++++

I worked a deal with Derek, he'd report the security/military adventures and Damon and I would continue to journal the local civilian events. There was one string attached, I had to quit avoiding Aaron's efforts to see that my needs were being met. This would turn into a battle of wills and I'd had far more practice. For one thing, I began setting an alarm clock to get me up at 6am. I take care of my basic needs, the 3 S's, and have breakfast. By 7am I was ready to go. I also assigned a group of chores to him, cleaning the firearms, keeping the pickup ready to roll and taking care of Sharon's and my horses. He adjusted far quicker than I did, I was used to staying up until 1am and getting up at 10am.

We also took to carrying what Aaron called the 'old man's medical kit' that contained a bottle of oxygen, a portable defibrillator, nitro tablets, plus an advanced first aid kit. He was trained to establish an IV with Ringer's or normal saline, and administer drugs like Lidocaine, sodium bicarb, epinephrine 1:1000, dextrose 25%, etc. getting instructions via radio. There was an ample supply of Art Cel gauze pads in case I scratched myself and tried to bleed to death. This was almost as bad as being in a nursing home.

We had only shopped in the Safeway in Benson to fill in. Now, they became a prime customer for things like spuds. Out in the shed were several of those bioconverters that produced 55 gallons of biodiesel in 3 hours. They were still in the shipping cartons, I'd never bothered to set them up. The replacement generator they found was also a Kohler, a 230REOZDB, capable of ~650 amps of prime power. Running 2 generators gave us >1,000 amps, more than enough for our expanding trailer park. It took a while to locate a synchronizer, Damon did that.

One of Mary's cousins was a diesel mechanic and could rebuild anything, provided you could find the parts. I had a set for the smaller Kohler, and we went looking for parts for

the larger genset. Both had John Deere engines, but different sizes. That biodiesel converter could barely keep up to the generators. They brought back drums of methyl alcohol from both Tucson and Phoenix, once the radiation died down a little. With that and a few cases of Red Devil lye, I think we were set to go.

"You done good, Damon, remind me to mention you in my will."

"Gee, thanks, assh*le."

"Yep. That's what I called my Dad when he brought up his estate."

"What do you mean?"

"He asked my opinion about how to distribute his estate. He'd already written the will, so I don't know why he bothered."

"Huh, I suspected he was like that, but I never knew for sure."

"Forget it, he's 10 years dead and buried. I don't know if we'll ever see anything out of the trust or not."

+++++

Taking care of Dad was becoming more of a chore since he had gotten up from his chair and started shuffling around more. Battle of wills was a perfect description for what he and I were doing, with poor Aaron caught in the middle. The kid took his marching orders from me, but those orders included "listen to Grandpa and do what he says so long as he doesn't get too carried away or interfere with watching him". That asked a lot of discretion from a guy just now becoming a man who loved us both and didn't want us fighting over how much Dad was doing.

I came up with a plan to make things easier. Since we were one of the last bastions of democracy we needed an elected council to run things. After a little organizing, I nominated Dad to serve as treasurer for the community. It made sense to me, seeing as he was already the de facto banker and richest man. Dad protested that he was too old for the job immediately. It didn't do him much good, though; he was elected by 83% of the vote in a 5 way election, a landslide in every sense of the word.

His duties in his newly elected office added a couple of hours of paperwork to his morning, keeping him in his chair long enough for Aaron to finish all the little tasks that Dad gave him.

I'm pretty sure that he cut me out of his will when he won.

+++++

The United States Marine Corps was organized as the land combat portion of the United States Navy. This happened way back when there were only two branches, each had their own Cabinet secretary, and they were constantly fighting with each other over everything from funding to facilities.

The Army handles all aspects of land combat except amphibious assault, with a few exceptions. The Navy handles all aspects of maritime combat, again with a few exceptions. The Air Force owns the "third dimension" of the battlefield, the air. The Marine Corps by its very nature, though, has to incorporate all three areas into its sphere of control. The primary purpose of the Corps is to punch a big hole in the coastal defenses of its enemy up to a operational depth of roughly 50 miles. They are pretty darn good at it, too.

Because of the "limited" nature of its sphere of influence the Marine Corps is usually the last on the list for new equipment and funding. Every piece of equipment that the Army uses is evaluated for application to the Marine mission. The Corps makes up the difference by more intensive training.

A typical Army soldier when attacked will find potential targets, evaluate them for legitimacy, and then shoot the ones he can confirm as enemy. A typical Marine in the same situation will look for potential targets and shoot them. The removal of one step makes the Marines faster to react in combat and deadlier, whereas the Army soldiers are less likely to create collateral damage.

Different usage begets different mindsets.

If I knew I was going into an ugly fight I would want at least some Marines because they would kill an awful lot of my enemies in short order. If discretion was required, though, I wouldn't want them within a hundred miles of my operation. The big problem for all the jarheads in Iraq was that the American public, coached by the mainstream media, wanted discretion when we needed destruction. Dad and I probably disagree on this point because of the fourth generation war, but there you have it.

Maybe more of those reporters should have come with us on convoys in Iraq. From experience, the first time you have a roadside bomb nearly kill you and people that you are responsible for, it changes your way of thinking. Maybe then they would have concentrated less on the methods our boys and girls used over there and more on what we needed to do back home to fully support them.

+++++

My convoys went without a hitch until the fifth go around. On that trip, a Mexican patrol caught up to us by accident I think.

They had two BRDM-2 recon trucks with 14.5mm machine guns mounted, and a total of 6 troops between them. The convoy reacted swiftly, though, opening up on them before

they could bring their guns to bear. Less than 15 seconds later both trucks were burning and my truck commanders were trying to get the gunners to stop shooting the survivors as they bailed out without much success.

.50 caliber bullets don't just make holes in people. They blow large pieces off of them. Grenades from Mk19s leave even less when they explode. There wasn't enough left of those Méxicans to identify as human beings, much less figure out which unit they were with.

We had to act fast, before that patrol was declared missing and the Mexican general decided to send out a search and rescue patrol. I figured that we had less than an hour before they were missed.

We loaded everything that we could, until the springs on the trucks groaned. Everything else was transferred to three shelters and rigged up with C4 and det cord. I spooled out a thousand yards of fuse for the charges and rigged it to light off all three charges at once.

Two puffs on the stogie to get it glowing, and I lit the fuses. Then we hauled butt as fast as those overloaded trucks would go.

It seemed to take forever, but the charges all went off as planned as far as I could tell. Even at a few miles of distance the shock wave was strong enough to push the trucks around a bit, and one of the gunners who didn't like earplugs had to be relieved while the medic treated him for a pair of ruptured eardrums.

The blasts made a nice mushroom cloud. Pretty in the dying light of a setting sun, but it told the Mexicans that there were insurgents in the area as surely as sending them a telegram.

+++++

Bill had an interesting hobby now. He was using a tabletop trainer he had swiped before he left Iowa to hunt for a tank crew.

"No, no, no, you are trying to move too fast! If you swing these controls too fast you will never get a good lay! Slow is smooth, smooth is fast! Quit fighting it!"

"But Derek said..." Damon began.

"The L.T. isn't here! You listen to me, or you don't train! As a matter of fact, we need to call it a day anyway. Practice tracking on your own. Remember to move the reticle to the target, dump your lead, lase, and blaze. Practice at least a half-hour before chow. Next!"

Damon still seemed to think that Bill was a lower rank because he wasn't blood kin. Bill was having a hard time disabusing him of the notion, too. Bill sighed and rubbed his eyes. He needed a drink, but training and drinking didn't mix.

Mary sat down behind the computer. Bill opened his eyes and blinked.

"Hi, Mary. What's up?"

"I want to give it a try."

"No problem, but let me get the guys through this first."

Mary turned to the group of men standing by. "You guys got a problem with me having a go?"

The group shook their heads. None of them was looking forward to another session with Bill's acid wit and sharp comments.

Bill took it in stride. "Fine then. You guys go fill sandbags for a while. I'll train her, since she still wants to do the training." One by one, the group of hopefuls shuffled off, griping about the pointlessness of filling sandbags.

"Alright, now. Slow is smooth, and smooth is fast. Grip the palm switch to move the turret. Remember to dump your lead by releasing and grabbing the palm switch again. Are you ready?"

Mary nodded, focused on the screen.

"Begin," Bill said, pressing a button on his laptop. The screen began to scroll as Mary scanned back and forth, looking for the telltale bright spot of a target signature. Bill noticed that she only missed it by a few seconds when it appeared and that it took less than the usual time for a new gunner to get on target and lase. She pressed the trigger and the screen jumped, just like it would in a real tank from the recoil of the main gun.

"Get back on it and evaluate your shot," Bill prompted.

Mary laid the target reticle back on faster than Damon had. "Hit, no kill," she said.

"Target, reengage," replied Bill, impressed.

"Identified."

"Fire"

"On the way," said Mary as she squeezed the trigger. The screen bucked again. Bill noted that she had hit the target again in the top foot or so. On a real target, this would

probably scare the bejeezus out of the crew inside but not destroy the tank. One limiter on the tabletop trainer was that the computer always awarded a kill on a second hit, even if the round would have glanced off of a corner.

"Target, ceasefire. Check your work," said Bill.

Mary scanned again. "No more targets."

Bill hit the freeze button on his laptop. "Not bad for the first time. The best I've seen here, in fact. You jerked the trigger both times, pulling the round up and right on the target. You need to squeeze it, just like a rifle. I take it back."

"What?"

"Spence once argued with me about women on the tank. I said that they had no business being there. You just proved me wrong in part. If you can hump a sabot round as well as you shoot, you can be on my crew."

"It's Spence's tank, Bill."

"And I'm his gunner. Even he won't cross me if I say no to a crew member. He knows that crew cohesion is as important as crew training."

+++++

Ain't no porta potty's in a tank, I couldn't see why Mary couldn't be a crewmember. Then again, I'd never been in a tank, not even Derek's tank. I had stuck my head in a gutted out Sherman they had at EAFB for an observation post, but that didn't tell you anything, because of it being gutted. That was one hell of a name for a tank, 'White Elephant'. They kept it in the machine shed, out of sight, out of mind. Besides, Derek said he didn't want anyone knowing we had it; it was an open invitation to the Mexican Army to invade the area.

Still, once they had the crew trained, they had to take it somewhere and fire it, crew orientation or whatever. Derek said, gunnery practice, according to the tables. They'd skip tables 9 through 13, they only had one tank. I was feeling somewhat constrained, they wouldn't let me off the acreage now. Something about Indians in the bushes (gooks in the wire). I wasn't worried about that, they had to get past the minefield first.

Gooks in the wire??? Did that mean that Charlie was allied with the Latin Army? You'd have thought that anyone with half a brain would have beat feet south. But no, they waited for the radiation to die down and continued their invasion. Before this was over, I'd be doing like R. Lee and killing watermelons.

+++++

My Dad tells a story about a gopher snake and an air force buddy that always tickles me. The gist of the story is that his buddy was too regular in his habits. Dad and some others coiled up a dead gopher snake in a candy machine that the buddy in question visited every night and scared the guy half to death.

The reason I refer to this story is that it applies to keeping on your toes. In Iraq we had to keep changing our schedule so that no pattern emerged. Patterns of behavior leave you open to ambush easier. Thus, Airman Second Class Dukes got frightened badly by a dead gopher snake. Thus also did a lot of good people in Iraq get killed and maimed.

We had a problem. All the activity we had going in and around the compound set a pattern. Sooner or later, someone was going to pick up on it.

Wouldn't you know it?

Convoy number five got hit. Some bright eyed Mexican sergeant had noticed that Fort Huachuca was too well defended for a deserted Army post. So he waited on the most likely avenue of approach for someone to come along. It was just his bad luck that his lieutenant couldn't place an ambush in hiding very well.

"Dad, I think that they're going to be coming for us."

"Chit. It's another Katy bar the door, here come the Indians. Think I'll be able to hit any of them?"

"I hope it doesn't come to that yet, Dad. It's better to hit them before they hit you. I think we should start playing Cavalry with them. Are you game?"

"What do you have in mind?"

"Just applying lessons learned. I always said that an American could come up with a better IED. Maybe we should give it a try."

"Go for it. Remember we have all those M183 satchel charges."

"I remember, Dad. I also remember that howitzer shells work wonders, too. Ok, so one satchel charge, two HE and one WP 155mm shells, and a proper detonation rig that will function with a remote trigger. Say, the clacker from a Claymore?"

"That will work."

"One in front, one in back, and claymores all around. We rig it all to go on one clacker, so that the whole convoy gets hit at once. A few brave souls armed with antitank rockets and heavy machine guns to clean up the mess, and transportation to get them out of dodge. How's that sound?"

"Don't we want to hit them in waves?"

"If we hit them with everything at once they won't have time to react."

"Oh."

"If we are going to do this, our rule has to be 'no survivors'. We'll attract enough attention just hitting them. Convoys and patrols that disappear are a big morale problem; one that is sure to attract the attention of even the most idiotic officers. They will have to deal with us. Let's hope that they try to deal with us with a heavy hand, because they will recruit for us."

"But that will put everyone here at risk. I got a lot of time and money in this little safe haven."

"They shouldn't suspect that little old Whetstone is the heart and soul of the operations. If we hit them as hard as we can when we strike they will think that they are dealing with a larger force; maybe even Billary. They will aim at where they think she is staging forces. Our enemies will fight each other, accomplishing more than we could do alone."

"Makes sense."

"Then let's get to it. Maybe we can come up with some ANFO to boost the charges."

"Why?"

"I want to cut the road, not just bust up the head of the column. One by one, we close the roads east of their positions. They will try to find a bypass first. That will force them into to teeth of Billary's forces."

+++++

We were bringing the war to us; I got out all of my weapons and cleaned and oiled, getting ready for the fight. It was a good plan, if it worked. If not, the Tired Old Man would become the Dead Tired Old Man. I had my weapons lined up, but kept going back to my favorite, my original M1A, the loaded standard with open sights. I must have loaded up about 60 of those 20-round magazines, we're not going to have much time to reload. After, I pre-positioned them, in lots of 20 or so.

"I'm ready, let'er rip, kid."

"Only when we're ready, Dad."

"What's to do?"

"Got lot's of IEDs to plant, Dad. What kind of ANFO should we use?"

"Do what Tim McVeigh did, use fertilizer mixed with nitromethane, also called Kinepak. Nitromethane is racing fuel, you should be able to find it in and around Tucson. ANFO is composed of approximately 94.3% AN and 5.7% FO by weight."

"Gottcha."

As I understood the plan, they'd pack culverts with ANFO and detonate the culverts with the 155mm shells which had been detonated by the M183 satchel charge. They'd blow up the front and rear vehicles, boxing in the others. I guess Derek had read some of my stories.

I was surprised to learn that Derek didn't want to drop the sides of all these attack sites to block the roads. I guess that he wanted to keep the roads easily repairable for some reason. Who knows, sometimes I think that the only one who knows what's in that kid's mind is him.

Whetstone – Chapter 18

We did decide to close down a half of a mile of road. Even with all the Claymores we set, there would be very little overlap between them. It would be a curtain of death for anyone caught inside.

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"Everything ready?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did you get all the charges set? This is a fairly popular stretch of road."

"Just like the Iraqis taught me, Dad. Work a bit at a time, in the dead of night. Take your time setting up. Just don't leave much that's different. The eye notices changes."

"You're sneaky."

"I learned from the best, Dad."

"Ok, so are we ready?"

"Section 1."

"Set."

"Section 2."

"Set."

"Lead section set. Dad, we're ready. Do you want to clack off on them, or shall I? Remember that you don't get to come on one of these ambushes again."

"Oh. My turn. Say when."

"That's what I thought. All sections stand by."

Derek wouldn't let me stick my head up. I wanted to watch, but he insisted that only one head should be up.

"Now, Dad."

I flipped the safety down and clicked the detonator three times, just like he showed me. One the first squeeze, the world turned upside down. Jeezus, that was loud! Not even the ear plugs seemed to help.

"Execute."

I stuck my head up and aimed my rocket launcher at the biggest chunk left. One squeeze sent a 66mm rocket at it, smashing it into smaller pieces. Around me, all of Derek's guys were doing the same thing or raking anything that moved with .50 caliber machine guns. He had to yell "Ceasefire!" three times before everyone stopped shooting.

Derek checked the 'kill zone' with his binoculars and nodded. "Displace. Rally at north cache."

Derek had to help me move back to the HMMWV. Everyone else was running like crazy for the trucks.

"Am I slowing you down?"

"Nope. They won't drive away until they call in to me. No one gets left behind, even if they get killed."

"Now I know why you wanted me to stay behind. This displacing is for the birds. They're all dead, right?"

"Méxicans' have helicopters. I don't want to be here if they show up."

"Oh. What kind?"

"Hind-E. We spotted a pair a week ago. Can you ask me this once we are on the road, Dad?"

"Sure."

I remembered all those little things Derek was fond of talking about when his mind wandered back towards tanks. One of those little things was about Russian attack helicopters. They were the only things that I think he was afraid of when inside his tank.

The Hind helicopter was designed to be a flying tank. The only real difference between it and a ground tank is that it flies. It has good armor, carries a butt load of ordnance, and can attack from a good ways off. When tanks see them, they can only freeze and hope that they can point the big gun at them because even the .50 cal will bounce off. If they can call for air support, they do.

Derek might have his tank, but if those Hinds showed up we were in a lot of trouble. I could see it in his eyes, we were screwed.

"Say, did you happen to get some Stingers when you went to Huachuca?"

"Yeah, but I never fired one. Neither has anyone we have. We'd be guessing."

"I know how."

"Bully for you. Can you hit anything with one?"

"Dam right I can. I read the manual."

"But have you even fired one?"

"No. They don't sell them at Ace Hardware."

"Great. So we don't have anyone who can fire them."

"No, we don't have anyone who has fired them. I can fire one if I have to."

"Let's hope that you don't. Those things are pretty heavy, Dad. Besides, I would rather break out the Bradley's. That Bushmaster will elevate to 65°."

"Won't that tell them that we have Bradley's?"

"Yeah, but if the choice is between revealing the Bradley's and getting killed, what would you pick?"

"Shoot the Bast*rds down."

"I thought so. Hop in, Dad, we got to go."

I thought I had the Army FM (FM 44-18) on the Stinger, I didn't. I figured if we could teach the Mujahadeen to shoot them, we had enough talent we could get them assembled and learn to aim them. I did have part of the manual, in document form, I just didn't realize it at the time. It was in the subdirectory titled Field Manuals and was the sole document file. I went looking that night and found it, printing out what I had. At least it gave them a fighting chance, provided they wanted to take it.

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"Hey Bill."

"Yes, sir."

"Knock that off, Bill, I've known you since we were both enlisted men."

"Roger, sir."

"Can you get an Avenger up and going?"

"Do we have the -20?"

"I don't know. Let me ask Dad."

"Hey Dad."

"Yeah?"

"Can you reach into your magical hat and pull out a -20 for an Avenger?"

"Depends. What's a -20? In English this time."

"It's a repair manual for an Avenger system."

"What's an Avenger system?"

"A HMMWV with Stinger missiles and an anti-aircraft gun."

"I've got chapter 2 of Field Manual 44-18."

"Not what I need. Can you take a peek around for me?"

"Don't you still have AKO access?"

"If it's still up, I should, but the Army would know that I was around."

"So let them know. I'm sure Billary is interested."

"What do I tell them when they ask why I didn't report in?"

"Tell them you were captured."

"They would want to give me a medal for it."

"So? It's about time you got a medal for something."

"I don't deserve the medal, Dad."

"Son, if it's the medal I think you're talking about, they give that to missing soldiers, too."

"Yeah, but..."

"As far as the Army is concerned, you've been missing for over a year."

"And if they want to order me back into service?"

"You can't get there from here. You lost a leg or something. Come on, kid, think. You're smart. You got that from me, didn't you? I gave you the smart jeans?"

"Ok Dad, I'll put on my wrangler's, then what?"

"We'll get one of our newly hired doctors to certify that you aren't fit for duty. You need an operation on your knee before you'll have proper mobility. How does that sound?"

"Might fly."

"Ok, now that we have that figured out, find a terminal and get on the military's secret internet. Don't tell me they don't have one, Dubya had a line item back in '05 or '06."

"Nobody is supposed to know about that; I'm sorry, but I can't even confirm it exists."

"I don't care if it exists or not as long as you can access it with that fancy ID Card of yours."

"Maybe, assuming it actually did exist and hadn't been brought down by the war."

"Bull hockey, Broom Hillary would make that her number one priority simply because she's the Commander in Chief."

"I'll see what I can do. No promises, Dad."

"Whatever, I don't give a rat's behind about that secret stuff anyway and haven't since '65."

"It ain't the secret stuff, Dad. Biliary's secrets can go to hell for all I care. All military websites are monitored. The more I learn from them, the more likely they are to learn where we are."

"Good, you can connect from Luke AFB, all that will tell them is the state."

"Or I could try a trick I know from the local recruiting station. All I need is a CAC jack."

"What's a CAC jack?"

"The slot that you plug your fancy ID card into. I can bounce the signal through a couple of calling center switchboards and they will be chasing me all over Omaha. So long as I have a CAC jack and time, I think that I can pull it off."

"Well, why didn't you say so?"

"I just thought of it, Dad. I have some of Mom in me too, you know."

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"Please enter your password."

"Please re-enter your password."

"Are you sure that you wish to proceed?"

"Yes"

"Where are you currently located?"

Chit. That's what I was afraid of. Well, here goes nothing.

"Camp Ashland."

"Welcome to Army Knowledge Online."

I let out the breath I had been holding for a while. It worked! I quickly accessed the online publications website and ordered the computer to download every TM, FM, DA PAM, TB, and SOUM they had.

"Please wait. This may take a few minutes. Estimated download size 168.356 GB. Download speed 17.6 Mb/second." At that rate, the connection would have to last more than 17.4 hours.

"Crap. I'm gonna have Dad's funeral before I get this download."

"Easy, Spence. Go have a smoke."

"We're going to have to pull the hard drive when we finish. Wait. Did I remember to shut off the screensaver?"

"YES! Go smoke!"

I grinned. "You coming, Bill?"

"Does a bear crap in the woods?"

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"Download complete."

"Finally! Shut this thing down and pull the hard drive."

I went outside to catch a breath of fresh air. The wind blew bitterly out of the west. Winter was coming early this year. I bet Dad was having a fit over his harvest, which wasn't half done yesterday when I left.

The wind brought something else in. Faintly, I could hear rotors.

"Chit! Hurry up, Bill, we got to go!"

"I just got the wires off, Spence. I don't have it open yet."

"Never mind. Just take the whole thing. Move!"

Bill grabbed the computer and we headed out the back to where the pickup was parked. We had deliberately come in a civilian vehicle to keep a lower profile. Hopefully it would work because the rotors were getting louder and I could see 2 black dots coming in from the west.

"You see them?"

"Yeah. Sound like Russian make."

"How can you tell?"

"I can tell."

"So we go to ground. Let's get across the street and under cover."

"What are you thinking?"

"West means Méxican, so it means that they're just doing a patrol. If we can catch them on the ground, we smash them. Otherwise, we wait until they go away."

"Why even bother hitting them if they land?"

"I want everything east of those ambush sites considered no-mans land."

"But helicopters? We're not talking about some supply convoy or patrol, we're talking about the apple of some generalissimo's eye!"

"All the more reason to hit them, Bill. It takes a while to train a chopper pilot, and not even all pilots can learn how to fly one. Plus, Russia only made so many and sold so many of them."

"Aye aye, sir."

Now I knew that I had irritated him. He was going back into Marine Corps mode. We could see the choppers plainly now.

"Ka-50's?"

"Looks like, they have straight wings and no tail rotors."

"My, my, my. I hope they land. They'll make a big boom."

Sure enough, the pair of them set down one at a time in the Safeway parking lot. Once the rotors spooled down, the crews popped the canopies and headed for the liquor store next door to the main grocery.

"José is after some Cuervo," muttered Bill.

I nodded. Moving slowly, I got out my M1A loaded standard. Dad bought it for me a while back so that I would quit "borrowing" his. Bill eased his Lee-Enfield forward and drew a bead on one of the rear Méxicans.

"Identified."

"Fire and adjust." Even after years off of tanks we both used the same crew fire commands to talk to each other. Both rifles barked, and two of the pilots dropped. The

other two whipped around in short order, bringing their pistola's up. A heartbeat later Bill shot his second man. My second dropped a hair later.

"Alright. Make sure that they're dead. I'll prep the choppers."

Bill leveled the Lee-Enfield again and fired four times. "They're dead," he announced.

"Damit, I meant go up there and poke 'em, not shoot 'em again!"

"Each one has a .303 in his head now. Either he's dead or he has one massive headache."

"For that, no booze for you."

"You say." Bill was already moving towards the liquor store.

It took me almost twenty minutes to move four bodies back into their cockpits and toss in the thermite grenades. Strangely enough, that's how long it took Bill to load up several cases of Glen Fidditch from the abandoned store.

"You still drinking that rotgut?"

"You are, too."

"Oh, really?"

"Yep. I found a case of Drambuie."

"In that case, I guess I am."

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"Didn't your momma teach you not to drink and drive?"

"He's drinking, I'm driving."

"Yeah right and when one of you get's a snoot full, you trade off."

"Dad, it was only about 45 miles from the recruiting station in Tucson."

"Glen Fidditch, that's some awful chit. I drank it once at \$5 a shot. I'm more of a blended scotch fan than a single malt fan. I don't suppose you found any Chivas?"

"Even if we had, we wouldn't have brought it, no reason for you to break your sobriety."

"Everyone worries about my sobriety except me. Hell, I wouldn't take it if you offered, thanks anyway."

"Where was the liquor store?"

"Tucson. Right next to two blown up Méxican choppers."

"How did they get that way?"

"Do you know what a thermite grenade is?"

"Yeah they burn."

"So did the choppers."

"What kind were they?"

"Ka-50 Hokum's."

"Never heard of them. One of Russia's late exports?"

"Yeah. Worse than the Hind."

"What about that Havoc they had?"

"If the Méxican have Hokum's, they have Havoc's. They probably even have a few old Hind's."

"How many?"

"A few hundred Hind's, maybe 100 Havoc's and 2 less Hokum's."

"Didn't see any Bombay Sapphire Gin, did you?"

"Well, did you Bill?"

"Yeah, but I don't drink that chit."

"Derek did your mother have any kid's besides your brother, that lived?"

"Yeah Dad, but I learned from one of the best. What about the harvest?"

"I hope you like spuds and green beans, we got plenty of those. Some of the remainder of the vegetables came in, but in smaller quantities. We got enough wheat to produce a few tons of flour, but it will have to be whole grain. That rice was a b*tch to grow. If I

didn't like it so much, I don't think I'd have bothered. Now, the tomato crop was mighty good, especially the Roma's. Gonna have a bunch of spaghetti sauce."

"What about the meat?"

"All we's got's is beef, pork and chicken. You want fish, get a pole."

"Fruit?"

"Real fruit of the PRK kind?"

"Real fruit, you know, apples, peaches, lemons."

"Wait a minute, that's two different kinds of fruit, citrus and pomes. Which do you mean?"

Whetstone – Chapter 19

"Both."

"We've got apples, pears and peaches. We also have oranges, lemon and grapefruit."

"No strawberries?"

"I ate them."

"I guess we're even for the Bombay Sapphire then."

"We would be if you weren't telling the truth and I wasn't lying. Anyway, what's the deal with the Russian helicopters?"

"We're trying to create a 'No Man's Land' east of Tucson."

"And?"

"We downloaded the publications we needed from a computer in a recruiter's office. It was near a Safeway store. Two KA-50s flew in and landed. Bill and I killed the pilots and I detonated thermite grenades in them to destroy them. They can't have many of those Hokum's, like I said."

"My manual wasn't good enough for you?"

"We needed the Tech Manuals, specifically the repair manuals. Sorry, Dad, but your effort is appreciated."

"When are we going to go out and blow up another bunch of the Latin troops?"

"I told, you, that was your last trip."

"That's not fair. Hell, at least you could have brought me one bottle as a consolation prize."

"But you ate the strawberries."

"I was lying. But you didn't bring me any booze and you were telling the truth. I'll forgive you someday, can't say when. Won't be more than 3-4 years, after that, I tend to forget why I had the grudge."

I suppose I didn't mind being pushed aside, it looked like we had a war going and war is a young man's game. What's more, whether I wanted them or not, I had responsibilities. Let me tell you a little about our neighbors, the city of Benson:

Benson is a city in Cochise County, 45 miles east-southeast of Tucson. According to 2006 Census Bureau estimates, the population of the city is 4,934. The city was founded in 1880 when the Southern Pacific Railroad came through. It was named after Judge William B. Benson, a friend of the President of the railroad. The city is perhaps best known as the gateway to Kartchner Caverns State Park.

Benson is located at 31° 57' 10" N, 110° 18' 24" W (31.95288, -110.30677). According to the Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 92.5 km² (35.7 mi²), none of which is covered by water. As of the census of 2000, there were 4,711 people, 2,084 households, and 1,346 families residing in the city. The population density was 50.9/km² (131.9/mi²). There were 2,822 housing units at an average density of 30.5/km² (79.0/mi²).

The racial makeup of the city was 89.32% White, 19.85% Hispanic or Latino (of any race), 1.29% Native American, 0.72% Black or African American, 0.47% Asian, and 0.13% Pacific Islander. 5.69% were from other races, and 2.38% from two or more races. There were 2,084 households out of which 18.9% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 51.5% were married couples living together, 9.2% had a female householder with no husband present, and 35.4% were non-families. 30.0% of all households were made up of individuals and 17.4% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.22 and the average family size was 2.72. <http://www.city-data.com/city/Benson-Arizona.html>

That was before the war. The 2010 census was never tabulated and between the disease and the war, the population was seriously reduced. When you only start with ~5,000, any reduction was noticed. Which, by the way my mind works, brings me to another subject, the trust fund. We stopped taking income from the trust when we won the lottery. Matt said that would allow the trust fund to grow by leaps and bounds.

I told him that I didn't like the looks of things and suggested, rather timidly, that they get very conservative with the investments. For all I cared, the bank could eliminate all non-Iowa investments and keep the money local. I told him that we didn't want the trust to disappear, just because the market collapsed. He listened, although I don't know that he agreed with me.

That was during the period associated with the first terrorist attacks. For a long time, we didn't associate the plagues with a second set of terrorist attacks and ultimately, the third world war made the mission of those submarine delivered terrorists moot. We had gone full circle and we back to fighting the Latin Americans. Well, Derek and his friends were, I was busy being a banker.

"Son, I need to put together a small convoy."

"What for?"

"I want to go to Charles City and clean out the trust fund."

"You can't do that Dad, they won't give up the money until you're dead."

"When my father wrote his will, I doubt he believed that we'd have WW III. Besides, I'm taking Damon and Sharon with me and you can give Sharon Power of Attorney to represent your interests."

"I can give you 2 HMMWVs with 50s for an escort, if you insist."

"I insist. When I get to Charles City, I'm going to be even more insistent. If I thought it would do any good, we'd go to Sacramento and insist they cough up the money they owe us."

"Is Sacramento still there?"

"Probably what's left of it, but we won't risk it, I serious doubt it would be worth the trip. We're going to need a fuel hauler."

"I think I'd better assign a HMMWV with a MK19, while I'm at it."

"We're going to locate some travel trailers and pull them, I doubt many motels will be open."

"Now Dad, I really wish you wouldn't do this, the money isn't worth the risk."

"Maybe not, but it's my money and eventually, your money. I want to get it, if we can, and add it to our reserves."

"How are we doing financially?"

"All things considered, outstanding. Putting that gold and silver into circulation, was the best idea that Jerry ever had. With me setting the fixed exchange rates at \$25 an ounce for silver and \$1,250 an ounce for gold, we basically doubled the value of our holdings. As far as our separate earnings, we're making about 15% in our funds."

"Once we have all the cache's emptied and secured here, we'll have everything we need to fight a small war. I don't want that Dad, that's why were trying to create the No Man's Land east of Tucson."

"Just keep at it, I have a feeling that we haven't seen the last of it."

"When do you want to leave?"

"Day after tomorrow."

"I'd better get busy then, we have to service the vehicles, locate the travel trailers and get them ready for the road."

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I suggested that Derek simply locate the trailers and rent them from the owner's if they could be located. Otherwise, salvage them and make sure the tires were good, etc. We'd be taking a total of 6 vehicles, 2 pickups, 3 HMMWVs and the fuel hauler. I figured we could pull 5 trailers and that should provide sleeping accommodations for as many as 20 people, maybe more. Mary said she was coming along to drive the fuel hauler, Derek had given his power of attorney to her.

Shortly after moving to Whetstone, I went to MSN Maps and Directions and got a route for the shortest trips from Whetstone to Charles City.

Total Distance: 1484.6 Miles

Estimated Total Time: 24 hours, 35 minutes

- 1: Take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-10 towards I-10
- 2: At exit 303, take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-10 Bus [SR-80] towards I-10-BL/AZ-80/Benson/Douglas
- 3: Turn LEFT (North) onto I-10 Bus [SR-76]
- 4: Keep RIGHT onto Local road(s) towards I-10
- 5: Take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-10
- 6: At exit 322, take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-10 towards Johnson Rd
- 7: Bridge work near Willcox
- 8: At exit 355, take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-10 towards US-191/Safford
- 9: Entering New Mexico
- 10: At exit 22, take Ramp (LEFT) onto I-10 towards US-70/NM-90/Main St./ Silver City
- 11: At exit 135, turn RIGHT onto Ramp towards US-70/Las Cruces/Alamogordo

- 12: Take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-10 Bus [US-70]
- 13: Keep STRAIGHT onto US-70 [W Picacho Ave]
- 14: Turn LEFT (North) onto US-70 [US-82]
- 15: Keep STRAIGHT onto US-54 [US-70]
- 16: Reconstruction between Duran and Corona
- 17: Take Local road(s) (RIGHT) onto US-285 [US-54]
- 18: Turn LEFT (North-East) onto US-54 [US-60]
- 19: Take Local road(s) (RIGHT) onto I-40 Bus [US-54]
- 20: Take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-40 [US-84] towards I-40
- 21: Reconstruction between Newkirk and Tucumcari
- 22: At exit 329, take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-40 Bus [US-54] towards I-40-BL/US-54/Tucumcari Boulevard
- 23: Turn LEFT (North) onto SR-104 [S 1st St]
- 24: Turn RIGHT (East) onto E Maple Ave
- 25: Turn LEFT (East) onto US-54
- 26: Entering Texas
- 27: Turn LEFT (North) onto US-54 [Denver Ave]
- 28: Entering Oklahoma
- 29: Keep STRAIGHT onto US-412 [US-54]
- 30: Keep STRAIGHT onto US-54
- 31: Entering Kansas
- 32: Keep STRAIGHT onto US-160 [US-54]
- 33: Keep STRAIGHT onto US-54
- 34: Keep STRAIGHT onto US-400 [US-54]
- 35: Keep STRAIGHT onto Ramp towards I-35/Kansas Turnpike/Oklahoma City/ Kansas City
- 36: Keep STRAIGHT to stay on Ramp
- 37: *Toll road* Merge onto I-35 [Kansas Turnpike]
- 38: At exit 127, take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-35 towards I-35 / US-50 / Emporia / Ottawa
- 39: At exit 231A, turn LEFT onto Ramp towards I-635
- 40: Take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-35 towards I-35
- 41: Entering Missouri
- 42: At exit 2U, turn RIGHT onto Ramp towards I-670/I-70/Broadway/Topeka/St Louis
- 43: Keep RIGHT to stay on Ramp towards I-70/Broadway/St Louis
- 44: Take Ramp (LEFT) onto I-670 [I-70 Alt] towards I-70/St Louis
- 45: At exit 2N, take Ramp (LEFT) onto I-70 [US-40] towards I-29/I-35/US-71/St Joseph/Des Moines
- 46: Take US-71 (RIGHT) onto I-35 [US-71] towards I-35/US-71/I-29 N/St Joseph/Des Moines
- 47: Road name changes to I-29 [I-35]
- 48: Keep RIGHT onto I-35 towards I-35/Des Moines
- 49: At exit 92, take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-35 towards US-136/Bethany/Princeton
- 50: Entering Iowa
- 51: At exit 72A, take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-235 towards I-235/West Des Moines/Des Moines
- 52: Construction near Des Moines

53: Road name changes to I-35

54: Stay on I-35

55: At exit 190, turn RIGHT onto Ramp towards US-18/Mason City/Charles City

56: Road name changes to US-18 [SR-27]

57: Turn LEFT (East) onto Local road(s)

I didn't plan to follow the map laid out exactly, we'd skirt any population centers. After we hit Iowa, I wouldn't really need the map, but had it just in case. Aaron continued his role and drove Sharon and me in our pickup with Damon bringing his pickup and extra stores. The time that MSN gives assume an average speed of 60mph. If we were going an average speed of 45mph, we were doing good.

Our convoy was arranged as follows:

1. HMMWV w/ M2
2. Our pickup
3. HMMWV w/ Mk-19
4. Fuel hauler
5. Damon's pickup
6. HMMWV w/ M2

The various areas of reconstruction cited were back in 2007-08. They wouldn't be accurate, but no doubt we'd find other areas of construction, especially as we got further north. Our greatest concern was any bridges/overpasses that might be out. Because of that, we had a very good road atlas, 2010 edition.

I sat in the back seat, my various firearms surrounding me. I couldn't help but think of the reaction we'd get when we pulled into the bank in Charles City and filled their parking lot with armed military vehicles. Floyd County, Iowa is very conservative, and that even goes for the Democrats.

+++++

"Can I help you?"

"Gary Ott to see Matt."

"Do you really need those guns? What is this, a holdup?"

"Different times call for different rules."

"Gary, good to see you."

"You may not think so after you hear why I've come."

"Let me guess, you want the balance of the trust fund in cash, right?"

"I have Sharon and Damon with me and Derek's wife Mary, has his power of attorney. I don't think Dad planned on the world ending."

"We did. Shortly after the outbreak of those plagues, we cashed out all of your securities and converted it to gold and silver. With the price of gold and silver what it is now, the trust has appreciated significantly. I presume you want the balance?"

"Yes, please. Down in Arizona, I've pretty much become the local banker because we converted half of our lottery winnings into gold and silver. We only got 5 payments from the Lottery before they went belly up and I rather doubt they'll make any more payments."

"That's quite the convoy you have, where did you get military vehicles?"

"Derek is a Lieutenant now; I guess you'd have to say that we have our own small Army."

"What's it like down there?"

"They're working to keep a No Man's Land east of Tucson. We have quite a bit of military matériel. How much did you have to pay for the gold?"

"Around \$900 an ounce, but some of it is in silver. The carts are here now."

