

THE MUTANT EPOCH POTO POT POT POCH Adventure TIMES

For6to10 1 Rank Characters

Created by William McAusland Published by Outland Arts

"Putting YOU in the Game"

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Beyond Bed Crater

Introduction

WARNING If you are going to be a player in this adventure, read no further! The only content for players is what the GM hands out to you. Looking at this content would be like reading the last page of a novel or watching the climatic end scene of a movie before starting at the beginning! If you are solo playing Beyond Red Crater, then read the Excavator Team Strength below and then skip to the next page, **The Adventure** and begin.

Excavator Team Strength

This adventure is for a dig team of between 8 to 12 low rank characters (1st to 3rd ranks). Due to anticipated casualties among player characters, and the absence of a fall back location to permit healing, resupply or reinforcements by replacement PCs, it is recommended that each player have at least two characters. Incidentally, eight pre-generated Player characters are available in appendix 10 of this book, pages 109 to 116.

'Read to Player' Text blurbs and GM advice on multi-path TME adventures

'Read to players' text in italics can be read as is, but a word of caution, reading to players is an art form, just as presenting prose at an author's book reading or giving a speech from prepared text. It is better to paraphrase the text, referring to it only if you must after previously reading the entry. If reading directly, look up at the players from time to time, use emphasis and if possible add to the description to make it your own.

Sometimes with a passage of read to players text, also seen as read: or read on: the game master will notice sections of normal text in parentheses, usually numbers or facts for the GM's eyes only that are tied to the proceeding text. Examples of this GM info might be numbers or types of creatures or people present in a description, distances, amount of ammo, game statistics for speeding up game play, and other highly useful information that the players either don't need to know or wouldn't know. Most often however, when the 'read to players' text ends, the abbreviation 'GM:' will appear and simply mean that the following text is meant strictly for the game master.

Game Master Summery

This adventure is situated outside of a small fortified village in a wasteland area. It is not setting specific so can be ported into the game master's own region if desired. If the GM's campaign is set in the Crossroads Region, the town of Rust Watch could then be Pitford.

This adventure is designed to be played in two or three sessions of about 3 hours each if the team is not forced back to town due to injuries, or get side tracked and wander off the map. It was designed both as a demo adventure for a game convention, as well as intended as a solo play training adventure for new GMs who just purchased the Hub Rules book.

There are several player handouts at the back of this book, as well as a player map that is meant to be torn up and the pieces divided among the players. If you are a Society of Excavators member (SOE), and you want additional copies of the maps and player handouts, or don't want to print this adventure but instead run it from a laptop or tablet, go to the Downloads by Product page in the member's only area of our website for PDF copies of all the sheets.

If you intend to solo play through this adventure, skip the rest of the summery and go right to Background and Adventure Hook, on the right.

Basically, this is a straight forward adventure involving both outdoor travel and underground ruin exploration. It can be enhanced with additional encounters, return trips to Rust Watch for healing or re-supply, or be expanded as per ideas listed in Appendix 5, page 92.

The poorly drawn, stained and partially torn player's map shows how to get to the dome once on the far side of Red Crater. If players look closely and pay attention to the map, they can plot a course which might avoid some deadly occurrences. At the dome, a tribe of humanoids worship a partially crushed robot which once every six years must shut down for a day to reroute power to a different battery which has taken that long to recharge from partially burned and unreliable solar panels. Smaller spider and pocket bots tend this larger, pinned war robot, while other beings communicate through the battle robot and impersonate a deity to deceive a tribe of fanatical, religiously driven skullocks. The skullocks are mainly at the dome during this rare holy event, but numerous squads, including airborne units, are on patrol around the dome and will do everything they can to stop intruders from getting anywhere near their holy shrine. These humanoids, who are often very intoxicated, believe that if they die in battle defending their God they will go to paradise. Given this, they do not flee or seek help when being overwhelmed by the adventure party, but instead fight to the death, chanting some dogmatic mumbo jumbo and welcoming a good death before the all seeing eye of their metallic God.

