

Honey – Chapter 1

A few years ago...

“Honey, got a minute?”

“I’ve ten before supper is ready to put on the table. What do you need?”

“Have you ever heard the expression that bad things happen in threes?”

“I had a great Aunt that believed that. I think it’s probably an old wives tale. Why do you ask?”

“I’ve been reading some of the stories one of the author’s posts on Frugal’s. He had a collection of sayings and quotes. He claims bad things happen in threes and that you should be careful what you wish for because God has a sense of humor. His quotes include a historical quote from Santayana, *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.* He also quotes Clint Eastwood from Heartbreak Ridge with, *Improvise. Adapt. Overcome.*”

“Strange man.”

“There’s more.”

“Let me get supper on the table and we’ll pick this up then.”

“Can I help?”

“Set the table.”

“What’s for supper?”

“I’m trying something new. You tie a pork loin and a beef loin together and divide the resulting roast into sections containing enough for two people and leftovers for sandwiches.”

“Sounds interesting. Table’s set.”

“Will you cut the roast?”

“Don’t you have to let it rest?”

“It was resting while you were talking about that author.”

“Thick or thin?”

“Try thin. Cut us three slices each or two if you can’t manage thin.”

“I’ll try thin. Mashed potatoes?”

“No. I included onions and potatoes with the roast and heated frozen corn. I made gravy for the potatoes.”

“Desert?”

“Almond Fudge or Cherry Nut ice cream.”

“How about we go to Dairy Queen and get banana splits?”

“Is it in the budget?”

“I’ll buy with my allowance.”

“I thought you wanted ammo?”

“I got the ammo. One battle pack of South African and two cases of Radway Green on stripper clips in bandoleers; seventy five rounds per bandoleer and ten bandoleers per battlepack.”

“That’s a strange mix.”

“I wanted to finish filling the magazines with South African and wanted some on stripper clips. I got it from Aim Surplus. With the money I had left, I’m on my way towards the scope and mounts plus a red dot sight.”

“I still can’t believe you spent that much on a rifle.”

“Well, I did. Once I finish this one, I’ll start saving for the .50 caliber.”

“Are you expecting a war?”

“As a matter of fact, I am. I’ve saved the extra firearms until last. I tried the Super Match with some match grade ammo and it shot a $\frac{3}{4}$ MOA group with iron sights. With the scope, I should get it down to $\frac{1}{2}$ MOA or less.”

“That’s a sniper class weapon. Why the surplus?”

“Because I can’t afford two M1As. I’ll sight the red dot in with the surplus and the Match with the scope. The rifle will just have to do double duty.”

“How much ammo will that make?”

“Forty-five hundred surplus and five hundred Match.”

“Which .50, the Barrett?”

“I think I’ll go with the Tac-50 with 750gr Hornady AMAX.”

“Why?”

“Most accurate American made .50BMG. It’s the official sniper rifle for the Canadian Army. Guaranteed to shoot ½ MOA. They get your Wrangler finished?”

“Yeah, strange to have a diesel engine. That 4BT is non-electronic, right?”

“Correct. It’s turbo charged and the new transmission is also a non-electronic automatic. You have fulltime 4 wheel drive. Just remember to run the glow plugs for a minute before you try to start it during cold weather. Did you go with the new large tank or same size tank?”

“Larger. Diesel costs as much as or more than gasoline. How come?”

“I think it’s because of demand, I’m not really sure. However, we’re both running diesel engines now, you the 4BT and me the 6BT. We can refill from the diesel tank for the generator in an emergency.”

“Besides your firearm projects, how is the LTS project coming?”

“I got more pails from various places last week and got them cleaned up. I stored 4 pails of corn, 4 of oats, 2 each of pintos, great northern and navy and 12 pails of hard red winter wheat.”

“No rice?”

“I ran out of pails. I got the rice from Costco last time we went. I put the last three bags of bread flour in the freezer.”

“Do you plan on putting the flour in the pails?”

“When I find enough pails I will. The roast is good. You could probably tie two pork loins to one beef loin though.”

“Ok, next time they’re on sale, I will. The beef I mean; we have several vacuum sealed whole pork loins in the freezer. How are you coming on the block laying?”

“Pretty good, actually. The inner walls are all erected and the inside equipment is inside. I’m going to use the loader to lift the inner door in place and form the concrete and then pour. While it’s setting up, I’ll start the outer block wall six feet and four inches outside

the inner wall. I've looked at this from several different angles. I think we'll need posts every eight feet inside to support the roof and the weight of the earth cover."

"Why don't you do that while the door is setting up?"

"They recommend that the door be closed when you pour and remain closed until it's set. It's ok, Dubya just got reelected and nothing much is going to happen during his second term. I do want to have this done before he's out of office."

"Why does it matter?"

"He squeaked by both times and I think that means the next president will be a Democrat. I just don't trust them if you must know."

"Six of one, half dozen of the other; if you ask me, we should vote for Ron Paul."

"That would just take two votes from the Republican Party. Let's wait and see who they run in three years before we decide. I should have the project finished in about six months except for the roof and earth cover."

"How do you plan to finish it off?"

"Put in the forms and pour the reinforced concrete roof six inches thick resting on the inner row of blocks and support posts. Fill the outer wall to level with the roof and raise the outer wall another six feet using hollow blocks. Cover it all over with heavily compacted earth to a depth of six feet. Raise the outer wall another five feet using solid blocks and pour six inches of concrete over the earth cover to seal it all in. Finally, add a fire escape that can be raised and lowered from inside to gain access to the roof."

"Are you going to put in a parapet with merlons and crenels?"

"Is that what you call those slots you shoot out of?"

"The slots are crenels and the raised parts are merlons. The wall is called a parapet."

"Yes honey, I'm going to put in a parapet with merlons and crenels. Do you think I should put in a second row of solid blocks inside the outer layer?"

"Do you already have all the block bought?"

"Yes."

"Did you include enough to do that?"

"No."

“We’ll have to wait and see if we can get some more at a discount like we got the first. What’s the protection factor on the shelter?”

“Six feet of earth provides a protection factor of 20. A foot of concrete has a protection factor of 5. You add them up and they represent the power you raise the number 2 to since 2 equals the halving thickness. Two to the 25th power is 33 million, 544 thousand, 432. Since most of the protection comes from the thickness of the soil, it wasn’t that difficult to raise high enough we’d never have to worry. It is the same as you’d get with a 12 inch thick dome covered with six feet of soil. However, the dome would be stronger because it is spherical.”

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That was over three years ago. Some of what I’d said was right and some was proven wrong. The Republicans are going to run John McCain and Sarah Palin for office. The Democrats are running Barak Hussein Obama and Joe Biden. I’m afraid the Republicans are going to lose because the economy is in the toilet and Obama is promising *change*. The above ground shelter was finished last year with the installation of the fire escape and second row of solid block. I got the Tac-50 with the Night Force 12-42x56mm Mil Dot Scope plus the McCann Night Vision Rail Mount and eight extra magazines. It turned out that the package accessories included a second magazine. I bought all four of the maintenance kits they offered plus the Elite Iron Suppressor. I didn’t get the Raptor, an AN/PVS-27 MUNS fell off a truck on the post.

I had a buddy who was still on active duty working in supply and over the period of a year, he got me 12 cans of Mk 211MP and 12 cans of M1022. He has another six months before he’s out... got stop loss... and said to plan on another six cans of each. We’ve been buying the Hornady A-MAX 750gr rounds ten boxes at a time and have managed to do that each month since we got the rifle so we have 150 10 round boxes.

I rounded out my armory with a Mossberg pump, model 590A1 and my handgun is a Taurus PT1911B. I bought Honey a MSAR STG-556 clone of the AUG and stocked up on 5.56 ammo and 42 round magazines. She wanted a Browning Hi-Power pistol and we got that used with new surplus extra magazines. She has 5,000 rounds of 5.56, 1,000 rounds of Gold Dot 124gr+P and the same shotgun I bought. I have some ammo coming for the shotguns and have 2,000 rounds of .45acp, half FMJ and half Gold Dot.

We stocked the freezer in the basement with a side of beef and two hogs plus a case of chickens. We did the same with the freezer in the shelter six months later. She did find the beef loins on sale and we had a dozen more of the two meat roasts prepared for each freezer. We had started our prepping before I enlisted as a result of 9/11 and had the one year of double bought food on the shelf by the time I finished AIT. While I was in the sandbox the first time, she managed to buy and store 4 one year deluxe units from Walton.

On my second tour, I got caught in a roadside bombing with an IED and ended up in a stateside hospital. Due to a loss of mobility from the injuries to my right leg, I was given a medical discharge and a 50% disability pension. I was a forklift driver before I volunteered for the Army and got a job with my former employer, probably due to sympathy, doing the same thing. With the job market the way it was, I took it and said *thank you kindly*. Honey was still working her job in the parts department at the car dealers. We basically had 2½ incomes and her folks and my folks got together and bought the place where we're living. They sold it to us on a low interest rate land sale contract. It's a 2½ acre lot, 108,900ft². Square, 330' per side.

About Honey's name. It seems her mother Janice was a fan of Bobby Goldsboro when she was a teen... You don't get it? Neither did I at the time. I looked him up on the Wiki website and found out his greatest hit was a song about Honey. My parents had no similar motives and rather than naming me Donald Junior, they selected David Paul. Honey's middle name was taken from an aunt, Rose. The last names were the same although we weren't related, Ritter. Anyway, back to the present.

Every penny we could scrape up went into our preps. Little things kept popping up to spur us on. Adventurism by Russia in some of the Republics, North Korea first unsuccessful nuke test and later successful nuke test. The housing bubble bursting, Wall Street Banking Firms tanking and Bernie Maddox. Our home wasn't at risk because our parents owned it outright and they began making gifts annually to reduce the principal without telling us. We didn't learn that we owned it outright until Christmas 2007 when we were given the deed.

Between what she'd gotten from Walton and what I bought in bulk and packed in the five gallon pails with oxygen absorbers inside of sealed Mylar bags we had a tremendous reserve of basic staples. We added the recommended vegetable oils and items not included in the packages like feminine hygiene, bath tissue, first aid, only aid and a trauma kit. Based on experience, I chose the ACS blood clotting bandages. Since I had Combat Lifesaver training, I managed to get both the Mark 1 kits and CANA (diazepam) in addition to IV sets and IV solutions including normal saline, D5W and Ringer's.

After we both completed an advanced first aid class, the doctor loosened up and wrote a few prescriptions including Tamiflu, Ciprofloxacin, Doxycycline, Cefalexin and Amoxicillin. Analgesics included Aspirin, Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, and Naproxen Sodium plus regular Hydrocodone. We had OTC Loperamide, a laxative, Sudafed, Hydrocortisone cream, Benadryl, multiple sizes of flexible fabric bandages, gauze pads, tape and several different rubs for sore muscles.

We could test for high/low blood sugar, blood pressure using a wrist cuff and had a stethoscope to listen for irregular heartbeats. Some of it was easy to get and others almost required an act of God. We had a set of *surgical instruments* and several types of sutures plus 1% Lidocaine injections. The only other items we had in large quantities

were triangular bandages, hot and cold packs, masks, gloves, 90% alcohol, and Betadine.

We bought 10 extra tires for each vehicle, 5 mounted on new rims and 5 unmounted and sealed in a wrapping. We bought two replacement batteries with the acid stored separately. Each vehicle had a full set of replacement belts and hoses. I had extra glow plugs, filters, engine oil, transmission fluid and brake pads.

“I think one more trip to Costco and Sam’s Club and we’ll have all the holes filled. I want butter, coffee, bath tissue, pasta and pasta sauce.”

“You can add some Earl Grey and Lipton tea. Maybe some of those 5 pound boxes of mixes, cookies, muffins and such. More sugar and bulk packed salt might be a worthwhile idea while we’re at it; a person can never have too much salt, according to the stories. If we can get some peanuts, M&Ms and raisins we can make up some Gorp (trail mix).”

“Why don’t you get Planters Mixed Nuts instead of peanuts?”

“Sure, that might be slightly better. Which ones, cashews or peanuts? You want a box of candy bars while I’m at it?”

“The peanuts. Regular and Almond Snickers?”

“Should we get jerky?”

“Some, it depends on the price. We have that case of Mainstay bars.”

“I’ll get the jerky in the large packages and move it to some vacuum Ziplocs.”

“Yeah, do that. We’ll go first thing in the morning and hit Costco first, Sam’s Club second, Wal-Mart third and the regular grocery store last to pick up anything we missed. Don’t forget the cooler with the cold packs.”

“Do I need the trailer?”

“Maybe, just in case. Remember the lock this time.”

We both had CCWs because it was now a shall-issue state. We lived in Robert Heinlein’s hometown, Butler, Missouri. We shopped up in KC on major shopping trips, just a shade over an hour north. We arrived early and decided to do Sam’s first because Costco didn’t open until 11:00. We took two cartloads of pasta through the checkout and I headed for the trailer to pack them while Honey went after the sauces. She only bought a dozen jars of prepared sauce and tomato sauce and paste by the case.

Our favorite sauce was ground beef and canned mushrooms made with one can of sauce and one of paste plus water to thin it. She had a good spice combination figured out that we both really liked. We got a few of the other items and then checked out and headed to Costco after we loaded up. She didn't start where I thought she would when we went to Costco and had a trolley full of personal care items which she sent me through the checkout with while she continued to shop. I think the guy at the register was more embarrassed than I was. Anyway, I put the load in the trailer and returned just as she had two carts filled with spices, Crisco, mixes and the two boxes of Snickers.

I went through the checkout a second time and this time he asked, "Stocking up?"

"We only come up once a quarter. My wife is still looking for more. Expect a trolley of coffee next."

"You drink that much coffee?"

"Well...we keep a good pantry in case of bad weather."

"I'll say."

The third time through was a trolley of coffee and other beverages. He just shook his head. My wallet was starting to get a little on the empty side. I lugged the trolley out and packed it in pickup. When I got back, Honey had two carts and was in the checkout lane. She had hams and butter and bacon and other things from the meat case. It cleaned out my wallet.

"Uh, I'm about out of money."

"Don't worry, I have more and we're just getting started. Next stop is Wal-Mart."

"I won't need much there."

When we arrived at Wal-Mart, she said, "I want you to get half a dozen pair of jeans, a dozen work shirts, socks, under clothes and a spare pair of work boots. I'm going to do the same."

"You know something I don't?"

"I know how fast the prices are going up, I've been watching them. Trust me, in three months you'll be glad we bought the stuff now."

"Ok, but I'm not buying the boots here. These boots don't last. I'll get Red Wings."

"Can you get the rest here?"

"As long as they have it in stock, yes."

“I’ll meet you in shoes in 30 minutes.”

“Ok.”

“These aren’t half bad looking boots. What’s wrong with them?”

“They only last about a year, eighteen months or so. When it’s time to re sole or re heel, the cobbler says they aren’t worth it. He recommends several brands including Red Wing. I wanted to check them out. I looked at their website and I think I’d like to get two pair, the 4465 Men’s 9-inch lace up and the 4470 Men’s 11-inch Pull-On. Both run over two hundred a pair.”

“But they last?”

“For years with proper care.”

“Ok, I get the same... in my size, of course.”

“Did you find everything you wanted?”

“Yes, but not the quantities. She called and I can get the rest at the store she called. They’re holding it for us.”

“I suppose we’d better get going.”

“Did you get everything?”

“Some of everything. I’ll check the other store for more of the same.”

“Do you know where the Red Wing store is?”

“They have twelve in the immediate area and 23 in a fifty mile radius. I have a list with addresses.”

We finished filling our wardrobes at the second Wal-Mart and a nearby Red Wing store. We stopped at a large supermarket and completed our shopping before turning the nose south. Ninety minutes later, I was unloading the cooler onto the kitchen counter while the coffee brewed. We’d eaten lunch at a place called Gladstone Maid-Rite in Kansas City, Mo. Strange hamburger, crumbly.