"Only 2 carts?"

"We mostly bought gold. You know the ratio between the price of gold and silver is about 50:1, right?"

"That's what we use. Did you get all of your fees?"

"Yes, which vehicle do you want the bullion loaded into?"

"Damon's pickup has the smallest load, put it in the back of that."

"How long did it take you to get here?"

"About 34 hours of driving time. We didn't have any trouble getting here, but I'm not so sure about going back."

"You shouldn't have any trouble, your convoy won't look any different."

"With my luck, we'll get attacked before we leave Floyd County."

"If you want, I'll get you a Sheriff's escort."

"No thanks, that would just attract more attention."

"Say, I just remembered, do you want to close your checking and savings accounts?"

"Probably should. Can I get that in gold or silver?"

"At the current exchange rate, yes."

"What is the current exchange rate?"

"\$1,200/\$24."

"Could I get it all in silver?"

"How about half and half?"

"Sure, why not."

Our account balances were close to \$50,000. We took 21 ounces of gold and the balance in silver, 1,035 ounces, all in one ounce coins, 86.25 pounds. In addition to that, we had 361 ounces of gold and 18,505 ounces of silver from the trust. Damon's truck would almost be on the frame, we had slightly over 875 pounds of silver and almost 32 pounds of gold. The bank had taken a fee of 1% per year for managing the gold and silver. When we left the bank, we headed back the way we came, I wanted to get as far as I could from Charles City, only they knew we were transporting 900 pounds of gold and silver. We stopped for the night at a rest stop south of Des Moines on I-35. That night we transferred the metal from his pickup to the 5 trailers. The remainder of the trip back to Whetstone was uneventful.

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"Well?"

"Well, what?"

"Did you get the money from the bank?"

"All in gold and silver, Derek. They converted it when gold was at \$900 an ounce and silver was \$18 an ounce. We have 382 ounces of gold and 19,540 ounces of silver. At our exchange rates, that's equal to \$966,000."

"What now?"

"We're going to divide the trust 3 ways and dissolve the trust. Sharon and I will take care of Lorrie and Amy out of Sharon's share."

"That doesn't seem right."

"I agree, but that how my father wanted it. We don't really need the money, so I'm sure Sharon will split her share evenly between Amy and Lorrie."

If you're interested in the numbers, the boys would each get \$322,000 and the girls each get \$161,000. A more fair distribution would have been to give each of the 4 of them \$241,500. We had talked it over on the way back from Iowa and had decided we'd even it out with our money, giving each of the girls \$161,000 and then divide the estate 4 ways. In the end, they'd all get the same, provided they avoided pissing me off.

The kids got together on their own and said that they wanted to merge their money with ours, especially since we were earning ~15% a year. We then explained how we intended to even things out. They suggested that we figure it all out in Microsoft Money and set it up that way now. That way, when it came time to divide up, each share would be reflected in the 'books'. That made it easy, we merged all of the money and showed 4 equal shares of the 'capital' of the 'company'. It was, and would remain, a proprietorship.

+++++

I thought it would be dangerous to keep any of the gold and silver in the house, thus it ended up stored in the armory. The armory had emptied out a little when I finally gave the remaining Mausers to residents in Benson. I had the ammo priced at 30¢ a round or \$250 a case. Considering what I'd paid for it, I get most, if not all, of my money back on the rifles. 250 cases at \$250 each equaled more than I had invested, and the early ammo sales went at 25¢ a round, \$225 a case.

A few folks thought I was getting rich on the misery of others. 'Tough, you could have prepared ahead, like I did,' was my usual response. Besides, Adam Smith had it right when he discussed economics. The was the law of supply and demand:

One of the main points of The Wealth of Nations is that the free market, while appearing chaotic and unrestrained, is actually guided to produce the right amount and variety of goods by a so-called "invisible hand" (an image that Smith had previously employed in Theory of Moral Sentiments, but which has its original use in his essay, "The History of Astronomy"). If a product shortage occurs, for instance, its price rises, creating a profit margin that creates an incentive for others to enter production, eventually curing the shortage. If too many producers enter the market, the increased competition among manufacturers and increased supply would lower the price of the product to its production cost, the "natural price". Even as profits are zeroed out at the "natural price," there would be incentives to produce goods and services, as all costs of production, including compensation for the owner's labor, are also built into the price of the goods. If prices dip below a zero profit, producers would drop out of the market; if they were above a zero profit, producers would enter the market. Smith believed that while human

motives are often selfish and greedy, the competition in the free market would tend to benefit society as a whole by keeping prices low, while still building in an incentive for a wide variety of goods and services.

In microeconomic theory the partial equilibrium supply and demand economical model originally developed by Alfred Marshall attempts to describe, explain, and predict the price and quantity of goods sold in competitive markets. It is one of the most fundamental models, widely used as a basic building block in a wide range of more detailed economic models and theories. The theory of supply and demand is important in the functioning of a market economy in that it explains the mechanism by which many resource allocation decisions are made. However, unlike general equilibrium models, supply schedules in this partial equilibrium model are fixed, as the long run reciprocal relationship between demand and supply is ignored.

Marshall's theory of supply and demand runs counter to the ideas of economists from Adam Smith and David Ricardo through the creation of the marginalist school of thought. Although Marshall's theories are dominant in universities today, other economists have disagreed with it. One theory counter to Marshall is that price is already known in a commodity before it reaches the market, negating his idea that some abstract market is conveying price information. The only thing the market communicates is whether or not an object is exchangeable or not (in which case it would change from an object to a commodity). This would mean that the producer creates the goods without already having customers – blindly producing, hoping that someone will buy them ("buy" meaning exchange money for the commodities). Modern producers often have market studies prepared well in advance of production decisions; however, misallocation of factors of production can still occur.

Keynesian economics also runs counter to the theory of supply and demand. In Keynesian theory, prices can become "sticky" or resistant to change, especially in the case of price decreases. This leads to a market failure. Modern supporters of Keynes, such as Paul Krugman, have noted this in recent history, such as when the Boston housing market dried up in the early 1990s, with neither buyers nor sellers willing to exchange at the price equilibrium.

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Stick around a while, there's a lot I still need to teach you about the big, bad world. Life is a learning experience. ~20 years of life's experiences are equal to a 4-year college education. Thus a Master's degree is equal to ~25 years of life and a Ph D to about 40-years of living. All schooling really does for you is offer other people's life experiences, condensed, like the soup, only much more condensed. It still takes actual experience to put those lesson to use. I know from personal experience that you can't directly apply the book learning, it's only a tool to help direct you. One of the most important things a person can learn in a school is how to think.

Besides, with Derek helping on this tome, you get a little current military thinking to add to my less than spectacular military education. Dam, can that boy shoot. Back in '06, when they came to visit for Christmas, we took my new rifle to a range. We first set up a target at 50 yards and ran 60 rounds through the rifle. Then we set the target at 100 yards and ran another 30 rounds through it. Finally I shot my last 10 at a steel plate at 100 yards. The first shot was low, the next 9 hit the plate. Derek fired 5 more rounds, 3 at a 200 yard steel plate and 2 at a 400 yard steel plate, all hit.

I don't know why Mary was shooting left handed, but she shouldn't have, she could barely hit the target. Our ammo was some of the South African surplus, I wish I had bought more.

The number one danger is:

Whetstone – Chapter 20

What, don't tell me YOU missed the program! It was on TV on December 31, 2006. Jeez, you mean to tell me YOU missed it? No kidding, sorry, I didn't. The name of the show was 'Last Days on Earth'. WW III was choice number 3, a pandemic was choice number 2. Behind door number 1 was Global Climate Change. And, you know who says so? Your pal, Al Gore. Several scientists agreed with him. Well, if Al says so, it must be the truth, he invented the Internet.

Could the human race become suddenly extinct? We count down seven ways in which the world as we know it could meet an abrupt and untimely end, from a mammoth asteroid strike to the eruption of a super volcano. What would happen as computers literally become trillions of times smarter than we are – would they program our mass murder? Scientists, experts, and witnesses describe these and other vividly pictured disaster scenarios, from super bugs created in secret labs to black holes that could suck earth into oblivion. Using state-of-the-art computer-generated graphics and interviews with the world's top scientists, we will leave viewers pondering humanity's place in the universe and will reveal the most terrifying truth of all – that our greatest enemy is ourselves.

The world is coming to an end on December 21, 2012! The ancient Maya made this stunning prediction more than 2,000 years ago. Journey back to the ancient city of Chichen Itza, the hub of Maya civilization deep in the heart of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, to uncover the truth about this prophecy. The Maya were legendary astronomers and timekeepers – their calendar is more accurate than our own. By tracking the stars and planets they assigned great meaning to astronomical phenomena and made extraordinary predictions based on them – many of which have come true. Could their doomsday prophecy be one of them? In insightful interviews archaeologists, astrologers, and historians speculate on the meaning of the 2012 prophecy. Their answers are as intriguing as the questions.

At 7:15AM on June 30, 1908, a giant fireball, as bright the Sun, explodes in the Siberian sky with a force a thousand times greater than the Hiroshima bomb. It decimates 1,000 square miles of forest – over half the size of Rhode Island, and was the biggest cosmic disaster in the history of civilization. What caused the apocalyptic fire in the sky? Over a hundred theories surround what is called the Tunguska event, varying from asteroids and comets to black holes and alien spaceships. Most scientists agree the Tunguska event will happen again, and next time, the human toll could be unimaginable. Now, NASA and other organizations race against time to stop the next planet killer before it ignites Armageddon.

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You really should have watched TV, it's gone now, along with the radio stations. You can still watch TV if it works and you have a player that works. Ask yourself, "How many times can I watch Star Wars before I'm sick of it?" Thought so, that few, huh? Derek could watch it forever, especially episode 4 through 6. We have something on the order of 200+ DVDs and 400+ VHS movies. My friend Ronald had over 1,000. That's not counting the ones they recovered. These days, who has time to watch movies?

We don't, we're really into gardening, canning and guard duty. I'm exempt from guard duty even though Derek knows how well I shoot. Still, it seems that I have guard responsibilities, I'm their fall back plan, in case the bad guys overrun us. With that in mind, even Sharon agreed to carry a pistol. I gave her the .32 auto and told her not to hurt herself.

That takes care of the spring, summer and fall. I don't go hunting and don't eat what they bring back, I like beef. I tried venison one time after they started hunting. It was marinated and they claimed it tasted like beef. Not hardly, it tasted like marinated venison to me. It could all be in my head but it doesn't matter because I didn't have any venison in my stomach. According to the Mayan Calendar, the world ends this year (2012) on December 21st.

Winter in the Sonoran Desert after WW III, and in the middle of the Latin invasion, was about what you'd expect after WW III. It was fine until we got nuclear summer. A nuclear summer is a hypothetical scenario resulting from nuclear warfare that would follow a nuclear winter. In this scenario, the amount of water in the stratosphere would increase, causing greenhouse warming of the surface. The nuclear detonations would also produce oxides of nitrogen that would then deplete the ozone layer around the Earth. This layer screens out UV-B radiation from the Sun, which causes genetic damage to life forms on the surface. Possibilities of any existing species to survive in this extreme condition will be less. The absorption of ozone also results in a heating of the stratosphere, which results in a further contribution to greenhouse heating.

A person would expect the heat in this area during the summer. That's ok, we have heavy duty swamp coolers. The only problem was that they weren't as efficient when

the relative humidity reached 50% and above. We had every fan we owned running, it was almost tolerable. One word comes to mind: sweltering.

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"How are you doing, Dad?"

"This sux."

"What sux?"

"Everything. I don't know what I imagined it would be like if we had terrorist attacks and WW III, but it sure wasn't this."

"You must have known. You prepared like you were expecting a lack of food and fuel, general disorder, chaos and radioactive fallout."

"Yes, I did; BUT I didn't really expect to have to use that stuff. It was sort of like life insurance. I thought about it and couldn't imagine what it would be like to be really hungry. I'd seen fuel crisis, like in '73, so I knew we'd have to have fuel for the vehicles and our generator. I like firearms and went crazy when I had the chance to buy them. The same thing went when it came to ammo, you can never have too much of that or toilet paper."

"I meant to ask, what's this obsession of yours about toilet paper?"

"Every use an outhouse? You know, one that used the old Wards catalog for toilet paper? I did when I was a child – it took a very long time to get over that. Since then, it's been high on my list of essentials. The outhouse is bad enough, you can't hold your breath long enough. Using something besides a decent toilet paper makes it 10 times worse."

"Some people still have outhouses."

"I know, but at least they buy toilet paper. Even that cheap commercial stuff beats using catalog paper. We have more problems than toilet paper, let me tell you."

"Like what?"

"You have a Latin Army to the west. You have Broom Hillary in charge of the country. Bad things happen in threes and we've had at least four; that means we're going to get nine. Most of the country has been destroyed and it will take years to get manufacturing reestablished, if ever. Instead of going to the grocery store to buy food, we're producing food and supplying it to the grocery store."

"Plus you haven't gotten any of the money the Lottery owes you since the war."

"Yes I have, what's the value of the military equipment you had shipped?"

"I have no idea, several million at least. What does that have to do with anything, Dad?"

"I don't care who pays us. The state of California probably invested that money in Treasury Notes. Since we can't get the money from California, we'll get it from the feds directly."

"Well, uh, if you say so..."

"I say so. California owes us a lot of money, Derek. I'm willing to take it anyway we can. Don't confuse that with salvaging, unless the property you recover is actually owned by the state of California. If you feel like driving out there, you could dig around and see how much gold and silver you could find. If you can find \$40 million in gold at the market price of \$600 an ounce, I'm willing to call it even."

"But Dad, that's 66,666.7 ounces of gold, 5,555.5 pounds. I doubt we could find that much in the entire state."

"You might, if you went to San Francisco."

"If you're going to San Francisco – Be sure to wear some flowers..."

"No, it's down the street from there. Specifically it's on Market Street."

"What is?"

"The US Mint, San Francisco, the Granite Lady."

"I thought they closed that down."

"They did. However, it was reopened to mint proof sets."

"How far is it to Frisco?"

"San Francisco! You call it Frisco and someone will shoot you. It's about 900 miles, give or take. You'd better take a big truck, most of the proof sets are silver. A couple of those M183 satchel charges ought to get you in. Don't take anymore than they owe us. On the way back, you can stop in Tehachapi and try and get enough wind turbines to power Whetstone and Benson."

"How much power will you need?"

"Do I look like Thomas Alva Edison to you? How the hell should I know? Get at least 20mw and we'll go from there. I read that they had an expansion project that wasn't

scheduled to be completed until 2011-12. There should be equipment sitting there that you can load up and bring home. Get the towers and we'll figure a way to install them in concrete bases."

"Palm Springs is closer, Dad."

"Well check there after you get my money and the turbines from Tehachapi. I figure more is better and you'd better start your shopping at the most distant point."

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One advantage we had when it came to using power was Wal-Mart. They had been on a kick pushing those small florescent bulbs that screwed into regular light bulb sockets. When we lived in Kalifornia, we had 3, all in the garage. Most of the time, nobody bothers to turn off the garage lights and they made sense. Costing about 8 times as much as regular bulbs, they lasted 10 times longer. In the long run, they made economic sense. When we moved to Whetstone, we loaded up on them, replacing the regulars bulbs when they wore out. It added up and made it possible to run 5 homes on 300 amps. Then we got more people and Damon salvaged more of the bulbs.

This 4½" tall, 13 watt mini compact fluorescent light bulb saves energy, last longer and is equivalent to a 60 watt standard bulb. This bulb lasts up to 8,000 hours and will save you more than \$45.00 in electricity over the life of the bulb. Light output is 800 lumens, energy used is 13 watts, and a life of 8,000 hours. Lamps Plus had them for under \$5. Every time you turned on the light switch, you saved 47 watts of energy and it does add up.

We also got our portable generator from Costco right after we won the Lottery. They had the Onan Homesite Power 6500 on sale for \$200 off the regular price through January 31, 2007. We got a different one, a 7kw with a Honda engine.

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"What did you get?"

"What did I get where?"

"I don't care, San Francisco, Tehachapi, Palm Springs?"

"We collected your lottery winnings from the feds in San Francisco. We found 56 V80, 1.80 megawatt wind turbines sitting in the original packaging at Tehachapi and we didn't bother with Palm Springs."

"56 times 1.80mw will produce 100.8mw. Kid, you done good."

"Thanks Dad, but I wouldn't count my chickens before they're hatched."

"I'm not, but I can count the eggs."

"If I read the data correctly, we're going to need about 64 yards of concrete for each of the towers we put in."

"That's what, 6 truckloads?"

"Depending on the size of the truck, yes."

"You'd better get the troops digging."

"What do you want us to do with the soil?"

"Dump it along the road. We'll have an earthen mound to hide behind, if the Latino's come calling. How many of the towers do you plan to install?"

"One at a time until we generate enough electricity for both Whetstone and Benson."

"Does that include us? I'd imagine those generators could use a rest. We might get Mary's cousin to look them over and rebuild them, assuming they need it."

"I believe you'll have to let them run for a while longer, erecting the towers and installing the control system is going to take a while."

"You say each tower will produce 1.8mw?"

"Right and we have 56 of them."

"I'm not sure, but I don't believe we'll need to install all of them. Assuming that the average home uses 12kw, and that there are a total of 1,100 homes in Whetstone and 2,900 in Benson means that we only need 4,000 times 12kw or about 48mw. If you install half of the turbines, you'll have 28 times 1.8mw or 50.4mw. That ought to be enough to run the extra things like the Safeway and the hospitals."

"Dad, 26 times 64 equals 1,664 yards of concrete. Assuming 12 yards to the load, that's close to 140 loads. I'm not sure that we can find that much."

"Think positive. Say, you weren't planning on planting all of those turbines on our place, were you? We need all 80 acres just to grow beans and meat."

"Who owns that parcel next to you?"

"The state of Arizona."

"Ok, we'll appropriate as much land as we need for the turbines and put them in there. We'll have to get some of the locals to run the power lines from there into town, where we can hook into the local grid."

"How long do you figure that will take?"

"At few months, at least. It will partly depend on how much help we can get from the residents of Whetstone and Benson."

"May I suggest a strategy? Mind you, I don't know if it's a good or bad idea, but if you tell them that they'll only get lights if they help, that will put most folks in the position of volunteering. Some people won't be able to contribute physical labor, but there ought to be something for everyone to do. I'm totally useless and I end up pulling guard duty, they can too."

"Ok, we'll talk to them."

"Good, I'm going down to the shelter and beat myself to death."

"Why?"

"I should have purchased several pallet loads of that South African surplus when I had the chance."

"Why didn't you?"

"Because, by the time we had the money, the ammo was all gone."

"You have a lot of ammo, Dad."

"Yeah, and I have a lot of enemies. First there's those Latino's; second there's the US Congress, wherever they may be; and, finally, there are all the surviving liberals."

"I think you're worried about nothing. A very large share of the liberals was sitting in the major cities waiting for the government to save them. Dad, the government couldn't even save itself, let alone the people. Besides, there wasn't time to evacuate most of the cities."

"You forgot the Latino's."

"We have a tank, artillery and a fair number of vehicles plus about 6 platoons to fight them. We're going to take the war to them and not let them come here. That's why we've tried to create that no-mans land."

"If you and your troops are busy putting in the wind turbines, how do you plan to keep the no-mans land clear?"

"We'll use about 3 platoons to run patrols and the other 3 to supervise the installation."

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It seemed obvious that I wasn't needed for the moment so I went down to the shelter, that's a real pain in the butt you know, and turned on the radios. Something was bothering me, but I couldn't remember what. Finally, it occurred to me, Aaron said we'd had more than 3 disasters. I got a pad and began to write them down: invasion, terrorist bombs, 2 plagues, and WW III. Crap, if my count was right, we had 4 more to go.

On the other hand, as the local banker, I was doing just fine. We had our lottery winnings in gold and silver, the money from the Charles City bank and what we'd saved. If they had been forced to recover our money from the mint in silver, they have needed a train to haul it. We were after all, talking about nearly 2 tons of gold. Silver would have run about 150 tons. Having all that money probably made us a target for anyone who knew about it. That consisted of the people who had gone with Derek plus the members of our family.

Realistically, 'precious metals' have no intrinsic value, they're just rare and people want them. It has to be relative. A man dying of thirst might part with an ounce of gold for a canteen of water. Does that mean that water is valuable? It might not be to the person that had lots, but even a domestic animal sometimes has value. An exclamation from the play King Richard the Third, by William Shakespeare; the king cries out, "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!" after his horse is killed in battle, leaving him at the mercy of his enemies.

One couldn't flood the market with gold and silver or it would lose its value. However, a prudent man could establish a fixed value, say \$1,250 an ounce for gold and \$25 an ounce for silver and then trade it for things of 'equal value'. He could also use the gold and silver to purchase labor, at a fair rate. The real problem arose when he overvalued the metal and undervalued what he took in exchange. Everything had to maintain the proper relationship, ergo, the value of an hour of labor had to equal something that a person was willing to work an hour to acquire. Hence, seeds had an intrinsically high value because they are a source of food.

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I caught the tail end of a conversation between two hams on the west coast. As near as I could tell, one was from Spokane and the other was from Yreka. Anyway, I just caught the tail end and they were talking about the quake and the water. I tried to reach each of them, to no avail. Whatever it was, I didn't like the sound of it. My mind went into overdrive. Cascadia? Did that subduction zone finally subduct? I was all over the dial trying to find other hams on the air. Surprisingly I couldn't pick up any from the west coast. Something had changed. There had always been a few on the air, regardless of the time. I'll get back to you when I find something out.

I gave up after a few hours. There just weren't many people on the air. It's a good thing you can't really die from curiosity, or I'd have been on the floor of the shelter shouting, "It's the big one Elizabeth. I'm coming to join you honey." Didn't happen so I got in my chair and raised myself back to ground level and went into the house. I was a little hungry so I popped 2 poppers of that popcorn we got from Sam's Club. It was just under \$12 for a 50 pound bag and it was fair to middling popcorn. We only had about 5 bags left, I made a note to myself to try and grow some next year.

"You want some of this popcorn, I popped 2 poppers?"

"Sure. Where have you been?"

"Down in the shelter, Sharon, trying to get some news. I caught the back end of a conversation from a guy in Kalifornia and another in Washington. I heard quake and water, but couldn't get any details. You know as much as I truly hate Fox News and their breaking alerts, I sort of miss them at times like this."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you remember back in '07 just before we won the lottery? It was a Sunday, if I remember and they had that problem in Miami with that semi. When I turned on the TV, Fox news was giving a breaking news alert. All it was, was old footage and some guy speculating about the semi they'd stopped at 8am. Then a tornado warning was issued to Alabama and they had 2 breaking news alerts. Before it was over, a subway train derailed, I think in DC, and they had 3 breaking news alerts. I got so tired of the guy guessing, I changed to either the military channel or history channel."

"I remember you getting excited about something, how did it turn out?"

"The truck had a load of automotive wire, the tornado didn't touch down as far as I know and 20 people were injured in the derailment. None of those things were really breaking news. It was breaking news at 8am, not at 2pm."

"Do you miss TV?"

"No, I think the Nazi's lost WW II. We lost the war in Iraq, even though George wouldn't admit it. Plus, as far as I know, they never caught the terrorists who set off the bombs or released the plagues."

"Who started World War Three?"

"If you believe the news, we were launching on warning, so apparently the other guy. That could have been China or Russia. My money is on Russia, I never completely trusted Putin."

"But he wasn't the President of Russia when the war started."

"I believe he was running things from behind the scenes."

"Why not the Chinese? You were all the time talking about their new fighter aircraft, what was it?"

"I think the one you mean was the J-10. They were building a bunch of those and using Russian engines. Plus they were buying more of the Su-30MKK and upgrading their Su-27s."

"That's the one, the J-10."

"It was really neat, looked a lot like the Eurofighter. Some claimed it was adapted from an Israeli fighter."

"Which one?"

"China obtained the cancelled Israeli Aerospace Industries (IAI) Lavi ("Lion") fighter technology. The Lavi fighter development began in October 1982 under the help of the United States, and the aircraft made the first flight in December 1986. However, the US was not prepared to finance an aircraft that would compete in export market with the F-16C/D and F/A/-18C/D, and a dispute arose to the final cost. The Israeli Government was unable to finance the project alone and the development program was finally cancelled in 1987. The Lavi technologies including its aerodynamic design and software for the "fly-by-wire" system were later transferred to Chengdu to help the J-10 development. With the help of the Israelis, the "Project 8610" entered full-scale development. Russia became involved in the J-10 development program by contributing its Lyulka-Saturn AL-31F turbofan engine. However, to accommodate the bigger-size AL-31F engine, Chengdu engineers had to go through a major redesign on the aircraft's rear fuselage as well as the air-inlet shape. The first flight of the aircraft, which was originally scheduled sometime in 1996, was postponed over a year."

"When did it become part of their Air Force?"

"Maybe 2003. It didn't become public until 2007. They had an A model for air-to-air and a B model for training and air-to-ground."

"And you think that Russia started WW III?"

"They had the most weapons. China hadn't built many of the DF-31A missiles, if I recall correctly. However, Russia had deployed a bunch of the Topol-M missiles. Russia could afford a first strike, you know. They could notify their population and get many of them underground. They had the shelter system to handle that, we didn't. Plus they had to do a first strike before we got enough of our ABM missiles in place. Once we had enough to intercept a first strike, it was all over for them."

"Gary, it doesn't matter who started it, we finished it."

"At what cost? Between the bombings of our cities, the plagues and WW III, I'd guess we must have lost 70% of our population. I sure wish I knew what those hams were talking about. Or, maybe I rather not know."

"What do you mean by that?"

"What if Cascadia did subduct or Yellowstone or Long Valley erupted? That would really be bad news."

Whetstone – Chapter 21

Apocalypse Soon

By Robert S. McNamara

Robert McNamara is worried. He knows how close we've come. His counsel helped the Kennedy administration avert nuclear catastrophe during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Today, he believes the United States must no longer rely on nuclear weapons as a foreign-policy tool. To do so is immoral, illegal, and dreadfully dangerous.

It is time – well past time, in my view – for the United States to cease its Cold War-style reliance on nuclear weapons as a foreign-policy tool. At the risk of appearing simplistic and provocative, I would characterize current US nuclear weapons policy as immoral, illegal, militarily unnecessary, and dreadfully dangerous. The risk of an accidental or inadvertent nuclear launch is unacceptably high. Far from reducing these risks, the Bush administration has signaled that it is committed to keeping the US nuclear arsenal as a mainstay of its military power – a commitment that is simultaneously eroding the international norms that have limited the spread of nuclear weapons and fissile materials for 50 years. Much of the current US nuclear policy has been in place since before I was secretary of defense, and it has only grown more dangerous and diplomatically destructive in the intervening years.

Today, the United States has deployed approximately 4,500 strategic, offensive nuclear warheads. Russia has roughly 3,800. The strategic forces of Britain, France, and China are considerably smaller, with 200–400 nuclear weapons in each state's arsenal. The new nuclear states of Pakistan and India have fewer than 100 weapons each. North Korea now claims to have developed nuclear weapons, and US intelligence agencies estimate that Pyongyang has enough fissile material for 2–8 bombs.

How destructive are these weapons? The average US warhead has a destructive power 20 times that of the Hiroshima bomb. Of the 8,000 active or operational US warheads, 2,000 are on hair-trigger alert, ready to be launched on 15 minutes' warning. How are these weapons to be used? The United States has never endorsed the policy of "no first use," not during my seven years as secretary or since. We have been and remain

prepared to initiate the use of nuclear weapons – by the decision of one person, the President – against either a nuclear or non-nuclear enemy whenever we believe it is in our interest to do so. For decades, US nuclear forces have been sufficiently strong to absorb a first strike and then inflict “unacceptable” damage on an opponent. This has been and (so long as we face a nuclear-armed, potential adversary) must continue to be the foundation of our nuclear deterrent.

In my time as secretary of defense, the commander of the US Strategic Air Command (SAC) carried with him a secure telephone, no matter where he went, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The telephone of the commander, whose headquarters were in Omaha, Nebraska, was linked to the underground command post of the North American Defense Command, deep inside Cheyenne Mountain, in Colorado, and to the US President, wherever he happened to be. The President always had at hand nuclear release codes in the so-called football, a briefcase carried for the President at all times by a US military officer.

The SAC commander’s orders were to answer the telephone by no later than the end of the third ring. If it rang, and he was informed that a nuclear attack of enemy ballistic missiles appeared to be under way, he was allowed 2 to 3 minutes to decide whether the warning was valid (over the years, the United States has received many false warnings), and if so, how the United States should respond. He was then given approximately 10 minutes to determine what to recommend, to locate and advise the President, permit the President to discuss the situation with two or three close advisors (presumably the secretary of defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), and to receive the President’s decision and pass it immediately, along with the codes, to the launch sites. The President essentially had two options: He could decide to ride out the attack and defer until later any decision to launch a retaliatory strike. Or, he could order an immediate retaliatory strike, from a menu of options, thereby launching US weapons that were targeted on the opponent’s military-industrial assets. Our opponents in Moscow presumably had and have similar arrangements.

The whole situation seems so bizarre as to be beyond belief. On any given day, as we go about our business, the President is prepared to make a decision within 20 minutes that could launch one of the most devastating weapons in the world. To declare war requires an act of congress, but to launch a nuclear holocaust requires 20 minutes’ deliberation by the President and his advisors. But that is what we have lived with for 40 years. With very few changes, this system remains largely intact, including the “football,” the President’s constant companion.

I was able to change some of these dangerous policies and procedures. My colleagues and I started arms control talks; we installed safeguards to reduce the risk of unauthorized launches; we added options to the nuclear war plans so that the President did not have to choose between an all-or-nothing response, and we eliminated the vulnerable and provocative nuclear missiles in Turkey. I wish I had done more, but we were in the midst of the Cold War, and our options were limited.

The United States and our NATO allies faced a strong Soviet and Warsaw Pact conventional threat. Many of the allies (and some in Washington as well) felt strongly that preserving the US option of launching a first strike was necessary for the sake of keeping the Soviets at bay. What is shocking is that today, more than a decade after the end of the Cold War, the basic US nuclear policy is unchanged. It has not adapted to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Plans and procedures have not been revised to make the United States or other countries less likely to push the button. At a minimum, we should remove all strategic nuclear weapons from “hair-trigger” alert, as others have recommended, including Gen. George Lee Butler, the last commander of SAC. That simple change would greatly reduce the risk of an accidental nuclear launch. It would also signal to other states that the United States is taking steps to end its reliance on nuclear weapons.

We pledged to work in good faith toward the eventual elimination of nuclear arsenals when we negotiated the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968. In May, diplomats from more than 180 nations are meeting in New York City to review the NPT and assess whether members are living up to the agreement. The United States is focused, for understandable reasons, on persuading North Korea to rejoin the treaty and on negotiating deeper constraints on Iran’s nuclear ambitions. Those states must be convinced to keep the promises they made when they originally signed the NPT – that they would not build nuclear weapons in return for access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. But the attention of many nations, including some potential new nuclear weapons states, is also on the United States. Keeping such large numbers of weapons, and maintaining them on hair-trigger alert, are potent signs that the United States is not seriously working toward the elimination of its arsenal and raises troubling questions as to why any other state should restrain its nuclear ambitions.

A Preview of the Apocalypse

The destructive power of nuclear weapons is well known, but given the United States’ continued reliance on them, it’s worth remembering the danger they present. A 2000 report by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War describes the likely effects of a single 1 megaton weapon – dozens of which are contained in the Russian and US inventories. At ground zero, the explosion creates a crater 300 feet deep and 1,200 feet in diameter. Within one second, the atmosphere itself ignites into a fireball more than a half-mile in diameter. The surface of the fireball radiates nearly three times the light and heat of a comparable area of the surface of the sun, extinguishing in seconds all life below and radiating outward at the speed of light, causing instantaneous severe burns to people within one to three miles. A blast wave of compressed air reaches a distance of three miles in about 12 seconds, flattening factories and commercial buildings. Debris carried by winds of 250 mph inflicts lethal injuries throughout the area. At least 50 percent of people in the area die immediately, prior to any injuries from radiation or the developing firestorm.

Of course, our knowledge of these effects is not entirely hypothetical. Nuclear weapons, with roughly one seventieth of the power of the 1 megaton bomb just described, were

twice used by the United States in August 1945. One atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Around 80,000 people died immediately; approximately 200,000 died eventually. Later, a similar size bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. On Nov. 7, 1995, the mayor of Nagasaki recalled his memory of the attack in testimony to the International Court of Justice:

[i]Nagasaki became a city of death where not even the sound of insects could be heard. After a while, countless men, women and children began to gather for a drink of water at the banks of nearby Urakami River, their hair and clothing scorched and their burnt skin hanging off in sheets like rags. Begging for help they died one after another in the water or in heaps on the banks.... Four months after the atomic bombing, 74,000 people were dead, and 75,000 had suffered injuries, that is, two-thirds of the city population had fallen victim to this calamity that came upon Nagasaki like a preview of the Apocalypse.[/i]

Why did so many civilians have to die? Because the civilians, who made up nearly 100 percent of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, were unfortunately “co-located” with Japanese military and industrial targets. Their annihilation, though not the objective of those dropping the bombs, was an inevitable result of the choice of those targets. It is worth noting that during the Cold War, the United States reportedly had dozens of nuclear warheads targeted on Moscow alone, because it contained so many military targets and so much “industrial capacity.”

Presumably, the Soviets similarly targeted many US cities. The statement that our nuclear weapons do not target populations per se was and remains totally misleading in the sense that the so-called collateral damage of large nuclear strikes would include tens of millions of innocent civilian dead.

This in a nutshell is what nuclear weapons do: They indiscriminately blast, burn, and irradiate with a speed and finality that are almost incomprehensible. This is exactly what countries like the United States and Russia, with nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert, continue to threaten every minute of every day in this new 21st century.

No Way To Win

I have worked on issues relating to US and NATO nuclear strategy and war plans for more than 40 years. During that time, I have never seen a piece of paper that outlined a plan for the United States or NATO to initiate the use of nuclear weapons with any benefit for the United States or NATO. I have made this statement in front of audiences, including NATO defense ministers and senior military leaders, many times. No one has ever refuted it. To launch weapons against a nuclear-equipped opponent would be suicidal. To do so against a non-nuclear enemy would be militarily unnecessary, morally repugnant, and politically indefensible.

I reached these conclusions very soon after becoming secretary of defense. Although I believe Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson shared my view, it was

impossible for any of us to make such statements publicly because they were totally contrary to established NATO policy. After leaving the Defense Department, I became President of the World Bank. During my 13-year tenure, from 1968 to 1981, I was prohibited, as an employee of an international institution, from commenting publicly on issues of US national security. After my retirement from the bank, I began to reflect on how I, with seven years' experience as secretary of defense, might contribute to an understanding of the issues with which I began my public service career.

At that time, much was being said and written regarding how the United States could, and why it should, be able to fight and win a nuclear war with the Soviets. This view implied, of course, that nuclear weapons did have military utility; that they could be used in battle with ultimate gain to whoever had the largest force or used them with the greatest acumen. Having studied these views, I decided to go public with some information that I knew would be controversial, but that I felt was needed to inject reality into these increasingly unreal discussions about the military utility of nuclear weapons. In articles and speeches, I criticized the fundamentally flawed assumption that nuclear weapons could be used in some limited way. There is no way to effectively contain a nuclear strike – to keep it from inflicting enormous destruction on civilian life and property, and there is no guarantee against unlimited escalation once the first nuclear strike occurs. We cannot avoid the serious and unacceptable risk of nuclear war until we recognize these facts and base our military plans and policies upon this recognition. I hold these views even more strongly today than I did when I first spoke out against the nuclear dangers our policies were creating. I know from direct experience that US nuclear policy today creates unacceptable risks to other nations and to our own.

What Castro Taught Us

Among the costs of maintaining nuclear weapons is the risk – to me an unacceptable risk – of use of the weapons either by accident or as a result of misjudgment or miscalculation in times of crisis. The Cuban Missile Crisis demonstrated that the United States and the Soviet Union – and indeed the rest of the world – came within a hair's breadth of nuclear disaster in October 1962.

Indeed, according to former Soviet military leaders, at the height of the crisis, Soviet forces in Cuba possessed 162 nuclear warheads, including at least 90 tactical warheads. At about the same time, Cuban President Fidel Castro asked the Soviet ambassador to Cuba to send a cable to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev stating that Castro urged him to counter a US attack with a nuclear response. Clearly, there was a high risk that in the face of a US attack, which many in the US government were prepared to recommend to President Kennedy, the Soviet forces in Cuba would have decided to use their nuclear weapons rather than lose them. Only a few years ago did we learn that the four Soviet submarines trailing the US Naval vessels near Cuba each carried torpedoes with nuclear warheads. Each of the sub commanders had the authority to launch his torpedoes. The situation was even more frightening because, as the lead commander recounted to me, the subs were out of communication with their

Soviet bases, and they continued their patrols for four days after Khrushchev announced the withdrawal of the missiles from Cuba.

The lesson, if it had not been clear before, was made so at a conference on the crisis held in Havana in 1992, when we first began to learn from former Soviet officials about their preparations for nuclear war in the event of a US invasion. Near the end of that meeting, I asked Castro whether he would have recommended that Khrushchev use the weapons in the face of a US invasion, and if so, how he thought the United States would respond. "We started from the assumption that if there was an invasion of Cuba, nuclear war would erupt," Castro replied. "We were certain of that... [W]e would be forced to pay the price that we would disappear." He continued, "Would I have been ready to use nuclear weapons? Yes, I would have agreed to the use of nuclear weapons." And he added, "If Mr. McNamara or Mr. Kennedy had been in our place, and had their country been invaded, or their country was going to be occupied ... I believe they would have used tactical nuclear weapons."