BEYOND RED CRATER



The Adventure

Read to players: Years ago, as teenagers, you each served as frontier rangers for the freehold barter ville of Rust Watch. Your dog mounted detachment numbered thirty youths, roughly half boys and half girls. You where lead north by your much respected officer, a bad tempered, one eyed old mutant called Three Fisted Sammy. The main body of your unit was encamped on the southern edge of the cursed Red Crater, which was abnormal but Sammy had explained that the patrol was merely conducting a territorial display, and promptly sent your squad off on a reconnaissance ride to the west.

Hours later, tragedy struck the main camp while you were kilometers away perched on the remains of an ancient overpass, your relic radio erupted with the panic stricken voices of comrades back at camp. The voices of your now lost friends and relatives are still fresh in your minds. Amid the clash of weapons, gunshots and screams, the transmission ended before you heard who or what attacked the main force.

At dusk on that terrible day you made your way back to camp and cautiously entered the smoking, vulture infested battle site. You found the outer junk and stick perimeter fence torn down and aflame, the tents shredded and the ground covered with the bodies of dead riding dogs and young comrades. You noticed that about ten of your militia comrades were not among the dead, and possibly taken captive. Only your commander, Sammy, still lived, two of his three arms broken, arrows and steel shafts driven through his body and pinning him to the sandy ground. You can still remember his last words as he held up a dirty, blood stained scrap of paper. "Swear to me, you'll split up and flee to the other trade forts... with this accursed map divided up." He used his teeth to tear the paper into four sections and handed a piece to four of you.

GM Note: Present a photocopy or printed download of player handout 1 (BRC-PH-1, page 117) at this point and right in front of the players, tear it apart into 4 sections and give the pieces to randomly determined players.

Read on to players here: Around mouthfuls of blood and sand, Three Fisted Sammy spoke again. "Keep the map hidden until you've grown... then gather... at this spot... six years and one day from now. Only then, join the map and follow it beyond this crater, through junk, across the river and flats to a broken

BEYOND RED CRATER

dome." Sammy coughed and convulsed in death throes but managed a few last words. "Go around the dome... find hole... enter... keep low as the pesks chant to the God of Death... sneak... keep low and go around to the right. Find the elevator... use code. Go down.

The power is on in the depths... and great secrets, weapons and wealth for our people. I was a slave to them once, so I saw it. We died here today 'cause I was greedy and did not wait. Too early. Skullocks not yet drunk and slowed. The worshippers came today ... took some of your friends prisoners, seven boys and six girls. I'm friggin' dyin', but... the map holds all the answers. Leave now. Go separately ... wait six years plus a day. Go October 16th, only then c... can you get by... chanters... you will... be heroes...." Three fisted Sammy died then, and as you stood among the carnage, could see a mass of humanoids gathering on the far side of the 120m wide, ancient blast crater, whooping and shrieking as they edged forward by the dozens. The growing dark and rising sandstorm did not allow you to get a good look at them. On your riding dogs, you lost them someplace in the night.



radically in this depression while at the center, in the deepest part of the crater, is a pool of foul looking blood red water. The crater itself is rust colored giving the site its name. The interior of the crater is about 120m across and 80m deep

several noticeable cavities. Stunted sagebrush and grass grow spo-

about 120m across and 80m deep at its lowest point. Going around it more than triples the distance needed to get beyond Red Crater.

You can choose to either march down the steep sides of the crater and cross it, skirting the pool, and heading directly north, or veer around the crater altogether on the flat ground going west or east.

GM: As the players decide amongst themselves, **roll d6** for a possible event or sighting:

1,2. Roll a random PC from the GM's Character & Campaign Reference sheet and **read:** For just a second you think you saw something shiny move on far side of crater, but whatever it was disappears before you can point it out to anybody else.