“Let’s get anything needing refrigeration put away tonight and finish up tomorrow. I want to divide the stuff between the basement and the shelter and we may need another shelf or two assembled. We only have 4 sets of shelves left, we should buy more.”

“There’s not much in the way of blank walls left in the shelter. I think two sets of shelves will use it up. It’s about the same in the basement, too. I don’t want to put up any shelving we can’t anchor to a stud.”

“Ok. Didn’t you say you have shotgun shells coming?”

“Yes, four more cases. There’s two cases of flechettes, one of 00 buck and one of slugs. That will give us two cases of flechettes, eight of 00 buck and four of slugs plus hunting loads in number 2 and number six shot. I have red and green flares, OC shells and bean bags. We can switch to the replacement barrels I bought for hunting, twenty six inch with Poly Chokes.”

“What do you want to save up for next?”

“Another tank for diesel fuel, the fuel and additional PRI-D and PRI-G.”

“Anything else?”

“Spare parts for the generator for a rebuild or two plus more filters and lubricants.”

“Is that all? I know there’s something you aren’t saying.”

“I asked Scotty to keep his eyes open for a few things in case they fell off a supply truck. I’m not really hopeful of getting them. Getting the Mk 211MP is enough of a risk; I doubt he’ll get the rest.”

“So what is it, mortar, heavy machine gun, rockets, hand grenades or something like that? I read the stories too.”

“The latter two if he can manage it. The M136 AT-4 has been replaced by the Javelin and some of the AT-4s plus some of the new batch of M72s. About the only hand grenades available are some less than lethal, the M67 fragmentation, smoke and the obsolete Mk 3A2. There’s a new Ma Deuce, the M2A1. It has pre headspaced quick change barrels, a rail accessory mount, an improved flash hider and a manual safety.”

“How much does a can of ammo weigh?”

“Over 30 pounds and we’d need quite a few. I doubt he can get the gun let alone the ammo. The same goes for the grenades and rockets even though they’re simply issue ammo in a combat zone. Stateside is a whole different scenario.”

“What’s he get out of this?”

“He has his own fifty, an M107 stamped property of the US Government. He’s been getting ammo for both of us. He’s sniper qualified and needs the M1022 to stay in

practice. I don't know how he gets the Mk 211MP. I do know he has as many cans stored in supply as we have."

Honey – Chapter 2

"What else does he have for a rifle?"

"The M24 SWS using 7.62 x 51mm M118LR ammo. Leupold ten power fixed Mark IV scope. I'm surprised he still has them since he's not going to reenlist and they can't stop loss him, again."

"Why not?"

"He was already stop loss'd to his full eight years. Federal courts have upheld stop loss but only to that point. He's home free in six months."

"Just so you know... it's time we started a family. I've stopped my birth control on the advice of my doctor."

"Was there a problem?"

"Yes there was. We don't have any children. I don't want to wait until I'm in my thirties to start. And, if you must know, both my mother and your mother are turning up the pressure. Oh, you got a letter from the Army and I put it on your computer desk."

"I wonder what that's about."

"Open it and find out."

"Huh, it's from the Army Medical Corps. They say they reviewed my case and determined that they underrated my level of disability based on similar cases. They adjusted it from 50% to 75% and my benefits will go up slightly. And, they will pay me back to the beginning for the difference."

"Will that be much?"

"Forty some months' worth, maybe enough for some stuff from Walton."

"I just ordered from them."

"On top of all we spent this weekend?"

"Yes, of course. Not to change the subject but Ron Paul isn't in the running so it's McCain and Palin."

"I hope we get that check soon, I think we need some more from Walton. I'll call Scotty and tell him to look hard."

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"What did he say?"

"He has the rockets and grenades and put in a requisition for more Mk 211MP and M1022. He put a feeler out and found some of the obsolete concussion grenades, two cases. He also found five cases of the obsolete M61s and both types are being transferred to him."

"What does he get out of this?"

"A place in our shelter, he's moving to Butler when he gets out."

"Do I know him?"

"I don't know. He's originally from Gary, Indiana. His parents moved out the same year he enlisted. Gary is crime ridden and has the highest percentage black population of any major US city. Scotty said he knew what it felt like to be a minority, only 12% of the population is white."

"I don't know anyone from Indiana that I know of. What kind of work does he do?"

"He is a certified welder. He'll have to get recertified since he was in the Army for eight years and wasn't a welder. He should have enough pre-enlistment experience to get him a job and eventually get recertified."

"How old is he? It sounds like he should be older than you."

"One year older is all. He studied welding for 3 years while he was in High School. I don't know if it was part of High School or outside, he never said and I never asked. Gary was a steel town. The community was created by US Steel to house labor for a new steel mill and the head of US Steel was named Gary."

"So is he going to be able to keep his rifles?"

"He has receipts showing that they were turned in. They aren't real so he's still able to get ammo to remain proficient. It's a matter of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing. He was transferred a bunch of times during his three tours in Iraq. I'm sure he turned in something, just not his weapons. He has other things, too. Being single, he invested money in firearms. He has a Springfield Armory M21, a Taurus like mine, a Mossberg pump and a Benelli M4 Super 90 12 gauge semi-auto with collapsible stock and with the longer magazine."

“Surely he didn’t invest all of his money in firearms. Is he a boozier?”

“He drinks two beers on Super Bowl Sunday. No, it’s invested in gold and silver coins. I don’t know how much he has but I think it’s a lot. His grandfather died in 2001 and his father invested the trust fund in US gold and silver Eagles. They were relatively cheap back in 2001.”

“But he’s single?”

“When the Army did the stop loss, his girl back home sent him a dear Scotty. You think you might want him instead of me?”

“No...I was just curious since he’s moving to Butler.”

The check from the VA was enough to buy a One Year Supply-Standard Food Storage Unit for One. We had all the pails I’d prepared and added enough to buy a second unit. Since this was the lighter part of the deluxe package, we saved a lot on shipping. It arrived just before Scotty did.

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“I’m hereeee!”

“Bet those were the longest six month in your life.”

“They were but they weren’t without rewards. I have 30 M61s and 30 M67s for each of us; a dozen Mk 3A2 apiece; two dozen Willie Pete apiece and two dozen of each color of smoke. On top of that there are a five AT-4s apiece and a fifteen M72A2s apiece. I also have your last cans of Raufoss and M1022. For myself, I have 10,000 rounds of 7.62 x 51mm M118LR ammo with me. I have some 9mm in 124gr+P HP if you need it. I think you said you had a Browning.”

“That’s Honey’s but I’ll take all you care to share. Come in and I’ll introduce you to my wife.”

“Hi I’m Honey.”

“You sure are. I’m Scott.”

“Coffee Scott?”

“Thanks Honey.”

It was at that moment that two things occurred to me. One was that her name left her open to the inappropriate comment and two that Scott was quite taken with Honey. I was going to have to try and get him hooked up with one of the local singles to alleviate

any concern. But, when he turned his attention to me and started telling the challenges he had during his last six months, I began to relax.

He'd had a spot of trouble when some Butter Bar questioned some of the requisitions he was asked to sign. He wanted to know about the rockets and grenades and Raufoss, among other things. One of the other things being a new M25 and fifty magazines. The rifle was to be equipped with the Leupold Vari X-III LR M3 scope and an Ops Inc. suppressor. Scotty took the rifle paperwork to the Company Commander, who signed it after which he called the Butter Bar to his office and Scotty had a new enemy. Nevertheless, the 2nd Lt. signed his future requisitions without so much as a second glance. He said that let him get the rockets and grenades shipped in.

If you've been counting, Scotty has an M21, an M24 SWS and an M25 and only 10,000 rounds of M118 LR. So, according to TOM, Scotty is short 5,000 rounds, right? Not really, they were being shipped UPS because he ran out of room in his trailer. He didn't have flechettes. He said he didn't care for them. The guy in Medford is still turning them out as fast as he can. Scotty's other shotgun ammo included:

Frag-12 shotgun rounds, a series of special purpose shotgun grenades, including high explosive blast, fragmentation, and HEAP grenades intended to be fired from any 12-ga shotgun. It has been proposed as an armament for modern UAVs and is currently being tested for military deployment. (British)

00 Buck - 9 lead pellets (0.33")

QB 8 - 8 pellets (Armor Piercing) - Quadrangle Buck is made from a steel cylinder cut into two layers of four pie-shaped pieces per layer. The numerous sharp edges give excellent penetration; however, the light weight and poor ballistic shape limits its effective range.

The Quadrangle Slug (12 gauge shotgun only) is a revolutionary slug designed as a non-explosive fragmenting munition intended specifically as an anti-vehicle or anti-material slug. It is capable of disabling automobiles, light aircraft, and marine vessels. This is due to eight pie-shaped hardened steel pellets wrapped in a cylindrical plastic boot (to protect the bore of the shotgun).

Slug - Slugs will pretty well flatten any target, armored or not; however, the issue of over penetration will determine whether you want to take the solid (Brenneke) or the hollow-point slug (Federal).

Slug HP - Hollow-point slugs. Less penetration than regular slugs.

Baton - Rubber batons. M1012

Rubber Balls - 12 rubber balls. M1013

"I'd better hit the road and get checked into a motel. I'll find an apartment tomorrow and start shopping for a job. It was nice to meet you Honey. David, see you soon."

"That's Scotty. Was he what you expected?"

"I had no expectations. I figured if he was a friend of yours he had to be all right. Tomorrow you need to take me to the doctor for a test."

"Something wrong?"

"I'm late."

"Late for what? Oh, you meant...how did that happen?"

"I got stung by a bee? Or was it pecked by a bird?"

"Weeee!!!!"

"That's how it happened, we caused it. I used the test and it came back positive. We just need to confirm it."

"This is going to be a day to remember. We're expecting and my best buddy from the Army blew into town."

"And Tuesday is the election. I have a sneaking suspicion that we'll remember this day for a long time to come. Change, here we come."

Obama won the election with ~10 million extra votes. UPS delivered Scott's ammo to our house and he came by to see if it had arrived.

"Ammo come in?"

"Today. Get an apartment?"

"Furnished one bedroom. Start my new job on Monday. Good thing I had a CDL, I'll be driving local delivery."

"No welding jobs?"

"Couldn't find one. I'll try to get recertified and see if that makes a difference. This town is a lot smaller than Gary, Indiana."

"Safer, too."

"There is that. I'm going to take off and see the folks and be back by Sunday. My dad was a little insistent, something must be going on."

“Honey is pregnant.”

“Don’t look at me.”

“No, she told me on Sunday after you left. You two didn’t even shake hands.”

“It must be hard having a wife named Honey.”

“It wasn’t until you called her Honey that I realized it could be both her name and an endearment.”

“Tell her hi. Let’s get this loaded and let me get on my way.”

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“You don’t look so good. How was the trip to see your folks?”

“Enlightening, gut wrenching and sad. He has pancreatic cancer. They did the surgery and thought they got it all. Apparently not, it came back. It has metastasized and he has it all over his body. They have him on morphine for the pain and he’s lucid only portions of the time. He gave me all of my gold and silver from the trust my grandfather left. I was surprised at how much there was. One of those he didn’t say and I didn’t ask things. He sent all of the family firearms including several I didn’t know about that my grandfather had. Know where I can get extra Browning Automatic Rifle magazines and a whole lot of FMJ .30-06?”

“World War II model?”

“Yeah, A1, late WW I or early WW II. I have twelve twenty-round magazines in a belt but sure would like more. Did you know they made a forty-round magazine? There are two of those in addition to the twelve twenty-round magazines.”

“Anything else?”

“Mark II pineapples, four cases of them. I tried one and they still explode.”

“I read that a Marine with a BAR and twelve magazines was carrying a forty pound load. Might have been on Wiki.”

“What’s Wiki?”

“An online encyclopedia. It has millions of articles covering millions of subjects. Where have you been?”

“Didn’t have a laptop and wasn’t into doing a lot of web surfing.”

“You said firearms, plural. What else?”

“Garand’s, Carbines, M1911A1s, M1897 Trench guns and some of the firearms from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Let’s see, AR-15s, several variations of the Mini-14s, some standard, some of the GB model, some of the AC556 models, AR-10s, AR-180s.”

“What caliber is an AR-180?”

“Five five six, short stroke gas piston, stamped receivers. These were made in Costa Mesa, California. Look it up on your encyclopedia. There is ammo, but not enough of the .30-06. There’re plenty of the loaded enbloc clips for the Garand’s but not enough rounds for the BAR. There is a lot of late date NATO surplus 7.62 and 5.56 and the usual assortment of buckshot and slugs for the Trench guns. Do you have a safe?”

“A gun safe.”

“Can I store some guns and my precious metals?”

“I’ll unlock the door to the shelter. It’s a padlock. My gun safe is just a locking file cabinet.”

“That will do for now. I have a bunch of stuff to bring out here for the shelter assuming I still have a place.”

“Of course you do. You’ll have to decide how much to bring when you do take time to bring it out.”

“Probably next weekend. Grab an armload of gun socks.”

“What are you planning on keeping with you?”

“Probably a shotgun, the Taurus and the M21. I want to check my GOOD bag against yours and add anything I may have missed. If I have something you don’t you might want to consider it, or not. I think it’s pretty standard, several sources of fire, light, water filter, purification tablets, sharps, rations, PFAK, garbage bags and so forth.”

“Sure, bring it with you. Honey’s and mine are nearly identical except for her personal items. Different ammo for the different firearms. We both carry some ammo for the rifle, pistol and shotgun. Basically one reload for each.”

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“What did you put in the shelter?”

“Some of Scotty’s guns and precious metals. He’ll bring the rest next weekend.”

“Have a nice visit with his folks?”

“Not really. His dad has cancer and I don’t believe he has much time left. Pancreatic, the worst kind. He’s on morphine and they try to hold off on that until the pain gets too bad. Apparently he has a large amount of gold and silver. I hauled firearms and he hauled the bags.”

“Bags?”

“Yeah, bags, plural. His grandfather had quite the collection of firearms. A bunch of military weapons including an M1918A1 BAR. He’ll probably be out next weekend to bring the rest of his stuff and compare our BOBs. He called his a GOOD bag. I think an INCH bag or a PERK is the same thing. INCH means I’m Not Coming Home and PERK means Personal Emergency Relocation Kit. Different names for 72 hour survival kits.”

“Our bags are more intended to help us get home. Even with only a half load of fuel, we could travel maybe 400 miles, right?”

“You might go further in your Wrangler. What kind of mileage are you getting?”

“I haven’t checked but it must be pretty good. I just top it off once a month at the gas station. I treat with PRI-D like you suggested, using about nine milliliters per five gallons when I fill up. That was a good second use for a child’s medicine gadget.”

“I thought so. It measures out 2 teaspoons which is the same as ten milliliters. I hope Scott is able to handle his father’s passing without getting too broken up. He told me once his family was always close and was really shaken when his Grandfather passed. Of course he didn’t know at the time how inclusive his Grandfather’s firearms collection was or that his Grandfather willed him half of his estate. Scott’s uncle was killed in ‘Nam and single. His dad was deferred as sole surviving son as a matter of policy.”

“Was his Grandfather well off?”

“Certainly not a millionaire but fairly well off, I think. The codicil to his will called for the money for Scott to be put in a trust managed by Scott’s father. At the time, gold had a spot price of around \$275 with the coins bringing the usual small premium. His father invested it in gold and silver Eagles including some of the fractional coins. At the moment, gold and silver are really climbing in price so his precious metals are worth at least double if not triple the original investment.”

“Where do his parents live now?”

“St. Charles, a suburb of St. Louis. It’s a lot better than Gary, Indiana.”

“How far is it in terms of drive time?”

“Maybe four hours. I think it’s around 275 miles give or take. I only made the trip once that I can recall. KC is so much closer and has pretty much everything St. Louis has.