I hope that President Kennedy and I would not have behaved as Castro suggested we would have. His decision would have destroyed his country. Had we responded in a similar way the damage to the United States would have been unthinkable. But human beings are fallible. In conventional war, mistakes cost lives, sometimes thousands of lives. However, if mistakes were to affect decisions relating to the use of nuclear forces, there would be no learning curve. They would result in the destruction of nations. The indefinite combination of human fallibility and nuclear weapons carries a very high risk of nuclear catastrophe. There is no way to reduce the risk to acceptable levels, other than to first eliminate the hair-trigger alert policy and later to eliminate or nearly eliminate nuclear weapons. The United States should move immediately to institute these actions, in cooperation with Russia. That is the lesson of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

A Dangerous Obsession

On Nov. 13, 2001, President George W. Bush announced that he had told Russian President Vladimir Putin that the United States would reduce "operationally deployed nuclear warheads" from approximately 5,300 to a level between 1,700 and 2,200 over the next decade. This scaling back would approach the 1,500 to 2,200 range that Putin had proposed for Russia. However, the Bush administration's Nuclear Posture Review, mandated by the US Congress and issued in January 2002, presents quite a different story. It assumes that strategic offensive nuclear weapons in much larger numbers than 1,700 to 2,200 will be part of US military forces for the next several decades. Although the number of deployed warheads will be reduced to 3,800 in 2007 and to between 1,700 and 2,200 by 2012, the warheads and many of the launch vehicles taken off deployment will be maintained in a "responsive" reserve from which they could be moved back to the operationally deployed force. The Nuclear Posture Review received little attention from the media. But its emphasis on strategic offensive nuclear weapons deserves vigorous public scrutiny. Although any proposed reduction is welcome, it is doubtful that survivors – if there were any – of an exchange of 3,200 warheads (the US and Russian numbers projected for 2012), with a destructive power approximately

65,000 times that of the Hiroshima bomb, could detect a difference between the effects of such an exchange and one that would result from the launch of the current US and Russian forces totaling about 12,000 warheads.

In addition to projecting the deployment of large numbers of strategic nuclear weapons far into the future, the Bush administration is planning an extensive and expensive series of programs to sustain and modernize the existing nuclear force and to begin studies for new launch vehicles, as well as new warheads for all of the launch platforms. Some members of the administration have called for new nuclear weapons that could be used as bunker busters against underground shelters (such as the shelters Saddam Hussein used in Baghdad). New production facilities for fissile materials would need to be built to support the expanded force. The plans provide for integrating a national ballistic missile defense into the new triad of offensive weapons to enhance the nation's ability to use its "power projection forces" by improving our ability to counterattack an enemy. The Bush administration also announced that it has no intention to ask congress to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and, though no decision to test has been made, the administration has ordered the national laboratories to begin research on new nuclear weapons designs and to prepare the underground test sites in Nevada for nuclear tests if necessary in the future. Clearly, the Bush administration assumes that nuclear weapons will be part of US military forces for at least the next several decades.

Good faith participation in international negotiation on nuclear disarmament – including participation in the CTBT – is a legal and political obligation of all parties to the NPT that entered into force in 1970 and was extended indefinitely in 1995. The Bush administration's nuclear program, alongside its refusal to ratify the CTBT, will be viewed, with reason, by many nations as equivalent to a US break from the treaty. It says to the non-nuclear weapons nations, "We, with the strongest conventional military force in the world, require nuclear weapons in perpetuity, but you, facing potentially well-armed opponents, are never to be allowed even one nuclear weapon."

If the United States continues its current nuclear stance, over time, substantial proliferation of nuclear weapons will almost surely follow. Some, or all, of such nations as Egypt, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Taiwan will very likely initiate nuclear weapons programs, increasing both the risk of use of the weapons and the diversion of weapons and fissile materials into the hands of rogue states or terrorists. Diplomats and intelligence agencies believe Osama bin Laden has made several attempts to acquire nuclear weapons or fissile materials. It has been widely reported that Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood, former director of Pakistan's nuclear reactor complex, met with bin Laden several times. Were al Qaeda to acquire fissile materials, especially enriched uranium, its ability to produce nuclear weapons would be great. The knowledge of how to construct a simple gun-type nuclear device, like the one we dropped on Hiroshima, is now widespread. Experts have little doubt that terrorists could construct such a primitive device if they acquired the requisite enriched uranium material. Indeed, just last summer, at a meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry said, "I have never been more fearful of a nuclear detonation

than now.... There is a greater than 50 percent probability of a nuclear strike on US targets within a decade." I share his fears.

A Moment of Decision

We are at a critical moment in human history – perhaps not as dramatic as that of the Cuban Missile Crisis, but a moment no less crucial. Neither the Bush administration, the congress, the American people, nor the people of other nations have debated the merits of alternative, long-range nuclear weapons policies for their countries or the world. They have not examined the military utility of the weapons; the risk of inadvertent or accidental use; the moral and legal considerations relating to the use or threat of use of the weapons; or the impact of current policies on proliferation. Such debates are long overdue. If they are held, I believe they will conclude, as have I and an increasing number of senior military leaders, politicians, and civilian security experts: We must move promptly toward the elimination – or near elimination – of all nuclear weapons. For many, there is a strong temptation to cling to the strategies of the past 40 years. But to do so would be a serious mistake leading to unacceptable risks for all nations.

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I never cared for McNamara, he was an idiot. Imagine replacing a fine weapon like the M-14 rifle with that Mattel toy gun. I can understand adopting it as a second gun, much like we did during WW II when we had the M1 Garand MBR and the M1 Carbine which provided a bit more power than the M1911. The M-14 wasn't well suited for the jungle, but that didn't make it a bad rifle. Hell, he even had them destroy new in the box rifles.

The US Army's M1 Garand rifle was originally developed to chamber a lighter .276 round, but this design feature was cancelled in the early 1930s, delaying the introduction of the rifle until 1936. The M1 rifle would eventually be chambered for the same powerful .30-06 Springfield standard round used in other service weapons of the time, such as the M1903, the BAR, and the M1917/M1919 machine guns. This left the army without the lighter, handier rifle it had wanted. This, along with lessons learned during earlier wars, observations of conflicts during the 1930s, and dissatisfaction with existing submachine guns and rifles contributed to the development of the M1 Carbine.

Troops in the rear, paratroopers, or frontline troops required to carry other equipment (such as medics and engineers) had found the older full-size rifles too cumbersome, and pistols and revolvers to be insufficiently accurate or powerful. Submachine guns like the Thompson were more than sufficiently powerful for close range encounters, but lacked effective range and were not significantly less difficult to carry and maintain than the existing service rifles (such as the M1903 and Garand).

Much the same constraints applied to airborne infantry, a concept that was also under consideration at the time. Prior to the development and issue of submachine guns such as the M3 'Grease Gun', a submachine gun like the Thompson was also much more expensive than pistols and most rifles of the period. The .30-06 Garand, then entering

into service in the late 1930s, was as heavy and cumbersome as the existing service rifles. It was decided that a new weapon was needed for these other roles. While the range of a pistol is about 50 yards (45 m) and the range of existing rifles was several hundred yards, the requirement for the new firearm called for a maximum range of 300 yards (275 m).

A carbine version of the standard-issue semi-automatic rifle was considered, but the .30-06 round for which the M1 Garand was chambered was found to be too powerful. The requirement was for a weapon lighter and handier than the Garand, with less recoil than the rifle, but at the same time, greater range, accuracy, and effective stopping power than the M1911A1 pistols currently in use. The M1 Carbine was intended for use by soldiers who required a more compact, lightweight defensive weapon, and for soldiers who did not utilize an infantry rifle as their primary arm.

The M1 Carbine and its reduced-power .30 Carbine cartridge was never intended to serve as a primary infantry weapon, nor was it comparable to more powerful assault rifles developed late in the war. Nevertheless, the carbine was soon issued to infantry officers, machine-gun crews, paratroopers, and other frontline soldiers. Its reputation in combat was mixed. Some infantrymen and Marines, especially those who did not use a rifle as their primary weapon, preferred the carbine over the M1 Garand because of the weapon's small size and light weight. The carbine also gained generally high praise from airborne troops who were issued the folding-stock M1A1. The carbine's exclusive use of non-corrosive primed ammunition was found to be a godsend by troops and ordnance personnel serving in the Pacific, where barrel corrosion was a significant issue, though not to the same extent in Europe, where some soldiers reported misfires attributed to bad primers.

The .30 Carbine's bullet weighs 110 grains (7.1 grams) and has a muzzle velocity of 1,900 ft/s, (580 m/s) giving it 880 ft-lbs of energy. In comparison, a .357 Magnum revolver fires the same weight bullet at about 1,300 ft/s (396 m/s) for about 410 foot-pounds of energy, though the .357 is of larger diameter, and often equipped with an expanding bullet design. Nevertheless, reports of the carbine's failure to stop enemy soldiers are well documented in individual after-action reports, postwar evaluations, and service histories of the US Army and Marine Corps.

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Where the Bombs are, 2006

By Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Kristensen

Katharine Lee Bates, the author of "America the Beautiful," could not have been referring to the expanse of the US nuclear arsenal when she penned the lyric "from sea to shining sea," but it is fitting. Though it is the smallest it has been since 1958, the US nuclear arsenal continues to sprawl across the country, with thousands of weapons deployed from the coast of Washington State to the coast of Georgia and beyond.

In total, we estimate that the United States deploys and stores nearly 10,000 nuclear weapons at 18 facilities in 12 states and six European countries (see below). The Pentagon developed this extensive network of installations over the past six decades in order to ensure the survivability of its nuclear arsenal. Post-Cold War base closures and arms reductions led to the consolidation of weapons at the current facilities; the number of weapons and their locations will change as the Pentagon implements the June 2004 Nuclear Weapons Stockpile Plan and the "New Triad."

Pinpointing the whereabouts of all US nuclear weapons, and especially the numbers stored at specific locations, is fraught with many uncertainties due to the highly classified nature of nuclear weapons information. Declassified documents, leaks, official statements, news reports, and conversations with current and former officials provide many clues, as do high-resolution satellite images of many of these facilities. Such images are available to anyone with a computer and internet access, thanks to Google Earth and commercial satellite imaging companies such as DigitalGlobe. This development introduces important new tools for research and advances citizen verification. The statistics contained in this article represent our best estimates, based on many years of closely following nuclear issues.

The nuclear weapons network shrank during the past decade, with the Pentagon removing nuclear weapons from three states (California, Virginia, and South Dakota) and the size of the stockpile decreasing from about 12,500 warheads to nearly 10,000. Consolidation slowed considerably compared with the period between 1992 and 1997, when the Pentagon withdrew nuclear weapons from 10 states and several European bases, and the total stockpile decreased from 18,290 to 12,500 warheads.

Approximately 62 percent of the current stockpile belongs to the air force and is stored at seven bases in the United States and eight bases in six European countries; the navy stores its weapons at two submarine bases, one on each coast. None of the other services possesses nuclear weapons.

The ballistic missile submarine base at Bangor, Washington, contains nearly 24 percent of the entire stockpile, or some 2,364 warheads, the largest contingent. The Bangor installation is home to a majority (nine) of the navy's nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines and a large number of surplus W76 warheads that will eventually be retired and disassembled. Its counterpart on the Atlantic coast, Kings Bay Submarine Base in Georgia, is the third-largest contingent, with some 1,364 warheads. Each base stores approximately 150 nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles.

Minot Air Force Base (AFB) in North Dakota, with more than 800 bombs and cruise missiles for its B-52 bombers and more than 400 warheads for its Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile wing, has the largest number of active air force weapons. The other B-52 wing at Barksdale AFB in Louisiana has more than 900 warheads, and Whiteman AFB in Missouri has more than 130 bombs for its B-2 bombers.

The large underground facility at Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque, New Mexico, stores more than 1,900 warheads that are either part of the inactive/reserve stockpile or awaiting shipment across Interstate 40 to the Pantex Plant outside of Amarillo, Texas, for dismantlement. The 970-acre facility at Nellis AFB, Nevada, northeast of Las Vegas, performs a similar function, storing approximately 900 warheads in 75 igloos—"one of the largest stockpiles in the free world," according to the air force.

During the Cold War, the United States deployed a large percentage (up to one-third) of its nuclear weapons in other countries and at sea. At its peak arsenal size in the late 1960s, the United States stored weapons in 17 different countries. By the mid-1980s, there were about 14,000 weapons in 26 US states, 6,000 more at overseas US and NATO bases, and another 4,000 on ships at sea.

Whetstone – Chapter 22

The United States terminated many nuclear missions after the end of the Cold War and retired the weapons. It withdrew all of its nuclear weapons from South Korea in 1991 and thousands more from Europe by 1993. The Army and Marine Corps denuclearized in the early 1990s, and in 1992 the navy swiftly off-loaded all nuclear weapons from aircraft carriers and other surface vessels. By 1994, the navy had eliminated these ships' nuclear capability, and many air force, navy, and army bases and storage depots closed overseas as a result. Today, perhaps as many as 400 bombs remain at eight facilities in six European countries, the last remnant of a bygone era.

<http://www.thebulletin.org/index.htm>

http://www.thebulletin.org/article.php?art_ofn=so06allison

http://www.thebulletin.org/article.php?art_ofn=so06arkin

http://www.thebulletin.org/article_nn.php?art_ofn=so06norris

If you didn't read those articles at the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, you should take time now and peruse them. It might explain why an old man who lived in Kalifornia began his preps for earnest in '06.

In sum, my best judgment is that based on current trends, a nuclear terrorist attack on the United States is more likely than not in the decade ahead. Developments in Iraq, Iran, and North Korea leave Americans more vulnerable to a nuclear 9/11 today than we were five years ago. Former Defense Secretary William Perry has said that he thinks that I underestimate the risk. In the judgment of most people in the national security community, including former Sen. Sam Nunn, the risk of a terrorist detonating a nuclear bomb on US soil is higher today than was the risk of nuclear war at the most dangerous moments in the Cold War. Reviewing the evidence, Warren Buffett, the world's most successful investor and a legendary oddsmaker in pricing insurance policies for unlikely but catastrophic events like earthquakes, has concluded: "It's inevitable. I don't see any way that it won't happen."

Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte and the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lt. Gen. Michael Maples, testified before Congress that the threat of terrorist attack with WMD was "more likely" than an attack by any state, including Iran and North Korea. Negroponte reported, "In fact, intelligence reporting indicates that nearly 40 terrorist organizations, insurgencies, or cults have used, possessed, or expressed an interest in chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear agents or weapons. Many are capable of conducting simple, small-scale attacks, such as poisonings, or using improvised chemical devices." Maples added, "Al Qaeda's stated intention to conduct an attack exceeding the destruction of 9/11 raises the possibility that future attacks may involve unconventional weapons."

The United States has considered or threatened the use of nuclear weapons on several other occasions: In response to the 1948 blockade of Berlin; in support of French forces in the northern Vietnamese town of Dien Bien Phu in 1954; in response to rioting that threatened the Lebanese government in 1958; during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962; in order to counter Soviet saber rattling after the breakdown of a U.N. sanctioned truce in Israel in 1973; and as an option to penetrate Libya's Tarhuna underground chemical weapons facility in 1996. But perhaps the most well-communicated US nuclear threat was made prior to the US intervention during the 1991 Gulf War.

During Operation Desert Storm in January 1991, the George H.W. Bush administration issued a formal threat of retaliation in response to chemical or biological weapons use and also against Iraqi support of any kind of terrorist actions. During a meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz on January 9, 1991, Secretary of State James Baker handed Aziz a letter from Bush and warned that, if "God forbid . . . chemical or biological weapons are used against our forces—the American people would demand revenge."

"This is not a threat," Baker continued, "but a pledge that if there is any use of such weapons, our objective would not be only the liberation of Kuwait, but also the toppling of the present regime." Baker later explained that he "purposely left the impression that the use of chemical or biological agents by Iraq would invite tactical nuclear retaliation." The letter listed three "sorts" of "unconscionable actions" by Iraq that would demand the "strongest possible response": use of chemical or biological weapons; support of any kind of terrorist action; and the destruction of Kuwait's oilfields and installations.

I suppose the hands of the Doomsday Clock are frozen in perpetuity at 3 minutes to midnight. The hands were moved from 5 minutes to 3 minutes in early '08 when the Board received reliable information that a terrorist group had acquired a WMD.

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Yes, I'm looking back and will continue to do so. Considering my age, I don't have a lot of time left. I'd like to figure it all out before I go, so my family will understand what happened. "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." – George Santayana You knew I'd find a way to insert that, didn't you? I did only because it's true. My 69th birthday was 3/23/12. That bunk about the Mayan Calendar

didn't bother me, it simply started over. Their Calendar was even more accurate than ours, or did I tell you that?

The trigger event was probably the Israeli bombing of those Middle Eastern countries. It's just lucky that Hugo didn't have any nuclear weapons. He was almost as much of a crackpot as that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. It took time for our military assets to return to the AO where the Latinos were operating. During that time, we were our own defense. That M1A3E3 was an experimental tank; nonetheless it would have been good to have 3 more so we could have a full Tank Platoon.

I strongly suggest in my notes that Israel's attack had probably led to the war, Russia had agreed to protect Iran. Had I not been forbidden to participate in the attacks Derek's group was making on the Latinos, I wouldn't have had the time to figure it all out. On that, he wouldn't budge, telling me, "You're our banker, we dare not put you in harm's way." (John Paul Jones, "I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast; for I intend to go in harm's way." – I liked the movie, too).

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Has anyone noticed how strange the weather has been lately? After that nuclear summer event, I noticed that it cooled more than usual. We didn't get snow by any means, but the average daytime and nighttime temps were about 6° - 8°F cooler. We could adjust, after all, we had 80 acres, plus we had a good well and could irrigate, if we had to.

The other day, I swore I felt an earthquake. Arizona doesn't get many earthquakes, that was the first one I'd felt since we'd moved. Every place seems to get an earthquake periodically, in Kalifornia, it was an hourly occurrence. Because nothing was damaged, I didn't include it the list of 9 disasters. More than 20 earthquakes with magnitudes greater than 5 have occurred in or near Arizona since 1850. All of Arizona has experienced some ground shaking. The magnitude 7.4 Sonoran earthquake of 1887, which was centered about 40 miles southeast of Douglas, caused 51 deaths in Sonora and extensive property damage throughout southeastern Arizona. Substantial damage occurred in the Yuma area as a result of the magnitude 7.1 Imperial Valley earthquake of 1940. The Flagstaff area experienced moderate damage three times during the early 1900's because of magnitude 6 earthquakes.

This felt more like a far off earthquake, maybe the San Andreas Fault? I got on the radios in the shelter and started listening to the ham net, sooner or later someone, somewhere, would mention the shaking and we could begin to narrow down where it occurred.

About the weather, frustrated with people and politicians who refuse to listen or learn, National Hurricane Center Director Max Mayfield ended his 34-year government career in search of a new platform for getting out his unwelcome message: Hurricane Katrina was nothing compared with the big one yet to come. They would probably have to add

a new category, if he was right. There is no such category on this scale, and any mention of a Category 6 tropical cyclone is fictitious or incorrect.

According to Robert Simpson, there is no reason for a Category 6 on the Saffir-Simpson Scale because it is designed to measure the potential damage of a hurricane to man-made structures. If the speed of the hurricane is above 156 mph, then the damage to a building will be "serious no matter how well it's engineered". However, the result of new technologies in construction leads some to suggest that an increase in the number of categories is necessary. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Severe_weather_terminology

A ham in Greeley, Colorado reported that the shaking in his area tipped over cabinets. Then I talked to a fellow in Truckee, California who said he thought Long Valley Caldera blew its top. Why would Greeley, Colorado have shaking that bad if Long Valley erupted? It wouldn't, maybe Yellowstone blew up. One Supervolcano would be worse than a nuclear war, but two? Maybe the Mayan's had it right after all. All of a sudden, I was beginning to miss cable news, they over reported everything and you were left guessing. I guess that's not totally true, sometimes the media speculated so much you couldn't sort fact from fiction.

WW I was The War to End All Wars; WW II should have been The War to End All Wars; and, WW III was, in fact, the War that Ended All Global Wars. Taken together with the Latin countries trying to invade the US and those terrorist attacks, one would have thought it couldn't get much worse. Somebody must have pissed Mother Nature off. We were experiencing falling temperatures, in contrast to global warming just 5 years before. To top it off, I was getting reports on the ham bands that either Long Valley or Yellowstone had erupted.

The following day, I hooked up with a ham in Tumwater, Washington. He told me that Cascadia had subducted the previous week and what had been left of Seattle was first hit with an earthquake followed by a major tsunami. He went on to say that several of the volcanoes in the Cascades were 'making smoke'. I could only assume that he meant that Mt. Rainer, Mt. Hood and some of the California volcanoes were involved. He was starting to give me a list when he was cut off.

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"I think we may have a problem, Derek. Get Damon and let's have a sit down meeting."

"This had, better be important, I was cleaning the cages, Dad."

"Damon, just shut and listen. I talked to hams in northeastern Colorado and California and it appears that both Yellowstone and Long Valley erupted. Worse still, a Washington ham told me that Cascadia subducted causing a major earthquake in Seattle followed by a tsunami."

Derek asked, "What about the San Andreas and New Madrid Faults, will they let loose too?"

"Son, it would be just our luck if La Palma fell into the Atlantic."

"How would we know?"

"We could try and contract a ham west of the Appalachians. If it did fall in, I'd guess most of the coast is gone."

"Do it and let us know. When will we see ash from California and Wyoming?"

"When it gets here; how should I know?"

I contacted a ham in New Jersey, he said they hadn't seen any water, so it appeared that all of our problems were coming from the west and the south. That 2 million man army from South and Central America hadn't given up. They'd simply broken into smaller units and were raising Hell everywhere.

It occurred to me that this was becoming Biblical, like the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah. What on earth had we done to make God so angry with us? Maybe taking down the 10 Commandments from the Courthouse wall? Taking God's name out of the Pledge of Allegiance? Maybe I should take my pal Clarence's advice and keep an eye on the sky. Whoops, I can't do that, it's filled with ash. Perhaps God was mad because we destroyed His planet and killed about half the inhabitants.

I've lost count here, are we at 9 yet? There were 5, the Latin invasion, the terrorist attack, the pandemic (2), WW III. If Long Valley and Yellowstone let loose, that made 7. and if Cascadia subducted, that made 8. Oh no, if both the San Andreas Fault and the New Madrid Fault let loose, we'd reach 10. Three times nine equals twenty-seven. Oops, I forgot the Cascade Range, it sounded like it was going to erupt and that got us to 9 without any major earthquakes on the 2 major faults. Chit!

God wasn't just mad at us, he must be furious. I didn't even know anyone named Noah! We were up to our butts in something, but there weren't any alligators in Arizona. Maybe it would soon be up to our butts in volcanic ash. When I thought about that, it occurred to me that there was a thing they called 'Volcanic Winter'.

The scales of recent winters are more modest but their effects can be significant. A paper written by Ben Franklin in 1783 blamed the unusually cool summer of 1783 on volcanic dust coming from Iceland, where the eruption of Laki volcano had released enormous amounts of sulfur dioxide, resulting in the death of much of the island's livestock and a catastrophic famine which killed a quarter of the population. Temperatures in the northern hemisphere dropped by about 1°C in the year following the Laki eruption.

The 1815 eruption of Mt. Tambora, occasioned mid-summer frosts in New York State and June snowfalls in New England in what came to be known as the "Year Without a Summer" of 1816.

In 1883, the explosion of Krakatoa (Krakatau) also created volcanic winter-like conditions. The next four years after the explosion were unusually cold, and the winter of 1888 was the first time snow fell in the area. Record snowfalls were recorded worldwide.

Most recently, the 1991 explosion of Mt. Pinatubo, another stratovolcano, in the Philippines cooled global temperatures for about 2-3 years, interrupting the trend of global warming which had been evident since about 1970. So it appeared we could still be in an overall period of global warming and have cold temperatures at the same time. It gives me a 2 Vicodin headache just trying to put it all together.

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"Ok, I checked. If we have any major earthquakes, we're screwed. Nearly as I can tell, we've now had 9 disasters without a major earthquake. La Palma didn't fall into the Atlantic. If it does, or we have an earthquake ala 'the big one', bend over and you're your butts goodbye."

"Why?"

"It means we're in for 27. The Rule of 3s, goes from 3 to 9 to 27 to 81.

"Dad, what about the Latin War?"

"That only counts as one, sort like in 'one riot, one ranger'."

http://www.knowsouthernhistory.net/Articles/Places/one_riot.html The real story is here: http://www.barrypopik.com/index.php/new_york_city/entry/one_riot_one_ranger_texas_rangers/ It is also confirmed here: http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/director_staff/texas_rangers/#Silver%20Stars%20and%20Sixguns

"How much ash will we get?"

"How much ash will we get? How should I know? It could be 5' high and rising. Look on my computer at the Yellowstone.pdf file. On page 5, it shows all the tuff beds, 3 from Yellowstone and 1 from Long Valley. Lowenstern says it couldn't happen, I just hope he was there when it blew."

"That's not a nice thing to say."

"It's how I feel, if it's not nice, tough sh*t. Have any of you seen any high level clouds, that were really dark?"

"Not yet, is that what we're looking for, high level clouds?"

"I really can't answer that, Damon. Mt. St. Helens put a cloud as high as 3-5km and the ash field extended to Spokane."

"How much ash was that?"

"About 0.4km³, almost nothing compare to Long Valley and the last big eruption at Yellowstone. They were 580km³ and 1,000km³. The biggest eruption at Yellowstone was 2.1 million years ago and it ejected 2,450km³."

"Who is this Lowenstern?"

"Some guy with the USGS who said we probably wouldn't get another large eruption of Yellowstone."

"I saw him on TV when they showed Supervolcano."

"You probably did, Damon. I doubt he's a Muslim with a name like Lowenstern. He's the Scientist in Charge of Yellowstone."

"So was it a hydrothermal explosion, a magma eruption or an explosive eruption?"

"Yep, I think that covers most of the possibilities. If Long Valley erupted, I think it's more than likely that it was an explosive eruption. There's been lots of carbon dioxide in the soil out there, trees been dying for years. They say, 'Measurements of the total discharge of carbon dioxide (CO₂) gas at the Horseshoe Lake tree kill area range from 50-150 tons per day. Variations are primarily caused by changes in barometric pressure. There is no obvious trend of either increasing or decreasing gas flux at this area; we conclude that the total gas flux coming to the surface at Horseshoe Lake has remained at these relatively high levels since 1996. We do not have enough data from any other gas discharge areas around the mountain to draw conclusions about changes over time at those locations.'"

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What a mess... terrorist attacks, surrounded by the South American Army, most of the major cities and several military bases destroyed, sickness, bad weather and now the possibility of volcanic ash. Worse, I had the best rifles in the area and they wouldn't let me go on patrol. I don't see why, I could go 100-yards or more before I had to stop for a few minutes and catch my breath. I always took time to have a smoke when I rested, it calmed my nerves. I could carry more ammo than I'd ever shoot, 10 magazines loaded with 18 rounds plus one battle pack of South African. To keep the load light, I only carried one LAWs and almost always use my original loaded standard. That Super Match with its fancy scope was too temperamental while the iron sights on my original

rifle were all but indestructible. The M82A1 was a better sniper rifle, but it weighed too much.

Why couldn't we have won the lottery when we first moved to Kalifornia? In those days, a man could buy an HK91, HK93, FN FAL and several different main battle rifles for a grand or less. That shop down on Parthenia must have had 100 cases of each of both .223 and .308 sitting in their main showroom floor. They also had a huge warehouse behind the showroom. Today those same guns were worth 5-6 times as much and the prices of ammo had probably gone up about as much. Then, the damed UN got involved in the small arms trade and we couldn't buy surplus ammo any more. In '82, that wasn't a problem. Rather than shipping 10s of thousands of rounds of .308 NATO to the US, South Africa was obligated to spend more money and demil it. The Lake City had been ok, when you could get it and provided is wasn't mixed lot ammo.

The good news was that the 'eruption' at Yellowstone was a very large and violent hydrothermal explosion, independent of associated volcanism. We wouldn't be seeing an ash cloud from there, according to the ham from Greeley. That gave us a spare when it came to disasters. However, the ham I talked to in Truckee was back on the air. He said that Long Valley had, indeed, erupted, but for some strange reason, they weren't getting ash in Truckee. I told him that, according to my research, he probably wouldn't. Good news. Hell it was great news. Yellowstone had potential, Long Valley not so much.

Damon brought up the subject of bugging out. I wanted to know one thing, 'to where'? It's all about location, when you get right down to it. We were in southern Arizona, a very good place to be in the event of a nuclear or volcanic winter. The only downside I could see was that Latin Army and they hadn't proved to be effective. While we didn't have them out gunned, we could make them wish they'd tried hitting an easier site.

Bugging out was the respite of people who lived in or near big cities. Besides, Sharon and I had built a substantial physical plant, 1,000kw of electricity, more with the soon to be installed wind turbines; a large underground shelter, underground diesel and propane tanks, a large multiuse building called the machine shed, a barn with livestock, etc. I wasn't buying it, but if they needed a 72-hour bag, just in case, that was fine with me. Sharon and I didn't go anywhere without enough supplies for 2 weeks. I'd taken Flight ER Doc's advice and rotated my ammo, apparently the vibration broke down the grains of gunpowder and caused excessive pressure.

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That said, we rarely ventured forth. Derek wouldn't let us go anywhere beyond Whetstone and Benson without a convoy of at least 3 HMMWVs and a fuel hauler. We didn't get a lot of ash, either. According to the ham net, California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas got some of the ash, with the heaviest ash fall being in northern Arizona, Nevada and Utah. That's not to say we didn't have action...

I was Air Force, Damon Navy and Derek and Mary both Army. Derek had more experience than the other 3 of us combined. Mary came in second because she pulled a tour in Kosovo. After I got out, or was that because I got out, the Air Force turned into a real military service. There was a time, before the Vietnam War, that only SAC maintained real discipline. I sure that must have applied to TAC, but I never saw any of them at Edwards.

I had wanted to reenlist, back in '65, but my Dad made me an offer I couldn't refuse. Besides, to stay in, I would have to quit drinking and probably smoking. They adopted new physical standards and I would have to shed 25 pounds, began exercising and even jogging. If I had it to do over, I wouldn't have started drinking in the first place, but I didn't know I was an alcoholic. When I finally figured it out, I was past caring. I just needed the next drink.

On the other hand, I'd have probably died from a heart attack at age 42, like my father almost had. Shhh, that's a family secret, I didn't know about it for 20 years. Mom said, years later, that it happened around the Cuban Missile Crisis.

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LONDON (Reuters) – Israel has drawn up secret plans to destroy Iran's uranium enrichment facilities with tactical nuclear weapons, Britain's Sunday Times newspaper said.

Citing what it said were several Israeli military sources, the paper said two Israeli air force squadrons had been training to blow up an enrichment plant in Natanz using low-yield nuclear "bunker busters".

Two other sites, a heavy water plant at Arak and a uranium conversion plant at Isfahan, would be targeted with conventional bombs, the Sunday Times said.

The UN Security Council voted unanimously last month to slap sanctions on Iran to try to stop uranium enrichment that Western powers fear could lead to making bombs. Tehran insists its plans are peaceful and says it will continue enrichment.

Israel has refused to rule out pre-emptive military action against Iran along the lines of its 1981 air strike against an atomic reactor in Iraq, though many analysts believe Iran's nuclear facilities are too much for Israel to take on alone.

The newspaper said the Israeli plan envisaged conventional laser-guided bombs opening "tunnels" into the targets. Nuclear warheads would then be used fired into the plant at Natanz, exploding deep underground to reduce radioactive fallout.

Israeli pilots have flown to Gibraltar in recent weeks to train for the 2,000 mile round-trip to the Iranian targets, the Sunday Times said, and three possible routes to Iran have been mapped out including one over Turkey.

However it also quoted sources as saying a nuclear strike would only be used if a conventional attack was ruled out and if the United States declined to intervene. Disclosure of the plans could be intended to put pressure on Tehran to halt enrichment, the paper added.

Washington has said military force remains an option while insisting that its priority is to reach a diplomatic solution.

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map". Israel, widely believed to have the Middle East's only nuclear arsenal, has said it will not allow Iran to acquire nuclear weapons.

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I see that my crystal ball is still working pretty well, sometimes. I can't explain why it didn't show me Long Valley blowing its lid, maybe it's tuned to nuclear war. A nuclear war is inevitable because the number of nuclear powers keeps increasing. When there were just 5 of us, and 90% of the weapons were in the hands of Russia or the Americans, it was manageable. Why? Because of MAD. Now you add Iran, North Korea, India and Pakistan to the mix and you have trouble. Plus the Israelis have a few, but like Sgt. Shultz, they know nothing. They denied planning on nuking Iran, but what did you expect?

Dam it's cold; it's that dry cold, like we used to get in Palmdale. On the average, it snowed about 0.7 times a year in Palmdale. It wasn't much, an inch or two, but you'd have thought it was worse than Denver. Those drivers out there can't drive in the rain, let alone the snow. The Highway Patrol made you put on chains every time it snowed.

Those folks who say the greatest danger is a global climate change, are right. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to realize that a few nukes set off in some cities, followed by WW III, followed by Long Valley blowing up will change the atmosphere for a very, very long time. That's a whole lot of dust in the air and there has to be a lot of carbon dioxide floating around. Unfortunately, an ANDAIR air filter won't do you much good, you need a carbon dioxide scrubber to clear the air. We had 2, one for each of the ANDAIR filters. Plus we had plenty of spare parts for the scrubbers and the AV-150s.

Israel waited until their threat was long forgotten. Only then did they nuke Iran and while they were at it, they nuked some of their neighbors. That probably led to those Muslim extremists nuking our cities and releasing a plague or two. I'm just speculating as far as the plagues go. It wasn't hard to eliminate the Latin's who were at our

southern borders; why attack us, if they were going to turn around and release a couple of plagues?

In some ways, I was about the closest thing as we had to a rocket scientist. Although, it was really stretching things to say that an Instrumentation Technician was a Rocket Scientist. In the '60s, we really were, but that was a very long time ago. Now Phelps Dodge trained people to be Instrumentation Technicians at their place in Thatcher, AZ, or they used to. I doubt they were really trained in the same things we were, but technology had changed so many things. When it came to pure electronics, Damon was far better trained than I was. He was an ET in the Navy.

Derek was about the closest thing we had to a pure soldier. Him and his friends, to be accurate. I could shoot fair, but he embarrassed me when we went shooting together at the range. My maximum range was about 200 yards, his was at least 400 shooting with iron sights and a lot more with those telescopic sights. Of course, anyone but a blind man could shoot well with that Barrett rifle and its Swarovski scope.

Whetstone – Chapter 23

The firm denial by Israel of a report in the London Sunday Times that its Air Force was training for a strike against Iran's nuclear facilities was as predictable as it is hollow. There is no doubt that Israel's fighter-bombers have been training for a long-distance mission; NATO sources say they have for weeks been watching Israeli warplanes running flights the length of the Mediterranean to Gibraltar – and nobody expects an Israeli strike on Gibraltar.

The drumbeats of war are beginning to sound from several directions. In Washington, the transfer of Admiral William "Fox" Fallon from Pacific Command to run Central Command (which runs the Iraq war and the Afghan mission) startled the Army and Marines, who had seen these as ground wars. But Central Command also includes Iran.

Fallon's appointment comes as the White House wants to increase the military pressure on Tehran. Fallon is heading to the region with some heavy reinforcements of two aircraft carrier strike groups, led by the USS John C. Stennis and the state-of-the-art new USS Ronald Reagan which left San Diego last week.

And then there was the remarkable suggestion from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, one of the Sunni leaders appalled by the fate of fellow Sunnis in Iraq and the growing prospect of a Shiite alliance led by Iran.

"We don't want nuclear arms in the area but we are obligated to defend ourselves," Mubarak said at a joint press conference last week with Israeli premier Ehud Olmert. "We will have to have the appropriate weapons. It is irrational that we sit and watch from the sidelines when we might be attacked at any moment."

The abrupt resignation last month of the Saudi ambassador to Washington, Prince Turki, reflected the sharp debate in Riyadh over the best way to respond to the Iranian threat. Prince Turki's predecessor in Washington, Prince Bandar, is now acting as the Saudi equivalent of the national security adviser and he is a hawk, convinced that the Saudi monarchy must rally the Gulf states and the Sunni nations against the prospect of a Shiite empire led by a nuclear-armed Iran.

Prince Turki was a dove, who wanted dialogue and negotiations and feared that military strikes against Iran would set the entire region ablaze. Pessimists among the Saudi-watchers say that he lost; optimists say that he returned to Riyadh to continue the argument.

Meanwhile back in Washington, the new House majority leader, Democratic Congressman Steny Hoyer, gave an interview to the Jerusalem Post, published Sunday, that declared a nuclear-armed Iran would be unacceptable.

Hoyer stressed that he backed "discussions, negotiations, sanctions." But Hoyer added that the threat of air strikes had to remain. On the possible use of force to end any Iranian ambitions to deploy nuclear weapons, Hoyer said, "I have not ruled that out. It is not an option we want to consider until we know there is no other option."

The Iranians, for their part, seem to be closing ranks against what they perceive as the mounting threat of military action. Former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who is seen as a relative moderate in Tehran terms and was defeated in the last presidential election by the fiery Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, said last week that "the enemies of the Islamic Republic have plans against the country."

Rafsanjani warned the "arrogant powers" (the United States and Britain) against launching a new crisis in the Middle East. "They are creating problems for themselves and the region that will not be confined to Iran. This is a fire that could burn many others," he went on. "They are looking for a pretext."

This closing of the ranks in Tehran is significant, since many top Iranian officials make little secret of their distaste for the rhetoric and populism of Ahmedinejad. However much they may sympathize with Ahmedinejad's statements that "Israel must be wiped from the map," or that the Holocaust was an "invention of the Zionists," or that the "Zionist state is illegitimate," they have found him to be an embarrassment. But now they are rallying round.

Most striking was the message by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to the pilgrims to Mecca to celebrate the Haj, which endorsed Ahmedinejad's skepticism of the Holocaust and Israel's right to exist. How, Khamenei asked, could it be a punishable offense in the West to question the Holocaust when the Pope could "openly defame Islam."

But then he went on to challenge the leaders of the Arabic world, the Saudi monarchy and Jordan and Egypt, to end their support for the West and rally round the "united identity of the Muslim ummah" (nation).

Every disaster that had affected the Islamic world in the 20th century, Khamenei said, from colonization to "the creation and strengthening of authoritarian regimes, plundering of their natural wealth and destruction of their human resources, and thereby keeping Muslim nations behind the caravan of progress in science and technology – all this has become possible only under the shadow of Muslim disunity that in some cases reached the level of internecine and fratricidal strife."

"Today any divisive action in the Islamic world is a historical sin," Khamenei went on. "Those who maliciously use takfir to declare large groups of Muslims as unbelievers (by this he means the Shiites, seen by the puritan Wahhabites of Saudi Arabia as not true Muslims), will be regarded as culprits, detested by history and future generations, and looked upon as mercenaries of the brutal enemy."

Khamenei has not spoken in such extreme terms for some years, and his rhetoric points to the nervousness, perhaps even verging on panic, which seems to be gripping the Tehran leadership. Alarmed by the decision of Russia and China at the United Nations Security Council to agree on the relatively modest sanctions against Iran, the Iranians sent their top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, to Beijing last week where he sought to continue Tehran's traditionally equivocal tactics.