3,4. Read: Something on the

Entry 1, On the Edge of Red Crater: Read to players: It is dawn, six years and a day later, October 16th. You meet again as adults in the prime of your lives armed as best as you could manage, supplied with a few days of food, water, torches, and basic survival gear. You stand among the sand and skeletons of the old encampment, the odd spear and remnant of canvas tent protruding from the baked earth, the wind whipping through the debris. You have the four sections of map in hand and peer north across the blast hole.

GM: Pass around player handout BRC-PH-2, from page 118, which shows the view from the edge of Red Crater. There is also a handy GM's only handout key sheet on page 125 showing all the routes and their entry numbers.

At this point players might work together to fit the map back into one piece. Don't supply tape as the characters wouldn't have such a luxury; but they might use thread and needle to stitch it together, so maybe have it on hand but don't explain why it is at a gaming table. They may need to assemble the map time and again. If any PC gets separated or slain and the map section he or she held is not retrieved, that section of the map is lost.

Read to players again: With the sun creeping higher into the orange sky, you overlook the ancient blast crater, which steps down where the detonation excavated different layers. Concrete slabs, rebar, pipes, and melted glass protrude from the crater, as well as

far side of the crater, in the scattered, crumbling ruins beyond, lets out a long, mournful howl. Kilometers away, a similar but higher pitched howl seems to answer. Other than the wind and snap of torn fabric, all is quiet.

5. Read: On the eastern side of the crater about 90m away, loose stones tumble down the side of the crater interior. A puff of dust follows the debris down, but you can't see what caused the small slide and nothing appears from one of the many pipe openings and pits in the side of the vast pit.

6. Read: You all see the faint shape of a distant airship hovering far to the east, but it disappears before the sun and is later lost in the gathering clouds. You place its bearing north west and range at least ten kilometers away; although with the bright sunlight, its hard to tell.

GM possible side plot here: Purists know of the location and have also waited six years for the event. A former pure stock associate of Three Fisted Sammy converted to puriatism and now leads a parallel mission to uncover the secrets of the dome. The NPC purists have no idea the PCs are also on the quest.

Players can decide on the following routes: Go through the crater; see entry 4, next page. Go east around crater; see entry 3, next page. Or, go west around outside; see entry 2, next page.

Entry 2 Go West Around Crater: Read to players: You trek down the side of the crater, heading left towards the west. The early morning sun has not reached this side of the crater yet and the air is still cool from the night. Ahead, the ground is littered with ancient debris, a few badly rusted ancient vehicles which are half buried in the silty soil, tumble weeds, sagebrush and assorted grasses cover the ground, but there are no visible obstacles nor features of interest.

GM: Go to Entry 5, below if the team decides to accept this route and press on.

Entry 3 Go East Around Crater: Read to players: Choosing to go the right, you step around the eastern side of the crater and into the brilliant morning sunlight. Ahead, there are stands of bunch grass, sagebrush and other low growing vegetation along with protrusions of concrete, steel and plastic. The sunlight in your eyes makes it hard to see far, but you don't see any obstacles nor movement ahead.

GM: See entry 7 page 9, if the PCs continue on this course.

Entry 4, Go Down Steep Edge Into the Crater: Read

to players: The sides of the crater are steep, loose, and encrusted with all manner of sharp protrusion making it impossible to simply walk all the way around the edge of the crater itself. Going down the slope into crater is no easy task either, on account of sharpened steel which protrudes upward.

GM: Each person is virtually attacked by sharpened steel, broken glass, pointed concrete, razor sharp ceramics, and other materials. SV 01-40/ DMG d6. If the team continues down and tries to cross the interior of Red Crater, see entry 6 on page 8.

Entry 5, Going West Around Crater: GM roll d6 for possible event:

1-3. Read: Your lead excavator sees a fresh crater in the ground to one side as if only weeks ago a small explosion had occurred here. The earth is blackened, the plant life brunt and what appears to be a shredded deer is scattered about the 1m deep pit; the animal ripped apart, its carcass picked clean by scavengers.