“Wiki said, ‘The M1918 feeds using double-column twenty-round box magazines, although forty-round magazines were also used in an anti-aircraft role; these were withdrawn from use in 1927.’ I assume if you could find them, they’d be priceless. I found twenty-round magazines several places. Best price was \$30. The problem was that the BAR, if used gingerly, could maybe last through 4 short bursts. Very short. OTOH, twelve forty-round magazines would up the load to at least sixty pounds.

“I’m glad now that we built a parapet with merlons and crenels.”

“Why?”

“We have too much stuff to be able to bug out in all but the most extreme circumstances. That means a static defense, ergo, the shelter roof.”

“Patton said the fixed fortifications were monuments to man’s stupidity.”

“The German Army didn’t try to go through the Maginot Line because they couldn’t. However, it was strategically ineffective, as the Germans did indeed invade Belgium, flanked the Maginot Line, and proceeded relatively unobstructed. It is a myth however that the Maginot line ended at the Belgian border and was easy to circumvent. The fortifications were connected to the Belgian fortification system, of which the strongest point was Fort Eben-Emael. The Germans broke through exactly at this fortified point with a unique assault that incorporated gliders and shaped explosive charges. The surrender of the fort, in less than two days, allowed the invasion of France. Our situation is different. Anything worth having will be inside the shelter. Scott and I could empty the basement into the shelter in just a few hours.”

“You said German Army. That’s the Wehrmacht, right?”

“Not exactly; the Wehrmacht was the defense force, the name of the unified armed forces of Germany from 1935 to 1945. It consisted of the Heer or army, the Kriegsmarine or navy and the Luftwaffe or air force. The Waffen-SS or combat arm of the SS became the de facto fourth branch of the Wehrmacht, as it expanded from three regiments to 38 divisions by 1945. The SS was autonomous and existed in parallel to the Wehrmacht; Waffen-SS field units, however, were under the operational control of the Armed Forces High Command or the Army High Command. I guess the Wehrmacht would be the same as our Department of Defense.”

“Do you think he’ll live to be sworn in?”

“Everyone in DC with a gun will see to that, count on it. Can you imagine what would happen if someone killed him before he was sworn in? Especially some guy who used

to belong to the KKK? I'm sure he and his family are being very, very well protected. I sure wouldn't want to be the first member of my race to hold a position like that. And, I wish he wasn't, now that I think about it. The only thing that will change in Washington is him, starting the day he is sworn in. I guarantee that it will be politics as usual."

+++++

Looking back now, I wish I had been wrong. Well, no new wars started and it turned out that most of the change was as I predicted. We made our BOBs, regardless of name, fairly uniform. Scott moved most of his stuff to our place with the majority going into the shelter. He ordered an additional twelve twenty-round magazines for the BAR and found a magazine belt and harness on E-Bay.

"We're going to erect the two extra sets of shelving in the bedrooms and transfer things from the basement to the shelter and then move the shelves from the basement to the shelter. By the time we're done, they will be at least two empty sets of shelving in the shelter. The freezer is low and we'll move it too and consolidate everything in one location, the shelter. I have to pick up the beef, pork and chicken next week."

"What's this all about? You know something?"

"Nope. Honey and I got to visiting about how we'd probably never bug out. Let me lower the fire escape so you can check out the roof."

"This is a castle."

"It's a parapet with merlons and crenels."

"Yeah, like I said, it's a castle."

"It's just a firebase. With that BAR and the magazines, we should be able to defend it easily enough."

"What are you going to do if they have some 40mm grenades?"

"Oops."

"How about we erect some fencing? It wouldn't be perfect, I know. Think on it. I saw a roll of chain link fence somewhere this past week. When I remember where I saw it, I'll go talk to someone and see if it's for sale. Didn't see any posts though."

"I can buy no more than we'd need. How tall was the fencing?"

"Eight feet."

Honey – Chapter 3

“Perfect. We can mount the posts on the outside of the parapet using carriage bolts. Might take a weekend, will you be able to help?”

“I’ll even spring for the door/gate. I see the control is inside the shelter. Is this fire escape the only way to get up here?”

“Yes it is. However there’re controls up here to raise and lower it. We might want to get some more of those CMI twenty-round magazines for the M1As.”

“I have seventy-five, how many do you have?”

“Twenty-five.”

“How many more would you want?”

“Another seventy-five but I’ll probably just buy one hundred and be done with it. Ok if I load some of my magazines with M118LR?”

“Have at it, there’s more than I’ll ever use.”

“I hope so.”

“What’s eating you?”

“The baby is due in a month, Washington is changing Obama rather than the reverse, inflation is up, available jobs are down and I think that new National Healthcare will do more harm than good. How much job security is there in driving a forklift?”

“Are you banking Honey’s wages?”

“Haven’t. Been trying to fill in some holes.”

“You better do that and learn to live on your income and hold hers back for a rainy day.”

“Think you can get some 40mm grenades and one of those H&K launchers?”

“I can get a 40mm grenade launcher easily. I don’t know about the grenades. What do you want, a mixture of HE and HEDP?”

“I’ll take anything we can get. Before I forget it, I have a place we can practice with our fifties. The range is 1,500 meters. Do you have a can on the Barrett?”

“Yep, a Jet suppressor. Cost about \$2,600 including shipping. Made out of titanium.”

“Ouch. Did you have to pay for it?”

“The Lieutenant is in for a real surprise. I added the rear monopod, the BORS and the Nightforce 12-42x56mm scope. I also ordered four extra magazines to get it up to the ten I currently have. Figure I stuck that young man with a tab on the order of seven grand, give or take. Why don’t you buy another M1A like a Loaded model? It would be much less expensive and you already have the red dot sight. If you’re getting that many more magazines, what’s another twenty-five? I’ll even help you load them. That way you’d have a backup rifle if something went wrong with your Super Match.”

“I’d rather put the money on a second diesel tank and diesel fuel.”

“If I buy the tank and go fifty-fifty on the fuel, would you do it then?”

“Probably.”

“Not good enough. You guarantee you’ll buy the rifle and I’ll do as much as I can on the fuel. You might be surprised.”

“You know something I don’t? That’s it, isn’t it?”

“When my grandfather died, Dad used his share of the estate to purchase two single premium life insurance policies, one for my mother and one for me. Hers is larger, two hundred fifty thousand and mine is for one hundred thousand. That should buy at least a 15,000-gallon tank and fill it. Oh, I met this gal, Stella. Cute as a button, five years younger than me and divorced.”

“Kids?”

“No children. That’s why she’s divorced, she wanted and he didn’t. Big argument, he slapped her and she slapped him with divorce papers. That’s the gist of it according to her.”

“Tell her about the fact that your first love is your armory?”

“Nope. I’m getting her a MSAR STG-556, Super 90 M4 and a new Hi-Power. I’ll store them here and if it works out, the three of us will teach her to shoot. Dealer is modifying the pistol for a lanyard.”

“Ok. If Honey agrees, I’ll get a Loaded. I’ll order the magazines now. If AIM has more Radway on strippers, I’m going to get it. It would probably be cheaper to drive to Ohio and pick it up than have it shipped.”

“I’d ride with you. What about your wife?”

“She can stay with her mother for two days. You’d better come through on the diesel and tank, the money I’m spending was being accumulated for the tank and fuel.”

“You have enough PRI-D?”

“Not for fifteen-thousand gallons.”

“How much are you short?”

“I have five gallons.”

“Ok, I’ll get a six gallon case, will that help? How big is your tank?”

“Ten grand.”

“I’ll get a used certified double wall twenty and fill it. Deal?”

“Deal. But why? You’d have a place regardless.”

“Because I can and because we’re buddies. Call it my buy in to the MAG.”

“We don’t have a MAG!”

“Every Journey Has A First Step. Every Saga Has A Beginning.”

“I heard that somewhere.”

“Star Wars.”

“I forget the question.”

“You’re going to ask Honey if you can buy a Loaded as a backup rifle.”

“Oh, ok.”

“What’s this about David buying another rifle, magazines and ammo? We’re saving up for a second diesel tank and fuel.”

“I’ll put in a 20,000-gallon tank and have it filled if he buys the rifle, ammo and magazines.”

“Why?”

“Because I like you guys. And I’ve met someone who I might like to invite into the shelter if we ever need to use it.”

“David said you’re getting the money from an insurance policy. That sounds like blood money. I don’t know if I like that.”

“I could sell my gold but I think the value will increase.”

+++++

Scott’s father died five weeks later. He went home for the funeral and stayed just long enough to file a claim for the insurance. His mother told him she didn’t need him hanging around. When he came back, the insurance check wasn’t far behind his return. He’d located the tank he’d described in St. Charles and called to have it shipped after the check cleared. He also arranged for an excavation to place the second tank near the first and have the two plumbed together in a manifold. Each tank had separate pumps.

His unspent money went for a larger generator than the one we had, a three phase wheel mounted 50kw unit. It was a used Cummins model, formerly a rental with refurbished alternator and rebuilt engine. He finally brought Stella out after Honey had Donald David and he was right, she was as cute as a button. And, Stella confided to Honey that she thought she was pregnant. Honey was her typical forward self and told Stella to get the ring in Scott’s nose before he slipped away.

“Dude, you need to ask her to marry you.”

“She said she was on the pill.”

“Uh-huh. That doesn’t change the fact that you’re going to become a father. You don’t want your child to be saddled with a label, do you? It’s a bad enough word that some websites edit it out of posts.”

“Well, she is attractive, I give you that. And she didn’t get that way by herself. Ok, but where will we live?”

“We have enough room here for you to put in either a singlewide or doublewide mobile home.”

“Is your well and septic big enough?”

“The well pumps 35 gallons per minute and the septic tank is oversized, we found out the first time we had to get it pumped out. You’ll just have to remember it’s septic and not sewer. There are some things you don’t put down into a septic tank.”

“Like what?”

“I looked it up at Wiki and printed a list when I learned Honey thought she was pregnant.”

- Excessive dumping of cooking oils and grease can cause the inlet drains to block. Oils and grease are often difficult to degrade and can cause odor problems and difficulties with the periodic emptying.
- Flushing non-biodegradable hygiene products such as sanitary towels and cotton buds will rapidly fill or clog a septic tank; these materials should not be disposed of in this way.
- The use of garbage disposals for disposal of waste food can cause a rapid overload of the system and early failure.
- Certain chemicals may damage the working of a septic tank, especially pesticides, herbicides, materials with high concentrations of bleach or caustic soda (lye) or any other inorganic materials such as paints or solvents.
- Roots from trees and shrubbery growing above the tank or the drain field may clog and or rupture them.
- Playgrounds and storage buildings may cause damage to a tank and the drainage field. In addition, covering the drainage field with an impervious surface, such as a driveway or parking area, will seriously affect its efficiency and possibly damage the tank and absorption system.
- Excessive water entering the system will overload it and cause it to fail. Checking for plumbing leaks and practicing water conservation will help the system's operation.
- Over time biofilms develop on the pipes of the drainage field which can lead to blockage. Such a failure can be referred to as Biomat failure.
- Septic tanks by themselves are ineffective at removing nitrogen compounds that can potentially cause algae blooms in receiving waters; this can be remedied by using a nitrogen-reducing technology, or by simply ensuring that the leach field is properly sited to prevent direct entry of effluent into bodies of water.”

“What’s the biggest concern?”

“Filling up the leech field. The only solution is to dig it up and replace it, probably have to be relocated too.”

“I’ll look for a mobile home if she says yes.”

“I’ll get you the want ads.”

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“What did he say?”

"I'm fairly certain he will propose, after he's satisfied she didn't get pregnant intentionally. I offered him space for a mobile home."

"Is there enough room?"

"He could put in a double wide although I think if he did, we wouldn't have room for a combination pole barn/storage building. We only have a 2½ acre lot with 108,900ft²."

"At least he added that second tank and fuel. He has as much invested in it now as we do."

"I don't know what Scott has in savings but wouldn't be surprised if he could pay cash for a mobile home. It wouldn't really dent his gold supply. He's also looking for HE and HEDP 40mm grenades."

"I thought you had grenades."

"Not the 40mm. May not get them unless he lucks into them."

"Boys and their toys..."

"You didn't seem to mind my hobby when it was laying blocks. The toys, hopefully, will allow us to keep what I built. Now, what do you think I should get Donald for his first gun?"

"We don't have a .22."

"I suppose it's between the 10-22 and the 39A. I'm going with the lever action. Just so Ruger doesn't feel left out I'll get a Mark III. And, I'm getting the backup rifle, a Loaded rather than a Super Match. Scott and I will drive to Ohio and pick up the ammo. I already ordered the extra magazines."

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"I was satisfied and she accepted. Wedding is in three weeks. Since we're going to Middletown, Ohio I called a guy I know stationed between here and there. Seventy-two each HE and HEDP plus two launchers for 3 ounces of gold. I'll use those oddball Krugerrands."

"What kind of launchers?"

"Oh, the ones made by H&K, the HK69A1. They were evaluation pieces and similar to the M79. Apparently the Army is going with the XM320, if they change. It's strange when you think about it. They don't evaluate weapons where he's based."

"I ordered the rifle and called ahead on the ammo. They had another shipment of Radway Green on strippers, seventy-five rounds to the bandoleer and ten bandoleers per battlepack. I got a cashier's check for seven cases (14 battlepacks) plus sales tax. I also ordered a Marlin Gold Trigger and Ruger Mark III for Donald."

"What about the magazines?"

"Two hundred at \$19.95, they'll pay the shipping. I sent a cashier's check overnight for the ammo and another for the magazines. We should have the guns and ammo situation wrapped up within a week. I think Honey was peeved over the Loaded, but she bit her tongue."

"How do you get away with stuff like that?"

"It's my hobby. Building the shelter was the sole focus of my hobby for a couple or three years. I reminded her of that."

"If you stop and think about it David, we both have more rifles than we could shoot at one time."

"Backups, no more, no less."

"Where is Middletown in reference to someplace I might know?"

"North of Cincinnati and east of Indianapolis. We'll take I-70 most of the way."

"I don't know how you save money the way you do on the pay you must earn as a forklift driver."

"We had two incomes and I took your advice and we saved some of Honey's. We own the house outright and just have utilities, electric and propane specifically. We have to rotate our LTS food supply and I grind our own flour and cornmeal. I roll our own oats. Honey is a very good cook and while we eat mostly simple foods, they're very good. Can Stella cook?"

"In the bedroom, let me tell you. In the kitchen, I don't really know."

"Well, buddy, you're about to find out what your wrongheaded thinking hath wrought. When do you get together with your friend?"

"We'll stop on the way back. He lives off post. It will probably be a ten minute stop. People don't get into gabfests when they're doing something like this. What time tomorrow?"

"Be here at 6am ready to leave."

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"I'm here, are you ready? How long do you figure?"

"With stops probably 11 hours. I don't want to get below a half tank and even changing off, I want to stop for meals and bathroom breaks. It's about 650 miles and MSN Maps said 9 hours and 35 minutes. I think that assumes an average speed near the speed limit. I don't want to push that hard; especially on the way back. Don't need any curious Troopers asking what's in the back of the pickup under the tarp. On the way back, I'm willing to use drive thru restaurants and just stop for fuel."

We stopped every two hours for a quick bathroom break, sometimes a meal and less often fuel. We actually made it to Middletown at twilight and found a budget motel. They only provided for local pickups on Wednesday after 9am. It didn't take more than a few minutes to get what we wanted. We parked near his friend's house waiting for him to get off duty. We pulled up as he got out of the car and Scott waived to him. He motioned for us to join him and filled each of our arms with a carton. When it was all in the pickup I tarped the load while Scott settled up. This stop didn't take any longer than the stop at Aim Surplus.

"Sure is easy to spend money fast, isn't it?"