Larijani stressed that Iran had not (unlike North Korea) abrogated the nuclear non-proliferation treaty nor had it stopped its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Iran remained open to negotiations, Larijani said, and pointedly referred to the close economic relations that now existed between Iran and China, symbolized by the privileged role China now enjoyed in helping to develop Iran's oil and gas reserves.

Back in Tehran, Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad-Ali Hosseini said Sunday that Chinese officials had agreed that the dispute should be resolved through negotiations, noting that China had adopted "a much more logical and fair stance on Iran's peaceful nuclear program."

But for once, these well-honed Iranian tactics did not work; the Chinese appeared to hold firm, insisting that Tehran come up with "realistic proposals." Yet the political mood in Tehran does not seem conciliatory, and the military pressure is building ominously.

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Like I said, it was inevitable. The Israelis were ready for whenever they needed to conduct the mission to Tehran. The difference was they intended to use low yield nuclear weapons this time. My only explanation of why they didn't is that someone changed his/her mind. My reasoning should be obvious, if Israel used nukes, it would

be the first time since 1945 that any country used nuclear weapons, other than testing them. No country could ignore that, especially not the 'communist nations'. Russia had built the Iranian reactor and they couldn't be expected to act like the French after the Israelis destroyed the reactor they built for Saddam. Moreover, the Chinese could be expected to be involved because they needed the Iranian oil.

I keep going back to the war because I wanted to understand what WE did to anyone to get them to attack us. The United States had always supported Israel. One of the few times I can remember our interfering with their plans when we prevented them from retaliating against Iraq when Saddam fired Scuds at Israel during Desert Storm. We provided Israel with Patriot missiles to help intercept the Scuds. Our close relationship may be because of the distribution of the Jewish population around the world that I mentioned earlier (page 101), a full third of them live in the US.

I know my tales wander around from here to there and back again, wait until you get senile and trying writing a cohesive story. Unfortunately, I get bored and my keyboard is never far away. This story started out to be about how Sharon and I would prepare when we won the lottery. With over 50 stories as reference, I put together a plan. It didn't take long for that to go to hell, I couldn't remember the story line. You want food, see TOM; ammo, that too; and, precious metals – we have a lifetime supply.

Sounds pretty good, until you start to analyze what we didn't have. We weren't secure in our homes, but that was nothing new, we hadn't been secure in our home since '82 when we moved to Kalifornia. There was that brief lull in '07-'08 right after we won the lottery. We moved from the middle of the terror zone to somewhere out in the middle of nowhere in Arizona. Sort of good, it was downwind from Tucson.

Built our (my) dream shelter, got the barn, machine shed and a few miscellaneous outbuildings. Life was pretty good. Springfield Armory had to put on a second shift for a week when I got to buying rifles and Ronnie Barrett was happy to sell another of his fine rifles. That's the problem, you see, we got ready. When we weren't ready, nothing happened. But, that's relative because we didn't live in New Orleans.

I don't know if it's an analogy or a metaphor, but the closest I can to describing the way life had been running is a funnel. The world's trouble seemed to get closer and closer with the passage of time, ah, the information age. When we didn't know for a couple of days about things happening in a far off land, it wasn't a big deal. And the came Ted Turner and the Communist News Network. If some world leader broke wind, we all knew about it before the smell was gone.

After that came the competition and several cable news networks sprang up, each one trying to out do the others. When there was a shooting, they finally got to where they were speculating on the types of bullets used. Except for Fox News, they were all totally opposed to war. I sometimes got the feeling that we'd have been better off if we'd nuked 'em and let God sort 'em out, the uproar in the media wouldn't have been

any worse. Some guy would go postal (do you remember when that meant delivering the mail) and the media would speculate about his motives.

Eventually, the media pressured the terrorists into committing terrorist acts and finally the major nuclear powers to go at it. No biggie, we were prepared. We had a 10 year supply of propane and enough diesel fuel to wear out the engine. We hadn't skimped on food and there were cases of seeds.

Except... the terrorists pulled off at least 3 attacks that we knew of, bombings and two different bioweapons. Hugo Chavez wasn't content to create a Marxist Country, he wanted to export it. The Israelis got tired of worrying about their neighbors and eliminated most of them. Now most of the world lay in ruins, the weather sucked and nature decided to go on a rampage. Worse, I had enough meds to keep me around to watch it all happen.

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Bottom line was Cascadia adjusted, Yellowstone sort of burped and Long Valley went postal. But wait, that's only 8. Can you picture snow on the Sonoran Desert? Back in '07, we were worried about the heat! Do you remember when I mentioned those submarines that deposited loads of terrorists on our shores? That was after the bombings of the cities and before the bioweapons release. We didn't know about them at the time, or that they were responsible for the bioweapons. At the moment we still didn't, which led to an interesting the summer the following year.

Derek's patrols kept the Latinos off our back and we got through the winter without any action. It was around my birthday when Walter showed up. He said his name was Walter Lang and he had once farmed in Iowa. I asked what he grew and it was just the usual crops: corn, alfalfa and oats. Walt had a dairy cow he kept for milk, hogs he raised for meat and a couple of feeders that he butchered and shared with his sons. He said they kept a half dozen hens and when they quit producing, they became baking hens.

Walt said he leased out most of the land and just grew a little, he was semi-retired. When he had his heart attack, he turned the farm over to his oldest boy and moved to Benson. He and Helen had lived here since '08. He'd run into Derek in Benson and learned that I was from Iowa, wanted to know what I thought of the coming growing season.

"Walt, I was never a farmer. When I was 9 years old, we moved to the big city. I have many relatives who farm, but I never did. From what I've heard on the ham bands, we could have a bad year. Did you know about Cascadia, Long Valley and Yellowstone?"

"Well, we visited Yellowstone one year, what about it?"

"It burped, you know had a hydrothermal explosion. Long Valley is in the Owens Valley of eastern Kalifornia, it blew its top, a massive volcanic eruption. I expect part of the grey skies is dust from the eruption. Far worse, in my opinion, is the Cascadian Subduction Zone. About half of it had been locked, you know. Anyway, according to a ham in Washington, it slipped, caused a massive earthquake and following tsunami."

"You don't say. I don't like the idea of having ash in the air, the winter was already bad enough."

"We moved here in '07 and this is the first time I remember snow. All this time, Sharon and I had been worried about the heat."

"Say, do we have you to thank for getting the lights turned back on?"

"That would be my son, Derek. He's the one who came up with those wind turbines and has overseen getting them installed. We only put in half of what he found, the remainder are spares or trade goods."

"Trade goods? Say, I picked up a good used Mauser rifle, not so long ago, do you know where I can get more ammo?"

"Would a case be enough?"

"Do you have some?"

"Only a little, I've been unloading it since I began giving the rifles away. Got my investment back, I guess I could afford to give you a case."

"How much?"

"I planned to give it to you."

"I pay my own way, how much?"

"How about 4 one ounce silver coins? That about the amount I had in it."

"I have a half ounce gold coin, can you make change?"

"I'll get 21 one ounce silver coins and the case of ammo, give me a minute."

"You have enough gold and silver to make change?"

"Only a little (I lied)."

"There you go Walt. I have 3 more cases if you need it."

"I hope I don't. I planned to use the rifle for hunting and home defense."

"That ammo is military ball ammo, it not much good for hunting. Try to pick up a box of reloads, there are a couple of guys loading hunting ammo for the Mausers."

"What do you carry?"

"Most generally, a M1A. That's the civilian version of the M-14 rifle. I have several guns, it sort of depends on my mood."

"Is that tank yours?"

"Derek's. It's a M1A3E3, a prototype. It has the new L55 developed by Rheinmetall GmbH of Ratingen, Germany to replace the shorter 120 millimeter L44 smoothbore tank gun. It permits effective use of a new APFSDS-T round, DM53 (LKE II), with a longer rod penetrator. The AT-1500 engine has been replaced with some experimental engine. I think he said they upgraded the sighting system, too."

"Jeez, you have a bunch of military vehicles."

"We do. And we have about 300 soldiers to go with them. Our strength is about 6 Platoons. There are still some of those Latin's around, you know."

"Even after the war?"

"Go figure... I guess Hugo won't let them go home."

"If you need help, let me know, I was in artillery in 'Nam."

"Thanks, Walt, I'll tell Derek. As to your original question, I have no idea what to expect this next growing season. Hell, I don't even know if we will have a growing season. If it were me, I'd not plant all of my seed, there's always a chance of a crop failure due to weather."

"You have a lot of seed?"

"Some... need any?"

"No, I'm ok for now, we only use heirloom seeds and I suppose I have about a 3 year supply."

"We have every bit of that and just a smidge more."

"Heirlooms?"

"Yep."

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There was no way that I'd tell a man I just met that we had to convert one of the bedrooms in the shelter into a vault to hold the gold and silver. Or, that valued at \$600 an ounce for gold, we had \$45 million in gold and silver. In fact, we kept about a million of it in the house because the vault was full. With our new standard price of \$1,250/\$25 an ounce, we were on our way to catching up to Bill Gates. I didn't gouge him on the ammo, I'd paid \$89 a case when silver was only at \$12 an ounce (7.4oz).

I said it was my birthday. I turned 70 today, 3/23/13. Man, I felt every inch of being 70. I knew we were going to have devil's food cake tonight; if I was lucky, with coffee frosting. I knew that Aaron had gotten our hand cranked ice cream freezer, I was hoping he turn out some vanilla to go with the cake. We also had an electric powered freezer, somewhere. If we limited the 'celebration' to family only, we could get by with a single cake and one freezer of vanilla. They were both 6-quart White Mountain freezers from Canning Pantry. Sharon always bakes the cakes in a lasagna pan using a double recipe. When they come out right, one cake will feed at least 20 people, large servings.

I never counted, but between the diesel tankers and the JP-8, we weren't short on fuel. We had gotten short on Pri-D, but a trip to a marina solved that, they bought it back by the 55 gallon drum. Between keeping the no-mans land clear and salvaging, we were busy whenever the weather permitted. 2013 was revealing itself to be a solar maximum, ergo, communications were awful. There are 2 theories on that, the eleven year cycle described by Schwabe-Wolf and the 22 year cycle described by Babcock.

Many communication systems use the ionosphere to reflect radio signals over long distances. Ionospheric storms can affect radio communication at all latitudes. Some radio frequencies are absorbed and others are reflected, leading to rapidly fluctuating signals and unexpected propagation paths. TV and commercial radio stations are little affected by solar activity, but ground-to-air, ship-to-shore, shortwave broadcast, and amateur radio (mostly the bands below 30MHz) are frequently disrupted. Radio operators using high frequencies rely upon solar and geomagnetic alerts to keep their communication circuits up and running. We were pretty far south to see any Northern Lights. I was totally shocked when the sky cleared enough that I saw them, it was one heck of a birthday present.

"Oh, cream cheese, huh?"

"I thought you liked it."

"I do, but I like coffee frosting better."

"Aaron made ice cream."

"Did you see the Northern Lights?"

"When?"

"Right now. Go look."

You know, I should have figured on creamed cheese frosting, she bought 2 cases of it at Costco, way back when. I had wanted to go to the range today; it was too cold and then Walt showed up. Even though I have a parka, I seem to have trouble keeping warm, must be my poor circulation. That's one I haven't figured out, my bp is normal, 110/70 and I take Plavix and Ecotrin to keep my blood thinned out. Plus I take Prevacid to keep the Ecotrin from giving me my ulcers back. About the only thing that has changed on my meds is the insulin. We had a real problem finding extra disposable insulin syringes and I started doing like my Dad, using one syringe for a week at a time. Man, does the needle ever get dull!

I only had 12 boxes of syringes on the shelf and would have had more, had not things gone to hell. Missy passed in '08, effectively doubling the number of syringes I had. For whatever reason, we probably got busy, I didn't get the other 12 boxes of syringes I had ordered. Normally, I use a little over 7 boxes of syringes a year, 730. I began to notice I was running short and asked both Damon and Derek to keep an eye out for 3/10cc insulin syringes. I could also use the 5/10cc and 1cc although I didn't really like to.

They gathered what they could find and I used up the larger syringes first. You can't use those short needled (8mm) syringes for IM injections and at 31 gauge, they're almost too fine for IV use. These pharmacists got really hinky when you tell them you wanted a dozen boxes of insulin syringes. It's not like you want a dozen boxes of Sudafed. We had 36 boxes of that, purchased one at a time. I use it when I get a cold, it really dries out my head.

"I hadn't seen those in years."

"Yeah me either. Not since we moved to Kalifornia."

"We're further south now than we were in Palmdale, why do you think we saw them?"

"Probably a massive corona ejection. They happen once in a while, but I don't know if it's on an 11 year or 22 year cycle. I can tell you that radio communications are pretty bad on the long bands."

"Then use the short bands."

"Dear, they don't have the range."

Palmdale is located at 34°34'52"N, 118°06'02"W. Whetstone is located at 31°42'14"N, 110°20'53"W. One degree of latitude equals 60 nautical miles and each second 1

nautical mile. Whetstone was located ~ 172 nautical miles or 1.150779 times 172 equals ~198 statute miles south of Palmdale. The conversion factor for kilometers is 1 nautical mile equals exactly 1.852 kilometers and 1 statute mile equals 1.6093 kilometers. There used to be a table on Wiki that allowed you to look up units of measurement: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversion_of_units Do you have Convert? <http://joshmadison.net/software/convert/download.php> If not, why not? You don't have Windows? Why do you hate Bill Gates? I don't mind Bill Gates, but I don't like Michael Dell. He outsourced his tech support to Mumbai (Bombay). There ain't no Bombay now, the Pakistanis nuked it, or so I heard. That's ok, there's no internet, either.

This story wasn't about Sharon and I winning the lottery. All that did was enable us to do exactly what we wanted to do. Yes, both of us, she wanted to get out of Kalifornia so badly, she could taste it. If I had a dollar for every time I heard her wish we could move, I wouldn't have needed the lottery ticket. That brings to mind the old expression, wish in one hand and spit in the other...

We hope to start planting a garden in mid April, possibly later, that depends on the weather. We've increase our herds of livestock slightly, it wasn't easy because we hadn't started out to have herds. The chickens were the easiest part, we stopped gathering eggs for a while. Those 2 roosters we had were really strutting. Damon and Aaron looked around some and came up with more hogs, cattle and horses. They even had the tack for the horses.

That 60+ year old 2N Ford was getting a workout. It was never intended to be a row crop tractor and was too small to mount much equipment on. We could mount a mower, pull the manure spreader or a wagon and not much else. Moreover, it burned gas, not diesel.

We were giving thought to the crops we'd plant this spring. Some corn, oats, wheat and alfalfa plus a very large garden. We'd get grain and bedding from the oats and wheat, livestock feed from the corn and alfalfa. Some of the corn could be turned into people food, corn meal and the like. We weren't the only family planning on some sort of farm, I think maybe Walt was going to give it a try.

After my back surgery back in '97 or '98, I been forced to retire. They said I was disabled, but retired sounds better. From then until we won the lottery, my health continued to fail, little by little. By the first of February '07, I'd suddenly gotten much better. Must have been because I'd gotten off my dead *ss and done something. By the time we'd gotten settled in here in Whetstone, both of us were getting around much better.

I can remember telling Sharon that the war in Iraq had cost the Republicans the White House in '08. Bill O'Reilly had it right, one last shot and then regardless of the outcome, come home. I was reading other things at the time; they mostly focused on how the War on Terror had put us on the brink of WW III. I doubt anyone expect Hugo to do what he did, thank God the troops were home. We'd have been better off if they'd

gotten that M1A3E3 beyond the testing stage, they'd have made a difference on the border.

It wasn't that big of a deal, the new tank was still the basic M1A2 with a new gun, engine and fire control system. DoD was looking at a 5-6 year conversion, beginning after they approved the new model. They had to license the L55 gun from the Germans, get Honeywell to build the engines and probably General Dynamics to build the new fire control systems. I half wonder if Derek could get the parts and convert 3 of the E2s to the new E3.

There probably hadn't been one survivalist who hadn't seen the war coming. It had gotten hard in '06 to buy surplus ammo and '07 was far worse. I managed those 15 battle packs of SA .308, 2,100 rounds. We'd shot up 100 rounds at Christmas '06. I knew I should get to the range and practice, but it was almost to Saugus and I didn't drive at that time. The name of the range was, 'A Place to Shoot'.

I know that I ramble, but I'm 70. I've shuffled when I walk for about 25 years, too. Bought the Barrett M82A1, but don't use it, I can barely pick it up. I just wanted to leave a record of how things were, both before and after. You might ask, 'before and after what?' I guess the real focus has to be WW III, that was the real turning point. Back on 9/11/01, we had I guess our 3rd major terrorist attack, they brought down the World Trade Center in New York. The first attack was in '93, when some Muslims tried to blow the place up. The second attack wasn't Muslims at all, just some wanttobe bad guy named McVeigh who blew up the federal building in Oklahoma City.

Whetstone – Chapter 24

On 9/11/01, a bunch of Muslims hijacked 4 planes. Two of them were flown into the WTC towers, one into the Pentagon and the fourth crashed in Pennsylvania. First we went into Afghanistan, looking to find and kill Osama bin Laden. Never happened. In '03, we decided to take out Saddam Hussein. It took a while, but we found him, the Iraqis tried him and then hung him. You could watch the hanging on Youtube, I didn't BTW.

The problem was, we didn't have a good plan of what to do with Iraq when we beat them. Sort of turned around and bit us on the *ss. In '07, just before we won the lottery, Dubya decided to ignore everyone and increase our troop presence over there. Must have worked out ok, we eventually left. Of course, by that time, our collation of the willing only included US.

Like I said, the survivalists around the country knew what was coming, they just didn't know when. It had somehow turned into a religious war, the Muslims against the infidels. I have no idea where Hugo fits into that, he was a Marxist. Chávez accused the government of the United States of attempting to turn Colombia into Venezuela's adversary, after US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld suggested that Colombia and other countries would be concerned over Venezuela's recent military purchases. "The

US empire doesn't lose a chance to attack us and try to create discord between us," Chávez said. "That's one of the empire's strategies: Try to keep us divided." The Colombian government did not take sides during the incident.

There was much ado with the Russian sales of arms to Venezuela. Dubya imposed sanctions on 3 Russian firms, like Russia really cared. When I read that and the article about China protesting sanctions we imposed on some of their firms over arms sales, I pretty much knew we were getting close. Right after we won the lottery, I loaded up on ammo. Especially .308 NATO, we were getting close, I just knew it. I have nothing against the Marxists, they made good targets. I must say, I was happy when México when with the license version of the H&K G-36, it was a 5.56x45mm cartridge. We all know how I feel about the 5.56, but the Venezuelans used 7.62x39mm cartridge in their AK-103s. M16s were also plentiful throughout South and Central America. It must have been a logistics nightmare for the Latin's. There were only a few of them left, most bugged out when the war came.

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"Dad, are you there?"

"Where else would I be?"

"Never mind. I called to give you a heads up. We out here in the boonies west of home and we've picked up signs of a group moving through the area within the last hour."

"How can you tell that?"

"The wind hasn't blown the snow back in the tracks. As nearly as we can tell, you have 4 vehicles headed your way. Put the rest of the troops on alert and tell Bill we'll be back in about 30 minutes."

Well, that's why I had a PA speaker on the CB... "Bill, heads up, incoming."

"Incoming what?"

"Bad guys. Derek just radioed. He says they cut sign for 4 vehicles headed our way."

"Rog, when will the L-T be back?"

"30 minutes."

The principal problem was that the earthen embankment only went across the front of the acreage. If these people were coming cross country, they could hit us from the flank or back. As I came out of the shelter, I heard the engine idling on the tank. I turned and they were warming up the engines on the Paladins, too. That's some heavy duty stuff

and I was certain that those artillery shells could probably reach out and touch someone, like Derek.

"We don't need any damed arty, Bill, you'll end up shelling Derek. The range on some of those shells is 30,000 meters (18.64 miles)!"

"I wouldn't do that, we're just going to move it out of the way. Why don't you get back in your shelter and let the professionals handle this?"

"Say what?"

"Go protect the women."

"I thought so."

Those banditos showed up, we were between them and town. There were as many of them as there were of us. More of them were on foot than riding in their 4 trucks. Some of them had G-3 rifles, some the G-36 and the rest either AK-47s or AK-103s, not to mention plenty of RPGs and a few medium and one heavy machine gun. The maximum effective range of the Mk-19 and Ma Deuces notwithstanding, Bill and the others never let them get really close. The firefight no more got going then Derek and his patrol showed up, putting them in a crossfire.

I suppose the thing that helped us the most was the defensive positions I hadn't known about. I swear, nobody tells me anything other than, 'guard the women'. I didn't need to do that, Mary and Amy were there to protect Sharon and Lorrie (and probably me). We were in the shelter but hadn't buttoned up, just in case. I was trying to follow the action on the radio, but they were too busy shooting to talk much. I guess I'm destined to miss all of the fun.

I didn't figure it would last long, I was wrong. Then, I heard the boom of the M236A1 and figured they were probably using HEAT rounds. They weren't, I later found out, they were using M1028 Canister. The round provides effective rapid lethal reaction against massed assaulting infantry armed with hand held anti-tank and automatic weapons at close range (500 meters or less) thereby improving survivability. Additionally, the round significantly increases the tank's lethality and enhances the tank crew's survivability. The additional capability will give the Abrams Tank the ability to survive RPG ambushes and to fully support friendly infantry assaults. Didn't sound any different than any of the practice rounds they'd fired.

It was late afternoon before the firing died off and Derek stuck his head through the shelter cover and said we could leave. When I got topside, they were busy stripping bodies of anything useful and loading them on the 4 trucks. I noticed right away that there was a growing pile of weapons and munitions. I pulled my coat a little tighter and stood there guarding the collection, it was fresh meat for the table, as good as money in the bank.

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World War III, or the Third World War, was a term used to describe a hypothetical conflict on the scale of WW I, WW II or larger. Most usages of the term assumed the use of weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons, biological or chemical weapons.

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War, an apocalyptic war between the United States and the USSR was considered likely. The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 is generally thought to be the historical point at which the risk of World War III was closest. Other potential starts have included the following:

- 1948-1949 – Berlin Blockade: The USSR blockaded Western Berlin in an attempt to remove America, France and Great Britain from Berlin. Some American politicians suggested an invasion of East Germany, however Truman was dissuaded from this by analysts saying that the risk and fallout of WWIII would be too great. (The Allies dealt with the Berlin Blockade with the Berlin Airlift, which was ultimately successful).
- July 26, 1956 - March, 1957 – Suez Crisis: The conflict pitted Egypt against an alliance between the French, the United Kingdom and Israel. When the USSR threatened to intervene on behalf of Egypt, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson feared a larger war and persuaded the British and French to withdraw. The Eisenhower administration, fearing a wider war, had applied pressure to the United Kingdom to withdraw, including a threat to create a currency crisis by dumping US holdings of British debt.
- October 27, 1962 – Cuban Missile Crisis: The conflict pitted the US against an alliance between the USSR and Cuba. The USSR was attempting to place several launch sites in Cuba in response to the United States installation of missiles in Turkey. The United States response included dispersal of SAC bombers to civilian airfields around the United States and war games in which the United States Marine Corps landed against a dictator named "ORTSAC" (Castro spelt backwards). For a brief while, the US military went to DEFCON 3, while SAC went to DEFCON 2. The crisis peaked on October 27, when a U-2 (piloted by Rudolph Anderson) was shot down over Cuba and another U-2 flight over Russia was almost intercepted when it strayed over Siberia, after Curtis LeMay (US Air Force Chief of Staff) had neglected to enforce Presidential orders to suspend all overflights.
- October 24, 1973 – Yom Kippur War: As the Yom Kippur War was winding down, a Soviet threat to intervene on Egypt's behalf caused the United States to go to DEFCON 3. (This was the height of Watergate and Nixon didn't know what Haig and Kissinger did. The Soviets quickly detected the increased American defense condition, and were astonished and bewildered at the response. "Who could have imagined the Americans would be so easily frightened," said Nikolai Podgomy. "It is not reasonable to become engaged in a war with the United States because of Egypt and Syria," said Premier Alexi Kosygin, while KGB chief Yuri Andropov added that "We shall not unleash the Third World War". In the end, the Soviets reconciled themselves to an Arab defeat. The letter from the American cabinet arrived during the meeting. Brezhnev decided that the

Americans were too nervous, and that the best course of action would be to wait to reply. The next morning, the Egyptians agreed to the American suggestion, and dropped their request for assistance from the Soviets, bringing the crisis to an end.

- November 9, 1979 – False 'Soviet First Strike' Alarm: The US made emergency retaliation preparations after NORAD saw on-screen indications that a full-scale Soviet attack had been launched. No attempt was made to use the "red telephone" hotline to clarify the situation with the USSR and it was not until early-warning radar systems confirmed no such launch had taken place that NORAD realized that a computer system test had caused the display errors. A Senator inside the NORAD facility at the time described an atmosphere of absolute panic. A GAO investigation led to the construction of an off-site test facility, to prevent similar mistakes subsequently.

- March 30, 1981 – Ronald Reagan assassination attempt: In the panic the United States government had confusion on who was in control. The DEFCON status was raised and intelligence showed movement of Soviet forces.

- September 26, 1983 – False 'US First Strike' Alarm: Soviet early warning systems showed that a US ICBM attack had been launched. Colonel Stanislav Petrov, in command of the monitoring facility, correctly put the warning down to computer error and did not notify his superiors.

- November 1983 – Exercise Able Archer: The USSR mistook a test of NATO's nuclear-release procedures as a fake cover for a NATO attack and subsequently raised its nuclear alert level. It was not until afterwards that the US realized how close it had come to nuclear war. At the time of the exercise the Soviet Politburo was without a healthy functioning head due to the failing health of then leader Yuri Andropov, which is thought to have been one of the contributing factors to the Soviet concern over the exercise.

- January 25, 1995 – Norwegian Rocket Incident: A Norwegian missile launch for scientific research was detected from Spitsbergen and thought to be an attack on Russia, launched from a submarine five minutes away from Moscow. Norway had notified the world that it would be making the launch, but the Russian Defense Ministry had neglected to notify those monitoring Russia's nuclear defense systems.

In addition to the above there are two other points during the Cold War that could have resulted in world war. These, however, are not generally listed as they do not relate to the United States-Soviet Union rivalry, but rather the events following the Sino-Soviet Split of 1960. The ideological split between Maoist communists (represented primarily by China) and Stalinist communists (represented primarily by the Soviet Union) divided the entire communist movement worldwide – which controlled governments or significant rebel factions on most continents. Thus a war between China and the Soviet Union may well have resulted in world war, while not necessarily involving the U.S. and the capitalist west. The two points the communist powers almost entered into all-out war over were:

- March 1969, when border clashes broke out between Soviet and Chinese troops over Zhen Bao Island in the Ussuri River. In total, the Soviets suffered about 90 casualties to 800 for the Chinese. At the time there were almost one and a half million troops deployed along the border.

- 1978 and 1979, in which pro-Soviet Vietnam invaded pro-China Cambodia and removed Pol Pot. China in turn invaded Vietnam in retaliation and the Soviets denounced this action strongly, although it fell short of taking action. The next year the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and the Chinese claimed this was a continuation of a strategy of encircling China with Soviet allies that had begun the previous year with the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.
- Finally, since the end of the Cold War, there have been at least two points in the decades-long conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir which almost escalated into nuclear conflict.

But wait, I need to point out that WW III ceased to be hypothetical around the time I tried to watch 'The Day After' and ended up sleeping 100 days.

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I've got to tell you, right here and now, it was nothing like I imagined it would be. Not the war on our southern border, not the terrorist bombings, not the pandemics and certainly not WW III. I had as many things wrong as I had right; still we did confirm the nuclear winter theory and appeared to be confirming the volcanic winter theory. The thing about terrorists is they don't always tell you when they do something. They didn't announce those two pandemics, they just spread the primary pneumonic plague and smallpox without a word. As we were soon to learn, there were 3 pandemics, not 2 and no amount of isolation, no amount of antibiotics, nothing could protect us from the third.

Now you can sit around and wait for the other shoe to drop. If we do, that will finish up the terrorists part of this tale. I'm not telling you because, I'm waiting to receive the explanation from Gassville, Arkansas. Meanwhile, I have about 300 weapons, give or take to clean once I persuade someone to help me get them down in the shelter.

"Damon, could you help? I need to get those weapons in the shelter before they rust. It looks like I'm going to need about a case of Breakfree. Plus, I've got to get someone to show me how to dismantle, clean and reassemble the weapons."

He said I'd love to, Dad, if I can find the time. You see my new job's a hassle and the kids have the flu. But it's sure nice talking to you, Dad. It's been sure nice talking to you. And as I walked away, it occurred to me, he'd grown up just like me. Damon was just like me. (Cat's In The Cradle – Harry Chapin)

How long is a L55 gun? Figure it out: 120mm times 55 equals 6,600mm which equals 21.65'. I believe the longest barreled cannon is the German PzH 2000, a 155mm self-propelled cannon with a 52 caliber barrel. That's about 26.4' long. It can put shells out to 40km (assisted). <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/pzh2000.htm> Nobody asked, but I think we should buy our self-propelled howitzers from the Germans, theirs seem to be better. The maximum range on the M106 is 30km (assisted), but it only has a 39 caliber gun.

Rather than let the Germans build our weapons, we could license theirs. It seemed to be going that way before the war, anyway. We licensed the L55 gun for the M1A3 and H&K was working on the XM-8 and 25mm XM25. Speaking of which, The XM25 precisely delivered air-bursting munitions in all conditions, including MOUT and complex terrain. It's five times more lethal at the M203 maximum range and provided lethality well beyond the M203's maximum ability. The system was designed for optimum performance at 300 meters but will perform to 500 meters and beyond.

It included five different types of ammunition:

- Thermobaric
- Flechette
- Training
- High Explosive Air Bursting
- Non-Lethal

Wait, there's a round missing, the XM1049, AP and there's only 1 training round instead of 2. But, they did perfect the thermobaric round and added a Flechette round. In my very first story, I proposed using flechette rounds in Thumper, my 12 gauge Gatling gun. Man, did I ever catch hell for that. It's ok, I have some, I just don't talk about it anymore – they punch right through soft body armor. Soft body armor is available that is stab resistant, but used primarily by prison guards.

Next time I talk to Derek, I'll ask about getting some of M25 grenade launchers and all of the rounds. Not for me, I too old to mess with a gun that looks like that. I've got my original M1A, the shotgun and various other weapons. I have a gun rack on my wheelchair that resulted from modifying a commercial gun rack. The 9-gun rack is here: <http://gunracks.tylerrose.com/> I used a shrouded brass 177D Master padlock with 4 numbers set to the first 2 – 5th digits of my SSN, although most of the time I don't lock the padlock. http://locker.masterlock.com/combo_padlocks.shtml Right, Derek will just run down to the hardware store and Benson and buy some.

Do you know how long it takes to clean that many guns? Wrong, longer... first one has to figure out how to dismantle them, clean them and reassemble them. We sorted them by types so I only had to learn them one at a time. Because I loved the 7.62x51mm, I cleaned the G-3s first. Even the Russians got away from the .22 cartridge. Their AK-101 use the .223 (5.56x45mm NATO) and the AK-103 the standard 7.62x39mm. Most of the 100 series of AK rifles were made for the civilian export market and were available in .223 NATO (AK-102), the .223 Russian (AK-105) and the standard AK round (AK-104).

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By the time I had the guns cleaned and put away, they were planting the garden and the crops. Because of the weather, we had a very late spring. They could have helped and I'd have been done much sooner. I claimed the weapons as trade goods and was told I

could clean them myself. The attackers had multiple cases of ammo, hand grenades, RPGs and ammo for their machine guns. I used FM 3-23.30 to identify the various grenades, it was quite the assortment, although, most of them were RGD-5 fragmentation grenades. I didn't like them because a person could only throw them 40 meters and they had a blast radius of 30 meters – so they became trade goods.

The folks in Whetstone and Benson were more than ready to trade off the Mausers to get real assault rifles. I let the grenades go for 5 per ounce of silver, the RPGs for 5 ounces and replacement rockets for 2 ounces, plus a trade in for any rifle. Anyone need a Mauser 98? I traded the ammo, round for round, the Mausers wouldn't do me any good without ammo. We were doing a lot to get the economy up and running in hopes of maintaining the system of capitalism. I also wanted to get politically active, but at 70, wasn't sure I still had the energy. What was interesting about that was 3 years after the war we had virtually no idea who was running the country. I kept a few of the better guns, just in case.

Most folks, myself included expected FEMA to come dragging in sooner or later and try to take over what remained of the country. We especially thought later in light of their poor showing in New Orleans. Apparently the government figured that the big cities needed more help than little rural locations like Benson and Whetstone. Those stupid b*stards didn't even realize we had 7 train loads of military equipment and supplies. Derek's friend Joe had made that possible, it was just a shame he couldn't get here.

Our AO covered the area from Tucson to about 40 miles east of Whetstone plus forty miles north and south or ~ 6,400mi². If you can find an old map of Arizona, you'll soon realize that it was mostly desert. That same map will also show you how few roads there were in the area. We could have had enemy combatants hiding anywhere and if they were wearing civilian clothes we may never have known.

What did you expect, a life and death struggle with bullets flying here, there and everywhere? You're half right, don't beat yourself up, it was a life and death struggle, our primary enemy being mother nature, not the Latinos. One thing you can say about nuclear winter and volcanic winter is that they're not over until they're over. The effect of the caldera eruption served to contain the nuclear summer, keeping the weather cool, almost too cold to grow crops where we were.

I did get a combat (tactical) wheelchair, the one I had couldn't support me, my gun rack and the weapons. It wasn't quite as heavy duty as the one I'd had in a previous story, it would only handle about 500 pounds, but I was slowly losing weight offsetting the additional weapons I insisted on carrying. I even had a small trailer to hold my spare ammo, rockets and grenades. Bill or Derek had replaced that standard wheelchair battery with a big one giving me as much as 12 miles cruising range compared to my previous range of ~5 miles.

"Considering the weather, the crops don't look bad, how much of our supply of seeds did you use?"

"About 10% Dad, we held back in case we don't get enough heat and water."

"The water comes from the well, so you're telling me what we really need is sunshine."

"Maybe... I have a feeling that we're not going to get any kind of crop this year."

"Why?"

"If I could answer that, we might be able to do something about. Darned if I know, it's just a feeling."

"Everything seems to be growing fine, despite the limited sunshine."

"Don't count your chickens before they hatch, this is far from over."

"What would happen if we didn't get a crop?"

"There'd be a lot of people subsiding on our store of MREs."

"I guess I got ahead of myself trading off those weapons. I was more concerned about another group like the last one showing up and trying to take what we have. As far as the acreage goes, I know there's enough food to get through for 2-3 years. It doesn't appear to be a problem though, the garden and fields are doing well."

I hadn't figured on the 9th disaster, just yet. We already had about as much as we could take as a nation, my only solace was more liberals died off than conservatives, maybe there was still time to save our Republic. I should have pulled my head out of the sand, there were forces out there that were going to 'save' us. You know, the guys with the blue helmets. A few countries managed to avoid any serious damage from the war and were just now getting their act together, preparing to help us. Someone had invited them, guess who?

Sorry, that's not the disaster I was referring to, it first appeared in late summer. Our crops were doing so well, right up until the plants began maturing when something hit them, a blight of some kind. Blights have been with us for hundreds of years, remember the Irish Potato Famine? Perhaps Derek or Damon can explain it better than I, we'll get their input in a minute. At a particular point, each crop began to die off leaving us with nothing. According to the ham bands, this was widespread, affecting the entire country.

Suddenly, we had troops back on our southern border, this time erecting a blockade. Worse, Canada did the same thing, hoping against hope that whatever was ruining our crops didn't get theirs.

"Any idea what this is?"

"Some sort of blight, Dad. Blight refers to a specific symptom that can be expressed by plants in response to infection by a plant pathogenic organism. It is simply a rapid and complete chlorosis, browning, then death of plant tissues such as leaves, branches, twigs, or floral organs. Most blights are caused by a fungus or a bacterium, each different according to the plant species involved. I don't get it, this is affecting every thing."

"Have you asked Derek?"

"He's been pretty busy, Dad, why don't you try to pin him down?"

"I will if I can find him. Is it affecting every plant?"

"Yep."

"That's got to be unnatural, you don't suppose..."

"Suppose what?"

"Just thinking... what if those terrorists who spread the plagues also released some sort of engineered plant virus?"

"Jeez, I don't know, can you do that?"

"It wouldn't be simple. About all I know about growing plants is that you plant the seeds, add water and fertilizer and harvest the produce when it's ready."

"Derek said something about their discussing plant viruses when he had chemical weapons training, Dad, maybe you'd better ask him."

"Where is he?"

"Out on patrol again. He said he wouldn't send any of the men anywhere he wouldn't go."

"That reminds me of a song..."

That famous day in history the men of the 7th Cavalry went riding on
And from the rear a voice was heard
A brave young man with a trembling word rang loud and clear
What am I doing here??

Please Mr. Custer, I don't wanna go
Hey, Mr. Custer, please don't make me go
I had a dream last night about the coming fight
Somebody yelled "attack!"

And there I stood with a arrow in my back.
Please Mr. Custer, I don't wanna go forward Ho!! aww

Look at them bushes out there
They're moving and there's a injun behind every one
Hey, Mr. Custer – you mind if I be excused the rest of the afternoon?

HEY CHARLIE, DUCK YER HEAD!!
Hmm, you're a little bit late on that one, Charlie
Hooh, I bet that smarts!

They were sure of victory, the men of the 7th Cavalry, as they rode on
But then from the rear a voice was heard
That same brave voice with the trembling word rang loud and clear
What am I doin' here??

Please Mr. Custer, I don't wanna go
Listen, Mr. Custer, please don't make me go
There's a redskin waiting out there, just fix'in to take my hair

A coward I've been called, cuz I don't wanna wind up dead or bald
Please Mr. Custer, I don't wanna go forward HO aww
I wonder what the injun word for friend is
Let's see—friend-- kemo sabe, that's it
KEMO SABE!, HEY OUT THERE—KEMO SABE!
Nope, that ain't it

Look at them darned injuns
They're running around like a bunch of wild Indians-heh, heh, heh
Nah, this ain't no time for joking

Whetstone – Chapter 25

We were still waiting for Derek to put in an appearance so we could find out about what was affecting our plants. He was out playing Custer. If he'd have taken his tank, I'd have probably accused him of being out playing Patton, a man we both admired. They left the tank and the artillery units sitting right where they were, they could always call back if they got in trouble. Most of the time they had 3 HMMWVs, equipped with the Mk-19, a Ma Deuce and an M240. That's about as much firepower as they had on the Swift Boats back in 'Nam, hopefully it would be enough. However, I doubt they carried an 81mm mortar. Patrol Craft, Fast (PCF) Swift Boat, Eighty-four Mark I. I could be wrong, but I believe that's when they came up with what evolved into the Mk-19.