GM: If the PCs don't turn back, there is a 4 in 6 chance that one PC happens to encounter an ancient land mine. The random PC is allowed a type C perception based hazard check to spot the circular device half buried in the sand and weeds and step around it at the last second. Failure results in him or her detonating the device: SV 01-90/ DMG d20+15, however, this is likely to kill a PC outright and if the player has only one character, then the GM can decide that the mine is damaged from the nearby explosion which formed red crater and only does d12 damage.

If the team continues on this route, there is a 1 in 8 odds each PC also has a run in with an identical land mine before getting to the far side. The PC should have the same odds of spotting the partially exposed device before stepping on it (type C perception based hazard check). Go to entry 8, page 9, if the team makes it around the crater.

4. Read: Something howls from the distant hills back the way you came, but you see nothing and due to the wind, can't really place where or how far away the sound came from.

GM: Go to entry 8, page 9.

5, 6. Read: Up ahead, about twenty meters away is what looks like a dirty, ill-fed, bearded old man leading two pack mules. You see each other simultaneously and he freezes, not going for any weapons nor turning and running. He appraises your group for a sec then swears out loud, a broad smile on his face. "I soiled myself, you sons of ... thought you was morts or raiders! What the hell are you doin' out here? You suicidal? This is a mine field! The ville is the other way about thirty or forty clicks. Off there to trade my scrap. You wanna come?"

GM: The man is a scavenger who has been pulling scrap plastic and metal from these parts for decades, keeping hidden and avoiding fights. He had been camping in the shadow of the crater all night and just got underway when he met the PCs. He knows where all the mines are on this side of the crater and camps here on purpose, finding security in the

explosives. He would be willing to lead the PCs through the field if given food or water, a gift or other trade item. If asked about the area, about the dome or the way there, he will say something like the following "Well, I never go far beyond this crater. There were some scavs who did take scrap from the ruins beyond here, and went into the ravine to the salt flat. But they all just disappeared a few years ago and I ain't had the stones to venture after 'em. I know that there is some mother big spiders in there, and the so called Bloodpath skullocks claim all this land as their own. I just stay hidden in these parts when not in town getting me salt and water. Unless you want to hire me to take you through this mine field, for say a liter of water or a day's rations, then you should turn around and follow me to Rust Watch, or go around the other side of the crater. Otherwise, good luck to you."

GM note: If there are any attractive females in the PC party of over 18 APP, this scav will stare at them the whole time he is talking to the group, clearly not having seen a woman in a long, long time. Depending on the age and sensibilities of the gamers at the table, the GM could have this scav offer to lead the PCs through the mine field in exchange for 'a quickie' with a female character. The scav is 50 something years old and has an appearance score of 3d6.

If the characters wish to press on around the crater in this direction without having the man guide them through the mine field, there is a 1 in 8 chance per PC of encountering a land mine before reaching safety at entry 8. If a land mine is stepped on, see Entry 5, roll 1-3, previous page.

Following encounters in this area, Go to entry 8, next page. If they want to backtrack and go around another way, they can either circle around from the east at entry 3 or go through the crater, entry 4.

Entry 6, Crossing Red Crater: Read to players: Once at the bottom of the crater, the wind has stopped and the stench from the pool in the center of the crater is sickening. Those with weak willpower suffer the worse.

GM: All characters must make a willpower based type E hazard check or drop to their knees and wretch uncontrollably, suffering d2 damage. **Roll d8** soon after this:

1,2. Read: From an assortment of pipe mouths, cave openings and pits within the crater, come a wave of small, skinny, gray skinned humanoids with skull like faces, white patchy hair and horrible, fanged teeth! They wear loin cloths and junk armor, and wield pipes for weapons. They charge like berserkers coming from 12 meters away on all sides and outnumber your side two to one.