"Sure is. That's about eight hundred pounds of ammo, 10,500 rounds. Those 40mm grenades weigh less than I thought they would. I don't know what I thought, actually. I've never handled them boxed up like that."

It was actually only two boxes. Each box contained a can that held 6 bandoleers of 12 grenades each. His friend carried the *heavy* box containing the two launchers.

"What were you two discussing?"

"How he came to have them. They're in the original box so we'll check out the label when we get home. H & K shipped them to the wrong location. The documentation in the box shows where they were supposed to go. It happens that he opened the box and realized what it meant. He put them up out of sight and waited for paperwork to come for them to be returned. Eventually, a memo went out to all locations inquiring about a missing shipment. The memo went to his boss and when his boss asked him about it, he acted normal, ergo, played dumb. He got the launchers home post haste but figured they wouldn't do him any good without grenades and managed to get a case each of the 406s and the new German 433s. They both have the same paint scheme, but the 406 has a more pointed nose and is shorter."

"Not that heavy either, maybe thirty-five pounds."

"A little more than that, the 433s weigh just a shade over ½ pound each. Probably 40 pounds with package, bandoleers and such."

“Think we came make it by driving straight through?”

“Might be a good idea, I’d hate to get stopped or try to layover with the load we have. That guy in the White House would have a real hissy if he ever found out what we’re carrying. Be the perfect excuse for another assault weapons ban.”

“He’d have to stretch the definition, 7.62 NATO ammo fits a lot of sporting arms, even if you can’t hunt with it. The grenades and launcher are flat out violations of the NFA, the same as the Raufoss. They probably weld the doors shut on our cells.”

“If they’re going to do it, I hope it’s before the wedding. I assume you’ll do the honors and be my best man.”

“I’d be delighted, thank you.”

“I’m sure Stella is going to ask Honey. Stella doesn’t have any living family and her former in-laws are quote jerks unquote. All I have left is my mother and I’ll invite her but I bet she won’t make the trip. She’s not taking my father’s passing too well.”

“Baby will make three. You’ll just have to make your own family. In that regard, we’re more like family than members of a MAG. I’m not too keen on the idea of a MAG. Jerry wrote *Cowboy* and *Ozark Retreat* that both discussed MAGs. Wait, he also wrote *The Trades People*. That was a MAG too. TOM wrote several stories that mentioned MAGs, including one titled *The MAG*.

Little did we know that at that very moment, his mother was in a hospital. When we got home and had the purchases unloaded in the shelter, he headed home. He had a message from a St. Louis area hospital and he was urged to get there ASAP. He called and filled me in and said he’d leave early in the morning because he was too tired to drive just now.

“Keep me posted, Bud. Call if you need someone to talk to.”

“Thanks. I called Stella first and she insists on making the trip with me. Just in case, she said.”

“Did your mother have any problems?”

“Besides a broken heart? Not that I know of and they wouldn’t tell me over the phone what was wrong, just to hurry.”

Well, double damn, three days later he called and said his mother had passed away. There would be no funeral because his mother specified direct cremation, the same as his father. Her will left everything to him. His mother was tickled pink to meet Stella, but it hadn’t been enough to keep her alive. He said the doctors said heart attack but he

thought it was more like a broken heart. They'd be several days getting back because there were arrangements to make and he had to list the house. His mother had deposited her insurance check in the bank, but hadn't spent a dime of the money. It was a joint account with Scott and they were joint tenants in common with rights of survivorship. He went on to say that he called his boss and explained the circumstances and if he could be at work next Monday, he still had his job.

I could tell that this double whammy of losing both parents in such a short time had gotten to him. I didn't figure trying to offer advice at the moment would do any more than upset him further. Besides, Stella was there.

Marriage laws in Missouri require you to be 18, pay \$50 for the license, wait 3 days for the license to be issued which is then good for 30 days and doesn't require a blood test. He said they'd apply for the license when they got back. He was renting a trailer to bring back the family heirlooms and donating the rest to the Salvation Army. He would get any funds once the estate was settled and any taxes paid.

They arrived home Sunday night. His mother's urn was in the same crypt as his father's. The trailer didn't seem to be overloaded. The Salvation Army had come in and cleaned out the house. The lawyer would hire a house cleaning firm, take care of the final expenses and taxes and send him a check. He estimated he would have it wrapped up in 6 weeks, maximum.

The house sold quickly because it was priced to sell considering the housing market. The estate tax returns were filed, the lawyer withheld his fee and with court approved paying something on the order of \$325,000 to Scott. The estate didn't include the gold and silver his parents had accumulated and Scott thought it would go unnoticed because he already had a large quantity of gold and silver Eagles and pre-65 silver coins. He also didn't mention his father and mother's firearms. His mother held them back since Scott had his Grandfather's guns.

Scott's father and mother had an eclectic firearms collection. It included two suppressed Ruger Mark IIs with the Phoenix integral suppressors, a Super Match and Bushmaster rifle with a 20" barrel and gas piston plus a pair of 870s with 20 inch barrels, ghost ring sights and magazine extensions with a pair of Browning Hi-Powers with the magazine safeties removed. Ammo wise, there were 3 1,260 round cans of South African 7.62 surplus less one battle pack, 4 cases of Lake City M855 missing 80 rounds, nearly a full 5,000 rounds of High Velocity and nearly 5,000 rounds of hyper velocity .22LR, one case of Brenneke slugs, two cases of low recoil 8 pellet Remington 00 buck and 1,500 rounds of 9mm 124gr +P HP. The firearms weren't included in the estate either.

Honey – Chapter 4

They got their marriage license application in on the Tuesday after they returned over the lunch hour. A local minister agreed to perform the wedding ceremony the following

Saturday. They lived in his apartment until the check came and he could buy a new triple wide. He had it professionally assembled and leveled and added heat tape and insulation for the plumbing before the installers added the skirting. He and I built a deck in front of the front door out of redwood and a small deck by the back door. Finally, a Cummins installer put in a 200amp ATS and hooked in the generator using an extremely heavy cable with a locking plug so the generator could be moved if necessary. The installer used one of the 3 phases for their house.

“What would you two think about my expanding your shelter? What I had in mind was using one existing wall as is and build on the side that has the gate to the chain link fence.”

“Why not build it on the other side and leave the fire escape where it is? We could erect yours to the specifications I used and when it’s done, remove the block, earth fill and second wall and use the blocks to line the passage between the two shelters. If we’re careful we can probably get it done without losing any of the earth fill between those two walls. Up on the roof, we simply add a second gate to allow access to your side of the roof.”

“Know anyone locally that can do it?”

“Besides us?”

“I’d prefer to hire it done. We’ll call it a secure cold storage room and install the air system and doors ourselves.”

“If we cut in a door between the two, you won’t need any doors, just the air system.”

“That’s even better.”

“You could also feed power from one of the other phases to power the shelter.”

“I’m going to get by cheap.”

“You haven’t priced the air system or the filter replacements. The replacement filters are \$700 per set. I suggest you buy two spares, one for each of us. American Safe Rooms, Inc. has a package on the air system for \$3,800 including shipping and they’re from Oregon so no sales tax. The blast doors are more and run over four grand with the necessary options.”

“So you want me to buy you an extra set of filters?”

“It would be cheaper than installing two blast doors and building a fourth wall.”

“Ok, deal.”

“Now that you’re semi rich, do you have any other plans for the money?”

“Not really. Gold and silver are out of my price range. They’re not really good investments right now.”

“You could always put in a 40,000-gallon diesel tank and half fill it. Honey and I would be responsible for the other 20,000-gallons.”

“How do you propose to do that?”

“A little at a time over the next 10 years.”

“Fifty-five grand? I don’t think you could handle the payment. Not even a second 20,000-gallon tank. How about a second 10,000-gallon tank and fuel? That would give us each 20 grand. Quick math on that would be about half of what I spent on my tank or on the order of \$37,500. You could probably handle that over ten years. Whatcha say?”

“I say ok, deal. What interest rate?”

“Four times what I’m getting from savings would be two percent. Can you calculate a payment, assuming it is paid at the end of every month?”

“Give me five minutes; you can watch.”

“What function?”

“PMT. The amount is \$344.48 per month for 120 months at two percent per annum.”

“Get it ordered and give the bills to me. I’m in a good mood today; I’ll pay for installation and plumbing.”

Stella checked out the shelter and said they didn’t need another but Scott could buy us two spare filters. She also wanted 30 cords of firewood cut, split and stacked for the two fireplaces in their new home. Scott bought the wood so they’d have cured wood from the get-go. He also bought two chain saws; a 24” and a 36” plus all the ancillary equipment and supplies.

They traded her car in on a used Suburban and replaced the engine and transmission. The engine was a 6BT and the transmission a non-electronic automatic. He said he was tempted to buy a Hummer H-1 Alpha until he priced one. He could live with a fuel hog, but wouldn’t pay the going price. They’d gone through his mother’s insurance check and were down to the money from the sale of the home. They’d hold onto that for cash fixable emergencies.

“We’re going to find out if that new National Healthcare is really worthwhile. New employees don’t get company sponsored healthcare until they’re on the job six months.

I have it now and we'll see if the baby is covered or if they'll try to weasel out of it due to it being a pre-existing condition."

"You've been burning through the money what with the new home and furnishings and that loan you made to us. How much for the firewood?"

"Forty-five hundred. I made them stack it to ensure I got the full 30 cords. Figure another thousand plus on the chainsaws. You don't have one, do you?"

"Nope. Been buying it by the pickup load."

I'm going to make one more purchase and call it good. Five thousand rounds each of 168gr HP and 165gr SPBT from Black Hills. Most of our other ammo is FMJ and I didn't sign the Hague Convention. Do you have any?"

"No hunting ammo."

"You want me to buy you some? Beats having you shoot up my M118LR."

"In that case, I'll take the same."

It took longer than anticipated but eventually a bill to re-implement the Assault Weapons Ban was submitted and made its way through Committee before being narrowly approved by the House who voted strictly along partisan lines. It stalled briefly in the Senate but, again, the final vote followed partisan lines and our Dear Leader signed it into law. There was no grandfather clause and the penalties for non-compliance were severe. With that being the case, Scotty bought a bunch of National Match Flashhiders from Fulton Armory with the bayonet lugs and had all of our M1As equipped. He then contracted with Ontario Knife for several of the OKC-3S bayonets modified to fit on the M14 plus the regular model to fit on AR's. He even went so far as to get bayonets for the MSAR STG-556s. Although the AUG is a compact weapon and a bayonet would put you too close to an enemy, they did make nice hunting knives.

The Black Hills ammo came on a pallet and Honey called me at work to come home and unload it. I called Scott and we hurried home and got it unloaded before the driver got mad enough to leave without it being unloaded. It was 40 boxes in total and we'd have to move it when we came home that night from work. Honey had bought an appliance cart and moving it was a little less of a chore. It took plenty of Icy Hot because of the repeated handling of the ammo.

"My good God, we have more ammo than a typical Company had in Iraq."

"A lot of mine is Berdan primed and non-reloadable. You ever reload? We could buy the supplies."

“What for? I doubt we’ll ever run out of 5.56 or 7.62 NATO. Do you guys plant a garden?”

“We haven’t but we both worked.”

“Stella is going to be a stay at home mother and I suspect that Honey will be too.”

“Oh?”

“Something she said to Stella, David. Maybe I’m talking out of turn.”

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“I understand you want to be a stay at home mom.”

“Want to, yes. I mentioned it to Stella. She must have told Scott and he told you. I thought we’d discuss it and make a mutual decision.”

“Stella or one of our mothers could baby sit. Scott said Stella is going to be a stay at home mother.”

“Forget it; you seem to have your mind made up.”

“I don’t. I was just pointing out alternatives.”

“I’ve considered the alternatives. Stella is going to be in the second and third term of her pregnancy. Our mothers both work. That means day care and I priced them. I’d barely make enough to pay for day care if I worked.”

“I guess you’d better be a stay at home mother and help Stella out.”

“Does that mean we can have another baby?”

“Not before Donald is one year old. Do you really want two in diapers?”

“Ok, we’ll wait until his birthday before we try again.”

What I heard wasn’t what she meant. She couldn’t use birth control, remember? She said the only surefire way to insure she didn’t get pregnant was abstinence. I thought she meant condoms. She said no way. At least it didn’t happen immediately. But we are young and healthy and it didn’t take that long. Bates County Memorial was a decent sized hospital, 60-Bed acute and skilled nursing facility with a wide range of services including 24-hour physician staffed emergency department, In-Patient and Out-Patient surgery and maternity care.

Stella used the same doctor that we used, a family practitioner. As I said, he was a bit of a prepper himself. After Donald was born, he added a couple of extra prescriptions and gave a bit of advice on OTC remedies. He also wrote prescriptions for our outdated prescription meds indicating which we could keep and for how long and which we should dispose of. A few things had a definite shelf life, like epinephrine and cyclines. Since Scott also had Combat Lifesaving training, he got the same prescriptions we got plus a new one, the ATNAA along with the CANA.

When Scott asked about gas masks, I got embarrassed. The thought had never crossed my mind. On his own, he got 4 of the Millennium gas masks with extra filters plus four of the class III supplemental kits with the suits, gloves and KI. He added boots and tape to complete the package and four baby SCRAPEs and four Child Safe PROs. That was good because Honey wasn't working and I was paying him back around three-fifty a month on the fuel and tank.

When he couldn't find radiation measurement equipment, he contacted Arrow Tech on his own and got an AMP-200 and assorted medium and low range meters and dosimeters. He had two ranges of dosimeters, 200mR and 200R. I only found out about that equipment when he added a storage cabinet to their bedroom in the shelter to hold that equipment and the Yaesu radio equipment he bought. I think Scott was bound and determined to spend most of the money while it still held some value.

"What about all the stuff in that cabinet?"

"I've decided on the MA-550 tower with the rotator and standoffs. For now, we'll just get the MFJ ten-band vertical and worry about the beams later."

The contractor used an accelerator in the concrete and the tower was up well before expected. He even had a second additive in the concrete that improved the strength. Scott bought the Discone antenna for the scanning receiver and the separate business band antenna so we could put all the antennas in at once. The contractor mounted the ten band antenna on top of the rotator, the Discone on one standoff, the business band on the second and the CB on the third.

Scott acquired CP 200 and CM 300 Motorola business band radios, eight of each with power supplies for four of the mobiles. He also got a Mosley 6 frequency beam, the Mosley Pro-57-B40. The vehicles got Cobra 148GTL SSB CB radios with Wilson antennas and the homes and shelter got a Galaxy DX2547 AM/SSB CB Base Radios. The CB portables that he bought eight of were Cobra HH Roadtrip 40 channel portables with the Cobra Microtalk MA-EBM Earbud Microphones.

"Feel free to stop spending money anytime Scott. You need to keep back some for an emergency."

"Just filling in a few holes. As circumstances change, I'll fill in more. Do you have a ham license?"

“No I don’t.”

“Get one and I’ll consider springing for a Kenwood TS-2000 for you.”

“What’s that?”

“About half the price of the fancy Yaesu,” he laughed. “I’m considering some two meter portables. I asked Stella’s doctor what he had and his portables were all two meter units. I wonder if I could get a package deal on some Ham radios for the vehicles.”

“Why would you want to?”

“The lower the frequency, the longer the range.”

He must have gotten a deal, all the vehicles were soon sporting used Yaesu FT-857 all mode transceivers. He explained that rather than buy the top of the line Yaesu for his base station, he’d gotten a used FT-857 all mode transceiver and the money he saved absorbed most of the cost of the additional units that he got a discount on. He was considering a 1,500 watt power amplifier, but wasn’t sure because of the cost. It would seem that Scotty’s spending spree was over.

“It’s a good thing you decided against building the additional shelter.”

“How do you figure?”

“The president was in Poland signing a new START agreement with the Russians today. I read the article and AP said and I quote, *it will shrink the limit of nuclear warheads to 1,550 each over seven years, down about a third from the current ceiling of 2,200* end quote. Do you believe that?”