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Dad always figured that I was too busy being a soldier to worry about civilian concerns. Wrong-o. Civilian concerns become military concerns when they affect the safety, security, and stability of the region. So when my finely-honed Iowa farm boy instincts homed in on the corn crop Dad was raising, a little investigating caused me enough alarm to go for a little trip.

Ever wonder how much of the average diet is grain-based? Corn, wheat and rice, among them, accounted for 87% of all grain production, worldwide, and 43% of all food calories in 2003. Several developing nations depend almost exclusively on cereal grains for their food supplies. What's more, most livestock feed is composed of ground grains.

My point? All major cereal grains grown in North America are cereal grains except buckwheat. That means that they are grasses, just like sorghum, sugar cane, and bamboo. To round things off, around 50% of the world's calories come from cereal grain and sugarcane.

That twitch that got me was a premature firing of the corn, before the ears had fully formed. It was followed by an ergot-like blackening of the seed. Thus I got my first inkling of Poalic grain blight.

Poales is order of flowering plants in the monocotyledons. The order contains true grasses, sedges, reeds, and bromeliads. Poalic Grain Blight was a broad-spectrum disease that killed any plant in order Poales. I had to find out more, and fast. My long patrol turned into a run for Iowa State University and some of the best horticultural scientists in the world. From what I was seeing on the way up to Iowa, it looked like we had an honest-to-goodness epiphytotic (plant epidemic) on our hands.

Now God could certainly manage to come up with such a disease, but I'm pretty sure that man came up with this one. It was more effective than aflatoxins in that it was self-propagating and ruined the entire annual crop of cereal grains in North America in a matter of weeks.

Iowa State University boasts one of the finest horticulture departments in the world. The scientists there are always figuring out the newest and greatest developments in agriculture before most of us normal folks have even heard of biotech hybrids that allow the farmer to directly spray them with Round-Up. Shoot, the anthrax strain involved in the mail-order terrorism several years back was the Ames strain first identified at the USDA veterinary facility associated with the university and named after the town both are located in.

Now, I figured that if anyone knew what was going on, the eggheads at Iowa State would if it was still there. So, I took a little road trip to Ames, Iowa. Along the way, I gathered as much data as I could on the move, including samples of various crops affected by the disease.

Wouldn't you know it? Ames was still there, and so were the eggheads. My military ID was still valid so I pretended to be one of the National Guardsmen ordered to gather samples (lucky, huh?) and learned whatever I could.

What I learned was:

1. The disease affected all members of order Poales. That included all cereal grains like wheat, rice, and corn.
2. The disease was not very effective at self-propagation through a hard freeze since it destroyed the seed in more than 90% of the cases. So one long winter should eliminate most of the threat.
3. The disease had no preventative treatment and no cure. The seed heads that showed signs of ergot-like growth could not be eaten or used for anything because the growth was a composite of carbon left over from the metabolism of starches and toxins.
4. The toxins produced were deadly to humans in amounts as little as 7 parts per billion and livestock in amounts of roughly 5 ppb per 100 pounds of bodyweight. For example, a 500 pound hog could eat as little as 25 ppb of infected grain and be killed.
5. Any livestock that consumed the toxin was inedible even if they did not die due to accumulated toxins stored in body fat. Infected livestock had to be slaughtered and the carcasses destroyed to prevent further circulation of the toxins in the food chain.

So, we faced a very broad spread famine. Farmers faced ruin on a scale unheard of before. Tens of millions of people would die from starvation worldwide.

Billary and the Husslin' Muslim responded by nationalizing food reserves.

Now, Dad grows some nice tomatoes. The Arizona dirt produced some decent potatoes, too. I was looking forward to telling him that his produce and livestock now belonged to Billary so that she and the Husslin' Muslim could make sure that the military was eating enough as they policed the areas under marshal law (you know, the ones between the two oceans).

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Before I was so rudely interrupted by the storyline, I was talking about the Mk-19. The first version was a hand-cranked multiple grenade launcher called the MK 18. In 1966, the need for more fire power inspired the development of a self-powered 40-mm machine gun called the MK 19 MOD 0. This model was neither reliable enough nor safe enough for use as a military gun. Product improvements begun in 1971 resulted in the 1972 MOD 1, of which only six were produced. The MOD 1 performed effectively in Navy riverine patrol craft, and broader applications for the MK 19 were found. In 1973, the Navy developed the MOD 2, which featured improved reliability, safety and

maintainability. In 1976, a complete redesign resulted in the MK 19 MOD 3, which the Army adopted in 1983. The Army uses the MK 19 within the tactical environment for defense, retrograde, patrolling, rear area security, MOUT, and special operations.

I listened to his explanation, twice. If I had it right, the corn, wheat and oats were a total loss, but the alfalfa was ok. Alfalfa is a legume so that means we'd get beans but the guy growing the rice was out of luck. As far as our garden crop went, it appeared we'd be ok, only losing the corn. He went on and on, talking about growing cotton, flax, Mulberry trees and what not. It really gave me a headache because I had no idea what Mulberry trees had to do with anything.

Mulberry (*Morus*) is a genus of 10–16 species of deciduous trees native to warm temperate and subtropical regions of Asia, Africa and North America, with the majority of the species native to Asia. Mulberry leaves, particularly those of the White Mulberry, are also economically important as the sole food source of the silkworm, the cocoon of which is used to make silk. The White Mulberry is native to Asia. So, take care of your silk garments, we nuked the crap out of China...

The problem with my kid is he sometimes thinks like me. When I was his age, I was always about a decade ahead of where I needed to be. The next thing you know, he'll be talking about tall cotton. I explained that I saw it on the History Channel... how you make denim out of cotton. The History Channel, Discovery Channel and National Geographic should be required watching for would be survivalists. If you need to break it up a little, watch the Military Channel, I did. They ran a show called 'My War Diary'. It was about troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and made me happy I didn't go there.

At least it wasn't a total disaster, the livestock would have to eat leftover feed and fresh hay. We wouldn't have wheat or oats and the man down the road wouldn't get any rice. I hope you understood what Derek said, I'm not sure I did. If he's right, this virus won't survive the winter. However, the terrorist attacks took place almost 4 years ago, so I'm not so sure about that.

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Now that America has an Islamo-centric security posture, any danger that doesn't fit within the counter-fundamentalist framework tends to be ignored. That's sort of ironic, since the biggest military threats to democracy in the last century came from atheists.

Five years into the "global war on terror," the evidence suggested that Islamic radicals were real good at blowing each other up, but not so good at projecting power abroad. As long as western nations maintained halfway decent domestic security arrangements, the fundamentalists seem to be hobbled in repeating their one major success of Sept. 11, 2001. Given that fact – five years and counting without a second big terrorist attack in America – maybe we ought to be paying more attention to the kinds of state-based challenges that roiled the world so much in the past.

But we weren't. No one gave much thought to Russia's vast nuclear arsenal, which could still obliterate America in a few hours, even though that nation was reverting to authoritarian rule. Nobody seemed to care about China's buildup of naval forces, its development of long-range missiles, or its new fighter. And nothing decisive had been done to prevent North Korea's march towards an indigenous nuclear arsenal. Each of these countries wielded far more destructive power than the handful of nuts scattered across Arabia that we call al-Qaeda. But because al-Qaeda was a current irritant and other concerns seem less pressing, the capacity of US forces to cope with state-based challenges is allowed to atrophy.

The decay was most pronounced in the US Air Force, the service that would have to take the lead in coping with urgent threats posed by Russia, China and other industrialized countries. After 20 years of neglect, the Air Force's fleet of combat aircraft was older than the Navy's fleet of warships. During his four-year stint as defense secretary, current Vice President Dick Cheney killed the service's cold-war fighter programs, terminated the next-generation B-2 bomber at a mere 20 planes, slashed the future C-17 cargo plane program, and decimated every other facet of US air power.

Clinton's defense secretaries added back some planes that Cheney had cut, but delayed and decreased the next-generation F-22 fighter that was the centerpiece of plans for future air dominance. Then President Bush's long-serving Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld launched the entire US Department of Defense on a leap-ahead trajectory to military transformation that ignored air power for another six years.

The end result was that the US Air Force flew 45-year-old aerial refueling tankers using a plane retired by commercial airlines a quarter-century ago; its F-22 fighter program had been cut 75 percent even though the aging fighters it would replace were so old they operated under flight restriction; its production lines for C-130 and C-17 transport planes were scheduled for closure despite lack of adequate airlift; and the service had canceled its planned family of aircraft for replacing cold-war radar and reconnaissance planes. The only bright spot on the horizon was the tri-service F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, but Navy efforts to slash funding for JSF suggested the Air Force can't even count on that program going to fruition.

Air Force pilots have a favorite story they tell that captures the meltdown of American air power over the past 20 years. Brig. Gen. David Deptula was flying his F-15 over northern Iraq in 1999 when cockpit gauges went haywire and the fuel reading plummeted to zero. It turned out insulation on the plane's wiring had rotted away with age, shorting out the electrical system. The punch-line of the story was that Gen. Deptula was flying the same F-15 he had flown 20 years earlier as a young captain. But most of the people who tell the story don't know it has a new punch-line: Gen. Deptula's son, a first lieutenant, is now flying the same plane in the Pacific -- nearly 30 years after it was built. Maybe it's time the Air Force finally gets some new planes, before a real threat comes along.

Unfortunately, they didn't...

Dust off is the term those in the military use to describe a helicopter rescue of a wounded soldier or Marine. The pilots are flat out crazy, flying into the face of death to extract the wounded. Nevertheless, it was a capacity that resulted in 97% of our wounded soldiers surviving in 'Nam. By Desert Storm and the 2nd Gulf War – GWOT – those figures had been increased, primarily due to the medical staffs available when the injured soldier or Marine reached the hospital. It was, in 2013, mostly a fleeting memory, we didn't have a pilot to fly the old, worn Huey we found.

However, the Lord works in mysterious ways, it turned out we did have a pilot – a former Army dust off pilot, no less. The man, Jack Woody, wasn't a spring chicken, he'd flown in 'Nam. He claimed he didn't say anything because he wasn't current, no longer had a flying license and had too many Huey's shot up in 'Nam. No, he insisted, he hadn't lost his nerve, and, yes, he could probably still fly a Huey in his sleep (gee, I hope he doesn't). He'd rather not, but if push came to shove, maybe...

We persuaded a mechanic familiar with the Iroquois to go over the bird and come up with a list of parts he'd need to get the bird in 'near perfect' condition. You'll have to realize two things: 1) we have a recovery specialist – his name is Damon; and 2) Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, with it's AMARC facility, isn't that far away.

"Make sure your brother assigns a couple of squads to help you and provide security."

"Aw, Dad, I move better on my own."

"Make it 3 squads, want to go for a whole Platoon?"

"I'd better shut up while I'm behind."

"Do you have the list?"

"Yeah, what's he doing, rebuilding a Huey from a pair of skids?"

"Spare parts, son. They built those helicopters before you were born, he wants spares of everything."

"Where in Hell do I find a pair of M134 mini-guns?"

"Good question, they probably pulled the guns before they mothballed the birds."

"Well?"

"Well, what?"

"Where in Hell do I find a pair of M134 mini-guns?"

"I said it was a good question, I'd DIDN'T say I knew the answer. Do a Gunny Highway thing."

"Yeah right, how am I going to improvise, adapt and overcome the need for a pair of M134s?"

"Don't forget the spare barrels."

"You didn't answer my question."

"I didn't think you'd notice."

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The ammunition storage system for the M134 has a capacity of 4000 rounds of linked 7.62mm percussion primed ammunition. It is a crew served, electrically driven, 6 barreled, rotary action, percussion fired weapon, with a maximum rate of fire of 6000 rounds per minute. In the current crew served application the rate of fire is selectable at either 2000 or 4000 rounds per minute.

The XM214 Automatic Gun (aka the Minigun) was developed for use mounted in and on helicopters and light aircraft. Like most GE Gatling gun type weapons it had six rotating barrels and the potential for a absolutely incredibly high rate of fire. It was electrically driven, and had a firing rate that could be adjusted from 1000 rpm all the way up to a 6,000 rpm. In addition to that, it could be set to fire bursts from 30 to 1000 rounds. A real drawback to the higher rates of fire was the huge ammunition usage (166 shots per second) , and the power requirements, because firing it at full power it required some 3.2 hp to drive the barrel assembly.

First seen in the movie "Predator" in 1987, the hand-held Minigun has captured the harts and minds of He-Men everywhere, be it in games or in real life. The very image of Jesse Ventura as Blain, spraying bad guys with a veritable hail of bullets that issued forth from his Minigun Painless was so powerful that the weapon has been seen in both countless other movies and in games.

Even in real life the idea caught on surprisingly well. Apparently some of America's Special Forces guys saw Predator and realized that a hand-held Minigun would be a great asset for clearing out landing zones real fast. Having ample access to the needed equipment, they started experimenting. And ran into some problems.

The first was that the Minigun weighed in at thirty pounds, which was heavy, but carryable. A backpack with a thousand rounds of ammunition and a linkless belt to the Minigun weighed in at another thirty-five pounds. Backpacks with two thousand rounds weighed in at sixty-five pounds, and were totally unrealistic in size. Just the gun and the ammo weighed in at sixty-five pounds.

The second was that in the movie, the power for the Minigun had been supplied by a pair of truck batteries through a cable that simply ran over the ground, and up into the Minigun. Since those batteries weighed some 30 pounds each, it was obvious that only one could be carried by one person (in addition to all the other equipment the soldier was to carry). Thus, the weapon could never be fired at its full rate of fire.

The third problem was that even at "only" a 1000 rpm rate of fire the gun produces about 11 kg of recoil *continuously! And this amount of force increases geometrically in proportion to the rate of fire. Firing a large burst would result in the gunner being spun around by his own weapon, and spraying everything around him indiscriminately with bullets. Including his own comrades...

After some experimenting it was thus realized that the gun would simply be too heavy and cumbersome to be ever used in real life combat, and the concept was abandoned. No army in the world has a hand-held Minigun in its arsenal.

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"Whetstone base, got your ears on?"

"Yeah, they're attached. What's up?"

"We have two old dudes here on I-10 at the west exit. They say they're headed to Tombstone to get hats."

"Did you get their names?"

"Ron and Clarence."

"Is one of them short and pudgy? The other tall and thin and black?"

"Do you know them?"

"Find out if their last names are Brown and Floyd."

"That's affirmative."

"Son-of-a-beech. Escort the gentlemen to my house. Tell them that there's a tired old man who wants to see them."

"Wilco, we're 20 minutes out."

A fiery horse with the speed of light! A cloud of dust and a hearty 'Hi-Yo, Silver!'; Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear... the Three Amigos ride again! Hadn't seen Ron and Clarence since '07, figured they were probably both dead by now.

Palmdale wasn't that far NE of LA, 70 miles from downtown and about 50 miles from the Valley.

"Hey you ugly old f*art, I figured you were dead."

"Hey *sshole."

"Gar-ree, good to see you. How have you been?"

"Clarence, I've just been sitting around getting old and counting my millions."

"Yeah right."

"No, really. You didn't know that Sharon and I won \$52 million in the Lottery?"

"When?"

"Back in '07. Paid off everything and got the Hell out of Palmdale. Ron knew, I left him a message on his phone."

"I never got no damed message, Lyn must have erased it."

"Where are Linda and Shirley?"

"Not everybody made it though those damed plagues, Gar-Bear. Linda caught the smallpox and died."

"Gary, Shirley got an overdose of radiation when they bombed the Harbors. She and my sister were down at Ports of Call Village shopping for Christmas presents. Lost both of them. I should have been with them, but Shirley didn't want me to see what she was buying me."

"Made a fresh pot of coffee and there's Sweet and Low in that little cupboard next to the coffee pot, help yourselves."

"Where did you get coffee?"

"We stored a lot of food in the shelter before TSHTF."

"But, it's been about 3 years since the war."

"So? When we were broke, we kept about a dozen cans. Imagine what I did when we were getting a million a year."

"They nuked Sacramento. Did you take a single payment or 26 years?"

"26 years."

"That was stupid. How years worth of payments did you get?"

"I, we, got it all. Sent some people to San Francisco and cleaned out the Mint."

"Gary, what's with the Army?"

"Those fellas are friends of Derek's, Clarence. Like the tank?"

"Hey, uglier than me, you got any .223?"

"I told you to buy a case or two from Ammoman."

"And, I told you I didn't have \$250 to spare."

"Still got the Kel-Tec SU-16?"

"Yes. I have the 5 magazines you got me too."

"Need more?"

"What I really need is a real assault rifle."

"What flavor? You can choose from, well hell, why don't I just show you? They're all stored in the shelter. Come with me."

"I can't climb down that ladder."

"Neither can I, Ronald, we get to ride. You sit in that chair and push the button. It has limit stops and shuts off when you're at the top or bottom. If it's up, it can only go down and if it's down, it can only go up. It won't let you change your mind either, you have to get to the end and push the button again."

"Gary, you're not using your wheelchair?"

"Only when I have to Clarence. Say, can you guys stay over, or are you in a hurry to get somewhere?"

"We were going to Tombstone to get hats."

"They don't have any. All of their hats are in one of those storage buildings. I have them for trade goods."

"Trade goods? What did you do, turn into J.C. Penny?"

"You want it, I got it, provided of course you have gold, silver or something to trade."

"Hey *sshole, I've got something to trade. I'll trade not giving you a fat lip for a hat."

"Screw you, I was planning on giving you hats, but if you're going to act that way..."

"You love it and you know it."

"So help me I do. Even though I got a driver's license and have a pickup, I don't get out much and don't know most of the people in Whetstone or Benson. That dog that licked you is named Max. I'm afraid Missy got old and died, damit. The other dog is named Duke and he's Sharon's dog."

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"Ok, the room on your right is the armory and that room over there has the gold and silver in it. The room to your left is the generator room and has the utilities, spare parts and things like that in it."

"How many did you have down here when you used it?"

Whetstone – Chapter 26

"Just the family, including Mary's family. That's Derek's wife, fellas. Anyway, they bought quite a bunch of stuff with them when they came. HMMWVs, transports and that pair of Paladins, plus we got about 7 trainloads of stuff a friend of Derek's shipped to them just before WW III."

"So here you sit with enough equipment for a small Army, two towns that you trade with and you have a ton of gold?"

"I have more than that, Clarence. Dam it's good to see the two of you. Could you please stay? I mean, hell, we can pull in trailers for you to live in, get you new furniture, hook you up to the utilities and I've got enough guns that you can have almost anything that you want."

"Gary, I thought I saw horses."

"You did. And no. I didn't name my horse Selena. Say, how bad did Kalifornia get hurt by Long Valley blowing up?"

"Bad enough we decided to come to Arizona."

"Where did you come from?"

"Palmdale. We didn't really get much fallout from the terrorist bombs and once they got everyone quarantined during the pandemics, both the pneumonic plague and smallpox died out. By the time the war came, I'd pulled the swimming pool and replaced it with a shelter. Clarence and I and our kids stayed there during the war."

"Yeah, Gary and then after the war, we in fair to middling shape. Scrounged around Palmdale and the Antelope Valley and found enough to get by. We were doing real good until that earthquake and tsunami up north. We both figured the San Andreas would let loose, but Long Valley blew up instead."

"Where are your kids?"

"Gar-Bear, they all headed to Baja, if you can believe that! Anyway, Clarence and I decided to see if there was anything left of the country. I remember when you got that hat in Tombstone and we thought we'd start there."

"Fellas, I can arrange an escort and we can have a look around the town. If you want any of the guns and stuff from Tombstone, help yourselves. We cleaned the gun stores and several other places out because they were abandoned. It isn't really safe to be out without an escort, a few of the leftover Latinos from the border war are still around. Plus I think we may have a group or two from the prisons that have moved into the area."

I unlocked the armory and both selected M16A2s, M1911s, plus Colt .45s and Winchester carbines in .45 caliber. We sorted through the leather we'd collected and both found gun belts, holsters and scabbards for their carbines. I suppose we sat there most of the day talking about old times and how things had all turned out. Finally, Sharon called on our intercom and said supper was ready.

"Ron, Clarence, we're short on room, but I got you both rooms at the motel. Mary and Amy looked and found a pair of new trailers we can pull in, if you decide to stay. I hope steak, baked potato and mushrooms is ok for supper."

"You may not like it, Ron, it's not tri-tip."

"That place burned down. We've been eating lots of pasta, I hate it."

"So, Clarence, how many years do you have now?"

"Must be around 30, Gary, I quit counting. Are you still sober?"

"Gawd, I've got 15 years. There are times when I'd have killed for a drink, but it wasn't available. Now that it is, I'm not going down that road."

"That strip of buildings where they had the Palmdale Group, burned down too, Gar-Bear."

"What about High Desert Storm?"

"They closed up shop, couldn't get any more inventory."

"If you want to go back, I have around 100 Mausers."

"Keep 'em, they're better than hunting with bows and arrows."

"You don't believe things will get better? Ron, you were always the optimist who told me I was foolish. I told you to buy a couple of cases of ammo and get a portable generator, it was never a question of if, just when."

"I still keep an eye on the sky, Gary."

"Waiting for the rock to pop out from behind the sun?"

"Why not, we've had about everything else happen. What's left?"

"Clarence, we could have a Supervolcano at Yellowstone, La Palma could slide off into the Atlantic, what's left of the Latin Armies could try a second invasion, FEMA could show up and try and put us in camps or we could be attacked by a prison gang."

"My luck, I'll get bit on the butt by a rattlesnake," Ron laughed.

"How's the steak?"

"Best meal we've had in 2 or 3 years. You grow all of your own food?"

"We try to. Thing is something affected all off the grass crops this year. We lost our corn, wheat and oats. The neighbor who was growing rice had the same problem."

"Are you going to be short of food, Gary? If that's the case, we'd better move on."

"Clarence, even with as many people as we have, we're good for this year and next. Those people in town will have to get by on MREs when they run out of food, don't worry, we have plenty. So, shall we move in a couple of trailers?"

"I suppose we could stay for a while Gar-Bear. What's your fuel situation?"

"We have lots of diesel and a fair amount of E-85. Before the two of you try to go see the country, you'd better talk to Derek. A bunch of them went out to check on the crop situation and checked out much of the Midwest. He can tell you what you're up against if you try to go sightseeing."

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From the time the good citizens of Kalifornia passed Prop 13, it wasn't a good place to live. That was back in '78, just before I moved to Davenport for for the (Iowa) Department of Revenue. I had wanted to return to Kalifornia because I remembered what it was like in the '60s. By the time we made it in '82, Kalifornia was reaping what they'd sowed. The schools went from being tied with Iowa as the best in the nation to 50th place. The population of Kalifornia had soared with legal immigration. They also had a small problem with illegals. By the time Sharon and I won the Lottery, half of the homes in our housing tract were occupied with illegals.

One of the symptoms of what was happening was the 'white flight' to places like Reno, Las Vegas and Phoenix. I suppose I should point out that both Nevada and Arizona had one other blessing, reasonable gun laws. From what I've heard, the bottom of Lake Mead must be solid steel, what with all the guns that got lost on fishing trips. I'm rather certain that if we hadn't had the terrorist attacks and WW III, Broom Hillary would have succeeded in trying to seize many of the weapons.

It was what I told Sharon, 'Molon Label!' I meant it too. They could have my guns only when they pried them from my cold, dead hands. To do so now, they'd have to get by the 155mm artillery and several trainloads of equipment and ordinance.

Arizona is the 48th state, a real late comer. Although the state had changed in 100 years, it hadn't changed as much as the original 13 colonies. Most of Arizona is Desert county. Arizona is also known for its exceptionally hot summers and mild winters. Less well known is the pine-covered high country in the north-central portion of the state, which contrasts with the lower deserts of the state. I think maybe that northern area is on the Colorado Plateau. The Mongolian Rim is the edge of the Plateau. One of these days, we might get in the diesel Beemer and go sightseeing.

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Ron, Clarence and I were a matched set. Fleataxi gave us the name, The Three Amigos, probably based on the movie of the same name. For a long time, we were a tight group, but times change. I had sponsored Clarence's nephew, Fred, until he died. A well meaning doctor had put Fred on Prednisone and it eventually killed him. Prednisone is a drug that must be used cautiously, it affects either the adrenal glands or pituitary gland. Steroids, such as prednisone, are often used to treat asthma, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, and other inflammatory conditions. The drugs do wonders for symptoms, but at a price. When taken for more than a few months, steroids can cause bones to become brittle and break.

Back when I developed food allergies from too many years of drinking too much coffee, the ER frequently gave me a shot of epinephrine, another of ACTH and an Rx for 20 tabs of prednisone. I'd start with 4 tabs the first day, 3 per day for the next 2 days, 2 per day for the next 3 days and 1 a day for the next 4 days. I have some, although I'd have to think twice about using it, it raises a diabetic's blood sugar level. I suppose if I got a several allergy attack, I might do the 20 tab routine.

Speaking of drugs, I had a 6 month supply of everything before we won the Lottery. In addition, I had 500 Vicodin ES, about 700 0.5mg tabs of Xanax and 500 50mg capsules of Benedryl on hand at all times. There was also a bottle of 25mg capsules of Benedryl not to mention the KIO3. Let me explain how that happened...

For a long time, we were so poor, we relied solely on doctor's samples. Eventually, I got the insurance for Medicare Part D. That was no reason to stop getting doctor's samples and over the course of a year, I managed to build up a 6 month supply. After, I stopped getting the samples and rotated the drugs. One bottle of Vicodin would last the 3 of us about a year. I'd take in the empty Vicodin bottle and my doctor would write me a new Rx. He was a little casual and never indicated how many refills were allowed... I guess he trusted me. Anyway, it worked for me and after I had my stash built up, we started in doing the same thing for Sharon. BTW, I don't have any drugs to share.

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I told Mary to have the 2 singlewides pulled in and set. Ron and Clarence were driving a Nissan Titan, a flex fuel vehicle with the 5.6 liter V-8 Titan engine. We had a problem though, no corn meant no alcohol which meant no E-85, this year. We just have to get by with the 10,000 gallons we already had.

We didn't know it yet, but we were entering a period of reversal. Most of you know that after WW III, the odds favor the elimination of much of technology. In time, the satellites will stop working or fall to earth, no one will be building automobiles and there will be few food processors. For the prepared person, the transition will be mild, depending, of course, on your age. We seniors won't see a whole lot of the change and with any luck, we'll get you younger folks started on the road to self sufficiency.

My vision of the future doesn't see a lot of effective government for a very long time. That same vision sees at least two-thirds of the population eliminated. That still leaves 100 million of us, mostly shifting for ourselves. You can't make it on your own, while a small to middle sized group might. It's that old saw that there is security in numbers. However, with that comes a certain amount of insecurity, presuming there is in-fighting. If there is a major disparity between the haves and have not's, there is sure to be trouble.

The reason I brought that up was what I learned from Jerry D. Young in 'Percy's Mission'. The best way to keep what you have is to share it. While Jerry and I may not agree on what weapons to include in our survival packages, we do agree on including guns. A gun doesn't do you a bit of good if you can't shoot it and clean it. Neither doesn't it do you much good without ammo. Even back in Palmdale, I got a rifle and a couple cases of South African. I had enough oil to change the oil in my 7kw portable genset at least 10 times. I located a source and bought 2 pints of Pri-G.

Our shelves were fairly well stocked with enough food to last 6 months. The LDS Church recommends a 1 year supply, but a person has to start somewhere and I'm a Methodist. We had as much food as we had backup meds. We started out with some things and added others. IMHO, there is no such thing as being overly prepared. Just don't get so much of anything that will spoil on you.

Desert Doc had a word or two to say on the subject of salvage. He made it clear that a person can only do so much salvaging. Seventh Fleet also offered an opinion, unless I've very much mistaken. No one man or woman can know everything there is that a person needs to know. Family is so very important, as are friends. With age comes patience and let me say, right here and now, that the value of patience can never be over estimated.

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"Gary, you still telling stories?"

"Clarence, I never really stopped. Man, I can't say how much you've been missed."

"Hey uglier than me, I suppose you're already making plans for the 2 of us."

"Ronald McDonald, nobody is uglier than you. And sometimes, nobody is dumber. You just wouldn't listen to good advice, like how important it was to keep all of your important immunizations up to date. Before you start to threaten to knock all my teeth out, you just sit you fat *ss down and listen to a few things you should have considered."

"Gar-Bear, I listened more than you'll ever know. I'll admit that I probably should have done more to get ready, but that woman I was married to could be more stubborn than you can ever imagine. We were way ahead of you on stocking up on meds and you know it. When you didn't have a gun to your name, I had to buy a second and eventually a third gun safe. There were just some risks I couldn't take because of my background."

"Gary, you're too hard on Ron sometimes, you should give him some slack."

"Crap, we're all living on borrowed time, Clarence. At the moment, I can't afford to give anyone too much slack. Why aren't the two of you wearing the guns I gave you? There was a time when, if my rifle hadn't been leaning against my wheelchair, I'd have ended up dead. You both took those poodle shooters yesterday; today, I'm going to see to it you have some real guns."

"With all the guards you have around here?"

After they'd gone to the motel the previous evening, I'd returned to the shelter and got the last 2 remaining loaded standard model M1As, 2 Tac-Force chest harnesses and 18

loaded magazines. I put 3 grenades each of the end pockets and took everything up to the house.

"Here, use a man's weapon."

"Is that your rifle?"

"One just like it, yes. You have 8 mags in the vest, one in the rifle and 3 hand grenades in each end pocket. We also have 2 cases of LAWs rockets in my study. From now on, you don't go anywhere with out your rifle and handgun. Your rifles are in condition 3."

"What's that mean Gary?"

"Clarence, gun conditions are:

Condition 0 - A round is in the chamber, hammer is cocked, and the safety is off;

Condition 1 - Also known as 'cocked and locked", means a round is in the chamber, the hammer is cocked, and the manual thumb safety on the side of the frame is applied;

Condition 2 - A round is in the chamber and the hammer is down;

Condition 3 - The chamber is empty and hammer is down with a charged magazine in the gun; and,

Condition 4 - The chamber is empty, hammer is down and no magazine is in the gun.

All you have to do is pull back the operating rod to load the rifle."

"Do you have a scope on your rifle?"

"Not on my original rifle, no. I have a couple of the Super Match M1As and they have very good scopes. I've found that most of the time I do better without a scope. If it's a long range shot, I'll use a Super Match and Back Hills match ammo. If you don't want the scopes, they're easy to detach."

"What's for breakfast?"

"Belgian waffles, bacon and orange juice."

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Clarence admitted he still kept a eye on the sky, a person could never be too careful. They were shocked yesterday when they found out we had coffee. Ron had been even more surprised that I had Sweet and Low. I told him that I'd never completely given up hope and as far as coffee went, when you're a millionaire, you can afford to stock up on the important things. I given them each a carton of Marlboros the day before, primarily to keep them from bumming my Kools. Out in the shed were several cases of cigarettes but we didn't announce the fact. If you wanted something that was almost

worth it's weight in gold, it had to be cigarettes. However, a pack of cigarettes doesn't weigh that much.

After breakfast, I made sure they were properly dressed, ergo armed, and we went to check on their new trailers. The girls had been very busy, they'd stocked each trailer with food, ammo, smokes, linens and they had several pairs of jeans available so the fellas could dress in western attire. Next, we went to the building with the boxes of hats and got them each a genuine Stetson. It was the official hat everyone wore, especially the cavalrymen whose hats were different in that they were black and had been soaked in beer to break them in. Just to be contrary, I didn't wear a Stetson, there was nothing wrong with the black hat I had. Ron and Clarence both picked out grey hats.

"Everyone here wears a black hat, fellas."

"We're not from here, we're just visiting."

"Straddling the fence between being good guys and bad guys? The two of you lived in Kalifornia too long."

"We still do, Gar-Bear. It's a mite tough getting through the ash to our front doors, but we still have the property."

"Only 'til it rains. I hope you didn't leave anything you can't live without when you left."

"Brought all of my guns, if that's what you mean."

"It is. Clarence, bring your shotgun and .38?"

"Got 'em, but with the new guns you came up with, probably won't use 'em."

"Ready to go to Tombstone? Not much to see, but I can point out the OK Corral and other sights."

"We only wanted to go to Tombstone to get hats, *sshole. Who cares where Quiet Burp had a gunfight?"

"I gave you regular ammo for the .45s, I have cowboy ammo if you're a wuss."

"Gary, do you have someplace we could go shoot the guns and get used to them?"

"Got a range. It's a combined pistol and rifle range, you can shoot from 7 yards out to 1,000 yards. Might be a good time to get out baby and see if I can still hit the bullseye."

"Baby?"

"Barrett, M82A1 with Raufoss ammo, Swarovski scope."

"Just had to go first class, huh?"

"I don't shoot it much, too damed heavy to carry."

"Can you hit anything at 600 yards?"

"Don't know, I can't find Geraldo."

+++++

It seemed like the 3 of us were all moving slower, I'd met Ron in '92 and Clarence in '95. By that time, Ron was on disability due to his bad heart. Clarence worked for Los Angeles County, probably leaning on a shovel. I had just quit my job with Iowa and was working for a CPA in San Francisco. I was the numbers guy, Ron knew propane and Clarence road construction and repair. None of these things were particularly applicable now, after the war.

We harvested all the food that could be saved from the blight and relied on stored goods to fill in the grass crops that had been destroyed. In a way, the blight had done us a favor, highlighting how precarious our situation truly was. The only food we had was the food we grew ourselves. Most of the things we took for granted would soon be totally unavailable – things like pharmaceuticals, all manufactured goods. Basically that meant that one of these days none of us would have the drugs that were keeping us alive.

Derek had brought that up when he needed a new uniform, they were hard to find. He told me that the Army considers the life of a pair of BDUs to be 6 months. I mostly wore jeans and found I could get ~5 years from a pair. Typically I kept 3 pairs of jeans so I always had something clean to wear. I had taken to wearing golf shirts a number of years ago and had plenty. Still, by the fall of 2013, our clothes were beginning to look a little threadbare.

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No way the country could experience 9 disasters is there? Ask the folks in Xenia, Ohio about that. That was the super outbreak, 148 confirmed tornadoes in 13 states and one Canadian province. In my home town, on May 15, 1968, a violent F5 tornado tore a ½ mile wide path through the town from south to north, killing 13 people, injuring over 1,000, destroying over 500 homes, 90 businesses, 8 churches and 3 schools. You don't hear about the worst tornado in Iowa history much, , but I wrote National Geographic Channel anyway, asking if they were biased or ignorant.

Every one of the calamities I've described has the potential of happening, the real issue is timing. We've had terrorist attacks, wars with Mexico, and just under 800,000 years ago, Long Valley blew its top. About the only thing we haven't had, yet, is a Global

Thermonuclear War. Cascadia has subducted before and half of the fault line is locked, just waiting to let loose again.

Before we won the Lottery, we were not very well prepared. I wanted the bomb shelter but couldn't afford it. Like most Americans with a bent toward preparedness, I did what I could to get us ready. Considering the odds of winning the Lottery, everything else in this story pales in comparison. By now you all know me well enough that you know how I'd spend the money, I'm just confirming it. Why would we leave Kalifornia? Because, I really would like to be able to own a .50 caliber rifle. Kalifornia doesn't much seem like it's part of the US anymore. The Governor is Arnold, a RINO. When we moved to Palmdale, we lived in a nice little housing tract, just a typical middle class neighborhood. In 2006, we couldn't speak to most of our neighbors, we didn't speak Spanish. Some of them might be legal, but I really doubt it.

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After the border war, there were the local Hispanics, soldiers from south of the border and the illegals. The soldiers must have known in advance about the planned attack, they moved south before the missiles started to fly. I really had no idea how many of our cities, military bases and infrastructure had been nuked, it had to be considerable. Ron and Clarence seemed to think that as many as a dozen locations in Kalifornia had been nuked.

"A dozen? I can see San Diego, LA, Santa Barbara, San Francisco and Sacramento. Where else did they bomb?"

"Beale AFB, Travis AFB, 29 Palms and Ft Irwin, for sure. I think maybe they hit Lemoore NAS and Point Magu NAS. Where did they hit in Arizona?"

"Phoenix, of course; Tucson and Ft. Huachuca plus I think they took out the Palo Verde nuclear generating station."

"And you've had to generate all of your own power since the war?"

"Right, that's why Derek stopped in Tehachapi and reallocated some of their wind turbines. We have twice as many as you see, the reminder are being held back for later."

"How long do they last?"

"About 20 years with proper maintenance. We should have enough to last through our lives and the kids lives. It's some of the grandchildren that concerns me."

"Gary, they will rebuild won't they?"

"Clarence, have you seen any sign of rebuilding? Have you seen any sign of cleanup?"

"Just locally in Palmdale after the war. Now they'll have to dig out from the ash from Long Valley."

"They only source of electricity in Palmdale was the wind turbine that belonged to the Water District. We managed to get a small generator from harbor Freight Tools, but it was a piece of junk."

"Didn't you check Costco? They had the PowerBOSS 7kw portable generators."

"Not by the time we got there, they didn't. We weren't getting any gasoline deliveries either. I know you used some kind of fuel stabilizer, where did you get it?"

"West Marine on Sepulveda Boulevard in Van Nuys. That idiot clerk they had didn't even know they carried it. I started out with 2 pints, enough for about 500 gallons of gas."

"About?"

"Well, yeah. The ratio is 1 ounce of Pri-G per 16 gallons of gasoline. I only had 5 gallon gas cans and had to compute the amount. It turned out to be 9.25ml per 5 gallon can. I used one of those measuring things that you use to measure medicine for kids. I got close, but it would have been better if I could have gotten 50 gallons of gas at a time."

Whetstone – Chapter 27

"You didn't buy gas drums?"

"I planned to, until we won the Lottery. We emptied the house out, got it repainted and new floor covering and came looking for a place in Arizona. We were headed towards Tombstone when we ran across Whetstone. Sharon talked to a realtor in Tucson, that's where she found the listing. We started out with 20 acres then added another 20 and finally another 40. It was expensive because it came with water and mineral rights."

"So what's the deal with your house in Palmdale?"

"Still own it, if it's still standing. I don't suppose you went by and checked it out did you?"

"Yeah, it's occupied, by Mexicans."

"Why am I not surprised?"

"You're never going back there, are you?"

"Ron, I can't see any reason why I'd want to. I can't see any reason why the two of you would want to go back. If your kids all went to Baja, you may never see them again. If you wanted, we could put together a mission to go and look for them. Unless you know almost exactly where they ended up, we might never find them. Hell, considering our age, we'd be better off just staying here. As far as meds goes, we probably have some of what you take, we cleaned out several pharmacies. I don't know how long they'll last, but you're more than welcome to them."