GM: (2 skullocks per PC, range 12m) **Skullock:** DV -12/ END 10+d8/ MV 7m/ Init. +1/ Attacks: 1 weapon/ SV 01-50/ DMG d10 club/ STR 24/ AG 33/ ACC 30/ INT 2d6/ WL 40/ PER 45/ APP 3d6/ Valuables: VP (very poor)/ EFs 15/ Morale: average/ Size 1.3m tall/ 50kg/ Mutations: 10% chance 1 prime mutation/ Implants: 5% chance of 1 from set 2/ Relics: 5% chance of 1 from table WC-R.

These humanoids do not flee nor surrender, and seem to fight with religious zeal, almost glad to die when taking a death blow. Go to entry 8, next page, after this encounter.

3. Read: Emerging from various pipes and holes all around the crater, each at an assortment of distances, are enormous, misshapen mutant ants. The bright red things come in two sizes, giant and massive.

GM: These are giant ants, with two workers per character and a total of d2+2 soldiers, the soldiers appearing 3d6+3 meters away and the workers trailing behind at 10+3d6m. They attack to the death. Their hive is many kilometers underground and filled with hundreds of their kind. Go to entry 8, next page, after this encounter.

Giant ant, worker: DV -10 / END 8+d6 / MV 7m / Init. +0 / Attacks: 1 / SV 01-40 / DMG d8 / STR 34/ AG 54/ ACC 34/ INT 4/ WL 25/ PER 25/ Valuables: nil/ EFs 15/ Morale: average/ Size 1.2m/ 27kg/ Mutations: 35% chance from insect mutations list page 161 Hub Rules.

Giant ant, soldier: DV -20 / END 30+d6 / MV 6m / Init. +0 / Attacks: 1 / SV 01-70 / DMG d12+3 / STR 64/ AG 54/ ACC 34/ INT 3/ WL 66/ PER 22/ Valuables: nil/ EFs 25/ Morale: excellent/ Size 2.4m / 85kg/ Mutations: 35% chance from insect mutations list page 161 Hub Rules.

4. Read: Something has dislodged a mass of rubble and gravel from a steep section of the crater edge. The blocks of ancient debris tumble down in a small avalanche, sending huge chunks of concrete bouncing and tumbling around your team.

GM: Each PC is attacked once: SV 01-60/ DMG d10 lethal and d20 stun. After the avalanche, there is no sign of whom or what caused the landslide to occur.

5. When the team is passing the pool in the center of the crater, the surface of the pool begins to boil with bubbles and a second later, a huge, pink and yellow spotted jaw worm erupts from the surface. The creature is allowed one attack on the team before the party can leap back out of its reach, and it will not follow them if they choose to avoid melee. If fired upon by ranged weapons, the beast will stay in the fight only 2 rounds before submerging out of sight. Go to entry 8, next page, after this encounter.

Worm, huge jaw: DV -7 / END 60+2d100 / MV 4m or 2m tunneling / Init. -2 / Attacks: bite / SV 01-70 / DMG 2d20 /STR 78/AG 17/ACC 25/INT 4/WL 21/PER 23/ Valuables: nil/ EFs 120/ Morale: firm/ Size 5m/ 600kg/ Mutations: 39% chance of d2 from worm mutations list with description in the Hub Rules book.

6. Read: As your team gets within 50 meters of the far side of the 120m wide crater, somebody on the top of the opposite side opens fire with a rifle! The sound of the gunshot arrives a second after the bullet.