“If that’s what they signed, why not?”

“Do you know how many active, non-reserve inventory weapons we have?”

“Twenty-two hundred?”

“Try ten thousand six hundred and forty. Dubya claimed they were doing something like seventeen hundred and I don’t know what became of that. Even if you take out the four hundred for the ground launched cruise missile, that leaves ten thousand two hundred and forty. And, I bet they have some in reserve that aren’t counted in that total.”

“But that’s good; we have more than they do.”

“If we’d lie, what would you do in their place?”

“You do have a point.”

“Tiger shot four under par at Augusta today.”

“They let him out?”

“He was never in. Do you know how many warheads we have on our boomers?”

“No, but I’m sure you’ll tell me.”

“Twenty four missiles per boat, eight warheads per missile equal one hundred ninety two per boat times fourteen boats equals two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight. That’s more than the new agreement will allow. The boomers are the edge we have to keep everyone else in line. Those Chinese maybe have three missile boats, the Russians one old Typhoon they don’t use. Our Ohio class boats are keeping the world safe. However, they’re building the Borei class.

“Somebody post a new story or something? You’re awfully worked up over something.”

“Honey is going to be a stay at home mother and have more babies. You got enough radio communications for a Battalion. Plus it occurred to me that we have enough ammunition to fight six wars and the president just outlawed most of our guns.”

“When guns are outlawed only outlaws will have guns.”

“There’s more truth in that that I ever realized. If we turn ours in, only the bad guys will still have guns. But if we don’t, that makes us bad guys.”

“Just exercising our Constitutional Rights, old son.”

“Why the hell do I need a bayonet on a sniper rifle? I ain’t getting that close.”

“Just in case?”

“I read that already.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Before he posted *Operation Blue Dragon*, he posted *Getting Hot*, and before that *Rufus*, and before that *So Much for Global Warming*, and before that *Stupid Computer*, and before that *Visions of 2012*, and before that *Just in Case* about a kid named Case whose parents named him Justin.”

“You do go on. What was the last story that other guy posted?”

“*Silence is Golden.*”

“That was an old song before our time. The Four Seasons?”

“And the Tremeloes, later; I sort of favor the Tremeloes version.”

“How would you know?”

“Heard them on YouTube.”

“You did what?”

“No, it’s not like *Who’s on First*. YouTube is a website with all kinds of videos. Mostly musical videos, but I did download the original *Red Dawn*.”

“Patrick Swayze, Charlie Sheen?”

“That’s the one.”

“Cool.”

“Now if you want the *Who’s on First* routine, I think TOM included it in one of his stories. I copied all of them and probably have it.”

“See if you can find it.”

“I’ll look. In the stories it was mostly referred to by just the name of the routine, kind of like shorthand.”

“Aside from getting a rototiller and putting in a large garden, what else do we need to do?”

“Probably get a permit and harvest firewood. I think anyone local who cuts down trees probably keeps the wood and sells it as firewood after it cures. The closest section of the Mark Twain National Forest is the one over at Fort Leonard Wood, Big Piney.”

“Maybe we’d be better off just buying it for now.”

“I have to because I don’t have a chain saw. If you think about it, one fifty a cord for cured, cut, split and stacked isn’t half bad. We’ve added one or two cords a year and don’t do fires in the fireplace very often. I think that a pickup load is about $\frac{3}{4}$ cord. That’s how come we have as much as we do. Since you’re pretty much caught up, you should be able to get by with a couple of cords a year too.”

“Is that a good price, \$150 per cord?”

"I tried to look it up. The only thing I found was a report from Kern County California concerning their 2005 timber crop. They harvested 1,214 cords which sold for \$262 per cord."

"Well, the price I paid was right. I made them stack it so I could measure it. A cord is four by four by eight, right?"

"That's right, one hundred twenty eight cubic feet. Your pile of firewood is as big as your home."

"How big is yours?"

"We've purchase twenty-two cords over the years and probably burned up about eight. We have roughly fourteen left. I might buy a couple more and burn one of the older stuff."

"Feel like going shooting Saturday?"

"Couldn't hurt to keep our eye in. No suppressors thought, they're illegal in Missouri. I'd really like to get a Surefire suppressor for my Super Match though."

"Is Surefire the only brand you'd consider?"

"They make one for the M25 that will fit on my Super Match. I can choose between a flashhider, muzzle brake or compensator adapter and the suppressor uses a Fast Attach system."

"I can get it, do you have the money?"

"If I had the money, I'd have found a way to get it."

"In a word, no."

"Right."

"I'll get it and tack it on to what you owe for the diesel and tank and it will be GSA pricing."

"I swear you know every crooked soldier in the US Army."

"In logistics one back scratches another because that damned computer system they set up is worse than typed requisitions. Someone always needs something that the system finds a way to block. Why complain, it works just as it always has. Did you see that John Wayne movie *The Green Berets*?"

"Yeah. They had a scrounger, Petersen."

“Most units have someone like Petersen; sometimes in logistics but as often as not.”

“Ok, get me one, if you’re sure you can handle it. I suppose that will cost me the bayonet lug but at 800 to 1,000 meters, it shouldn’t be a problem.”

“Maybe we can figure a way to have both, just not at the same time. Do you know what models you want?”

“The FA762K suppressor and the FJ762KM flashhider, with a set of the shims and other installation parts.”

“Give me a week to ten days.”

“Feel like going shooting Saturday? Scott suggested it and it would be a good time to familiarized Stella with her weapons.”

“I’ll ask mom to watch Donald. Does she have ear protection and shooting glasses?”

“I didn’t ask.”

“I’ll bring Mom’s set. Are you about done scratching itches?”

“Scott is looking for the last one. That will be it until we need to fill in the ammo we shoot up.”

“What last itch?”

“A suppressor for the Super Match.”

“Ok...that makes sense, in a convoluted way. What do you care if the target hears the shot? He should already be dead.”

“I’m not thinking so much about the target, it’s his companions. We were talking about that new START treaty and the numbers don’t add up. We have at least ten thousand and two hundred forty bombs and warheads. But the figures in the article suggested we only have twenty two hundred.”

Honey – Chapter 5

Abbott and Costello – Who’s on First

Abbott: Well, Costello, I'm going to New York with you. Bucky Harris the Yankee's manager gave me a job as coach for as long as you're on the team.

Costello: Look Abbott, if you're the coach, you must know all the players.

Abbott: I certainly do.

Costello: Well you know I've never met the guys. So you'll have to tell me their names, and then I'll know who's playing on the team.

Abbott: Oh, I'll tell you their names, but you know it seems to me they give these ball players now-a-days very peculiar names.

Costello: You mean funny names?

Abbott: Strange names, pet names...like Dizzy Dean...

Costello: His brother Daffy

Abbott: Daffy Dean...

Costello: And their French cousin.

Abbott: French?

Costello: Goofe'

Abbott: Goofe' Dean. Well, let's see, we have on the bags, Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know is on third...

Costello: That's what I want to find out.

Abbott: I say Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know's on third.

Costello: Are you the manager?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: You gonna be the coach too?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: And you don't know the fellows' names.

Abbott: Well I should.

Costello: Well then who's on first?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: I mean the fellow's name.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy on first.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The first baseman.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy playing...

Abbott: Who is on first!

Costello: I'm asking you who's on first.

Abbott: That's the man's name.

Costello: That's who's name?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: Well go ahead and tell me.

Abbott: That's it.

Costello: That's who?

Abbott: Yes. PAUSE

Costello: Look, you gotta first baseman?

Abbott: Certainly.

Costello: Who's playing first?

Abbott: That's right.

Costello: When you pay off the first baseman every month, who gets the money?

Abbott: Every dollar of it.

Costello: All I'm trying to find out is the fellow's name on first base.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy that gets...

Abbott: That's it.

Costello: Who gets the money...

Abbott: He does, every dollar of it. Sometimes his wife comes down and collects it.

Costello: Who's wife?

Abbott: Yes. PAUSE

Abbott: What's wrong with that?

Costello: I wanna know is when you sign up the first baseman, how does he sign his name?

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: How does he sign...

Abbott: That's how he signs it.

Costello: Who?

Abbott: Yes. PAUSE

Costello: All I'm trying to find out is what's the guys name on first base.

Abbott: No. What is on second base.

Costello: I'm not asking you who's on second.

Abbott: Who's on first.

Costello: One base at a time!

Abbott: Well, don't change the players around.

Costello: I'm not changing nobody!

Abbott: Take it easy, buddy.

Costello: I'm only asking you, who's the guy on first base?

Abbott: That's right.

Costello: OK.

Abbott: Alright. PAUSE

Costello: What's the guy's name on first base?

Abbott: No. What is on second.

Costello: I'm not asking you who's on second.

Abbott: Who's on first.

Costello: I don't know.

Abbott: He's on third, we're not talking about him.

Costello: Now how did I get on third base?

Abbott: Why you mentioned his name.

Costello: If I mentioned the third baseman's name, who did I say is playing third?

Abbott: No. Who's playing first.

Costello: What's on base?

Abbott: What's on second.

Costello: I don't know.

Abbott: He's on third.
Costello: There I go, back on third again! PAUSE
Costello: Would you just stay on third base and don't go off it.
Abbott: Alright, what do you want to know?
Costello: Now who's playing third base?
Abbott: Why do you insist on putting Who on third base?
Costello: What am I putting on third.
Abbott: No. What is on second.
Costello: You don't want who on second?
Abbott: Who is on first.
Costello: I don't know. Together: Third base! PAUSE

Costello: Look, you gotta outfield?
Abbott: Sure.
Costello: The left fielder's name?
Abbott: Why.
Costello: I just thought I'd ask you.
Abbott: Well, I just thought I'd tell ya.
Costello: Then tell me who's playing left field.
Abbott: Who's playing first.
Costello: I'm not...stay out of the infield!!! I want to know what's the guy's name in left field?
Abbott: No, What is on second.
Costello: I'm not asking you who's on second.
Abbott: Who's on first!
Costello: I don't know. Together: Third base! PAUSE
Costello: The left fielder's name?
Abbott: Why.

Costello: Because!
Abbott: Oh, he's center field. PAUSE
Costello: Look, You gotta pitcher on this team?
Abbott: Sure.
Costello: The pitcher's name?
Abbott: Tomorrow.
Costello: You don't want to tell me today?
Abbott: I'm telling you now.
Costello: Then go ahead.
Abbott: Tomorrow!
Costello: What time?
Abbott: What time what?
Costello: What time tomorrow are you gonna tell me who's pitching?
Abbott: Now listen. Who is not pitching.
Costello: I'll break you're arm if you say who's on first!!! I want to know what's the pitcher's name?
Abbott: What's on second.

Costello: I don't know. Together: Third base! PAUSE

Costello: Gotta a catcher?

Abbott: Certainly.

Costello: The catcher's name?

Abbott: Today.

Costello: Today, and tomorrow's pitching.

Abbott: Now you've got it.

Costello: All we got is a couple of days on the team. PAUSE

Costello: You know I'm a catcher too.

Abbott: So they tell me.

Costello: I get behind the plate to do some fancy catching, Tomorrow's pitching on my team and a heavy hitter gets up. Now the heavy hitter bunts the ball. When he bunts the ball, me, being a good catcher, I'm gonna throw the guy out at first. So I pick up the ball and throw it to who?

Abbott: Now that's the first thing you've said right.

Costello: I don't even know what I'm talking about! PAUSE

Abbott: That's all you have to do.

Costello: Is to throw the ball to first base.

Abbott: Yes!

Costello: Now who's got it?

Abbott: Naturally. PAUSE

Costello: Look, if I throw the ball to first base, somebody's gotta get it. Now who has it?

Abbott: Naturally.

Costello: Who?

Abbott: Naturally.

Costello: Naturally?

Abbott: Naturally.

Costello: So I pick up the ball and I throw it to Naturally.

Abbott: No you don't you throw the ball to Who.

Costello: Naturally.

Abbott: That's different.

Costello: That's what I said.

Abbott: you're not saying it...

Costello: I throw the ball to Naturally.

Abbott: You throw it to Who.

Costello: Naturally.

Abbott: That's it.

Costello: That's what I said!

Abbott: You ask me.

Costello: I throw the ball to who?

Abbott: Naturally.

Costello: Now you ask me.

Abbott: You throw the ball to Who?

Costello: Naturally.

Abbott: That's it.

Costello: Same as you! Same as YOU!!! I throw the ball to who. Whoever it is drops the ball and the guy runs to second. Who picks up the ball and throws it to What. What throws it to I Don't Know. I Don't Know throws it back to Tomorrow, Triple play. Another guy gets up and hits a long fly ball to Because. Why? I don't know! He's on third and I don't give a darn!

Abbott: What?

Costello: I said I don't give a darn!

Abbott: Oh, that's our shortstop.

Costello: (makes screaming sound)

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"That's confusing."

"That's why it was so popular years ago; Abbott was the straight man and Costello the clown. I think they did a good job of it. But, times change and an act like that wouldn't get the air time these days."

"Maybe the source you used to get the larger number isn't current."

"Maybe."

"Come on, Supper is ready. I'm trying something new."

"What?"

"Chicken and noodle casserole. It the same as tuna and noodles except I substituted chicken. I'm trying to duplicate the Pizza Hut casserole. Plus I baked bread."

"From scratch?"

"Aren't I a surprise a minute?"

"I'll say. Smells good."

"The bread or the casserole?"

"Both."

I began to notice that Honey was trying all the recipes she'd never had time to prepare before. I know she was a good cook but she was better than good. During dinner just as I was reaching for a second helping she gave me another surprise.

"I'm pregnant."

“We need to get the water checked, that seems to be going around. Good, the more the merrier.”

“It’s a three bedroom home.”

“Easy, we’ll take the master suite and use one as a boy’s dorm and the other as a girl’s dorm.”

“Donald isn’t a year old yet.”

“Let’s just hope they don’t both need changed at the same time.”

“I like Stella, regardless of their shotgun wedding. She isn’t much of a cook but I’ve been helping out and she learning fairly quickly. They have pretty good furniture, a washer and dryer plus a 21ft³ upright freezer. I gave her some suggestions on how to stock their freezer. I hate having both freezers in the shelter but that refrigerator could come in handy around the major holidays.”

“I’m looking for a used rototiller so we can till a garden area. How’s your thumb, green I hope?”

“We’ll need a pressure canner and jars. I’ll talk to mother and your mom and see if they have any to spare. If we have to buy new, they’re about a buck a jar for quarts. I did find a place to buy lids by the case out in Utah.”

“You know the place?”

“Do you?”

“One of the authors mentions the place in his stories. It’s in Hyrum, north of Salt Lake City. I think Canning Pantry, Walton Feed and Emergency Essentials are Mormon operations.”

“Is that important?”

“Not really, just an observation. I wonder if Scott and Stella are going to lay in a supply of LTS foods.”

“They are. Stella said they ordered 6 one year deluxe units from Walton and a Diamant 525 grain mill from Lehman’s with 3 sets of extra burrs.”

“Did you tell her we had a mill and an oats roller?”

“Sure did. They added wall mounted lamps to every room in their home plus table lamps where appropriate, all kerosene burning. She said they also got wicking by the roll and a few replacement parts, globes and such.”

"I sure hope he stops spending money like he has been. It wouldn't hurt to have a few thousand for emergencies."

"I got the distinct impression that Stella feels the same way. I think he's about over that."

"I don't like owing and our tab with Scott will take a total of ten years to pay off. We may have our own baseball team by then."

"I doubt that, I'd get my tubes tied if it gets out of hand. And, how much is this one last purchase going to be?"

"I don't know what the GSA pricing is. I know full retail is around eighteen hundred for the adapter, suppressor, shims and other things need to mount the adapter. Then, there's the question of whether or not we can weld on a bayonet lug without interfering with the suppressor. Couldn't use both at the same time, of course."