"Gary, we did want to see some of the country."

"We have always wanted to see it too. I don't know about now, though, it might be risky."

"I don't see why, you have all of those Hummer with machineguns. Couldn't we take a couple of them for security and go sightseeing?"

"Gee, I don't know. We have to take one or two fuel haulers, a couple of supply trucks, the Hummers plus several operators. It could get very complicated. I think the first step would be to run it by Sharon. If she's willing, we'd have to run it by Derek, he's in command of the military group. Are you sure you want to do this, we don't know what we're going to run into?"

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"You want to go where?"

"We want to go see the country."

Ron and Clarence will only stay for a while and then they plan to move on. Clarence pointed out that we had Hummers with machineguns for security. I told him we'd have to take several trucks to haul fuel and supplies. I think it's my last chance to do something with the guys.

"Have you talked to Derek about this?"

"Not yet, I wanted to get your approval first. If you agree, I'll have to try and work out the details with him."

"Well, it seems like were stuck here whether we like it or not. Most of the things I'd want to see probably aren't there anymore. How long would you plan on being gone?"

"For as long as it takes, it could be up to a year."

"I'm not going on a year long road trip. If you really want to, go ahead. I can take over your banker responsibilities until you get back."

"Then, it's ok?"

"I'd rather you didn't, but you're 70 and a little old for anyone to tell you that you can't do something."

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"How would you make this trip, Dad?"

"We'd probably take I-10 to Jacksonville, Florida, I-95 to New York and pickup I-80. That would get us to San Francisco and we could take I-5 south to I-10 and return home."

"You'd probably hit almost every major city that got nuked in the war."

"We might, but we're really not sure which cities were hit."

"I don't know that I like the idea. Most of the major cities on your route were probably nuked. You have no intelligence on what you might be up against. You'd need either a tanker or two HEMTT fuel haulers, a HEMTT for food supplies and another for ordinance. I suppose you'd want 2 HMMWVs with Ma Deuces and one with a MK-19. Did I miss anything?"

"I don't think so, no. We'd want to take our own generator with us so we had electrical power."

"Where would you stay?"

"Probably in motels and if there was anyone around, I'd have the means to pay for the lodging."

"How many personal vehicles?"

"Probably one, my pickup. I think it would be better if all of our vehicles were diesels."

"You're talking about 8 vehicles. You're probably talking 10,000 miles give or take. If I figure 10mpg average you'd need at least 8,000 gallon of fuel. Dad, that's a lot of fuel for a pleasure trip."

"Can you make it happen?"

"I'd only ask for volunteers. Let me look into it and I'll get back to you."

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"Well?"

"Sharon said ok, but she won't come with us. Derek is seeing if he can get enough volunteers to drive the vehicles. We're just going to have to wait and see."

"If he can't work it out, let us know, we can still go on our own."

"Sure. You guys are lucky, you know. I hate steak and Sharon loves it. Having the two of you over for dinner every night means she can serve steak and I can like it or lump it."

"What is your favorite food, Gary?"

"Don't have one, Clarence. That diabetic neuropathy took out my taste buds, it all tastes about the same. Worse, the things I do like give me indigestion."

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I looked at the map and figured if we got as far as El Paso, we'd be doing outstanding. If we could get past El Paso, surely San Antonio would hold us up. It was hard to tell from the map I had, but most of the journey looked like open desert. I figured that meant it was farming country once we got to Texas.

Truthfully, I'd have rather taken a sharp stick in the eye than 'see America'. We didn't have to go any further than Tucson to see post war ruins. It's hard to judge the country from one city, but in the 3 years since the war, there hadn't been much done to clean up Tucson. What was left had been thoroughly picked over, about the only reason to go there was for spare parts for a vehicle, if you could find them.

We had rebuilt the smaller generator and serviced the larger generator. If the wind didn't blow, we'd still have power. Soy beans are a legume, we'd have biodiesel but no crops to produce alcohol. We'd finally set up those biodiesel converters and were running them 24/7. Each unit produced 55 gallons of diesel in 3 hours. Given the transition time, that meant about 5 loads a day times 4 or 20 loads of 55 gallons a day. It didn't take long to go through the soybean oil.

How much fuel do you use in a year? Figure 25,000 miles and 15mpg and the answer is: 1,667 gallons. Except we were stay at home folks who probably didn't drive 10,000 miles a year: 667 gallons. I had to use Pri-D in our fuel tanks to keep the fuel fresh. I also added Pri-Ocide although I'm not sure we needed it. By the time we had the soybean oil converted, we were out of storage places. The way Derek's bunch was running through fuel, that was a temporary problem.

After batting it back and forth Derek announced that he couldn't provide an escort for us to tour the county. He also threaten to sit on me if I insisted on going. He would, he said, provide Ron and Clarence a fuel trailer with 1,000 gallons of fuel and enough rations to last them for the trip.

"Sorry, partner, I can't go with you. You've got food, fuel, guns and ammo; however, I think you should reconsider."

"It was just dumb luck we ran into you in the first place, Gar-Bear. Are you going to let your kid tell you what you can and can't do?"

"I have obligations to the people here in Whetstone and Benson, fellas. I looked at the map and from here to San Antonio, you'd only go through a couple of large cities. I'll make sure you have everything you need, but I won't go with you. Neither of you seem to like the M1As so you can give them back and I'll give you some Mausers as trade goods."

"Tell Derek to load us up and we'll leave tomorrow."

One minute they were here and a minute later, they were gone. I sure hoped they stop back here when their trip was over. I told Mary to clean up the trailers and keep them ready for the fellas return, although I had little confidence I'd ever see them again.

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Apparently that blight was a one time deal intended to starved us all to death. If it had been better timed, it could have. Starting that fall we got many more people coming into the area trying to find food. There is a limit to Christian charity, although it's hard to say exactly what that is. Perhaps if someone is honest and says they're starving but are willing to work to earn food, one might be inclined to find some work. On the other hand, when they come in guns first, they get an entirely different reaction. I burned through the South African and was now using Lake City surplus. As bad as it must sound to you, we had a large pit and a truckload of quicklime (CaO). The quicklime helped with the stink.

Word must have somehow gotten out that the people in our area had food. The grapevine also must let them know that we were more than willing to fight to keep what we had. Sometime just before Christmas 2013, a very large group came in on I-10 from the west. The freeway and ditches had been blocked with those portable concrete medians. It was a short shot for the Paladins and a medium to long shot for the M1A3E3.

"Condition Black, we have a large group on west 10."

"How many?"

"Too many to count."

"Are they peaceful or looking for trouble?"

"What, you can't hear the guns firing? We need help here, bring up the tank."

Our artillery was pre-sighted (registered) for several distinct locations, like every place we had barricades and troops. We were using M795 projectiles, the replacement round for the M107. A Paladin is capable of a maximum rate of fire of 4 rounds per minute and a sustained rate of fire of 1 round per minute. I think maybe the barrels get hot or something. I can't tell you because the Air Force didn't have cannons when I was in.

"Target Zone A, fire for effect. Start close in and work the rounds back until the forward observer tells you to move them forward again."

"Right, L-T. You gonna take that tank and have some fun?"

"Bill will be in charge until I return."

In this case, close in meant ~200 meters in front of the barricades. The rounds they were using had the CCF (Course Correcting Fuse) The CEP was probably about 50 meters. To put it bluntly, that meant there was an area free of artillery fire that these bad guys were all trying to crowd into.

"Gunner, Beehive, Troops! Fire And Adjust! Caliber .50!"

"Dam L-T, that's some nasty sh*t."

"I like it, it gives them over 1,000 reasons to change their minds!"

The artillery was working its way back in the column and the tank was mowing down those in the front. A LAW rocket simply bounced off the front armor of the tank. While it was possible to destroy an Abrams with a rocket, you could only do it from the side or the back.

That battle didn't last long, although we did lose one HMMWV, to a LAW's rocket. We were able to salvage the M240, so it wasn't a complete loss. I figured this was our practice battle, when Broom Hillary figured out we had food, we'd be fighting the US Army. They didn't know what we had, we kept it under camouflage netting. You don't suppose they sent those people so they could evaluate our defenses, do you?

I'd better back up and give you more of the details of the fight. We had 4 dead and 37 wounded. For the first time, we hadn't gotten away unscathed. The opposing force had about a 50% fatality rate from the initial combat and a 100% fatality rate after we'd checked the wounded. I think Derek said that about half of their wounded would have died without treatment. Does putting them out of their misery qualify as Christian charity? I don't know, but they shot first. Condition Black? We were using the system the US military used in Iraq to identify roads: Green, Yellow, Red and Black.

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I had hoped we'd avoid dealing with the government. After Derek's 'secret' trip to Iowa (it was a secret to me) we pretty much knew what we were facing. As long as we used our seed, we'd be ok unless the wind brought in that what-you-call-it toxin, Poallic Grain Blight. Hell, I couldn't even pronounce it.

Anyway, one model of the M1A rifle is known as the 'White Feather', the M25. The name comes from Carlos Hathcock, the US sniper in 'Nam. Hathcock didn't actually use a M-25, he used the Winchester Model 70 chambered in .30-06 Springfield as his sniper rifle of choice (The pre-64 Winchester Model 70s the US Marine Corps used before adopting the Remington Model 700 were chambered in .30-06 Springfield).

Did you ever wonder why the announcer's voice on the military channel sounds so familiar? Like James Earl Jones voice over for CNN was so famous, Dennis Haysbert was the announcer beginning in 2004. You know him, he used to do Allstate ads and played Jonas 'Snake Doctor' Blane in 'The Unit'. You might have seen him in "Goodbye Bafana" where he played the role of Nelson Mandela (2007). Or, you might have seen him in "Breach" (2007), which was based on the true story, FBI upstart Eric O'Neill enters into a power game with his boss, Robert Hanssen, an agent who was ultimately convicted of selling secrets to the Soviet Union. Haysbert played Dan Plesac.

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The U212 submarine is capable of long-distance submerged passage to the area of operation. The German Navy has ordered four of the submarines.

The Type 212 is being constructed by Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft GmbH (HDW) of Kiel and Thyssen Nordseewerke GmbH (TNSW) of Emden. HDW is responsible for the bow sections and TNSW for the stern section. HDW is assembling the first and third vessels, TNSW the second and fourth. U31, the first of class, was launched in March 2002 and commissioned in October 2005.

The second, U32, was launched in December 2003 and was also commissioned in October 2005. The third, U33, was launched in September 2004 and commissioned in June 2006. U34 was launched in July 2005 and is scheduled for delivery by the end of 2006.

In September 2006, the German Navy ordered two further U212 submarines, to be delivered in 2012/2013. The new vessels will have improved network-centric communications, combat system and sensors.

Two U212 submarines are being built by Fincantieri for the Italian Navy. The first, S526 Salvatore Todaro, was launched in November 2003 and was commissioned in June 2005. The second, Scire, was launched in December 2004 and was commissioned in 2007.

The Type 212 is equipped with a highly integrated command and weapons control system which interfaces with sensors, weapons and navigation system. The system is based on a high-performance databus and a distributed computer system, the Basic Command & Weapons Control System (Basic CWCS) supplied by Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace of Norway under the trade name MSI-90U.

There are six torpedo tubes in two groups of three. Type 212 is equipped with a water ram expulsion system for torpedo launch. The submarine is equipped with the DM2A4 heavyweight torpedo weapon system from Atlas Elektronik.

EADS Systems & Defence Electronics and Thales Defence Ltd have been awarded a contract to develop the FL1800U electronic warfare system for the German and Italian Navies' U212 submarines. The 1800U is a submarine version of the FL1800 S-II which is in service on the Brandenburg and Bremen Class frigates.

A consortium lead by ATLAS Elektronik and ELAC are responsible for the development of the TAU 2000 torpedo countermeasures system. TAU 2000 has four launch containers, each with up to ten discharge tubes equipped with effectors.

The effectors are small underwater vehicles, similar in appearance to a torpedo. The effectors are jammers and decoys with hydrophones and acoustic emitters. Multiple effectors are deployed in order to counter torpedoes in re-attack mode.

The submarine is equipped with an integrated DBQS sonar system which has: cylindrical array for passive medium-frequency detection; a TAS-3 low-frequency towed array sonar; FAS-3 flank array sonar for low- / medium-frequency detection; passive ranging sonar; and hostile sonar intercept system. The active high-frequency mine detection sonar is the Atlas Elektronik MOA 3070.

The search periscope is the Zeiss Optronik SERO 14 with optical rangefinder, thermal imager and global positioning system. The Zeiss SERO 15 attack periscope is equipped with laser rangefinder.

The propulsion system combines a conventional system consisting of a diesel generator with a lead acid battery, and an Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) system, used for silent slow cruising, with a fuel cell equipped with oxygen and hydrogen storage. The system consists of nine PEM (Polymer Electrolyte Membrane) fuel cells, providing between 30kW and 50kW each.

For higher speeds, connection is made to the high-performance lead acid battery. An MTU 16V-396 diesel engine powers the generator from Piller GmbH for charging the battery installed on the lower of the two decks at the forward section of the submarine.

The diesel generator plant is mounted on a swinging deck platform with double elastic mounts for noise and vibration isolation. The propeller motor is directly coupled to the seven-bladed screwback propeller.

HDW has developed the Type 214 submarine, which is a further improvement on the Type 212. The Greek Navy has ordered three Type 214 submarines. The first, Papanikolis (S120), was built at the HDW Kiel shipyard and was launched in April 2004. It is scheduled to commission in 2006.

Hellenic Shipyards will build the second (Pipinos S121) and third (Matrozos 122) vessels at Skaramanga, for commission in 2008-09. Hellenic Shipyards was acquired by HDW in May 2002. A fourth vessel, Katsonis (S123), was ordered by Greece in June 2002 and is expected to commission in 2010.

South Korea has also ordered three Type 214, to enter service in 2007, 2008 and 2009. These are being built by Hyundai Heavy Industries. The first, to be called Admiral Sohn Won-il, was launched in June 2006. The submarines will form the KSS2 Class.

The Type 214 will have an increased diving depth of over 400m, due to improvements in the pressure hull materials. Hull length is 65m and displacement 1,700t. Four of the eight torpedo tubes will be capable of firing missiles.

Type 214 submarines for the Hellenic Navy will be armed with the WASS (Whitehead Alenia Sistemi Subaquei) Black Shark heavyweight torpedo. The Black Shark is a dual-purpose, wire-guided torpedo which is fitted with Astra active / passive acoustic head and a multi-target guidance and control unit incorporating a counter-countermeasures system. It has an electrical propulsion system based on a silver oxide and aluminum battery.

Performance of the AIP system has been increased with two Siemens PEM fuel cells which produce 120kW per module and will give the submarine an underwater endurance of two weeks. A hull shape which has been further optimized for hydrodynamic and stealth characteristics and a low-noise propeller combine to decrease the submarine's acoustic signature.

The Integrated Sensor Underwater System ISUS 90, from ATLAS Elektronik integrates all sensors, command and control functions on board the submarine. BAE Systems provides the Link 11 tactical data link. The sensor suite of the U214 submarine consists of the sonar systems, an attack periscope and an optronic mast. The submarine's electronic support measures system and global positioning system sensors are also installed on the optronic mast. <http://www.naval-technology.com/projects/>

It's the quietest submarine in the world when it's running on fuel cells.

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"I'm confused, who is the enemy?"

"We have several, Dad – do you want a breakdown?"

"Start at the top and work your way to the bottom. Go slow, or I'll have to write it down."

"At the top of the heap is Billary and the Husslin' Muslim. Next in line would be the starving people all over the county. Third, and probably final, are the leftover Latinos."

"Crap. I let my 2 amigos go out in that?"

"How could stop them? You old guys are all alike, bullheaded! If they manage to avoid getting their *sses shot off, maybe they'll be back."

I can't remember anymore, but I think Ron is the oldest followed by Clarence and I am the youngest. It might not be important, but after the shoot out last week, I became very conscious of my age. Next birthday, I'll be 71, I should live so long. Ron and Clarence would be lucky to outlive me, all they had were M16s.

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We couldn't recover all of the weapons this time, you'd be surprised what those canister rounds do to a weapon. The attackers had been organized to a degree, the guys in front mostly had AKs or a variation. Those variations included the AKM, SKS, AKS and the rifles built in China, the type 56, etc. What they had in common was the 7.62x39mm cartridge. Some were real junk and some really good rifles. I didn't bother with the Commie guns, I was looking for a few 'good' men who had real rifles, either the Garand or the M1A. About the only foreign gun I'd consider were the FN FALS and the H&K firearms. That included the G-3, HK-91, HK-93 and the G-36. The 93s and 36s were more out of curiosity, they're .223s.

With a little help from Damon and Aaron, we managed to collect ~40 rifles. 15 of them were M1As, I was in heaven. There were other 7.62 NATO rifles, 7 to be specific. I could clean a G-3 but the HKs and FN FALs required a new learning tree. At least these guy had a fair number of magazines, finding a rifle with only a couple of magazines was frustrating, to say the least. We found 25 of the 1,260 round cases of South African, a real bonus.

On the list of the top 10 military firearms of all times the M-14 came in 10th, the Mattel toy gun came in second and the AK first. I didn't care what the Military Channel thought, the M-14 rifle would have been near the top if it had a longer service life. It was basically a Garand that had been modified to accept a box magazine and new cartridge. The Garand only came in 4th. I gave you the list in 'The New Crusades'.

The town folks were having a heyday collecting the usable weapons. Damon tried to grab as many of the LAWs rockets as he could but we had those and I was more interested in the rifles. Still, he didn't do too badly, he collected 60 of the LAWs and another 24 of the M136 AT-4. The thing I like about the LAWs rocket is that it gives you a miniature, highly portable cannon.

Although the new M72 family of weapons is designed primarily to defeat light armor, these weapons retain a moderate capability against main battle tanks when engaged from top, side and rear angles of attack. They are also effective against concrete and brick walls, as well as both hasty and prepared field fortifications.

These next generation M72LAWs are affordable, highly proliferable weapon systems, compatible with the needs of most modern armed forces. The new M72LAWs offer greater lethality, increased range, better accuracy, and more versions of the M72. These improved capabilities are provided without significantly increasing system size, weight, complexity, or cost. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the military ordered more of the LAWs rockets. They were a slightly improved version with a slightly improved range and more accurate fire. Regardless, the main thing was you could carry from one to three of them on the wheelchair.

Back in the late '70s and early '80s, one of the big gun debates (besides the perpetual battle to preserve the 2nd Amendment) was which was a better rifle: the HK91 or the FN-FAL? Both the M14 and .308 Galil were rarely mentioned in these debates.

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Remember, we're talking pre-SR25 days when the HK91 was \$350-\$400 apiece.

Function? The HK91 is based on the roller locked delayed (or retarded) blowback action. Brass must be a certain hardness or the barrel fluted for it to function properly (the latter is done). It shares the same operating system as found on the MP-5 SMG. Like Rich says, the HK is a dependable system. HKs are tougher on the brass than the FN-FAL so if you're a reloader, be warned. They are very durable and were known for their accuracy. Gee, they even made a couple sniper versions of it too and because of its operating system, was easier to make into a successful sniper rifle (fewer operating parts). The receiver did have to be stiffened to reduce the twisting on firing. Getting back to the HK91, gun for gun I think they're more accurate than the FN.

The FN-FAL is a gas operated system which, thanks to its four position gas system, may be adjusted to various loads - which makes it less ammunition sensitive than the HK (or the M14). Attempts to make this rifle into a sniper arm was not as successful as for the HK (too many moving parts to contend with).

Handling qualities: The FN feels nice, balanced and very comfortable. the HK, thanks to its bolt carrier, is top heavy (scope it and its worse). The HK jungle handguard is bulky and even worse if you put the bipod on (but it promotes faster barrel cooling than the HK slimline forearm): cocking - handle is on the receiver and closer to the hand on the FN. On the HK, handle is on the tube mounted above the barrel and requires an extension of the arm to cock it. Not that I've ever found it to be a disadvantage. Overall, I'd give the FN the advantage here.

Of course, you should also consider other tangible factors: scope (my guess is about \$100 for a scope base for the FN-FAL and about \$350 for an ARMS scope base for the HK)?; extra large capacity magazine prices (about the same for both - \$20), carrying handle (use to be standard on the FN and option on the HK - which means extra money and if you want the ejection port buffer, I don't think you can put the carrying handle on); Sights - there are a couple of optional iron sights for the FN, but the HK has an optional 1200 meter iron sight which is very nice (and will cost you over \$100); Slings - the HK is more versatile especially with the ambidextrous sling swivels and that wonderful multiuse web sling of theirs. Of course, you can always buy a combat sling for the FN; 22 conversion kits - may still be available for the HK but pricey (cheaper to buy a 10/22). HK use to make it for the FN-FAL, but I don't know if any were imported into this country.

Servicing: Well, it's easy to do simple armorer's work on the HK with a few punches. I don't really think you need many screwdrivers except for the sights and maybe for disassembling the stock (why would one ever do that?). Specialized tools are too pricey for even most gunsmiths to consider (receiver tube straightener, jigs to swage in barrels) and that stuff is best left to H&K. There are surplus parts kits, but these are from retired (and probably worn) service rifles. Service manuals - I guess you can find them at gun shows and they use to be around all the time. BTW, the trigger group is not that hard to disassemble, but don't try it with a Set-Trigger of the MSG90 or PSG-1. You have to be a clockmaker to understand their set trigger and even my instructor had to pull a fresh one off the shelf to reassemble one.

FN-FAL requires about a dozen tools for a basic armorer's kit (about \$150 I guess) and like the HK, really isn't too hard to work on. Parts are easier to come by for the FN but you should be careful about inch v. metric v. Isahpore. Another advantage is that there's a domestic source for new receivers here in this country. It is unknown whether they obtained blue prints from FN or whether it is a product of reversed engineering. Manuals are out there and an excellant book to supplement it with is Blake Steven's \$110 masterpiece, "The FN-FAL Rifle."

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War is hell. But it's worse when the Marines bring out their new urban combat weapon, the SMAW-NE. Which may be why they're not talking about it, much.

This is a version of the standard USMC Shoulder Mounted Assault Weapon but with a new warhead. Described as NE - "Novel Explosive"- it is a thermobaric mixture which ignites the air, producing a shockwave of unparalleled destructive power, especially against buildings.

A post-action report from Iraq describes the effect of the new weapon: "One unit disintegrated a large one-storey masonry type building with one round from 100 meters. They were extremely impressed." Elsewhere it is described by one Marine as "an awesome piece of ordnance."

It proved highly effective in the battle for Fallujah. This from the Marine Corps Gazette, July edition: "SMAW gunners became expert at determining which wall to shoot to cause the roof to collapse and crush the insurgents fortified inside interior rooms." The NE round is supposed to be capable of going through a brick wall, but in practice gunners had to fire through a window or make a hole with an anti-tank rocket. Again, from the Marine Corps Gazette:

"Due to the lack of penetrating power of the NE round, we found that our assault men had to first fire a dual-purpose rocket in order to create a hole in the wall or building. This blast was immediately followed by an NE round that would incinerate the target or literally level the structure."

The rationale for this approach was straightforward:

"Marines could employ blast weapons prior to entering houses that had become pillboxes, not homes. The economic cost of house replacement is not comparable to American lives...all battalions adopted blast techniques appropriate to entering a bunker, assuming you did not know if the bunker was manned."

The manufacturers, Talley, make bold use of its track record, with a brochure headlined Thermobaric Urban Destruction."

The SMAW-NE has only been procured by the USMC, though there are reports that some were 'borrowed' by other units. However, there are also proposals on the table that thousands of obsolete M-72 LAWs could be retrofitted with thermobaric warheads, making them into effective urban combat tools.

But in an era of precision bombs, where collateral damage is expected to be kept to a minimum, such massively brutal weapons have become highly controversial. These days, every civilian casualty means a few more "hearts and minds" are lost.

Thermobaric weapons almost invariably lead to civilian deaths. The Soviet Union was heavily criticized for using thermobaric weapons in Afghanistan because they were held to constitute "disproportionate force," and similar criticisms were made when thermobarics were used in the Chechen conflict. According to Human Rights Watch, thermobaric weapons "kill and injure in a particularly brutal manner over a wide area. In urban settings it is very difficult to limit the effect of this weapon to combatants, and the nature of FAE explosions makes it virtually impossible for civilians to take shelter from their destructive effect."

So it's understandable that the Marines have made so little noise about the use of the SMAW-NE in Fallujah. But keeping quiet about controversial weapons is a lousy strategy, no matter how effective those arms are. In the short term, it may save some bad press. In the long term, it's a recipe for a scandal. Military leaders should debate human right advocates and the like first, and then publicly decide "we do/do not use X".

Otherwise when the media find do find out – as they always do -- not only do you get a level of hysteria but there is also the charge of “covering up.”

The good news is Human Rights Watch is a distant memory. The better news is that some of the M72s had thermobaric warheads. We didn't find any of the SMAWs, but we didn't really know what we were looking for.

Volumetric weapons include thermobaric and fuel-air explosives (FAE). Both thermobaric and FAE operate on similar technical principles. In the case of FAE, when a shell or projectile containing a fuel in the form of gas, liquid or dust explodes, the fuel or dust like material is introduced into the air to form a cloud. This cloud is then detonated to create a shock wave of extended duration that produces overpressure and expands in all directions. In a thermobaric weapon, the fuel consists of a monopropellant and energetic particles. The monopropellant detonates in a manner similar to TNT while the particles burn rapidly in the surrounding air later in time, resulting an intense fireball and high blast overpressure. The term "thermobaric" is derived from the effects of temperature (the Greek word "therme" means "heat") and pressure (the Greek word "baros" means "pressure") on the target.

Thermobaric compositions are fuel rich high explosives that are enhanced through aerobic combustion in the third detonation event. Performance enhancement is primarily achieved by addition of excess metals to the explosive composition. Aluminum and Magnesium are the primary metals of choice. The detonation of Composite Explosives can be viewed as three discrete events merged together. All three explosive events can be tailored to meet system performance needs:

1. The initial anaerobic detonation reaction, microseconds in duration, is primarily a redox reaction of molecular species. The initial detonation reaction defines the system's high pressure performance characteristics: armor penetrating ability.
2. The post detonation anaerobic combustion reaction, hundreds of microseconds in duration, is primarily a combustion of fuel particles too large for combustion in the initial detonation wave. The post detonation anaerobic reaction define the system's intermediate pressure performance characteristics: Wall/Bunker Breaching Capability.
3. The post detonation aerobic combustion reaction, milliseconds in duration, is the combustion of fuel rich species as the shock wave mixes with surrounding air. The post detonation aerobic reaction characteristics define the system's personnel / material defeat capability: Impulse and Thermal Delivery. Aerobic combustion requires mixing with sufficient air to combust excess fuels. The shock wave pressures are less than 10 atmospheres. The majority of aerobic combustion energy is available as heat. Some low pressure shock wave enhancement can also be expected for personnel defeat. Personnel / material defeat with minimum collateral structure damage requires maximum aerobic enhancement and the highest energy practical fuel additives: Boron, Aluminum, Silicon, Titanium, Magnesium, Zirconium, Carbon, or Hydrocarbons.

Thermobaric materials can provide significantly higher total energy output than conventional high explosives. The majority of the additional energy is available as low pressure impulse and heat. I think we're going to need those weapons, we have food. If Hillary came looking, we'd need nuclear weapons!

You may recall that one of the new munitions for the M25 was also thermobaric. Derek couldn't understand why we needed thermobaric grenades or rockets. In MOU operations, they'd be the perfect weapon for clearing a house or whatever.

But I was talking about the guns we recovered before I distracted myself, wasn't I? 22 of the 40 rifles we recovered were 7.62x51mm. All were serviceable and had enough extra magazines. Plus we had more than a case of ammo per rifle. Damon and I took the guns and ammo to Ron's trailer along with the 60 LAWs and 24 M136s. He helped me get an empty Mauser rifle rack from the shelter and we proceeded to clean the weapons, setting up an armory in a spare bedroom.

"What do you want to do with the .223s?"

"We'll keep 'em. You know Ron and Clarence, they like the BB guns. We probably ought to move a few cases of the .223 ammo in here together with a couple of cases of grenades."

"You act like you think they're coming back."

"Derek made it to Iowa and back and he's not half a mean as either Ron or Clarence. When they first left, I felt like I'd never see them again. That was before I knew about Broom Hillary and her Executive Order. If nothing else, they'll be back to get explosives so they can hunt her down."

"Say, I got caught up on reading your stories, you really don't like President's, do you?"

"You left out Geraldo. I don't like politicians, lawyers and reporters, in no particular order. I never cared for Geraldo, but when he drew the map in the sand, he became a viable target."

"But that was 10 years ago."

"So, do you think he's really changed? There are a few others I dislike more, most of them worked for the Communist News Network or the Communist Broadcast System."

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Ron and Clarence made it as far as Louisiana. They ran into trouble just NW of New Orleans. According to Clarence, the only thing they could figure was that someone mistook them for FEMA. FEMA had been delayed getting to New Orleans back in 2005 because the Governor wouldn't let the President federalize the Louisiana National

Guard. Then when Dubya got his teet in the wringer, he fired Brownie. I seriously doubt they'll ever get New Orleans rebuilt now.

"New ventilations scheme?"

"I'm just lucky they didn't get the radiator, Gar-Bear."

"Why didn't you get out your elephant rifles and return fire? Whaz the matter you short on .338 Winchester magnum and .375 H&H magnum?"

"I thought about it until I heard the Rebel yell. Clarence said, 'Oh, oh', and I went pedal to the metal." <http://www.26nc.org/History/RebelYell/main.htm>

"You guys missed out on the fun."

"What fun?"

"We were attacked by several hundred men. We used the artillery and Derek's tank with canister. We had 4 dead and 37 wounded, they took 100% casualties. Anyway, I collected any weapons worth having, cleaned them and stored them in your spare bedroom partner. There are also some of the newer version of the LAW rocket and a few AT-4s. We added some .223 and a few grenades."

"How'd you make out on the crop? Do you know what caused the failure?"

"Something called the Poalic Grain Blight. If you want to know more, ask Derek."

"Well crap, we can't go back to California and we can't take our sightseeing trip. What now?"

"Other than they cleaned up your trailers and changed the linens they're the same as you left them, stay here."

"Gary, what we gonna do if'n we stays here?"

"Fight the wicked witch from the east, Broom Hillary."

"She'll never get the Army to help her attack American citizens!"

"I suppose that means we'll be fight the Blue hats."

"That's different, where do I sign up?"

"Count me in Gary."

"Say, you didn't say why we're fighting."

"She issued an order claiming all of the food for the government."

"She can't do that."

"Sure she can, she did it. The only question is, 'Can she get away with it?' I don't believe we've attracted any attention, so far. Cross your fingers and hope it stays that way. The day may dawn when fair play, love for one's fellow men, respect for justice and freedom, will enable tormented generations to march forth triumphant from the hideous epoch in which we have to dwell. Meanwhile, never flinch, never weary, never despair."

"Who said that?"

"Winston Churchill."

"Can we repulse them if they attack?"

"Ron, we have 2 Paladins and 1 tank. We have one Huey for Dust Off. They have an Air Force, Army, Navy and maybe Marines. What do you think?"

"We're screwed."

"However..."

"What?"

"We have Stinger's that have their IFFs disabled. That could help with the Air Force. We have hundreds of square miles of desert that we know and they don't. That could help with the Army. We have 300 combat experienced American soldiers, that's worth a Division of UN troops. If they use an aircraft to take recon photos, there is nothing visible from the air to give them a clue as to our military power. We'll just fight a 4th Generation War, most disciplined military units can't cope with that."

"Bullsh*t. What's the bottom line?"

"Oh, that. We'll probably get killed, but they'll wish they never invaded Arizona."

"Well, let's get a look at those weapons."

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Clarence later asked me what a 4th Generation war was. I told him like the war in 'Nam and the war in Iraq, an insurgency. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Generation_War
One website used to have thousands of pages on the subject of 4th Generation War.
<http://www.d-n-i.net/>

If the US ever has another internal war, like the 'Civil War' or the 'War of Northern Aggression', it will no doubt be a 4th generation war. ***Pax Americana*** is a great example of that statement. So is ***The Battle of the Jakes***. Given the absolute power of our modern military, it would be nearly impossible to go head-to-head with them. It is nearly inconceivable that any President could manage to get the American military to wage war on the American people. However, there is nothing to preclude a President from calling on the UN to help restore law and order.

Until George Bush became President, I couldn't conceive of any President turning on the American people. That's not to condemn Bush, but to identify when the concept became plausible. Can you imagine Hillary and Obama in the White House? I have concluded anything is possible. In this final work, I have examined a series of disasters that could happen. Not one of them is impossible although having them all occur in such a short sequence is highly unlikely. Never say Never! Bob Dylan was never more right than when he sang, "The Times They Are a-Changin'."

Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you
Is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.

Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin
And there's no tellin' who
That it's namin'.
For the loser now
Will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin'.

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt

Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside
And it is ragin'.
It'll soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'.

Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is
Rapidly agin'.
Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'.

The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is
Rapidly fadin'.
And the first one now
Will later be last
For the times they are a-changin'.

© Bob Dylan 1964, renewed 1991

His most famous song:

How many roads must a man walk down
Before you call him a man?
Yes, 'n' how many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
Yes, 'n' how many times must the cannon balls fly
Before they're forever banned?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

How many times must a man look up
Before he can see the sky?

Yes, 'n' how many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

How many years can a mountain exist
Before it's washed to the sea?
Yes, 'n' how many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?
Yes, 'n' how many times can a man turn his head,
Pretending he just doesn't see?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

© Bob Dylan 1962, renewed 1990

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"It's come to that, huh?"

"Fraid so partner. How many times have you and I talked about this? Dozens at least. There are still plenty of us left who were born in the '40s and '50s who remember when this was mostly a free county. I defined my allegiance in the early '60s and never looked back. I don't know what the future holds, nobody does; for my part, I'll give every drop of blood I have to keep the country the way it used to be."

"Talkin' about it won't cut it anymore."

"You do realize that we're not going to get much notice when it does go down? About the best we can do is get ready to bolt and start our own little war."

"Do you have enough vehicles to move all of your stuff?"

"Never keep all your eggs in one basket, Ron. We have stuff cached all over the desert. What little there is left here is transportable."

"When did you do that?"

"I didn't, it was one of Derek's brainstorms after he got back from that trip. He knew we had enough heirloom seeds to out last the Blight and could, with care, continue to produce food. That will make us a primary target, as soon as the government figures it out."

"And, when they determine that there are people in the area, they'll conclude that there must be food."

"Exactly."

"Gary, consider how cold it is out, there's no way to hide the people, chimney smoke will give them away."

"You're right about that Clarence, as many people are heating with wood as are with other fuels. What would you guess, a spring offensive?"

"They have to gather the information, analyze it and make plans, Gar-Bear. I'd say late spring or early summer."

The problem with people who have low self-esteem is they don't handle criticism well. My mama always said, "If you can't say something nice, don't say nothing at all." I guess she didn't know about chocolates, like Forrest's mama did.

Whetstone – Chapter 29

"Have you found Jesus yet, Gump?"

"I didn't know I was supposed to be looking for him, sir."

We continued preparing through the winter of early '14. We never saw a contrail, but that didn't mean much, some planes don't generate one. Besides, maybe the government still had a satellite they could use or some of those Predators. Derek had to pull double duty, he knew about the Blight and was our military commander. I unloaded all of my magazines to let the springs rest and later reloaded them to capacity. By now, I had dozens of 20-round M1A mags, more than I could carry. I loaded them into surplus gas mask bags because they had a shoulder strap. In a pinch, I could get sol loaded down I couldn't walk.

There were advantages to winning the Lottery, if you felt like having 20 of those 10-round magazines for you Barrett rifle, the fact that they listed for \$135 each didn't bother you. Neither did paying some Sergeant First Class an inordinate amount of money for a few rounds of Raufoss. Of course for a while there, I did have to worry about the BATFE. Once I even got together with a class III dealer and loaded up on those fancy suppressors Surefire makes. They cost about 3 times as much as your average suppressor but last about 5 times as long.

I had a car load of Thunder Lizards but not a single Chicago Typewriter. The Tommy Gun weights about 10 pounds empty. A full 100 round drum goes another 10 pounds, easy. There were two military types of Thompson SMG. One, the M1928A1, had a 20 round box magazine or 50-100 round drum. It had a longer barrel than the M1A1. Its cocking mechanism was also on the top of the gun. The M1A1 had a shorter barrel, 30

round box magazine, and the cocking mechanism was on the side. The M1928A1 along with the regular M1928 was the choice of the Marines. The M1A1 was the choice of the Army. An original Model of 1928 in working condition can easily fetch \$20,000 or more.

The M1A1, formally adopted as the United States Submachine Gun, Cal. .45, M1A1, could be produced in half the time of the M1928A1, and at a much lower cost. In 1939, Thompson's cost the government \$209 apiece. By Spring of 1942, cost reduction design changes had brought this down to US\$70. In February of 1944, the M1A1 reached a low price of US\$45 each, including accessories and spare parts. The thing I can't understand is why, with all the money I have, I can't find a Thompson and a few of the 100-round drums. They're out there, they were a popular 'bring back' item after WW II.

Heck I even loaded up on Corbon Power Ball ammo in case I ever found one (I'm not holding my breath). The Tommy Gun wasn't worth a crap in dense jungle because of its low muzzle velocity. Hey there's no jungle in southern Arizona, bring one on. Yeah, I know I'm not Ben Raines, but we like the same guns.

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Ron and Clarence settled in easily enough but usually ate dinner with us. A frequent topic of conversation was the government and when they come after us. There wasn't anyway we could hide so we didn't try. If they got a Predator drone up with FLIR and DLIR they'd almost know our exact population. DLIR (downward looking infra red) was developed and used in the F-117. A couple other planes had it too, the F-111F and the A-6E. After a while, the nose of the plane gets in the way, making it impossible for the pilot to keep an eye on the target. In the F-117, the IR automatically switches from FLIR to DLIR.

"I sure wish I had a Thompson."

"Wish in one hand and sh*t in the other, Gar-Bear."

"Ronald, there have to be some out there for the taking. The problem is finding one. If we did find one, it would probably be a display item and have the firing pin removed, or something."

"I thought the firing pin was machined into the bolt face, Gary."

"Clarence the military version, the M1A1 had that feature. It wouldn't use the drum magazines, I don't want one of those."

"You'd burn through a lot ammo with one of those, Gar."

"Ronald, I have 10,000 rounds of Power Ball I've been saving in case I ever found a Chicago Typewriter."