GM: A random PC is shot at by a .22 cal round, SV 01-60, DMG d10. This half seen foe will fire down on the approaching team for 10 simultaneous rounds, if not stopped beforehand. The shooter is in fact a skullock sniper attached to a small squad ordered to block anybody from coming this way. The gun is a .22 cal sporting rifle with a range of 500m, rate of 1 shot per round, 10 round magazine with a spare 3d6 .22 rounds in the skullock's pouch. He has d3+2 other skullocks with him armed with javelins and knives, all of whom remain out of sight during any long range fire fight, and if the shooter is killed, another of these humanoids will grab the rifle and spare ammo and use it on the PCs themselves, fighting to the death. The shooter is hidden in the rubble and making excellent use of cover and camouflage, thus, the PCs will have a tough time locating the shooter with each character allowed a type C perception based HC to locate the skullock sniper's firing position. The skullock gains -20 DV bonus for using rubble as cover. The PCs can either take identical cover and gain -20, flee and get out of effective range (although extreme range is allowed to the skullock but at half SV and half damage on a strike). If the PCs charge toward the far side of the crater under fire, they will sustain many potential strikes before closing with the shooter and his team.

Skullock: DV -12/ END 10+d20/ MV 7m/ Init. +1/ Attacks: 1 weapon/ SV 01-50 (.22 rifle 01-60) / DMG (.22 Rifle d10) d12 javelin or d8 knife/ STR 24/ AG 33/ ACC 30/ INT 2d6/ WL 40/ PER 45/ APP 3d6/ Valuables: VP (very poor)/ EFs 20/ Morale: average/ Size 1.3m tall/ 50kg/ Mutations: 10% chance 1 prime mutation/ Implants: 5% chance of 1 from set 2/ Relics: 5% chance of 1 from table WC-R.

Go to entry 8, next page, after this encounter.

7,8. No event, go to entry 8, next page.

BEYOND RED CRATER



Entry 7, Possible Event on Sunny Eastern Side of Crater: Roll d6:

1,2. About half way around the crater, the PCs run into some trouble. Growing to one side of the path, 3d6+3 meters away is an impaler bush which, if getting initiative (+3 for plant), shoots its harpoon at a random PC.

Plant, impaler bush: DV -7, vines -25/ END 60+d20/ MV nil/ Init. +3/Attacks: 1/ SV 01-68/ DMG d20/STR 40+d20/AG 22/ACC 26/INT na/WL 16/PER 43/ Valuables: nil/ EFs 35/ Morale: na/ Size 4m/170kg/ Victims will be dragged back to mouth at 4m per round and attacked by identical stats as harpoon. Plant attacks prey within 30m of it. Harpoon 'cord' can be hacked off, DV -25/ END 24.

3,4. The lead character discovers a small basement sink hole the hard way. Sagebrush, roots, weeds, and ancient junk have formed a trap-door-like cover over this old basement, unseen until its too late. The character must make a type C perception based hazard check to avoid falling into the 4m deep pit. If falling, he or she is allowed a type E agility based HC to catch hold of a root and avoid falling to the bottom where the skeletons of deer, wild cattle, giant rabbits and other animals have formed a impalement threat. If falling in, treat the PC as attacked by d6 assorted antlers, horns, jagged bones and upturned lengths of ancient metal: SV 01-50, DMG d10 each.

Climbing out is easy enough, if the fall victim is still alive, and there are no side passages leading off of this basement footprint. **Entry 8, Arrive at Far Side of Crater Regardless of Path:** *GM:* Present Player Handout BRC-PH-3, from page 119, and have the players pick a route ahead. The players can either review the main player handout illustration and pick or the GM can read from the following options:

Go west up a steep game trail to the plateau on the left (go to entry 9, next page).

Travel through the gap between the western plateau and crumbling buildings where odd shaped sacks of white cloth hang from ropes attached to arched metal beams (see entry 10, next page).

Climb up and over a towering mound of rubble and junk between two sections of crumbing buildings (go to entry 11, next page).

Go down the middle right between yet another row of dilapidated high rises and under a tunnel beneath fallen beams and concrete slabs (see entry 12, page 11.)

To the right, along the edge of a series of ruined structures which skirt a green colored crater-pond (entry 13, page 12).

Or go around the pond between the shore and the steep slope of the eastern plateau (entry 14, page 12).

Or finally, to the far right and up the steep, sandy embankment to the top of the eastern plateau (entry 15, page 13).

5,6. No event, go to entry 8.