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"Well...I got one and it's not the one you specified, but I think you'll like the price. It seems that the FA762SS is NSN 1005-01-554-6164 and it's the complete system. He said he thinks it has to be the adapter for the M14/M1A because the other adapter has a different NSN number."

"What's the price?"

"Four bottles of Jack Daniels Single Barrel."

"What's that cost?"

"I'll find my receipt and you can repay me. He said you'd need a gunsmith or armorer to install it. He said he'd do it for another bottle."

"I thought they just screwed on."

"You have to have some kind of alignment rod. I had him get me three and bought him a full case. I'll take him the M21 and keep the other for backup."

"Make sure he's not in his cups when he installs them."

"Count on it. You want the second one for your Loaded?"

"Don't you want it for your M24SWS?"

"I'll see if he can get the other adapter. If he can, I'll install it on my Remington. Otherwise, you can have it for your Loaded."

"I've got to send my Super Match in to get the Fast Attach Adapter installed. The whole shooting match cost around two hundred. Four bottles of Jack Daniel's Single Barrel at \$46.88 a bottle plus tax. Plus another bottle to have the adapter installed. The whiskey is cheaper than the installation tools so I'm going to let Scott's friend install it."

"Surely there are less expensive suppressors. They're illegal here anyway, aren't they?"

"Yes on both counts. There are less expensive suppressors but none with a guarantee like Surefire. While automatic rifles are legal in Missouri, suppressors aren't. Under the new law even the rifles are illegal and they can only lock us up once. With that in mind, we might as well get anything we can."

"But Scott's BAR is registered, right?"

"It was his grandfather's and back when his grandfather got it, \$200 was a lot of money so it's not on the books. I looked at those carbines too. Some are M1s and some are M2s. The M2 is the select fire version."

"And they're not registered either?"

"I doubt it."

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I ended up forking over \$250 for my share of the cost of the Jack Daniels Single Barrel. I didn't consider it an expense; rather, I was saving about \$1,550 on something one couldn't buy in a Missouri store without a badge and a letter from the boss. These higher grade M1As were extremely accurate and more so with the addition of the suppressor. We had the time and the ammo and spent nearly every weekend at an old gravel pit that nobody used anymore. Years before, it had been the go to place for target practice. Then, somebody built a private range and eventually most people went there to shoot. There was one spot about 1,650 yards long that allowed us to set up the 1,500 meter range for the fifties. After further thought, we used the suppressors on the fifties to avoid attracting attention.

Our second child came after Scott and Stella's first. They had a girl and named her Kimberly Anne. We had a second boy and named him Scott Alan after Scott and Honey's father, Alan. I'll have to tell you, while happy about Scott, Honey really wanted a daughter. She asked if I minded trying a third time, later, to try and have a daughter. I told her we'd have to stop at four, regardless.

That National Healthcare Law really stuck it to employers, insurance companies and seniors. Plus there was that obligation imposed on the population to buy health insurance they simply couldn't afford. A whole lot of Democrats weren't reelected in 2010 and more lost in 2012. Somehow, Obama got reelected for four more in November

of 2012. I thought that the other candidates would win. It sure was close but Obama took home the bacon.

He found himself in the same position as Dubya did after the 2006 elections, a Congress filled with the opposition. I figured Nancy Pelosi would lose, but those strange people in San Francisco reelected her. At least she didn't get back her position as Speaker of the House. That went to another Californian, Buck McKeon. He'd been a representative as long as she had been. He was as straight laced as they come. He only had one wife, six children, was Mormon and was the first Mayor of Santa Clarita. Santa Clarita is the fourth largest city in Los Angeles County, California and the twenty-sixth largest city in the State of California.

During his second inaugural address, Obama promised to bring all the troops home. Not just Afghanistan, all the troops. That included South Korea and Germany and any place where the country had more than nominal representation. We'd still have military liaisons, but that was the extent of our overseas presence.

"I don't like it David. He didn't say it, but I think his next step will be to cut the military by a few Divisions. Watch and see... Brigades will be replacing Divisions. That will cut the size of the forces to 40 percent of the current size."

"What I didn't like was the ambiguity concerning the new Start Treaty. He said plainly that we had reduced our weapons by 650 weapons, ahead of schedule. Now if we only had 2,200 weapons to begin with, that was pretty fast. However if we had ten thousand two and forty weapons like I said, we still have nine thousand five hundred and ninety."

"Whatever. It would only take one to start the ball rolling."

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For the next 18 months, we laid low, doing our jobs, making babies and keeping even. The economy didn't really recover so a person would notice. Every trip to KC we now made as a group to buy supplies from Costco and Sam's and the large supermarket took more money to buy the same things. We didn't need some of the things we'd purchased in the past because of the large garden we all put in and Honey and Stella had harvested.

We had planted a few fruit and nut trees and put in a hive of honey bees to pollinate the trees. We also followed one of Jerry's frequent suggestions and installed first a fence and then thorny blackberries. Scott bought a used welder and fabricated a front gate out of six inch pipe. It swung out, not in and anything less than a tracked vehicle would *probably* be stopped by the gate.

The new assault weapons ban basically outlawed all magazine fed weapons for everyone except the military and civilian law enforcement. It wasn't quite as widely

enforced or overwhelming as Jerry had written about in *Scavenger*, but it came close. It brought to mind *Unintended Consequences* and the ATF bimbo with the torn fingernail.

The government no longer allowed the importation of ammunition except for the military and a select few. Excess US ammunition being turned out by the Lake City Plant was stored for 'future needs'. If you could get it from someone in the military and used 5.56x45mm, 7.62x51mm, 9mm or .45ACP, ammo was available. It was also expensive because the logistics Sergeants realized they controlled the market. Winchester lost the contract to produce the Mk 211 and it was moved to the Lake City Plant too.

We had notarized Bills of Sale for every firearm that appeared on a 4473 in keeping with another of Jerry's stories, *The Hermit*. I got a few small Christmas bonuses and we paid ahead on the loan Scott had made for the fuel tank and #2 Diesel. We treated the fuel once a year to keep it stabilized because: 1) PRI products have a 3 year shelf life; and, 2) We weren't sure how stable the fuel would remain with no more than the few cans of #2 we added annually to top off the tanks. These days, delivered fuel cost more than at the truck stops.

The third time was a charm; Honey came through with Susan Janice. Scott and Stella's second was also a girl, Megan Honey. Their third was a boy, Joshua David. Both women had a belly button procedure. It was supposedly reversible if necessary. Did that mean it wouldn't prevent a pregnancy... did it mean it would? I worried these days.

We managed to keep the freezer filled and increase the number of five gallon cans of staples of wheat, corn, oats, beans and rice by buying in bulk and doing the home packing with the Mylar bags and oxygen absorbers.

Scott's friend we got the 40mm grenades from decided he was going to be a lifer but he had a problem, he liked to gamble just a little too often and lost more than he won. Always conscious of our being set up for a sting, we continued to do business with him, for a while. The first time he had white star illumination and shotgun rounds. Scott set the transaction up as a drop off. We'd checked the boxes and if they were as advertised, we'd leave them sit and go pay the man's wife at a neutral location, a McDonald's. The price was $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce for the case of 72 buckshot rounds and $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce for the white star which came 44 to a case. On the way back, Scott let out a long *whew* and said we weren't going back.

"Something wrong with the deal?"

Honey – Chapter 6

"I'm not sure, but I think she might have been tailed."

"But you still went back and picked up the boxes."

“Was that sweat or blood coming out of my pores?”

“Looked like sweat. I just realized, you were sweating like a pig. Why didn’t you say something?”

“I didn’t spot the probable tail until after I gave her the 5 quarter ounce coins.”

“You did that very well, if I hadn’t been specifically looking, I’d have missed it.”

“I think she’s done this before, I was mostly following her lead.”

“I don’t think it’s worth it. We have a lot of the 40mm stuff now. What about .50; any chance of getting more M1022 and or Mk211?”

“I don’t think so. We’ll just have to reload our brass. It’s all boxer primed and I do have the equipment.”

“You don’t have reloading equipment. I remember you asking me if I reloaded.”

“Didn’t have. I have a Dillon progressive loader with dies for 5.56, 7.62, .30-06, .30 carbine, 9mm and .45ACP. I also have multiple cans of the appropriate powders and the correct size primers and bullets. I have a separate loader for the .50BMG rounds with the bullets, powder and primers. The .50 caliber bullets are the 750gr Hornady A-MAX. Also got the same model of weather radios Honey and you have, the Oregon Scientific model WR602.”

“I bet you thought they were expensive.”

“They are a lot of things, but not expensive. Bought them from the OS store.”

“I’ve got to get some of those civilian MREs.”

“Are you nuts?”

“Probably. Pretty handy if we end up doing patrols to scavenge.”

“Did I miss something?”

“Russia now has a large troop presence on the Belarus, Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian borders. China is in the first stage of building its forces across from Taiwan.”

“Missed that.”

“It gets better. With Kim Jong-un replacing his father Korea doesn’t look good. I think pulling the troops was a mistake. North Korea has free reign if they decide to invade.”

It allowed Russia to build its troops along the borders with Baltic States and Belarus. Don't have a feel for China, that's an on-again, off-again situation."

"I can see everything you suggested but one. Belarus used to be called White Russia and they've chosen to align with Russia. In fact, they were the first member of the CIS."

"There was a post on one of the forums from a person who identified themselves as a resident of Haifa. I couldn't tell from the name if it was a man or woman. They claimed that the Arabs are building forces and with a few exceptions have Israel surrounded. We both know they've always been surrounded so in and of itself, that wouldn't be a big deal. But it's not just the people in southern Lebanon, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The indication, although subtle, suggested that Israel is on the highest state of readiness since the 1968 war. That's troubling if Iran has developed nuclear weapons.

"There you go again. *Conspiracy Theorist* doesn't begin to explain your attitude. What's the difference? We've been as prepared as possible since my mother died."

"Still, I'd feel a lot better if we had a larger propane tank. I had to really push to get the buried 1,100 gallon tank."

"I know, I had the same problem. What we could do is put in second tanks from Ferrell Gas. We could put in a berm and install the tanks aboveground behind the berm. That would bring us up to 2,000 gallons each."

"I'll ask Honey to call around. I hadn't thought about that, the above ground tank wouldn't be visible to the guy filling the underground tank and the underground tank wouldn't be visible to the guy filling the above ground tank. Better do that now in the off season to get the best price."

"You know you could have any size tank you wanted if you bought it instead of renting it."

"Oh I know that, but have you priced them? I did and I don't see how they make enough from the rental to pay for the tank. I saw a 1,600 gallon tank for \$1,650. It was the most economical tank I saw."

"But if you owned the tank and it was backup tank, you could probably get the same company to fill both tanks."

"What I saved on the suppressor would pay for the tank too."

"There ya go."

"Are you going to get one?"

"I just might, I have a pretty good cash reserve with you paying back that three fifty a month. We missed the end of the world you know."

"No, I must have missed that because I was concentrating on a possible war. What are YOU talking about?"

"Planet X. Nibiru. The Mayan Long Count Calendar ended on December 21st, 2012 and some thought that signified the end of the world."

"Nah, they just started the 14th long count Calendar."

"So you did know."

"I saw the show on Mega Disasters or a similar program. Believe none of what you hear and only half of you see. Is that why you were so gung ho about prepping?"

"I can't say the thought didn't enter my mind."

"I'm still holding out for weapons of mass destruction. Nukes, chemical warfare or biological warfare."

We put in the berms behind both homes and purchased the 1,650 gallon tanks. AmeriGas wasn't going to fill them until we explained that they were emergency reserve tanks for our *propane fueled* generators. Well...what's a little white lie among friends? We did extend the pipes and connect the tanks to our manifolds. Full, we had space available for 2,430 gallons (90% fill) apiece. Scott found a guy where he worked that reloaded and he set up each of the plates and we reloaded our boxer primed cartridges for practice.

Just before Thanksgiving, Russia crossed the borders of the three Baltic States. As they were members of the EU and NATO, there was an immediate response by both the EU and NATO. Rather than watching football games on Thanksgiving, we were glued to Fox News, occasionally switching to CNN. The Russians used a massive tank assault with the T-80s, T-90s and T-95s. Air cover was provided by KA-50 Black Sharks and KA-52 Alligators plus their remaining MI-24 Hinds.

The US failed to respond to NATO's calls for help, led to calls to impeach the president. It was brought to a vote in the House and failed to reach a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority, falling several votes short. A very upset McKeon resigned as speaker. He further stated that he would not run for reelection. Obama refused to change his position. Russia didn't pursue an invasion of Poland, posting troops on the western borders of the Baltic States and Belarus. Medvedev was in his second term and it was expected that Putin would run for president again and appoint Medvedev as Foreign Minister.

Kim didn't invade the south and China continued to mass their troops. Realizing how close he'd come to the fate suffered by Clinton and proposed for Bush, Obama backed

off on some of his more controversial programs. The house passed a repeal of the new Assault Weapons ban with a 69% majority and the Senate adopted it with a 68% majority. Realizing that his veto would be overridden, Obama signed the bill. Ammunition would become available as soon as the companies could resume production. To meet the immediate shortfall, all calibers of US military surplus were released to the market and imports loaded onto ships headed for the US. We waited, hoping the prices would fall.

You see, Scott never found a job as a welder and it looked like I'd be driving a forklift until I retired. On top of that, children are surprisingly expensive to raise. The gardening offset some of the cost, thank God. We implemented hand-me-downs where possible. Susan wasn't going to be a tomboy, Honey saw to that.

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"I have a launch."

"Put it on the screen."

"General, this is Colonel Brightman. We have a launch sir. One missile, from China. The target is Washington sir. Yes sir, right away."

"Activate the mountain. Move the backup shifts and transfer tracking from Anderson to Cheyenne Mountain."

"Mr. President, this is General Clark at NORAD, sir. We're tracking a single missile launch from China, destination Washington, sir. Yes sir, DF-5A with a range of 13,000 kilometers. A single five megaton sir. No sir, it has not been confirmed by open intelligence. A second source reports a single two megaton and a third 6 MIRV'd weapons. If we presume the latter, either six Minuteman III missiles with the single Peacekeeper W-87 warhead or two Minuteman III missiles that haven't been refurbished and still have three W-78 warheads."

"Yes sir. Will you or the Secretary notify the Russians before we launch? Sir, we can launch with two minutes' notice. Yes Sir, two missiles with the W-78 warheads, all warheads targeted on Beijing. We will standby for the launch codes. I will be in transit to the Mountain. Colonel Brightman has transferred to the mountain along with both backup crews. Northcom is moving too, sir."

Meanwhile, orders were given to scramble the B-52s, B-1Bs and B-2s, half to Groom Lake and the remainder to Edwards. Cargo aircraft were ordered loaded with ALCMs and bombs destined for both locations, a just in case move. With a single missile airborne the decision was made to limit the SAME broadcast to the Washington area. Secretary Gates informed the Russians and both he and the President issued launch codes for two MIRV'd Minuteman III missiles. Instructions were issued by the DOD to

place the Boomers on launch stations. The remainder of the Minuteman fleet was placed on standby.

The orders from NCA were passed to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs who then passed them to the General in charge of the National Military Command Center and from there to the missile sites. The REACT System reprogrammed the two missiles selected in moments and they were launched. The United States had just launched the first missiles on its side of a nuclear exchange. Not the first weapons, just the first missiles with live nuclear weapons.

It would have been unknown but for the SAME warning issued for the Washington area. By the time the Minuteman missiles were emerging from their silos, MSNBC, Fox, CNN, ABC, NBC and CBS had interrupted programming to carry the recorded announcement. I heard it on a radio in the break room and called Scott.

“You heard what?”

“They issued a SAME warning for a nuclear attack on Washington DC.”