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Today, the Auto Ordnance Corporation of West Hurley, NY. is a company that has expanded its product line to include Submachine guns, Tommy gun patterned semi-auto rifles, M1911A1 pistols, and a host of spare parts and accessories.

For Export and Law Enforcement sales only, A.O. produces the M1927A-5 semi-auto pistol, and the M1928 and M1 Thompson submachine guns. They also have high capacity box magazines from 15 to 30 rounds, and drum magazines in 50 and 100 round capacities.

For domestic sales, they have three versions of a Tommy Gun styled semi-auto rifle; the 1927A-1, 1927A-1C, and M1 semi-auto. They also have a limited number of pre-ban high capacity box magazines and a 10 round drum (yes drum) magazine that simulates the look of the original Tommy Gun.

In keeping with John Thompson's association with the development of the .45 cal. pistol cartridge, Auto Ordnance Corp. produces a line of M1911A1 pistols that are available in several models with a variety of configurations, calibers and finishes that are all made in the United States. Magazines are available in capacities up to the legal 10 round limit.

Owners of Thompson submachine guns, new or old, can find a wide assortment of parts and accessories in the Auto Ordnance catalog. GI slings, belts and magazine pouches can be found among other items such as a violin carrying case and engraved cigarette lighters and coffee cups.

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"How far is it to West Hurley, NY?"

"Why?"

"I just learned that Auto Ordinance is making Thompson submachine guns again."

"Let me check. Let's see, in round numbers, 2,500 miles."

"Saddle up, we're going to NY."

"No we're not, Dad."

"You can't get there from here."

"That's an old CB joke, you can get from anywhere to anywhere."

"Maybe before WW III, you could, but not anymore."

"I want that submachine gun!"

"Which one?"

"The M1928A1."

"Who used them?"

"You mean in the military? The USMC."

"How many do you want?"

"Three. If I get one and Ron and Clarence don't, I'll never hear the end of it."

"What do you want for magazines?"

"Five of the 100-round drums, each."

"It may take some doing, you know."

"Like I care – it's not right I have a Thunder Lizard and don't have a Chicago Typewriter."

"Are you going to need ammo?"

"I don't but Ron and Clarence will."

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"Sorry, but they're used."

"Be still my heart! You did it! How? Where? When?"

"I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you."

"Top Gun, Tom Cruise speaking to Kelly McGillis. How many did you find?"

"Ten. We also got several cases of 230gr FMJ to go with the guns. Plus, there are a few of the 20-round sticks, you can use them for back up."

"Don't need them, got my M1A for backup."

"This I gotta see."

"What?"

"You with your tactical vest, an M1A, 10 magazines for the rifle, 6 grenades, a LAWs rocket, a Thompson submachine gun and 5 100-round drums. Hell, Dad, you won't even be able to walk."

"Nothin' new about that, I can barely walk when I'm not carrying a gun. That's why I have my tactical wheelchair. That has a 9 rifle gun rack plus a trailer to haul the ammo."

"With a top speed of 5mph, the battle will be over before you get there."

"Max, sic 'im."

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"Where did he find these?"

"Damed if I know, he wouldn't tell me. Wait, that's not true, he said, 'I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you.' It's a line out of a movie."

"Yeah, Top Gun, Gar-Bear."

"You have it in your collection?"

"Yeah, but I didn't wear out a copy like you did."

"What do you think Clarence, feel like doing your Ben Raines thing?"

"Who?"

"Ben Raines, oh, never mind. He was a character in a series of books."

"How much these magazines weigh loaded?"

"Ten pounds."

"Each?"

"Yeah, why?"

"Don't know as I can carry 50 pounds and still fight."

"Plus the Thompson, an M1A, 10 magazines, 6 grenades and a LAWs rocket."

"That will weight more than I do. How are you going to do it?"

"Load down my wheelchair!"

"I'll take one."

"One what, Ron?"

"One wheelchair. I can't carry that much stuff either."

"Gawd, I hate getting old. Ok, two more tactical wheelchairs. Anything else?"

"Whatcha got?"

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"What about the snakes and lizards? What we gotta watch out for?"

"There's scorpions, gila monsters, rattlesnakes, coral snakes, bats and black widow spiders; nothing much different than what we had in Palmdale. We lived in Palmdale for 20 years and I can't recall ever seeing a snake that wasn't in a zoo."

<http://cals.arizona.edu/extension/azffig/> <http://www.reptilesfaz.com/h-accounts.html>

"How about when you were at Edwards?"

"I saw 2, one was a sidewinder and I don't know what the other was, maybe a Mojave. We made that second snake a good snake and gave the sidewinder to the survival school."

"Seen any around here?"

"Haven't been looking. I'd be a lot more worried about the government's JBTs than anything else."

"It's been nearly 4 years since the war and we ain't seen sh*t of the government. It was pretty much the same in Palmdale. Derek told you they were coming to get OUR food?"

"Can you picture Hillary hoeing a garden?"

"I'm still trying to figure out how she got elected."

"That's simple: 1) people were tired of the Bush Republicans; 2) a few people liked Bill; and 3) the combination of a woman and a black man who happened to be Muslim was too inviting to a politically correct America."

"How is she still in office? We haven't had a Presidential election since '08."

"Got me, Ronald. Let me ask you a question: where are they getting the money to run whatever government there is? There hasn't been any way to file a tax return since the war. I rather doubt that her highness is eating MREs."

"How much gold was there in New York City and at Fort Knox?"

"I don't know. I think I read somewhere that there was about 4,600 tons of gold at Fort Knox. At bank in New York had more, maybe 5,000 tons. Altogether, that would be almost 10,000 tons of gold and that's 240 million ounces at \$1,250 an ounce. I don't believe she has to eat beans. That's nearly \$300 billion at today's prices."

"But the money in New York doesn't belong to us."

"It probably does now. Maybe that's why Derek seemed to think we see blue hats in the US."

"Where are they going to find anyone willing to come here?"

"I don't know, maybe Africa."

"That will go over good, especially in the south."

"Gary, we've been invaded from the south and now you're talking about being invaded from the east. Does we have enough people left to fight them?"

"Unless we're invaded from the north by Canada and the west by Indonesia, we might. I think those Russians must be *ss deep in snow and the Chinese are mostly crispy critters. That would leave the island nations and Africa as the major world powers."

"Them Canadians can't be much better off. What are you smirking about?"

"I just had a thought. What do you call the 2007 snowstorm they had in Tucson?"

"I don't know, and oddity?"

"Practice."

"Speaking of which, we need to get to the range."

"Why?"

"To try out our Thompson's."

"Load up a couple of drum with that military ball ammo Derek brought back and we'll see if we can hit anything at 50 yards."

"Why 50 yards?"

"That's the effective range of a Tommy gun."

"You got it backwards, Gar-Bear. The M1As should be our primary guns and the submachine guns the backups. Given a choice, I'd rather shoot them at 300 yards than 50 yards."

"What about our shotguns, Ron? If I'm gonna be fighting, I need to know which gun to shoot when."

"Clarence, the order is rifle, shotgun or submachine gun followed by your handgun. If we're down to depending on handguns, were in some deep doo-doo."

The people who lived in Palmdale were luckier than residents of other cities, they had a huge wind turbine generating nearly 1mw of power for the Water District. Palmdale had water while many cities lacked the power to pump their water. The Aqueduct came through the area, but without the electricity, the water couldn't be pumped over the Tehachapi Mountains. I suppose we should had felt bad over reallocating those wind turbines from Tehachapi, but we didn't. Derek didn't say that anyone was there that objected to his group taking them.

I probably already said this, but I figured we could generate power for at least 40 years. It could be longer provided we could refurbish the turbines. Unless something untoward happened, the turbines would out live me. Broom Hillary had probably outlawed guns by now, either by persuading Congress or by Executive Order. I didn't few a bit bad having those Tommy guns, hell a BB gun was probably illegal.

We'd been attacked by a hungry family, Latino troops and a big group of 'bad guys', managing each time to successfully resist their overtures. We hadn't had to go up against a modern, mechanized military, possibly one with aircraft. A jet flew so fast you couldn't line up a gun on them, you either used a missile or got bombed. There might be a lucky shot, it happened a few times in 'Nam, where a person brought down a jet with a rifle. However, it wasn't anything a person could count on.

One thing of great concern was the dearth of supplies. Things like tires, batteries, belts and hoses for vehicles were getting hard to come by. We had spares, but no way to replace them when we had to use them. Regardless of your feeling on salvaging supplies, eventually the cupboards were bare. You either had to grow it or make it yourself. It was one of the reasons we standardized most of our firearms to certain calibers, it lessened the type of supplies. Even reloading ammo had a limit, eventually the brass would be beyond use, provided we still had powder, primer and bullets.

Per Derek's instructions all the grass crops were gathered up, taken a few miles out and buried. The winter was very hard considering we were in southern Arizona, it would have seemed like nothing to the Iowa folks. It got down to 0°F for several nights running, hopefully low enough to destroy any left over seeds we'd missed. The starts from the greenhouse gave us a leg up on planting. We didn't lose any live stock other

than those we butchered. There's something to be said for having stored feed and fresh alfalfa.

Can't tell you how nice it was to have Ron and Clarence back, even if it meant I got called *sshole a dozen times a day. I put Damon on finding them a means of transportation, thinking he'd come up with a couple of wheelchairs. What he found instead was an ATV dealer that hadn't been looted. Or, hadn't until he got there. When he found them, he didn't say anything, opting to have one of Mary's relations work 'em over just a bit.

Using my 9 rifle rack on my wheelchair as a pattern, he welded together a 6 rifle rack for each of the ATVs. Then, he mounted one of those window rifle racks on the backside of each one to hold 3 LAWS rockets. Saddlebags held grenades and a mounted box loaded magazines. When they had the project done, Damon came with a hat containing 3 slips of paper and said the 3 of us should each draw a slip. My paper said black, Ron's red and Clarence's green. Apparently, he could only get one of each color. Near as I can tell, an ATV is a 4 wheeled motorcycle. They'd done something to the exhaust system to make them reasonably quiet, we could get within walking distance of any bad guys.

To be totally candid, I sort felt like that bunch in the movie, The Apple Dumpling Gang. Can you picture three old (recovering) alcoholics, all in their early 70s, armed to the teeth with really deadly weapons out patrolling the fence line of a small 80-acre ranch in southern Arizona? Noise discipline was something they talked about on the military channel, you could hear us coming at least ¼ mile away. It was mostly a mix of name calling, curse words and suggesting what we'd try to do if the bad guys showed up. Yeah, like Hillary or Osama Obama would really show up in person! Maybe the nicest suggestion was to cut her heart out and feed it to Max, sounds like animal cruelty to me.

It wasn't as if we were in any real danger, Derek and Bill had patrols out 24/7; every road into the area was heavily barricaded and each barricade manned. Most of the people in Whetstone and Benson were concentrating on trying to grow enough food this year to get through the coming year and maybe resupply their dwindling pantries. There was even that lady who grew goats; what was her name, nanny goat lady? Turned out she used to go to Frugal's forum too! We had our fingers crossed we'd seen the last of that grass blight.

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"Whetstone base, west 10. We have a party here who want's to talk to whoever's in charge."

"Rog, any idea who they are?"

"Foreigners dressed in military uniforms and wearing blue hats."

"UN?"

"Affirmative."

"How many are there?"

"One jeep and several BMDs. Maybe 50 troops."

"Rog. Give us 10 and then escort their OIC, his driver and their NCOIC down to the ranch. What rank is that officer?"

"He say's he's a Captain."

"Rog. The Lt. Col. will see him when he gets here."

"Derek, get off those butter bars and pin these on."

"Lt. Col.? That's a quick promotion."

"Their guy is a Captain, you need to outrank him a little. By the way, each Platoon just became a Company."

"Dad, this is your place, should you be the one talking to him?"

"You can bring me in later as the local civilian in charge."

"Hey Ron, Clarence and you should put up the military weapons and grab those Marlin rifles. It might help if this guy thinks we're just a bunch of hayseeds."

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"I'm Captain Farid Hassan with the UN Peacekeeping Force. I came to talk to whoever is in charge here."

"I'm Lt. Col. Derek Ott, in charge of security. You're a long way from home, Captain."

"Your President and the Vice President asked for UN assistance in gathering and redistributing food."

"We haven't had an election since the war, who is the President?"

"Mrs. Hillary Clinton. The Vice President is Barack Obama and the Secretary of Defense is Bill Clinton."

"We hadn't heard, the radio and TV haven't been on since the war. I have a small military detachment providing security for the area."

"Large?"

"Small, 6 Companies, about one Battalion."

"Battalion? Do you have infantry, armor and artillery?"

"Yes. My father is the man in charge here, I'll introduce you. Come with me, please, Captain."

"Dad, this is Captain Farid Hassan with the UN Peacekeeping Force. I'll be around if you need me."

"Captain. The fellow on my left is Ron Brown and the fellow on my right is Clarence Floyd, my advisors. What can we do for you today?"

"Your President, Hillary Clinton, and the Vice President, Barack Obama, asked for UN assistance in gathering and redistributing food."

Whetstone – Chapter 30

"I urge restraint, here," Ron murmured.

"We had a crop failure last year Captain, there isn't much food to distribute. It was some kind of blight that destroyed all of our grass crops."

"Yes, the Blight, most unfortunate. Be that as it may, we're here to collect the available food so it can be redistributed. I see you men are wearing guns, that is prohibited. In fact, we're going to have to seize all weapons including the equipment your Battalion has."

"Our Constitution guarantees us the right to keep and bear arms. It also provides that no property shall be seized without due process of law. I think maybe you're in the wrong Country Captain."

"Your President suspended your Constitution pending the recovery from the war."

"You don't say. By what authority?"

"Executive Order."

"An Executive order issued by a President whose term of office ended on January 20, 2012? I don't think so. Are you a student of history Captain?"

"I don't understand."

"Julius Caesar, upon crossing the Rubicon River at the beginning of the Roman Civil War said, 'lacta alea est', the die is cast. You go, Captain, and tell those in charge that we don't have any food or weapons to spare. Tell them that we will resist any and all attempts by you, or anyone, to take what we have. You tell them that Caesar also said, 'veni, vidi, vici', I came, I saw, I conquered. Finally, tell them that George Santayana said, 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.' You're dismissed, Captain."

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"He looked a little pissed."

"I got at least part of it right."

"Oh?"

"Yeah, the die is cast, there is no turning back from here."

"What about those Latin quotes?"

"I took Latin in 9th grade. It's about all I remember."

"Where do we go from here?"

"Probably to Hell in a handcart. If we get some of that material that they make Space Blankets from we can suspend it over the buildings and reflect any infrared signature they might have. That should make them harder targets to find. We have plenty of the camouflage netting and can suspend that above the blanket. They can't hit what they can't see."

Those silver oak leafs looked pretty good on Derek's lapel, he might as well keep wearing them, for all practical purposes they didn't mean anymore than the butter bar. I got on the ham set that evening and spread the word about Madam Hillary and what she was doing. Strangely, I got quite a few acknowledgements and an indication we weren't alone in the fight. One fella said that the only thing worse than them damed Yankees was them damed furiners. His handle was Johnny Reb.

In the US, space blankets are made by vacuum depositing a very precise amount of pure aluminum vapor onto a very thin, durable film substrate. Space blankets are included in many emergency, first aid, and survival kits because they are usually waterproof and windproof. It can sometime be found in large rolls, like plastic. The emergency space blanket is just that, a sheet of plastic. The more durable kind have cloth on one side.

We explained to Derek what we had in mind to protect the buildings on the acreage. He said it sounded like a lot of work but was worth a try. The 3 of us resumed our patrols

but cut the chatter. If the UN thought it was up against a brigade sized force, their first step would probably be a recon. If they sent in spies, through the desert, they were as likely as not to start at our place.

We'd screwed the pooch not putting up the netting and space blankets earlier, they already had pictures of the entire area. Didn't think of it at the time, I was too concerned with getting a Tommy gun. It was a problem of getting overly focused on a single issue. The 3 of us weren't in charge of security and just ran the fence line to free up a couple of the troops. What I know about fighting battle could be written in large letters on a sheet of paper that would get lost in the eye of a gnat. It all boiled down to take cover and shoot back.

It never occurred to anyone that they might wait until later in the year to attack. The gardens were growing very well and the grass crops looked like they might be ok. In times past, disasters were speculative, one could expect them, but they might never happen. Conversely, they could happen without any expectation. This was different, they knew where we were and had as much as said, 'We'll be back'. When that didn't happen right away, we resumed the fence line patrol. May ended and June came and went. None of the 3 of us saw a soul. During the second week of July 2014, we were about halfway around when Max stopped, perked his ears up and growled. We pulled up short and watched, but we didn't see anything. Clarence got his shotgun, Ron his Thompson and I grabbed my M1A. We eased our way over to the fence and opened the gate.

"Max, kill."

If you could get your dragster to accelerate that fast, you'd always win the drags. Two guys got up and ran when they saw Max coming. They were close, before I could bring my rifle to bear, Ron cut them down.

"Hey this one's alive. Crap, I just winged him."

I dug out a bandage and slapped it on the wound. Derek could talk to the guy and see what was going on.

"Whetstone base, Gary."

"Whetstone base, copy."

"We're at the south fence and just shot a couple of spies, send a truck."

"Rog."

"As soon as they pick him up, we'd better finish the patrol. What did they have for guns?"

"G-3s."

"Right caliber anyway. What kind of condition are they in?"

"Gary, these look fairly new, you want them?"

"Sure. Let's check and see if they have a camp nearby."

"Over here."

"What is there?"

"Not much, a radio, some food and a couple of sleeping pads."

"Grab the radio, it might come in handy."

Ron grabbed the radio and Clarence picked up the food and pads. It looked like they'd been there a day or two, why hadn't we noticed them? This was the first time in a week that Max was with us, remind me to give him a steak. Were there more of them somewhere around the small acreage? I got my Thompson and loaded a full drum, noticing that Clarence was swapping out a Thompson for his shotgun. The truck came, picked up the survivor and the body and returned to the house. We finished the patrol without Max spooking again.

"Did he say anything?"

"Not much, he's a Paki. He was hurt worse than we thought, he passed out and we had to turn him over to the doc."

"That Captain who was here – was he a Paki, too?"

"Yeah. I'd have thought that India and Pakistan would have nuked each other. Now I think not, but we didn't get a chance to confirm that. If he doesn't speak English, we may have a problem, none of my people speak their lingo."

"Let me get on my computer and check something. Hang on, I almost got it. Ah, according to the copy of the CIA Factbook I have on my computer, they speak the following languages: Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Siraiki (a Punjabi variant) 10%, Pashtu 8%, Urdu (official) 8%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1%, English (official and lingua franca of Pakistani elite and most government ministries), Burushaski, and other 8%."

"They almost speak as many languages as we do. Unless this guy speaks English, French or German, I won't have a clue. I picked up a little French and German in Kosovo."

"Figure anything out from his papers or the radio?"

"A call came in on the radio but it wasn't English. I can't make anything out of their papers. They've been making a map of the location, though – they've been here a while."

"It looked like 2 days from their camp. Did they have anything important marked on their map?"

"The locations of the buildings was all. It doesn't appear as if they'd gotten close."

"Did they have the building locations marked before or after they got here?"

"No way to tell, why?"

"I had an idle thought was all. What if they already had the building locations? They could have gotten those using a Predator."

"If they use GBUs, and already had the building locations, we're screwed."

"The same applies if they didn't have the locations before and radioed them in."

"Have we got enough Stingers?"

"We have a total of 24."

"Can you get more?"

"Not at the moment, no."

"If the Commander in Chief gave an order to the military to enforce her Executive Orders, would they obey?"

"Some might, but the majority wouldn't because their oath is to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

"Can you get in touch with any military units?"

"I can," Randy butted in. "They moved a detachment of Marines to Yuma. You know Marines, no way they're going to stand around and let a bunch of outsiders take over the county."

"Derek, give those butter bars to Randy and the two of you contact Yuma. See if we can get some help. If we can't, at least try and get more of those Stingers."

"I ain't no damed officer," Randy protested.

"You are now, L-T," Derek laughed.

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The plain truth of it was that I wasn't in charge of anything. Sharon and the girls were in charge of the house and garden, Derek was in charge of security and Damon in charge of recovery. Next to me, Damon had the fewest duties, there wasn't much left to salvage. I-10 wasn't nearly as busy as I-40 in northern Arizona and he'd gone almost to the state line in both directions. Most of his efforts were now centered on Tucson, there was always something there to find.

I took my lack of duties seriously, the 3 of us patrolled the fence line on the even hours, then sat and smoked and drank coffee the remainder of the time. From the time of the shooting, we didn't have anymore trouble and Max seemed almost disappointed. The wounded guy got an infection and what antibiotics we had failed to save him. Near as we could tell, he didn't speak English and we'd have never understood him.

It was a good thing we got a corn crop, we needed alcohol to make biodiesel and E-85. What little corn we did get went into livestock feed, I had to let loose of some of those one ounce gold pieces to get corn for alcohol. We also bought rice and other cereal crops we didn't or couldn't grow. It did appear that we were past the Blight.

Of course about the time the harvest came in, the UN came back. The planes that dared to fly over soon learned we had Stinger missiles, lots of Stinger missiles. In case you're wondering, the boys came up with a TRUCKLOAD of the things. They wouldn't say where they found them, but they did say there were no Marines at Yuma or Barstow. Lo and behold, they also found 4 more Paladins and 3 M1A2SEP Abrams. More importantly, they found a few stragglers, of military origin – our military. If they told me where, I've forgotten by now.

Anyway, as I sat sipping coffee from my NRA cup – it said: The 2nd Amendment, America's Original Homeland Security – we mused about the coming battle.

"They haven't sent over an airplane in nearly a week, think they know better, Gary?"

"Those were small flights, 2 or 4 planes. If they send a lot at once, we could be in deep sh*t. What I want to see is a Raptor up there shooting down the MiGs."

"I'd settle for an old fashion F-15, Gary."

"Or, even on of those Super Hornets."

"I read the results of some tests they did putting a Raptor against all of them. The ending score was Raptor 60, F-15s, F-16s and F/A-18s 0. Maybe I'm biased, but that some kind of super airplane."

"Well, they should be at a quarter billion apiece, *sshole."

"They wouldn't have cost so much if they'd have bought the original order. They had to spread the tens of billions in development costs over fewer planes. They're complicated to build, I think they were only building something like 20 a year once they got rolling. I read somewhere that they're more complex than the human body."

Mussing about the capacity we used to have. Where did we hide the B-2s and F-22s, inquiring minds want to know? Which bring to mind the old saw, it's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog. We'd bluffed, claiming a Battalion when we had maybe 2 Companies. The few additional men they added gave us maybe 3 Companies of soldiers. With 6 artillery pieces and now 4 tanks, we couldn't last very long against a sizeable, organized force. The main difference was we were fighting for our homes and they were half a world away from theirs.

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"Whetstone base, condition black. It looks like we have the whole UN at our front and back doors."

"Been nice knowin ya fellas, time to get to the embankment."

Derek ordered 2 tanks to the east and two to the west. The arty opened up and conversation was next to impossible. If these guys attacking us had watched the History Channel, they'd have known how to get past our little Siegfried Line. Their problem was they stuck to I-10, a very bad plan. With our registered arty and a pair of tanks at each barricade, they weren't getting anywhere.

Sneaky b*stards had a third force to the south, some on 80 and the larger force on 90. Next, they brought in the aircraft, Russian Hinds. We replied with Stinger fire, getting a good share of them. Mind you, Ron, Clarence and I were on the embankment, just waiting. While we watched the action, we were busy topping of mags and loading the extras. We had dragged all of our guns up to the fighting positions and had 5 LAWs rockets apiece. The acreage isn't on 80, it's on the side road, I was on my second canteen of water before anyone showed up.

I opened up with my M82A1 while they were still 1,000 yards out. They were driving commandeered vehicles which didn't give them much protection. I tried to block the road by blowing up the engine in the front vehicle. That worked, for all of 10 seconds, then they tried to go around and I murdered a second vehicle. Meanwhile Ron and Clarence were shooting at the guys bailing out of the vehicles.

All of our soldier's, you see, were sent to the barricades except for those using the arty and the Stingers. It looked like a Platoon sized group and there were only about 10 of us on the embankment. They were in the open, we were in fighting positions, advantage: ours. We got reinforcements, the ladies joined in. I was being careful not to

damage their guns, I could easy get \$4-\$500 apiece for them.

Ping, a round hit right in front of my foxhole, spraying sand and dirt everywhere. I thought I spied that SOB who shot at me and introduced him to Mr. Barrett, it cut him near in half. They were, nonetheless, getting closer so I switched to my open sighted M1A. That rifle must have been 1 in 1,000, no old guy like me should be able to shoot that good. I swear, these guys had the range, they were chewing up the ground around all of our fighting positions.

I was slammed to the back of the foxhole, that Dragon Skin had just earned its pay. Knocked the wind out of me, I struggled to get my breath and stand back up. When finally, I managed, I realized it was time for the Tommy guns. I could hear Ron and Clarence shooting theirs, so I racked back the action and opened up. Even with their moderate rate of fire, these things give a new meaning to the term 'spray and pray'. I looked over and Udell, Jr. had his M16 set on full auto and was spraying, if not praying.

I think it was Sharon or Mary that got the last one, with a shotgun. "I hollered, 'Reload, there could be more coming', then ripped open a battle pack and started to refill my M1A magazines. I must have been pumped, I reloaded every magazine I had before I noticed it was very quiet. I stood and looked around, everyone was out of his/her fighting position, just standing around visiting.

Even the artillery was quiet, the soldiers were restocking their ammo. I shouldered my M1A and went to check on Ron and Clarence. There was a row of slugs across the front of Ron's Dragon Skin, but he didn't seem to be hurt. Clarence must have avoided getting shot, he had a big grin on his face.

"They got you too, partner?"

"Knocked me on my butt, took a minute to get my wind. We get 'em all?"

"This bunch at least, Gary. What was that that you hollered?"

"I said reload, there could be more coming."

"You should have had your radio on, we stopped them at the barricades."

"Is everyone ok? Nobody dead or wounded?"

"Not this time at least, no."

"What happened at the barricades?"

"Oh, between the artillery and the tanks, we stopped them cold in their tracks. We had just under 50 dead and about 100, round numbers, wounded. Derek and Bill have their people out collecting weapons, ammo and supplies. Derek said they were just going to

leave the UN vehicles on the road to extend the barricades."

"Grandpa, I have a report from the radio, want to hear it?" Britney asked.

"Waddya learn?"

"There were attacks all over the country, in most places, we won. Someone compared the battle to the battle of Moga... Moga..., I didn't get the name."

"Mogadishu?"

"That's the name."

"Let's hope that this battle had the same effect on the UN that that battle had on us."

"What do you mean, grandpa?"

"Remember the movie, 'Blackhawk Down'? Clinton pulled our troops from Somalia after the Battle of Mogadishu. In a national security policy review session held in the White House on October 6, 1993, Clinton directed the acting chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Jeremiah, to stop all actions by US forces against Aidid except those required in self-defense. He also reappointed Ambassador Robert B. Oakley as special envoy to Somalia in an attempt to broker a peace settlement and then announced that all US Forces would withdraw from Somalia no later than March 31, 1994. On December 15, 1993, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin stepped down, taking much of the blame for what was deemed a failed policy. A few hundred Marines remained offshore to assist with any noncombatant evacuation mission that might occur regarding the 1,000-plus US civilians and military advisers remaining as part of the US liaison mission. All US personnel were finally withdrawn by March 1995."

"They won't pull out after one defeat."

"What makes you think the next battle will go any different? They're doing what they're told, we're fighting for our homes. Get someone down there and collect their weapons, you can never have too many guns."

"You really believe that, Gary?"

"They're not the top of my list, that's toilet paper. After that come food and meds. Then comes a source of power and fuel, if required. Guns don't do you any good unless you have ammo, look at Ron, Clarence, 30 guns and only 1,000 rounds of ammo."

"Well, I didn't win the Lottery and ammo is damed expensive."

"Ron, I told you to get a case of SS109 when it was still cheap. Military ammo in sealed cans lasts for years."

"But you don't like the .223."

"True, but you do. It really doesn't matter what you choose as a Main Battle Rifle, as long as it's a 7.62 NATO. I like the M1A, the next guy might like the FN FAL or one of the G-3s."

"What's the .223?"

"That's more of an assault rifle than a main battle rifle. It lays down a high volume of fire when you need it. The accuracy is limited to about 5-600 yards. Different situations call for different weapons. A handgun is basically a last ditch weapon, you should never let anyone get within handgun range."

"What's handgun range Gary?"

"Seven yards, Clarence."

"Somebody asking about .223?"

"Yeah, Derek. Why? We're running low, aren't we?"

"Not really. See that conex over there?"

"What is a conex, kid? Speak English."

"The metal shipping container buried under sand bags, over by my tank."

"Yeah, I see it. Isn't that your office?"

"Yep. I keep my semi-ready ammo there."

"I thought that you said that semi-ready ammo is behind the Tank Commander. What are tank rounds doing stockpiled so close to my house? You trying to blow me up?"

"Not that semi-ready ammo, Dad. What's 3,820 times 192?"

"I don't know, 4000 times 200, about 800,000?"

"Close, 733,440. That's how many rounds of .223 I have. I'm selling at a case of 3,820 for an ounce of gold."

"Jeezus, kid, you take after my dad sometimes. These are friends. Why are you being stingy?"

"It was a joke, Dad, relax."

“What kind of ammo? It isn't that frangible stuff?” asked Ron.

“Good old fashioned military ball, M855. All one lot, too. You interested?”

“Kind of expensive, but then again what isn't?” said Ron.

Derek laughed. “Special offer for an old friend of Dad's. One case on the house. Just remember where you got it from.”

“So what happens when we shoot up your stash?”

“Who says that's the only stash I have?”

“Gar-Bear, this kid of yours is an *sshole just like you.”

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There was 'much discussion' about whether the UN would come back. They'd paid dearly for the attack, but only they could decide if it was worth the cost to get what little food we were growing. They'd used about a Battalion (1,000-1,200) sized force, this time. Apparently, our Stinger's had frightened off what Airborne Force they'd used. Those Stingers were consumables and we didn't have another source of supply. Of course they didn't know that and we still had quite a few. When they were gone there wouldn't be much we could do to stop their planes and choppers.

Sometimes military commanders react to a force getting wiped out by re-attacking the same place to put down the resistance. Other times, they move on to greener pastures, first. Still, the rule of thumb is that if you kick they're butts, they'll be back, just like Arnold. Derek continued to send out patrols, it appeared that we were generally hemmed in, by three Regiments. This, in turn, ended Damon's salvage operation, if we didn't have it now, we couldn't get it, unless we could grow it or manufacture it out of available materials.

"How are we on food and supplies, Derek?"

"You tell me, Dad."

"I know how were are on the supplies Sharon and I accumulated, I'm asking about military supplies."

"We have about 1,000 rounds of tank ammo, 3,000 rounds of artillery ammo and charges, enough 50 cal, 5.56 and 9mm to last for several major battles. The only thing we're low on is missiles. We have 56 Stingers left (they got more)."

"I can't shoot down a Hind with the Barrett, can I?"

"Assuming you could hit it, not likely."

"What model were those Hinds we shot down, they looked like the ones you see in the movies with a single cockpit?"

"Hind A. They didn't go to the tandem cockpit until the D model. The D model is the most common model around the world. The only problem with the Hind is that the engine exhaust is directed right under the rotor shaft. Those heat seekers tend to home in on the jet engine exhaust and blow off the rotor. They later countered that with flares and a missile warning system. One Afghan rebel said one famous quote 'We do not fear the Soviets. We fear their helicopters.'"

"So we gave them Stingers?"

Between battles, I hopped on the SINCGARS radio and put out a net call on 33,000, the single channel plain text frequency for real world emergencies. I didn't expect to hear much, but it was worth a shot.

"Net call, net call, this is Apache 6."

Whetstone – Chapter 31

I waited for all of 10 seconds before I heard, "Apache 6, this is Dustoff 6."

"Apache 6, this is Ugly 2."

"Apache 6, this is Bataan 6."

Well, what do you know. "Dustoff 6, this is Apache 6. Sitrep." If they didn't know that I was only a pretend colonel, then I was happy to pretend."

"Well, Apache 6, we're dug in near the South rim. We are slant 6 flyers and 38 personnel. We are LACE green, red, green, green; we need critical resupply of class 1, 3, 4, and 5, over."

"Roger that. Can resupply you if you relocate to our position. Standby for location, break. Ugly 2, Sitrep."

"Apache 6, this is Ugly 6. We are slant 314 grunts. LACE is all green, but we need class 1 and a change of clothes."

"Roger, Ugly 6. Bataan 6, sitrep."

"This is Bataan 6. Current slant is 41 tanks, 41 brads, six mortar tracks..." He went on for at least a minute before he said "over."

“Bataan 6, this is Apache 6. Does the wind still blow cold in Brainerd?”

There was a pause. “Affirmative, Apache 6. How did you know?”

“Because us Iowa boys still think if you ain’t Cav, you ain’t sh*t.”

“Red Bull?”

“Once upon a time, Bataan 6. All stations, be advised. Blackhorse Whiskey Alpha Kilo Romeo Romeo Bravo Echo Oscar. Acknowledge.”

“Dustoff 6, roger.”

“Ugly 6, roger.”

“Bataan 6, roger. Leave it to the cav.”

“Dustoff 6, kickoff is at 2300. Come in on Blackhorse Bravo Kilo Romeo magnetic, November Oscar Echo.”

“Wilco, Apache 6.”

“Bataan 6, Ugly 6, come in on Blackhorse Echo Echo Lima magnetic from codename Huachuca. Running 1-3, I say again running 1-3, over.”

“Bataan 6 wilco. Echo Tango Alpha 2 Delta’s, over.”

“Ugly 6 wilco. Echo Tango Alpha 6 Delta’s or so, over.”

“Roger that. Sitreps every hour on the hour. Jump up Blackhorse Bravo Kilo Echo Echo Echo.”

“Wilco, Apache 6.”

“Wilco, 6.”

“Ugly 6, wilco.”

“Apache 6 out.”

I put down the mike and let out a deep breath. This called for a cigarette.

“Good news, kid?”

“Yep. We got some friendly assistance inbound.”

"Oh? What kind?"

"A squadron of medevac choppers, an over strength company of dismounted infantry, and about an armored cav squadron of armor and mechanized infantry."

"How do you know?"

"I gave them directions to our compound. We should see the Blackhawk's tonight, the armor day after tomorrow, and the dismounts by the end of the week."

"The blue hats could have heard that, though, right?"

"Pakistanis normally don't understand the Blackhorse code even if they understand US DoD phonetic spelling."

"And Blackhorse code is?"

"When you want to give out numbers over the radio and you might be monitored, you use the letters from the word Blackhorse to replace numbers. 1 is B, 2 is L, 3 is A, and so forth through 0 is E."

"So what does a series of numbers have to do with it?"

"With a couple of letters in front of them, they become grid coordinates Dad."

"You'd better write that down for me in case I'm at the radio some day and a message comes in. Blackhorse, that a cav unit isn't it? I thought you were in the Redhorse."

"I was, when I was in Kosovo. Blackhorse is the nickname for the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. They invented the code."

"I understood part of your conversation, what kind of whiskey?"

"No, Dad, dubya not whiskey, think phonetic alphabet."

"Crap, I thought maybe they were bringing me a bottle. Maybe I should try some of the moonshine."

"I won't stop you, if you're sure that's what you want to do. Won't Ron and Clarence complain?"

"That's not how it works, kid. Oh well, they're not bringing any so I guess I'd better forget it."

Right about then a drink would have gone down smooth, it was just a shame I couldn't stop at one. I could, of course, but the next day I'd have to have another and that's a long, winding road. We could sure use the help, Lord knows. How they were going to get an armored cav squadron past the UN was way above my pay grade. Besides, I don't recall him asking me. The choppers could probably sneak in during the dark, I wondered if they were Huey's or Blackhawk's. According to the information I copied to my computer from global security they use Blackhawk's for medevac.

From my viewpoint, the problem with the Blackhawk was its capacity. If one of them went down with a full load of people, that meant a whole lot of dead people. I knew you could shoot one down with an RPG-7; 2 in fact, they did that in Mogadishu. I had felt like telling him to speak English before I realized he was using the phonetic alphabet. I didn't let him know I knew it. The problem was it had changes more than once during my lifetime. I'd learned Able Baker Charlie Dog Easy Fox George How Item Jig King Love Mike Nan Oboe Peter Queen Roger Sugar Tare Uncle Victor William X-ray Yoke Zebra followed by Alfa Bravo Coca Delta Echo Foxtrot Golf Hotel India Juliett Kilo Lima Metro Nectar Oscar Papa Quebec Romeo Sierra Tango Union Victor Whiskey Extra Yankee Zulu and finally Alpha Bravo Charlie Delta Echo Foxtrot Golf Hotel India Kilo Lima Mike November Oscar Papa Quebec Romeo Sierra Tango Uniform Victor Whiskey X-ray Yankee Zulu. About the time I get this one memorized, they'll probably change it again.

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Someone asked a question about radios, I'll give my answer, but you might want something else. In my opinion, Kenwood gives you the most bang for the buck although Icom and Yaesu are both very good radios. I like the Kenwood TS-2000X. If you add a CB SSB base station and some GMRS/FRS radios, you've got everything covered except the frequency hopping military radios. You'll probably have to steal one of those to get one and then you need the code disc to program it to the current operating frequencies. The small portable SINCGARS is the Spearhead. SINCGARS are 24 volt radios except for the man-pack which operates on 12 volts.

If you have an antenna capable of 10 and 12 meters, you don't really need an 11 meter antenna, you can retune your other antenna. I think it's better to have a separate 11 meter antenna plus a Comet tri-bander that will cover the higher frequencies. The X part of the TS-2000 is a plug in card you can always add later – it covers 1.2ghz. Kenwood describes the radio as an HF/VHF/UHF/1.2 GHz All-mode Multi-band Transceiver. Your most important component is your antenna, not the radio. If you have the money, you'll do best with a beam on a high tower. The problem with a beam is that it's not omni directional. More watts of output power is nice, but you really should spend the extra bucks on the antenna. If you weren't concerned about money, the Yaesu is a very good radio (but expensive).

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In many of my stories I gave medical advice. When my brain still worked a little, I could think well enough to try and avoid giving bad advice. Derek assigned Aaron as my driver, not because I couldn't drive, but because my brain slowed to the point that I would be like an epileptic and might go a mile or more and not know I did it. Worse, I sometimes became hypoglycemic. There isn't much practical difference between being epileptic and hypoglycemic, you're totally out of control. Consequently, I quit giving medical advice. The statement from the Bible is, physician heal thyself and it was more like no way, Jose.