“I’m going home.”

“I’ll probably beat you there.”

The second stage of the DF-5A uses four liquid fueled engines. One of the four produced a very minor difference in power. The US was struck almost right on schedule, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania not Washington DC. And the warhead was the original five megaton warhead, not the two megaton or the MIRV’d version. It could have stopped with the single exchange, the operative word being *could*. It took China additional time to fuel its remaining missiles.

Nuclear countries around the world went to their highest states of alert and held off launching. Those with bombs armed their planes. For a country like Israel, that meant arming their remaining unarmed fighters. The US bombers were airborne and wouldn’t be armed until they landed and the cargo planes with the weapons arrived. Russian forces armed their assortment of bombers ranging from the old Bears to the modern TU-22M3 Backfire C and Tu-160 Blackjacks. Il-78 tankers were fueled and sent aloft to station keeping positions. The US duplicated the Russian moves, but held the tankers until the bombers had landed and were being refueled and armed.

It was now early April, 2014 and the garden spot had been rototilled before winter but we hadn’t done the spring pass before planting. We had made our quarterly trip to KC three weeks earlier and Scott and I had filled additional pails with rice, beans, corn, oats and hard red wheat. The price of coffee had been down and we’d picked up an extra 12 cans each, extra bacon because it was on sale and extra butter and cheese. And, instead of planting the garden, we had moved most of the fresh food to the shelter and were glued to Scott and Stella’s large screen TV.

“Patton was right. We should have let him come up with an excuse and kicked their butts all the way back to Moscow.”

“You know that really happened, but not like the movie made it seem. Near the end of the film, Patton is shown having a tense telephone conversation with Bedell Smith in which he argued that America should go to war with the Soviets. Patton actually had this conversation with General Joseph McNarney, Eisenhower's deputy commander, not Bedell Smith as depicted. Another thing, I discovered on Wiki was that Patton incorrectly cites Frederick the Great as saying, ‘L'audace, l'audace, toujours l'audace!’ (“Audacity, audacity – always audacity!”) This actually originated with Georges Danton, a leading figure in the early stages of the French Revolution, ‘De l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace et la France sera sauvée!’ which means (Of audacity, still of audacity, always of audacity and France will be saved!). They chopped his head off before it was all over.”

“I know that TOM and his son are real Patton fans. The son started out in Abrams. I think he did six months in Kosovo and twelve months in the sandbox.”

“In an Abrams?”

“No, in a UA HMMWV with a CROWs mounted with a Ma Deuce escorting shipments of goods as an MP.”

“What’s he doing now?”

“Artillery, I think. Counter-battery fire; target acquisition. Lives in Arkansas.”

“He’s still in?”

“National Guard. Going to hang in there for his twenty, I think. His old man must have rubbed off on him, he wants to teach history.”

“I guess I should have read some of his stories.”

“Read one, they’ll pretty much all the same. Like Honey and I discussed once, he has a few main points. He claims bad things happen in threes and that you should be careful what you wish for because God has a sense of humor. His quotes include a historical quote from Santayana, *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it*. He also quotes Clint Eastwood from *Heartbreak Ridge* with, *Improvise. Adapt. Overcome.*”

“A Purist?”

“Very traditional, yes. Thinks the M14 was the greatest rifle ever invented. On that we agree. Thinks the M1911 was the greatest handgun ever invented, another agreement.”

“Does he have a Super 90 or 590A1?”

“590A1.”

“Hates the M16?”

“You’ve read his stuff?”

“No but people who like the M14 would tend to prefer a Mini-14 in 5.56. You know piston driven not direct gas impingement.”

“He said he owned a couple. If I recall correctly, he drank them up.”

“You know, it might be wise to move this big TV to the shelter and use a portable to watch the news. Give me a hand?”

“Sure Scott, where will we put it?”

“It’s not that heavy, we’ll just put it front of something. Did you run a cable from the dish into the shelter?”

“I did. Not that I know why. If the warheads fly, there won’t be any TV.”

“One HEMP will probably take out a bunch of the communications satellites.” (Not true)

We moved the 40” screen to the shelter and got it set up. Stella and Honey moved supper to the shelter to finish cooking and we helped them finish up the refrigerators. We also moved Scott and Stella’s freezer to the shelter. We didn’t shut down the home utilities other than lowering the thermostats to 55°. We had plenty of folding cots to set up for the older children and only moved one crib each. The Sears washer/dryer pair was going to get a real workout. But, it was a top of the line Frigidaire 27” stacked set, all electric. We obviously got it before the reserve propane tanks.

Scott had some thingamajig between the cable from the dish to the receiver that he moved to the shelter setup. He called it a transient voltage suppression diode. Nothing else was connected to an antenna and all the radios were all in the Faraday cabinet, excluding one SAME radio. We’d had drills or as Honey called them, trial runs. While she was totally aboard as a prepper, she hoped to never have to use the preparations. I think a lot of preppers feel that way, I know I do.

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“I have additional launch signatures.”

“China?”

“Some of them. They seem to be lifting off like a volley, one after the other. I have tracking. Half are headed our way and half towards Russia. Wait one, additional lift offs, India, I think.”

To or from?”

“Both. General?”

“Hand me the phone. Mr. Secretary? Yes sir, multiple launches from China directed at the US, Russia and India. Wait one, sir. What are those new tracks?”

“Russia launching on China, the US and in general, Europe. I have outbound tracks from Israel and Pakistan. Israel seems to be firing on everyone and Pakistan on India.”

“Sir, Pakistan has fired on India, Russia has fired on the US, China and Europe. Israel has fired on everyone. Yes sir, with REACT, retargeting can be accomplished quickly, but not that quickly. Yes sir, we’ll close the Mountain. Lock her up!”

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“What’s that sound? Oh, it’s the NWS radio.”

“Let me see. Crap. Scotty, help me get the outer door closed, first, and then the inner door. Everyone sit on the floor – away from the walls. We’d better unplug that TV and get it laid over.”

“Won’t things fall over?”

“Everything is anchored to the walls, mostly with earthquake straps.”

“Our freezer isn’t.”

“Give me a hand; I have straps we can use and brackets on the walls to run the straps through.”

“Velcro?”

“It’s stronger than you think. With the straps being as long as they are, we’ll have a minimum of 18 inches of Velcro fastening each of the four straps.”

“I don’t feel good. I’m going to be sick.”

“Hand me Susan and get to the bathroom.”

“Here.”

“Thank God, she made it. I wouldn’t relish cleaning up that kind of mess in the middle of World War III.”

“Why do you have two doors?”

“We have at least two of everything. Two Safe Cells, two doors, two extra sets of filters thanks to you. We probably didn’t need two blast doors, but the rating between the resistance to the pressure wave and the rebound load is different. The blast wave is 50PSI while the rebound is 14.5PSI. With two doors, we have 64.5PSI both ways so it doesn’t matter. That’s something I had a problem with. I thought that you had to put the door in place and then pour concrete to hold it in place. I think I was confused by the door sold by Utah Shelter Systems. This door requires an opening 32” wide by 72” high and bolts to the concrete block. Even worse, it had to be perfectly flat. At least the instruction manual explained how to make it level.”

“But we’re pretty safe in here?”

“Well, we’re only about 60 some miles from KC and about the same as the crow flies from Whiteman. I think Fox said the B-2s took off for parts unknown and we know the silos are empty. The questions are does the enemy know the planes left and do they believe the silos are empty? If they target Whiteman and KC, they wouldn’t have to be very far off to drop one on our head. It must have been Fox, because I don’t watch MSNBC or CNN, which said that the target was Washington, not Philadelphia. If they were short on that one, what’s to say they won’t be long on the next or off course?”

“If that happens David we won’t know it so don’t worry about it.”

“If I didn’t worry, we wouldn’t have this shelter.”

“We’ve done all that we can and broken more than one law doing it. I hope in the end that breaking those laws was worth it. I think the BATFE will be the least of our worries in the future.”

“You hope.”

“Ok, I hope. I’m not so much worried about those like us who prepared. It’s all those liberal whiners who want to make love, not war that I worry about. If they manage to survive and if they get hungry and if they get their hands on someone else’s gun, look out.”

“A lot of ifs.”

“You think a lot of ifs the first time one of them shoots at your castle.”

“I’m not so sure I want to let them get that close.”

“So what, you’re just going to shoot anyone within 1,500 meters?”

“I didn’t say that.”

“You implied it with your statement.”

“Would YOU TWO JUST STOP!”

“Sorry.”

“Me too.”

“I’m going to make some Chamomile tea and try to settle my stomach. You want some tea Stella?”

“Do you have Darjeeling?”

“A full case containing 120 bags. I bought direct from the company by the case in several flavors including Chamomile, Darjeeling, Earl Grey, English Teatime, plain Green Tea and American Classic Tea. If you like, I have Lipton Orange Pekoe. The case size varied according to the flavor with the American Classic case containing something like 288 bags. Or, you can have Folgers coffee.”

“The Darjeeling I think.”

“I suppose you two yard birds want to crack the seal on a bottle of the Single Barrel I saw under Scott and Stella’s bed.”

“You bought Single barrel? Fifty bucks a fifth. Wow.”

“I only bought one case of that and three cases of regular Black Label. It could be years before they get back in production, if ever.”

Honey – Chapter 7

“Tequila or Gin?”

“Mixed case of some other booze, you’ll just have to check. No mixes and no bourbon. Vodka and, uh, I don’t remember.”

“I stocked up too. Anyone for a Bud Light?”

“No Colorado Kool-Aid? I remember. One bottle of scotch and one bottle of Grand Mariner, one bottle of cognac, three bottles of vodka, three bottles of tequila and three of gin. Five cases altogether. I’ll take a Bud.”

“Remind me to keep an eye open for Squirt.”

“None of the good stuff for you.”

“That I’d take neat or on the rocks. Jack Black and Squirt is a favorite.”

A faint tremor was felt by all of us sitting on the floor.

“That had to be KC or Whiteman.”

“To quote one of my favorite authors, it’s time to lock and load. Time for you to hook up all that fancy radiation equipment your bought.”

“I’ll plug in the AMP-200 and the AMP-100.”

“Did you get anything like a CD V715?”

“Nope. Got better. It’s the size of the CD V-715 but will measure up to 9,999R/hr or lower ranges. Got two. I told them what I wanted and they steered me in the right direction. Got low range and high ranges dosimeters. That stuff wasn’t cheap but it was less than it sounded like it was going to cost. Thing was, as long as this equipment was properly maintained, we didn’t have to send it to be recalibrated all the time.”

“Whatever suits you just tickles me plumb to death.”

“Wait, wait, Henry Fonda with Glenn Ford, *The Rounders*.”

“That’s where I heard that. Who was the other guy?”

“Chill Wills, Jim Ed Love.”

“What are you two babbling about?”

“An old movie made before any of us was born with Chill Wills, Henry Fonda and Glenn Ford. It was a western comedy.”

“That sounds like a contradiction in terms.”

“It was funny though. Feeling better?”

“A little. So some madman somewhere just had to push the button? I suppose it’s a full blown global nuclear war.”

“With the attitude of many of the nuclear powers, it’s use ‘em or loose ‘em. I suppose China, Russia, the US, the UK, France, India, Pakistan and Israel for sure. North Korea if they actually had some and maybe some countries that had them and no one knew about it. Based on those initial TV reports or speculation or whatever they were, China started it. They could lose triple the population of the US and still have a population greater than the pre-war US population. We’re fairly well set. Most of what we don’t have we can get easily enough.”

“We’re missing something? What caliber?”

“Clothing and shoes for our children. Thanks to you, you and I are in fair condition in that department. We’ll buy it if we can or barter but I’d like to reserve salvage as our last resort. I don’t want to be one of those that preps and then still has to salvage for everything that didn’t occur to us.”

“We’ll just find a department store and load up on clothes. Under the circumstances Susan will just have to be a tomboy until she gets older and needs female cut clothing.”

“Do the two of you have enough personal supplies?”

“We’ll handle that, thank you.”

“Does anyone have the spreadsheet?”

“You know about that?”

“I didn’t download it, I figured you had it.”

“Lucky for you I do. I could do it by hand but it wouldn’t be worth it. If we had to do that, I prefer to just go by the meters.”

“How’s it work?”

“Well, you plug in the peak level and compare the results to the ongoing reading and adjust the peak until the spreadsheet conforms to your readings. It’s called the seven/ten rule because for every 7th increment of time, the radiation is one tenth of the previous level. Exponential not arithmetic. At 7 hours it’s down to 10 percent and at 7 times 7 it’s down to 1 percent. He suggests starting with a peak level of 3,000.”

“So what’s at the next interval?”

“It’s simple math, you tell me.”

“Got a calculator?”

“You first lesson in new math. How much is seven times fifty?”

“Three hundred and fifty.”

“Very good. Now, I rounded up by one before I multiplied by seven so the answer is three fifty minus that one times seven or 343. At that point in time, the radiation will be 0.1 percent. I happen to know the next interval, 2401 hours where the level will be 0.01 percent. That is 100 days plus one hour.”

“I think we’ll be out long before that.”

“You do realize that if you do go *shopping* only two people can go at a time. You and Honey go and we’ll watch the kids. Then when Stella and I go, you two can watch the kids. So you pre-bought clothing?”

“Jeans and work shirts, underwear and socks and two pairs of Red Wing boots.”

“You should have said something.”

“We did that before you got out. It slipped my mind because she washed the sizing out and stored the shirts in garment bags. They’re hanging on the clothes bar in our bedroom. The other things, except for the shoes, are in the dresser.”

“It’s all new?”

“It almost wasn’t. Some of my jeans were beginning to get the look and the company frowns on that.”

“Get the stuff locally?”

“KC.”

“Oh well.”

“Jeans and the other things are available locally. I have a list of Red Wing dealers within a 50 mile radius of KC.”

“You know, something just occurred to me. This shelter is a whole lot larger on the outside.”

“Of course it is. It has a block wall within a block wall with the void filled with compacted earth. Compare the outside height with the interior height. The overhead is six inches of reinforced concrete, overlain with six feet of earth. The way I explained it to Honey went something like this, *Put in the forms and pour the reinforced concrete roof six inches thick resting on the inner row of blocks and support posts. Fill the outer wall to level with the roof and raise the outer wall another six feet using hollow blocks. Cover it all over with heavily compacted earth to a depth of six feet. Raise the outer wall another five feet using solid blocks and pour four inches of concrete over the earth cover to seal it all in. Finally, add a fire escape that can be raised and lowered from inside and on the roof to gain access to the roof.*

”I added more of the solid blocks and added the parapet. That was the extent of it until you showed up and we added the fencing as protection against grenades.”

“I saw a blast hatch at American Safe Rooms. Why didn’t you put one of those in the roof so you could access the roof from inside the shelter?”

“I’d had to add two like the blast door setup and it wasn’t possible at the time.”

“Do you have any information on the hatch?”

“I have the installation manual for the hatch and door. They’re in the same book and I downloaded a copy. You have something in mind?”

“That kind of depends on how hard it would be to line that layer of soil with metal plates and fabricate the blast hatches.”

“Assuming we figured out how to do that without losing the soil, then what?”

“I’d have to find some metal plate. How thick were the plates that made up the blast hatch?”

“I’d have to check. If memory serves three sixteenths. Let me check on the laptop. Ah, here we go. The hatch is 32 by 24. Inside the hatch are 5 sections of 2½ -inch steel tube sandwiched between two formed 3/16-inch steel plates creating a super strong H-beam design. The hinges are Steel hinges with 5/8-inch diameter hardened steel pins hidden when the door is closed. There are all kinds of pictures.”

“Filled with concrete?”

“I guess so...has to be the same as the blast door.”

"I see. We'd only really need one but if we can find the material, I suppose I could build two. Build everything out of three sixteenths plate. Don't know about those concrete anchors, we may have to substitute. We could make it so no one could unbolt the hatch, though. Have to wait until the radiation is down and we're free to move around some."