I'm assuming Derek will tell you more about the guys when they show up. I don't speak modern Army jargon, sorry. I know whiskey, but only the drinking kind. It sounded like we'd more than double our force and pick up all kinds of things we didn't have. That crazy kid would probably want to take on Hillary and the husslin' Muslim.

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In fact, we had quite an arsenal going now. Dustoff showed up first, of course, with six nice, new Blackhawk helicopters. Their nickname was the common call sign for all Army medevac units, but in this case it was the 498th Air Ambulance Company. I assume that they got in partly because they were all marked plainly with nice, big red crosses on the sides. What the UN puked forgot was that even medevac choppers carry miniguns now, thanks in no small part to some of the insurgent activities the Army had faced over the last several decades. Your average official soldier from another country saw the red cross and knew that the Geneva Conventions banned attacks on it because of the rescue missions being flown. Your average insurgent, on the other hand, saw the red cross and thought the Americans very stupid to put a crosshair on the side of their aircraft. Thus, even medevac choppers could put an amazing amount of firepower on target to secure the landing zone, and so long as the fire remained defensive Geneva couldn't say anything.

The other reason they got in was that this was the 498th, a unit made famous for its daring rescue missions flown during Vietnam. Nap of the Earth flying, an ugly method requiring the pilot to dodge the ground at high speed, was practically invented by the 498th and units like them. I felt better knowing that we had the best chopper pilots in the world at our disposal.

Bataan showed up next, and boy was I glad to see them. 1st Battalion, 168th Armor Regiment was a bunch of Minnesota National Guards that belonged to the same brigade as I did back when I was in the Iowa Guard. Normally, their complement was 58 tanks, 8 120mm mortar carriers, and various support vehicles. They did not have mechanized infantry, normally, unless they had exchanged a company of tanks (14) for a company of Bradleys (20) from another command. These guys were every bit as anti-social as any cavalry scout, though, and decided that they didn't want to act in support of UN invasions. Thus, they headed south at a medium pace, picking up as many stray soldiers and equipment along the way as they could. Due to attrition they now had exactly the proper complement for a cavalry squadron: 41 tanks and 41 Bradley's. I'm

sure that all those tankers were slightly insulted by my comment to that fact. Armor units know that the Cav sux, just like Cav units know the reverse.

One other nice little fact was that their Bradley's were Infantry models. That meant 8 soldiers per track. Rounding their personnel count up gave me 164 tankers, 328 mechanized infantrymen, 30 mortarmen, and about a hundred or so support personnel, or one good Armored Cavalry squadron. I joked with the Bataan commander about retasking his unit as cav; one look from that grizzled old light colonel said more than enough. This was a unit whose proud history included surviving the Bataan Death March. This unit held the distinction of being the original "Battling B*stards of Bataan", a fact that they were extremely proud of. Hence the unit call sign Bataan and their unofficial nickname, the B*stards. Armor they would remain, if only in name.

Ugly was the biggest surprise, and possibly the most welcome. This unit had no history, calling themselves the 1st provisional volunteer infantry. Their C.O. was a retired sergeant major from the 101st who bled red white and blue, and the men were mostly former soldiers who had the same sort of bloodstream. The rest were kids too young to serve in the US Army.

That crusty old Sar-Major had whipped them into shape, forging perhaps the finest militia unit in history. The Ugly Stepchildren could march 36 miles in a day, every day, for weeks on end. They could cross any terrain, make something out of nothing better than 9 times out of 10, and could sneak up on a paranoid sniper without making them twitch. What's more, their composition told me that we weren't the only ones out there who would stand up for our beautiful, sacred land.

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All I wanted was a little peace and quiet. I wanted someone to make the bad guys go away and never come back. More, I wanted the country to return to the best times, the '50s. No, not the 1850s, the 1950s, I'm not quite THAT old. That's why I like Ronnie Milsap's song, 'Lost in the Fifties Tonight'. Times were tough in the country, but the country still had values. These days, it was 'What's mine is mine and what's yours, is mine, if I can get'. It also appeared the national language was Spanish.

There wasn't any reason for Ron, Clarence and I to patrol the fence, so we did it anyway. I went to bed early that night and never heard the Thump, Thump of the Blackhawk's when they arrived. It only made sense to have a dustoff unit, we had a M*A*S*H unit. The day after the armor unit showed up, they had tanks, Bradley's and even mortars. Derek said there were over 300 additional soldiers coming in. He wasn't wrong, the soldiers were there by Thursday night. These guys must be good, they got around 2 Regiments of UN troops. That was a drunken brawl, let me tell you. I didn't even know we were brewing beer.

Derek explained that 6 Paladins made an artillery unit called a battery. If that's the case, what did 45 tanks make? We had our four and the 41 that drove in. How many

soldiers are in a Bradley IFV? Six and 6 times 41 is another 246 dismounts plus the Bradley crews. For all of our lying we were actually close to a short Brigade. Not just any Brigade, a Brigade who absolutely hated the UN. We had people from Minnesota, the southeast and the rest from here and there.

It seemed our only problem was the 120mm ammo for the tanks. It has a maximum life of 10 years, maybe less. Sabot ammo is made in Iowa at the Iowa Army ammunition plant in Middletown, Iowa. The ammo case is made out of nitrocellulose. That's the part that goes bad, not the sabots or the HEAT warhead. Derek claimed if we could get new rounds from Middleton (near Burlington) they could swap out the warheads. If he says so, I'll assume it's true. Meanwhile we could use up most of the old ammo, depending on the condition of the disintegrating cartridge. The sabot round is also the most popular tank round.

With them having 2 Regiments and our having a short Brigade, we were outnumbered maybe 4-6 to 1. If we were to get beyond them, it would take a concentrated attack against only one of their Regiments. The question was, to what purpose? The answer was if we didn't break out, they'd eventually come for us and take everything we had. Derek said if we could punch a hole in their lines, he could get to Iowa and locate more tank ammo, or the components.

By this time, late fall of 2014, the Amigos were almost beyond caring. We were old, and oh so tired. I sometimes wondered if we wouldn't have been better off if we had been in Tucson, shopping, when the war occurred. It must have been the depression that sometimes crept in despite the Zoloft. Sharon was depressed too and took Prozac to control it. It worked better for her than the Zoloft did for me.

The UN Regiments solved one problem, they kept the bad guys away. I'm not sure why we had a stalemate, maybe they actually believed we had a full Brigade with more coming all of the time. They had to see the evidence, you can't move that large of an armor force without leaving signs. Maybe they mistook the Blackhawks for Apaches. That would have been nice, a detachment of Apaches, equipped with Hellfire missiles, Hydra rockets and those 30mm cannons. Like all of our equipment they were vulnerable to machinegun and rocket fire.

After several days of scouting, a patrol found a gap in the encirclement. It was still a long way to Middleton but after checking all of the tanks rounds, they found enough swelled they didn't have much choice. Bill and Derek decided to make the mission with 10 vehicles, 4 10-ton trucks, 1 fuel hauler and 5 HMMWVs. If they found more ammo than that, they'd appropriate a civilian tractor trailer. I thought it a fool's errand, Derek's was very confident. Derek would lead the mission and with good travel times said they could be back in 5 days.

At oh dark thirty, one cold and blustery morning, they launched mission, sending scouts and infantry ahead to clear the way. My contribution was to supply a dozen suppressors that they promised to return. I wasn't really contributing much these days,

my banker duties had been taken over when I made a math error. Every morning these 3 Amigos bundled up to keep warm and patrolled the acreage, a make work project. The nearest troops were probably 15km out just maintaining the encirclement.

One scouting party reported that not all of the troops assigned to the 2 Regiments were concentrated on keeping us in. Instead, they were ranging much of southern Arizona, confiscating food and guns. Their mission was hard, not one Arizonan was willing to cooperate. They were finding some food, but no firearms, an unlikely scenario in Arizona.

We had finally completed moving in all of the containers from Ft. Huachuca. There were camouflaged containers everywhere and we had more ordinance than we could shoot up in years. My new goal, everyone has to have goals, was to shoot down a Hind with my Barrett. I was counseled that only a hit to an engine would do and I'd have to find one hovering fairly close to pull it off. The crew compartment of all series of Hinds was well armored, I couldn't simply shoot the pilot.

"Forget it Gar, there hasn't been a chopper here in weeks, not since we unloaded those Stingers on them."

"We'll have to lure one in, any ideas?"

"Yeah, let's go back to house and get more coffee."

"So we can talk it over?"

"So we can talk you out of it."

"Fat chance, but I'll be patient. One of these days one of them will come cruising by looking for something and I'll get him – Derek and Bill got 2 at a liquor store of all places."

"Aren't you tired yet?"

"Exhausted, how about you?"

"Clarence and I were talking, we're both tired. You have about 1,000 soldiers, can't you let them do it from now on?"

"I could, but Max needs his exercise."

"Starting tomorrow, we aren't going. If you need someone to go with you, get Aaron."

"That kid watches me like a hawk as it is, it's about the only chance I have to get away from him. You're really not going?"

"That's it, today was our last trip. Just stay with us and let Aaron exercise Max."

"I'll have to let you know. I'm afraid if we don't keep active, we won't be any help when those UN boys attack."

"We can still go to the range. We've both noticed that a trip to the range thoroughly wears you out. The last time we went, you had to take a day of to recover."

"No I didn't, I had a cold."

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They won by default, the next day I was so tired, I slept until noon. After I got up, showered, dressed and had breakfast, I found them in my den drinking coffee.

"Aaron had already had Max out, pull up a chair and rest yourself."

"When are they supposed to be back?"

"From Iowa? Three more days."

"Did he say what?"

"You know he is about secrecy, don't have a clue. I don't believe we'll be involved. He said much of his plan depends on what they find up in Iowa."

"Not counting Derek's tank, we have 11 tank platoons, a battery of artillery, mechanized infantry and assorted dismounted infantry. Give us a squadron of fighter bombers and it would be over in nothing flat. I think you guys were right, what we really need is Strike Eagles and a few loads of bombs."

"What's the basic Air Force unit, Gary?"

"A squadron, Clarence. Three Squadrons make a Wing. Back in the '90s, they kept changing the Squadron sizes, last I knew a Squadron had 24 planes and a Wing, 72. Thing is, I don't know where we'd find a wing of Strike Eagles. For all I know, a Wing might be composed of a squadron or two of F-16s and one Squadron of F-15s."

"They were replacing the F-15s with F-22s?"

"That was the plan and the F-35s were supposed to replace the F-16s. Don't know that that happened, what with the war and all."

What I didn't know was that Congress, after Iraqi Freedom ended, diverted large sums of money to both the F-22 and F-35 programs. We had produced almost 500 of the F-35s, ~400 for the Air Force. The F-22 program was completed, far ahead of schedule.

The government clamped a lid on the news and the American public was unaware that the Air Force was, for the first time since 'Nam, almost over strength. In a move that would have made a conspiracy theorist proud, ordinance for the aircraft was widely distributed, with a vast quantity stored at Ft. Huachuca, an Army facility.

The apparent explanation was that the money had already been allocated to the war and homeland security sucked. You know how the government is, once they allocate money, they're loath to not spend it. The Air Force got the 381 F-22s it wanted, ~ 400 F-35s and the Navy and the Corps had a few of the new joint strike fighters. The buildup ended when the war came but the F-15s and F-16s hadn't yet been retired, the phase out was gradual.

Our Sergeant cum Lieutenant cum Lt. Col. finally connected up with a Squadron of Eagles. I mentioned the CBU-75 Sadeye earlier. The Squadron had those, JDAMs and several other types of bombs.

There are two Mountain Homes that I know of. One is in Arkansas close to where my son lived for years. The other is in Idaho. Thankfully, the Idaho city has the 391st Fighter Squadron and their 24 F-15E Eagle fighters. The 391st had been deployed to support the UN operations in Arizona. Since the Air Force I knew and loved demanded that their personnel have integrity, courage, and moral fortitude, their presence actually became a blessing. Disgusted by the UN tactics and the unjust mission, the pilots and ground crews had decided to look for something else to do. Lucky us, we were just where they needed us to be.

Whetstone – Chapter 32

The wing that the 391st was assigned to also had the 172nd Fighter Squadron (A-10C Thunderbolt II) attached to it. Best of all, it was the 162nd Fighter Wing, a unit that I was sure had been wiped out with Tucson. The 162nd boasted 3 full squadrons of F-16E/F fighters before the additional squadrons were attached. In total, we had 24 F-15E Strike Eagles, 72 F-16E Block 60 fighters from the 162nd, and 24 A-10C Thunderbolt II ground attack fighters. It was a sizeable little air force for us to chance upon.

The fighters were relocated to Ft. Huachuca after the nukes ruined their base in Tucson. Thankfully, they were able to reconstitute and redeploy them. Now they would fly missions in support of us instead of the UN, with a little help from some fellow officers that were fed up with the Commanderess-in-Chief to cover their tracks. I bet old Hillary would crap her expensive drawers if she knew we were commandeering “her” expensive hardware and highly-trained pilots. Thank God she knew nothing about how her military worked. With a bit of luck, we might get even more units sent our way “in support of contingency operations” that would remember their allegiance was to the Constitution, not the President.

With enough defections, Ms. President might just give up.

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Although Ron never said anything, I believe that he was concerned about our having automatic weapons and suppressors. They were strictly controlled by the NFA of 1934, another example of the government meddling in our lives. First off, a suppressor doesn't silence a firearm, it reduces the sound to a bearable level. Many gangsters of the 20s and 30s preferred the Tommy gun, while still others, like Clyde Barrow, preferred the BAR. Was there some magic that made a shotgun with a 17" barrel any more dangerous than one with an 18" barrel?

The law didn't prevent LEOs from having the weapons, just the public. You could have one, provided you were willing to cough up \$200 for the tax stamp and pass the background check. Think about that in the terms of the economy in 1934... \$200 was nearly a fortune when many were working for \$1 a day. Next, there was the question of where the gangster came from in the first place. Yes, Virginia, we've always had criminals, but Prohibition gave them a new source of money and they had millions of more than willing customers.

The government created the situation in the first place; then when the bad guys took advantage of the latest weapons for their rivalries, rather than legalize liquor, they outlawed certain firearms and accessories. It was a case of a pound of cure for an ounce of trouble. To make matters worse, many states outlawed all of the NFA 'weapons' and even if the feds approved the purchase, you still couldn't legally own one whatever.

Having lived in Kalifornia since he was 2 weeks old, Ronald had been taught from day one that NFA firearms were bad things that only criminals had. Thus for whatever reason, he was very uneasy with the selection of weapons we had. I was the opposite and always felt the government had overstepped its authority when they outlawed machine guns, short barreled rifles, suppressors, destructive devices, and that special class, 'any other weapon'. It only got worse with the GCA of '68 and the FOPA of '86. Broom Hillary's husband got through an Assault Weapons Ban when he was Prez, but it had a sunset clause, thank God.

When the fat was in the fire, none of this kept good ole Ronald from using the weapons, still I could tell, it bothered him. Had it been up to me, I'd have mounted Mk-19s on our front and back decks, but we didn't have enough to allow that. And when it came to my grabbing a weapon in a hurry, I generally reached for that Kalifornia legal M1A. Given a choice between spraying and praying vs. one well aimed shot, the latter always prevailed. I keep the 10 round magazine that came with the rifle loaded with Black Hills 165gr BTSP point ammo, 'cause you never knew when an edible critter might get into your sight picture.

Like I'd ever see an edible critter now that we spent most of our days in my den. At best, the 3 of us were consigned to monitoring the radios Damon had moved from the

shelter to the den. We kept our guns loaded and powder dry just in case. I kept the volume up on the SINGARS so we'd know immediately if the UN were attacking. They weren't, of course, they had other plans.

By stationing a Regiment on each side of us they hoped to keep us contained until they were ready to do whatever evil deed Biliary assigned to them. Meanwhile, they controlled most of southern Arizona, except for Davis-Monthan and Ft. Huachuca. They weren't about to go up against 5 Squadrons of Air Force or the remaining force at the Fort. It was rumored that Biliary was at Cheyenne Mountain and the VP was at Holloman.

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A little explanation about the armed services is in order right now. Although most former members already know these things, many civilians don't.

Every service member, from the rank-and-file enlisted to the highest officers, swears an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and to obey the orders of the President. National Guard members add the Constitution of their respective state and their Governor to this oath, following the same patterns.

Note that the oath is to the Constitution, not the government. This raises the question of why.

If the oath was to the Government, the service member would be pledging themselves to serve the people elected to represent the nation instead of the nation itself. Thus, the services would become the property of those elected officials and not the people that elected them.

The Founding Fathers had the wisdom to realize that when the Armed Forces of a nation belong to her leaders instead of her citizens that those forces can be used against those citizens to protect the power of the elected officials. This is what the ruling monarchs in Europe had done for centuries.

The United States of America was a different form of government. It needed a different form of allegiance from its armed forces. Out of this was born the following concepts: the services belong to the people and swear an oath to the Constitution itself; the services cannot be used to police the people except in cases of national emergency, and then only so long as is necessary to restore order; the people themselves had the right to arm themselves against the government if it became corrupt so that they could defend the Constitution against those who would pervert it.

Now, the elected President had decided that the mounting crisis within the borders of the United States justified her declaration of martial law, nationalization of critical resources, and invitation of foreign troops onto American soil to maintain public order.

In doing this she subordinated the authority of the Constitution to that of the United Nations.

As every graduate of public high school can tell you, civics class teaches you that the Constitution is the supreme law of the United States. What she did, therefore, was extremely illegal.

Service members aren't as dumb as some people think, though. When these acts happened, the members themselves each faced a personal crisis. Do we rebel against the corrupted government to restore the Constitution as the supreme law of the land, or do we follow orders from the President whom we swore to obey?

The answer is that we continue to serve the office until such time as we can act to restore the Constitution.

Now, Dad didn't know that we were using what connections we still had to contact the Armed Forces of the United States as often as we were able to remind them of their oath to the Constitution. I was a bit afraid that if I told him that I was doing this he would feel that I had subordinated the wellbeing of our family and friends in our small community to that of the same corrupt government that took away his rights before the crisis. Nothing could be farther from the truth, but he was getting old enough that I feared the kind of roaring argument that would follow might threaten his health.

The truth is that the folks like Dad, Sharon, Ron, Clarence, and the other older people that remembered the freedom us youngsters could only dream about were depressed because they could remember that freedom and mourned its loss. Those of use born after the slow decline of freedom that the older folks mourned now fought to restore a level of freedom that we had never really had. One speech was usually enough to spark the interest of other freedom-minded individuals our own age.

It's interesting that in basic training every new recruit is taught that they no longer practice the freedoms guaranteed them by the Constitution, but to protect those freedoms for everyone else. That fact makes service members easier to remind with a little speech of their true allegiance.

The word was out through the rumor mills and scuttlebutt that there was a bunch of service members standing up to the occupying army of the President down around the Four Corners. Every once in a while a few service members would disappear because of this rumor. Most reappeared in a few days to a few weeks somewhat closer to the Four Corners area. Some didn't reappear.

The lucky ones were the ones who stayed gone. My sources told stories of drumhead trials and hangings for deserters.

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I set out to pick up some ammo from Iowa and Illinois. Dad knew about that mission. I didn't set out to rally the Armed Forces to the flag.

That's what happened, though.

As we made our way across the country we ran into patrols, checkpoints, and units deployed to police up firearms, food, and medical supplies. The UN troops got a line of bull about how we were transferring the vehicles to another garrison that was always just a few more miles up the road; it worked, too, thanks in part to acting classes I took in college and in part I think to divine Providence. The US forces heard something else.

I appealed to the guys face to face. I was legally a Lieutenant Colonel because of a very old tradition known as Full Faith and Credit and the fact that the legally constituted government of the state I served kept their own promotion lists. So long as I was in the National Guard, my rank was determined by the elected government in Arizona. As far as we knew, that government was based in Whetstone. Thank goodness for that. A light Colonel gets a little more time to explain.

All of the American units I ran into were sympathetic when I explained to them. Service members are a pretty loyal bunch when it comes to America and we were all sick and tired of the way the government was running things. None would volunteer any information about us and our whereabouts to the UN officers they reported to by Executive Order. A very few implied that they would head south west.

Nobody loves a soldier until the enemy is at the gates. This time, the enemy was inside the gates before we knew what was happening. The civilians that saw us proudly flying the Stars and Stripes from our radio antennas definitely loved us. We had hot meals all the way there and back, even when the families providing them looked like they needed them more than we did. To repay them for their hospitality we gave away the food we didn't eat thanks to them and arranged quietly with our ever-expanding network of "battle buddies" to misroute some of the food seized by Hillary's troops to them. It wasn't much, but it was all that we could do.

I meant to load up with as much ammo as I could get. The support units that heard about us did one better. We were at each of the two depots less than two hours and got a full load between them of everything we needed, from bullets to grenades to rockets. Someone even conjured up some fake orders for us, labeling this shipment as "necessary ordnance for the contingency operations in Arizona". Good old American know-how and the kind of sneakiness that made the Continental Army successful back in the Revolution got us more than we ever bargained for: Ft. Huachuca would now be getting occasional resupply from the ordnance depots and Hillary would never be the wiser. Officially, the resupply convoys would be headed for the UN forces stationed there. Unofficially, each convoy would have whatever we asked for to be delivered to Ft. Huachuca before they brought a mixed bag of defective and semi-defective supplies to the UN. The additional items would never be on the books so there would be no paper trail, either.

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The fighters were relocated to Ft. Huachuca after the nukes ruined their base in Tucson. Thankfully, they were elsewhere during the strikes and had survived mostly intact. Now they would fly missions in support of us instead of the UN, with a little help from some fellow officers that were fed up with the Commanderess-in-Chief to cover their tracks. I bet old Hillary would crap her expensive drawers if she knew we had commandeered “her” expensive hardware and highly-trained pilots. Thank God she knew nothing about how her military worked.

“Hi, Dad.”

“Well, how did it go?”

“Better than we expected. The Americans we ran into are fed up with the UN and Hillary. We now have all the ordnance we could ever use set up to be delivered to Ft. Huachuca and more units headed this way. The General I ran into even promoted me to Full Colonel and ordered me to manage the units he could get sent down here as commander of Joint Task Force Apache.”

“Great, but what is Joint Task Force Apache?”

“You see all these guys that snuck in? They are part of a new off-the-books taskforce of Americans who will eventually drive the UN out of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah. The taskforce will contain units from every service branch. To that end, I have to ask the local people for permission to quarter a Navy construction battalion just south of Whetstone.”

“What for?”

“To help rebuild the local infrastructure. Whetstone is going to be the support community for Ft. Huachuca, providing some of the support needed to operate the base and in return getting some of the food and critical supplies that Hillary is rounding up.”

I was getting mighty angry by this point. Derek sounded like he had gone over to the other side. “So you work for Broom Hillary now?”

“No, Dad. This is off-the-books. The Joint Chiefs of Staff don’t know it yet, but their not in command of the Armed Forces. The units I ran into were pretty happy to help us regain control of our own country and restore the Constitution.”

“So what does that have to do with us?”

“Dad, do you like the thought of the United Nations stationing troops around your land?”

"No."

"Neither does any other real American. There's a civil war brewing right now, Dad, and our quiet little town is getting famous as one of the last bastions of freedom. Some guy up in Utah is doing something similar up there, and the native tribes like the Navajo are making sure that the UN can't enter reservation lands pretty effectively. Whetstone is one of the principle rallying points for the Four Corners, Dad. There are folks all over that want to know why it is that we are left alone for the most part, including Hillary. Truth is that most of the forces she wants to pacify the Four Corners are getting into trouble before they leave Texas and Oklahoma. Civilization as we know it might be over, but America still lives in the hearts of her citizens."

"No chit, tell me more."

"Liberals like Hillary are moving to Washington as fast as they can get there. The locals all over the country have brought back some time-honored traditions like tarring-and-feathering. The UN has its hands full rounding up the leaders of such "rebellious acts" and hanging them publicly. Folks are starting to think that we can get the crooked b*tch out of office."

"I'm not sure about that, son. What about the military units that are loyal to her?"

"There aren't many left. Right now, they're giving lip service to Pentagon and behind their backs, being loyal Americans."

"While you were gone, Damon moved the radios out of the shelter into my Den. Ron and Clarence refused to continue the patrols with me, so I have Aaron walking Max and spend my days in the Den."

"Taking it easy?"

"Hell, I even gave up my banker duties. They gave you the Bird, I see, when do you get the Star?"

"Not bad for an E-5, huh?"

"Seems to me that a Bird Colonel is an O-6, you changed letters from E to O and added one rank. It was just a shame you couldn't get into West Point when you graduated from High School. I'll tell one thing kid, I ain't gonna salute you. I crossed swords with a Bird Colonel way back when, he won. He was a fighter jock who got assigned to run the Rocket Site. He was pissed to begin with and my antics didn't really help."

Joint Task Force Apache? Why not Navajo or Hopi? It was probably because of Geronimo. He had surrendered at Skeleton Canyon, located 30 miles northeast of the town of Douglas, a ways southeast of here on 80. It seemed more than fitting in a way,

the 2nd Revolutionary War would be fought by Apaches. Maybe someone would get to Colorado Springs and bring down the Great White Mother. With what little information he gave me, I couldn't tell if we'd ended up with a Brigade, Regiment or Division. Well, not a Division, those were commanded by 2 star Generals. A Bird Colonel could command a Regiment or Brigade and a Brigade could be as large as 2 Regiments. <http://www.theoutlaws.com/gold5.htm>

The reference to gold is because the Spanish were rumored to have hidden 2 tons of gold in a cave in Skeleton Canyon. It's a long way from Phoenix, so I guess it's not the source of the Dutchman's gold. East of Phoenix a ways is a depleted gold mine, cum tourist trap. I always sort of figured that location was the Dutchman's gold. I'll be darned if I can remember the name of the mine, but when I was there they had a mining demonstration and a store where I bought a book about the Lost Dutchman Mine.

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Rallying point? Four Corners? We were a fair distance from the four corners, the junction of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado. I wouldn't go there anyway, they charged admission, \$3 a head before the war. Me a rebel? It figured, my past was coming back to haunt me; when did I ever come up with the expression, 'I'll do anything you ask me to do, but refuse to do anything you tell me to do'?

Man things had changed in the 8 years since we bought that PowerBOSS 7000. Those were simple times, I only fired my rifle on the range and we only used the generator once a week for 30 minutes to exercise it. Sitting in the Den, the 3 of us weren't getting any exercise. How hard was it to fire up the ATV and run the fence line? We hadn't burned any more calories doing that than we did sitting in the Den. We didn't care anymore, we were too old for this chit.

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Once upon a time, there was a mountain that represented the heart and soul of the United States Department of Defense. A massive rock, immovable and strong, that housed the greatest command center ever devised. NORAD, they called it, the North American Defense Command.

Cheyenne Mountain. The last bastion of the free world.

Not anymore. Now it was our ultimate target.

“Apache 6, this is Blackhorse 6, over.”

I picked up the hand mike and depressed the push-to-talk button. “Apache 6, over.”

“Your axis of advance is generally 045 degrees. Strike today's objects and report when set. Out.”

Boy, was it nice to be taking orders for once. After all those years in uniform I was used to someone telling me what to do from time to time. I was also used to the relative bliss of having a small area of responsibility compared to what I had now. Don't get me wrong. Not one soldier to ever put on the uniform got through so much as a week of serving without thinking that he knew better than his officers. Even the officers knew that one; well, at least the good ones did.

The Four Horsemen were the commanders of the groups assigned to the various areas leading up to and around Cheyenne Mountain. In the north was Whitehorse 6, a screwball infantryman with nearly a full division of irregulars behind him, all from former Confederate states. They would secure Denver and Colorado Springs along the I-25 corridor. From the west would come Redhorse 6, two brigades worth of Midwestern farmboys in heavy combat vehicles led by an old friend of mine, Matt Bogardus. I knew him back when he wore three up and two down; now he wore a single star. They would cut off everything from the east and set up their headquarters in Security, Colorado. From the south, my new boss would lead the rest of Blackhorse up through Four Corners and Pueblo. Between the three forces, the foreign invaders that Billary was using to protect herself would be pinned against the Rampart Range.

Last but not least would be Palehorse 6. Somehow, somewhere, someone in Kalifornia had managed to gather up some of the best warplanes ever built. I'm talking about F-22s, F-35s, B-2Bs, and that wild weasel version of the F-117. They were assembled into a huge mega-group nicknamed Taskforce Death by some melodramatic idiot. Behind them would follow several massive cargo lifters loaded to the gills with paratroopers from every airborne unit still in service. Back in WWII there had been five proud airborne divisions, the 11th, 13th, 17th, 82nd, and 101st. All five patches were supposed to be represented in the second half of Palehorse, nicknamed Taskforce Hell. Those brave paratroopers would drop in on NORAD and penetrate the mountain after we isolated it.

Overall command was in the hands of what was left of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Their callsign was Pentagon 6, but we were beginning to call them the Pens-are-gone 3. They didn't seem to know the first thing about running a fourth-generation war. For that matter, I sometimes wondered if they had caught on that we were in the middle of one.

The Pens-are-gone 3 did give us some crypto gear so that we could encode our radio traffic and a mountain of operational orders and acetate map overlays so that we could see exactly what their massively complex and ultimately doomed plan of action was. I found every bit of what they gave us useful. I loaded the cryptographic sets into my SINCGARS radio and used the rest to start fires in burn barrels so that the men could warm themselves.

Now, one piece of this overblown plan I liked, but only from a point of honor. There were five airborne divisions at the height of their prominence. One saw action in the Pacific Theater. Three saw action in the European theater.

One didn't see any action. Guess which division that was? Right, the 13th. They were organized on the 13th of August 1943, sent to Europe in January of 1945, and sent right back home in August. The Black Cat Division never saw much of anything except for a regiment transferred in from the 82nd that never respected the rest of the soldiers in this hard luck division.

The All-Americans and the Screaming Eagles laughed at their less storied cousins in the 11th, 17th, and especially the 13th. The Angels of the 11th could claim that they had invented Air Assault to silence the 101st. The Thunder from Heaven cited proudly their battle credits and won grudging respect from the 82nd. The Black Cats, however...

So what ever did our fearless leaders do? Put the 13th in the forefront of the raid. They would make the first drop, followed by the fearless paratroopers of the 82nd and 17th and finally by the air assault divisions.

Never mind the fact that the 13th was a bunch of civilian skydivers and parasailing adrenaline junkies. They could hack it, right?

As for a backup plan, the braniacs had reactivated the 2d Cavalry Division. This was another unit like the 13th Airborne that had seen no combat. It was another hard luck unit, but with a difference. The Black Cat division was cursed by superstition: The 2d Cavalry was cursed by the permanent tan many of the members wore. Originally organized with the 9th, 10th, and 11th Cavalry Regiments assigned, it finally gathered together all the Buffalo Soldiers (read: black cavalry troopers) into one division. I was surprised only that they weren't used in some farcical mission, like Operation Human Shield or Operation Cannon Fodder. The natives of the Plains tribes respected the tenacity and fighting ability of these soldiers for decades before that war, yet the unit was never trusted to face actual combat as a division. What a crock.

My guys were attached to Blackhorse. Frankly, I didn't mind that much. These fellow soldiers had a deep pride and a burning need to redress past wrongs. There wasn't much else that could be better for morale than that. Strangely enough, the troopers of 2d Cavalry were a broad spectrum, from the descendants of those buffalo soldiers to the great-grandsons of those who deemed them inferior to members of the tribes the buffalo soldiers used to chase around this area over a hundred years ago.

Pride was the point I liked. Whitehorse had the pride of the Old South to restore. The Airborne was led by the boys who never fought. Our division had generations of second-class status to erase. Even those Midwestern boys had something to prove: when I was with them, we were told that we wouldn't go anywhere until the aliens landed in Kansas City. Pride would give us everything we needed.

The Pens-are-gone 3 didn't know it, but they couldn't have assembled a more unlikely bunch.

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I lined up my guys abreast of each other and told them to hold formation no matter what happened. We were the eastern flank of Blackhorse, so we had the most level terrain to work with. In front of us we could see the Great Plains meeting the foothills of the Rockies. It had been a long road march to get us in position. Now it was our job to make sure that nothing got between us and the southern flank of Redhorse until we linked up with them. They were currently 8 hours away from us.

My guys were grumbling about our task. I reminded them that no job was unimportant but they wanted to see some action.

“Apache 6, this is Ugly 3. Contact, east, over.”

“Ugly 3, this is Apache 6. Give me a SALUTE report, over.” Ugly 3 was the operations guru with the Ugly Stepchildren. He was telling me that he saw something, and I wanted to know exactly what it was.

“Apache 6, observing tanks and pc’s with dismounted support. Estimate brigade strength or better. Coming up from the southeast. They kinda look like the boys that were harassing us back in Arizona.”

It wasn’t the proper format but it was enough to proceed on. “Roger, Ugly 3. Guidons, guidons, this is Apache 6. Contact, east, tanks and pc’s with dismounted support. Switch to echelon right formation and engage, over.” Echelon right formation is simply a diagonal line with the trailing edge on the right side. I wanted to set my lines so that we would hit them in the flank all at once. I got acknowledgements from all the commanders under me.

I brought up my binoculars and took a look over towards the reported position of the enemy. Sure enough, there was the dust trail. They were trying to hit Redhorse in the rear.

“Gunner, give me a range.”

Bill pressed the laser rangefinder button. “5700, sir.”

“Guidons, Apache 6. Engage in 2 minutes, over.” Again, the commanders acknowledged my order.

2 minutes was just long enough to get all my big guns in range. It doesn’t seem like a long time, but when you are waiting to kill someone, 2 minutes is an eternity.

“Need something to steady yourself?”

I lowered my binos and looked down at Bill. He was holding out a hip flask. "Bill, are you drinking during combat?"

"Nope. I'm nipping just before combat. After this is over I'll be drinking."

"Right." I took the flask and had a sip of Bill's homebrew. The fire started immediately and burned its way through my senses to my stomach. Coughing, I handed it back to him. "How long did you age this batch?"

"Nearly 2 weeks. You promised me that we'd look for barrels to age it properly, remember?"

I put my eye up to the extension sight. "Range."

Bill put the crosshairs on a tank and pressed the button again. 4900 flashed in green under the crosshairs. I checked my watch. 2 minutes exactly.

"Guidons, Apache 6. Fire and adjust. Report when complete."

Bill pulled the trigger on that big gun, causing the breech to rock back about a foot and drop the brass from our first round. Through my hearing protection I could hear the thunder of dozens of similar explosions. I kept my eye in the sight and toggled over so that I could designate the next target for Bill while he watched the round in. "Target!" he screamed, releasing and grabbing his controls again. The big gun swung over to line up on the second target I had picked out. My loader rammed another round into the breech and rearmed the gun.

We cycled through the firing process four more times before I couldn't find a new target. "Scan for more targets. I'm going topside."

I popped my head up and looked through my binos, taking a quick scan of the horizon. A hundred columns of smoke remained to mark the burning hulks that once were combat vehicles. I could also just pick out the dismounted infantry as they finished ducking into the brush.

"Guidons, Apache 6. Good shooting. Prepare to receive antitank fires. As soon as they present a target, get those dismounts."

Bill switched from the main gun to his coaxially mounted machine gun. "I can't hit them from here, boss."

"Don't worry. Leave it on main gun. If you see a puff of smoke, put a round into that puff."

"Don't you think that's overkill, boss?"

“Maybe, but who’s going to prosecute us for war crimes? Besides, I don’t want this tank damaged.”

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That was it, it wasn't easy but the patriots ended it. The framers of the Constitution saw the possibility that someday, someone would take it into their head that they were Above the Law. I could quote a hundred sources, but they all say the same basic thing, if the government gets too big for its britches, the people have a means to resist tyranny, that's really what the 2nd Amendment is all about. Somewhere along the way the country got too civilized for its own good and lead us down a path to destruction.

There was a song a long time back...

The eastern world, it is exploding
Violence flarin', bullets loadin'
You're old enough to kill, but not for votin'
You don't believe in war, but what's that gun you're totin'
And even the Jordan River has bodies floatin'

But you tell me
Over and over and over again, my friend
Ah, you don't believe
We're on the eve
of destruction.

Don't you understand what I'm tryin' to say
Can't you feel the fears I'm feelin' today?
If the button is pushed, there's no runnin' away
There'll be no one to save, with the world in a grave
[Take a look around ya boy, it's bound to scare ya boy]

And you tell me
Over and over and over again, my friend
Ah, you don't believe
We're on the eve
of destruction.

Yeah, my blood's so mad feels like coagulatin'
I'm sitting here just contemplatin'
I can't twist the truth, it knows no regulation.
Handful of senators don't pass legislation
And marches alone can't bring integration
When human respect is disintegratin'
This whole crazy world is just too frustratin'

And you tell me
Over and over and over again, my friend
Ah, you don't believe
We're on the eve
of destruction.

Think of all the hate there is in Red China
Then take a look around to Selma, Alabama
You may leave here for 4 days in space
But when you return, it's the same old place
The poundin' of the drums, the pride and disgrace
You can bury your dead, but don't leave a trace
Hate your next-door neighbor, but don't forget to say grace
And... tell me over and over and over and over again, my friend
You don't believe
We're on the eve
Of destruction
Mm, no no, you don't believe
We're on the eve
of destruction.

Recorded by "Barry McGuire"
Written by "P.F. Sloan"
Album: "Eve of Destruction"

The American media helped popularize the song by using it as an example of everything that was wrong with the youth of that time. The song also drew flak from both conservatives and liberals. On the right, a group called The Spokesmen released an answer record entitled "The Dawn of Correction". A few months later, Barry Sadler released the patriotic "Ballad of the Green Berets". The Temptations' song "Ball of Confusion (That's What the World is Today)" mentions the song title. The song was banned by some radio stations in the USA as well as by the BBC and Radio Scotland.

It was never a question of if, only when and what. Of all the tragedies in this tale, two stand out, WW III and the government's usurpation of power. Newt tells us WW III has already started, maybe he's right. Are any of the 10 'Bill of Rights' Amendments more important than the other 9? If so, I'd vote for the 10th Amendment, States' Rights. Ask the people in New Orleans if you don't believe me. Most of us watched that happen on TV, live. Most of us watched 9/11 on TV. The Cold War never ended, it just changed character.

I'd like to thank Derek for his collaboration, especially on the military stuff. He has seen combat and helped immensely with those parts. My story Armchair Survivalists may be more accurate than you know. We started our preps, I only hope we have time finish them before the world situation gets totally out of hand. Some things are harder than others, for instance, how do you store enough gasoline to keep your generator running?

If you live in the country, you probably have a farm tank, but try putting in one of those in the PRK if you live in a city.

End