"You still want the Bud?"

"Maybe I'd better stick to coffee. Never lived through the end of the world before, might miss something."

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As it turned out, we had to wait about four weeks for the radiation to decay below enough for a quick peek outside. The spreadsheet said, "For Safety's sake, don't stay out until it says 100 or less." That would generally indicate a radiation exposure of 2.5R per day times 120 days equaled 300R total exposure, the maximum allowed to avoid getting radiation sickness, over that time period. I did read some of the stories and he said you were better off waiting to 50mR/hr if you could. Our highest level was 235R/hr and it came quickly, probably Wichita.

By the time 60 days had passed, we were not only out of the shelter full time, but out scavenging, a little. We had enough food, guns and ammo. We needed the steel plate, clothing, shoes, diesel fuel and a backup supply of propane. Passing by a business that harvested and sold firewood gave us the idea to add more of that, too.

After doing a little scavenging, we concentrated on the roof access from inside the shelter. Scott welded up the two hatches and next four plates to the inside hatch dimensions and we marked a spot on the roof. We used a concrete saw to cut into the concrete and chiseled it out, smoothing the edges as we went. Next, we laid boards across the box to prevent bending the metal and slowly drove it through the dirt, removing dirt as we went. We finally struck something and after clearing discovered the inside overhead.

We used that masonry bit that came with the outside doors and drilled a hole in each corner. Moving inside, we measured and drew a line for the hole in the overhead. We sawed that out as deeply as the blade permitted. Finally, we chiseled out the concrete carefully so it wouldn't fall on our heads. It came crashing down, the saw blade having cut the rebar and we drove the box home, keeping all of the soil in place.

The next task was to break up the hunk of overhead into pieces small enough to move and clean up our mess. We finished early that day and took the remainder of the day off. Broke out a couple of cans of Bud Light, just to celebrate. It was starting to cloud up the next morning and we rushed and got the top hatch installed to keep the rain out of the shelter. The inside hatch was more of a challenge because it was never intended to be installed upside down and was a trifle heavy. Hydraulics to the rescue. We went

shopping and found two cylinders, a pump and oil. Scott welded arms to the hatch and made brackets we attached to the overhead for the other end of the cylinders. Open the valve and the weight of the door pushed the oil out of the cylinder. Close the valve and pump and the door slowly rose to the flush position where it could be locked with the outside lock. Don't ask me, I drive forklifts. Well, I used to anyway. Whatever, it worked.

Furthermore, there was a ladder installed in the shaft that was a sort of extension ladder that you could hook and pull down so you could climb up to the roof. It used friction to stay in whatever position you left it, up or down.

Our children grew like weeds as children are wont to do. We'd cleaned out a couple of places, mostly getting jeans, shirts, socks and male and female underwear. Kids sizes for yea so up to and including adult. Are you keeping the kids straight? Ours are Donald David, Scott Alan and Susan Janice. Theirs are Kimberly Anne, Megan Honey and Joshua David. Do I think our children and their children will grow up and marry each other? I have no idea. Based on the way they fight, I wouldn't presume so.

We knew of the first missile that hit Philadelphia. We had learned over the amateur bands, confirmed really, that the US had responded in kind. The US had presumed that the Chinese nuke was MIRV's with six warheads and had launched two Minuteman III missiles, each with three warheads. An amateur in Hawai'i reported hearing that the first launch had been made at the direct order of some Chinese officer and he'd launched the five megaton warhead, the only one he controlled. When the US retaliated with 6 warheads, it was viewed as an escalation and China responded in kind, launching every missile they had, 20 DF-5As, their newer missiles and those on the three boats.

"The Second Artillery Corps was believed to be equipped with 110~140 nuclear-armed strategic missiles, including 15~20 DongFeng 3 (CSS-2) IRBMs, 15~20 DongFeng 4 (CSS-3) IRBMs, about 20 DongFeng 5 (CSS-4) ICBMs, and 60~80 DongFeng 21 (CSS-5) MRBMs, all of which carry a single warhead. The new-generation DongFeng 31 (CSS-9) began deployment in 2007 and its improved variant DongFeng 31A was also operationally deployed. Additionally, the SAC is equipped with 900~1,000 conventional theatre missiles, including the DongFeng 15 (CSS-6) and DongFeng 11 (CSS-7) SRBMs. In recent years, the SAC has also began the deployment of the DongFeng 21C (CSS-5 Mod-3) conventionally-armed MRBM and the DH-10 land-attack cruise missile (LACM)." I got that from Sino Defense. They also say that the DF-5 was equipped with a first generation warhead but don't define what that is.

"Roger. We must have been hit by Russia too. The mainland got more hits than China had ICBMs."

"Affirmative. We heard here that everyone who had a weapon used it. It was a case of use 'em or lose 'em."

"We speculated that very thing. Did Israel survive?"

“Nobody hit them, which is very strange. They launched their Jericho missiles and the fighters carrying the nukes following shortly after and turned most of the Middle East into a glass slag pile. They’re on the west side of the Middle East and most of the fallout went east with the prevailing winds. They aren’t communicating with anyone so nobody has a clue.”

“How did you find that out?”

“From a Turk. Turkey is a Member of NATO, or was. The guy was probably military, spoke perfect English and was well informed. Lost contact with him and can’t raise him now. That’s about all I know and my batteries are starting to go. I’m go...”

“Where was he?”

“The big island, Hawai’i.”

“We got the roof access in and the garden spot is far too muddy to plant. Feel like a trip up to KC to see how hot the Lake City ammo plant is?”

“We really need a bunker if we’re going to store more ordnance.”

“Would a Quonset Hut work?”

“If we partially buried it and topped it with earth covering, it should. Do you know where we can find one?”

“Yes, I’m reasonably certain I know where we can get an unassembled building. We’ll need footings at the minimum although a floor would be preferable. It has a 10’ radius so it’s 20’ wide by 48’ long. We’d need a crane of some kind to lift the four sections into place.”

“Where is it?”

“Belton. Just off US 71. We could pick up I-470 to I-70 and exit at Missouri Route 7. The plant is just north of there.”

“We’d need a box trailer for the ordnance and probably a flatbed for the hut.”

“I agree. On the other hand, do we really want to be on the downwind side of Kansas City? I know I brought it up...still do we really need to go?”

“The only things we haven’t located and brought back are diesel fuel and propane. If we could locate a propane distributor and empty a large tank into delivery trucks, we could move it here, plumb it in and fill it. We’d have enough for years. If we could find a

Cummins or Kohler dealer, we could get a pair of large diesel fuel generators and feed them from the diesel tanker. As long as we stayed ahead of the game by having a replacement tanker, when we emptied one, we'd could switch them and go fill the empty. We might get PRI-D and PRI-G from a distributor too."

"I'll check the laptop. I have data sheets on Cummins and Kohler diesel generators. I think the model we want is the DGDB or the DGCG. It's a 100kw unit putting out around 275 amps."

"Everyone and his brother are going to be looking for generators."

"Very true...however, most won't want something that weighs a ton and burns fuel like there's no limit to the supply and it's all free. And, I have a list of the Cummins Distributors for the entire country with addresses and the worthless phone numbers. The closest is KC, Missouri."

"So, it's better than I thought David. We can get a Quonset building, a generator and all the ammo we can haul. We'll be set for life."

"For however long that is. You realize that it will be just the two of us against however many we run into. I'm telling you Scott, it's not if, just when and where and how many. You'd better plan on bringing that BAR in case we get ambushed. This is the first time since I came home from the sandbox that I wished for something with burst or full auto mode."

"Are you saying that you'd use one if it were available?"

"I'd sure take one along, even a 5.56."

"I have six A1 lowers. I also bought six Bushmaster short stroke piston uppers. How long would it take you to have a working short stroke piston A1?"

"Minute, minute and a half, tops. How come you didn't say anything?"

"Well, it slipped my mind. I bought the Bushmaster uppers and they were backordered. Then, when they came in, we'd just gotten married and I never got around to it."

"You've had them that long?"

"We had all the 7.62 rifles we needed. I never particularly like the direct gas impingement system anyway so I can't say that the M16 or M4 was my favorite weapon. When I carried a backup weapon in the sandbox, I carried a Para Ordinance P14."

"How in the name of God did you get away with that?"

“Most of the SpecOps guys preferred .45acp so it wasn’t unusual to see a M1911 pattern handgun. Snipers are sort of special even if they’re not SpecOps and we were mostly left alone. The sniper had the sniper rifle and the spotter usually carried an M4 or an M14. The M14 is a spectacular rifle, for a desert environment and the M4 with a gas piston would have been the idea rifle for the ‘Nam. But the war was over before Ruger came up with the Mini-14 operating system. Even if Ruger had it available in ‘67 instead of beginning to develop it in ‘67, the Army was already smarting from the forced conversion from the M14 to the M16. And, McNamara wouldn’t have changed a second time, regardless.”

“Let’s get them assembled and get ourselves and our wives checked out on them. If someone attacks while we’re off traipsing around, at least they’ll have a chance. We can show them how to use the hand grenades, the M72 and one of the 40mm grenade launchers.”

“We need to find a fifth wheel dolly or two to pull behind the two trailers we’re taking. We might find a tanker of fuel or two. If KC is as hot as I suspect, the sooner we’re there and gone, the better.”

“You ever drive a semi?”

“Nope. You?”

“Nope. Have to find something with automatic transmissions and maybe an instruction manual.”

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“You’re going to what???”

“First we’re going to teach Stella and you how to operate an M16A1, an M72 and an M67 plus the H&K 40mm grenade launcher. Then we’re going to get a box trailer, a flatbed trailer, two fifth wheel dollies and two semis with automatic transmissions. When that is all accomplished, we’re going up to KC and Independence and find a couple 100kw generators, a truckload of ammo, a Quonset hut and hopefully a pair of loaded diesel tankers and run a road train back down here to Butler.”

“What’s an A1?”

“The A1 is semi-auto and full auto. Scott happened across some A1 lowers. He ordered some of those short piston uppers from Bushmaster. Anyway, we’re going to assemble them and leave you with those to defend the place while we’re gone.”

“How long will you be gone?”

“One day, maybe two.”

“Will you be anywhere near one of those Red Wing stores?”

“Don’t know, but I’ll take the list. What do you want?”

“Boots like we have for Scott and Stella. And hit a Wal-Mart and get a full assortment of kids sized shoes plus underwear, socks, jeans and shirts.”

“I’ll add it to the list although it will be on the bottom.”

“Don’t we have enough ammo?”

“We’ll look for toilet paper and coffee too.”

“Huh?”

“What are the things that can never have too much of?”

“Oh. Ok, you’re going steal it aren’t you?”

“Strategic Reallocation. We might even find solar panels, charge controllers, batteries and inverters. Our goal is the Quonset hut, ammo, generators, diesel fuel plus the things you mentioned.”

“You will be careful, right?”

“Absolutely. And we’ll train Stella and you on the various weapons you may need if you’re attacked.”

A day at the range practicing with the A1s and demonstrations of the LAW, frag, and 40mm grenade launcher and we were ready to go. We scouted out town until we found two semis, one with a box trailer/refer and a second with a lowboy. We got a few hours practicing driving the trucks both with and without the trailers. We left the following day and chanced upon an empty dual tank tanker with two 9,000 gallon tanks. We dropped the trailer and hooked the tanker to the truck and hooked the fifth wheel dolly behind the second tanker and reconnected the lowboy.

Honey – Chapter 8

We spotted the Quonset hut first and used an onsite crane to load it on the lowboy. We hooked an equipment trailer behind the lowboy and loaded a propane fueled forklift. Our next stop was Independence and we took all the ammo the truck could carry without trouble, ~40 tons. The problem wasn’t the lack of ammunition, it was in locating it. The

plant had a lot of buildings and storage locations. It took longer to find the ammo than load it. It was moderately hot around the plant, ~0.5R/hr.

The Cummins Distributor was also in a semi-hot zone and we added the generators to the lowboy and extra generator parts to the box trailer. Finally, we found a fuel distributor in the phone book and headed there to look for the PRI products and another tanker. The tanker was twin 8s instead of twin 9s, but it happened to be filled. There were more tankers there waiting to be filled for additional deliveries.

After stabilizing the #2 with PRI-D, we put the remainder of the PRI products in the sleepers of the tractors and filled the pair of 9s we hooked up earlier. Absent a generator, we had to gravity fill the two tankers. There was a Red Wings store and a Wal-Mart on the south side and we were able to get most of what Honey and Stella wanted plus boots for Scott and Stella. We lay over for the night. On the return trip, we kept a constant quarter mile between the two road trains we had cobbled together. We had 34,000 gallons of fuel, the ammo, most of the shopping list, the Quonset hut and the big generators.

The hot areas we entered have a radiation level varying between 0.5R and 0.8R. We would get a shower and some sleep and begin the unloading/installation process. We hadn't gotten the solar equipment because the location was very hot, 5R/hr.

"We left behind four twin 9s. Why don't we take your 3 phase generator up there and load the four tanker twins and bring them down? In two days, we could up our fuel supply by 72 thousand and drive a local delivery truck down to top off our tanks."

"With the tanks topped off, we'd have 146 thousand. It might be a great trade item. If it's not, we'd have a 2½ year supply at 100% power."

"Good, it will take that long to sort and inventory the ammunition."

"Don't forget we need to get the footing and slab in for the hut and a crane to raise everything into position."

"We could assemble it in place and lift it onto the concrete after it cures. I mean hell it's just the two sides and two ends. We'll need to cut out an opening in one end for a garage door so we can get the forklift in and out."

"I'm not sure the crane that I know about could lift the entire building fully assembled."

"Ok, we'll do it the hard way. How deep do you want it?"

"However deep it has to be to have five feet of earth cover that we can compact and level. That should leave enough soil to cover it fairly well. We'll cut in ramps for both ends about the width of the doors. Better put a berm in front of each end, just in case."

“We’re going to need to improve the berm to conceal the tanks. It wouldn’t hurt to find a really big tank, if we could and fill it as we locate supplies of propane.”

“How big are you thinking?”

“30?”

“A distributor sized tank? Don’t be ridiculous.”

“Why is it ridiculous? You want 146 thousand gallons of diesel. We’re going to be storing some of those tankers on someone else’s property aren’t we? With the big garden we put in, there isn’t much room for them here.”

“I hadn’t thought about that. We’ll just park them close together. We can string those fill hoses together and move from tanker to tanker. Every time we empty a pair, we’ll drive up and refill them. The problem that I see is the shelf life of PRI-D. I hope someone gets a refinery going before we run out of stabilized fuel.”

“What’s the maximum burn rate on the generators?”

“Six point eight gallons per hour.”

“At one hundred percent load?”

“Yep.”

“Odds are we’ll be running about a twenty-five percent load. What the burn rate at that load?”

“Two point four gallons per hour.”

“So, assuming we keep the usage down and eventually find some solar, we’ll get about 2,535 days of power out of the diesel?”

“Um, I hadn’t thought about that. That’s close to seven years.”

“If we hunted around some more, we could find more tankers and create a whole new economy in stabilized diesel.”

“Well, there are 8,766 hours in an average year, factoring in leap year. At 2.4gph, that’s roughly 21 thousand gallons a year. I see what you mean. And, if we find enough solar panels, batteries, charge controller and inverters, we might well have a lifetime supply of diesel.”

“Don’t count your chickens until they hatch.”

“We need some chickens, now that you mention it. Probably beef and pork, too.”

“What, no rabbit feeding worms which feed tilapia?”

“I don’t like rabbit. Maybe we can feed the worms something else.”

“I think they eat organic matter. You know leaves and such.”

“Where do we get those what did you call them, tilapia?”

“They’re a tropical fish. Can’t stand the cold. I understand that Arkansas stocks many public ponds and lakes to help with vegetation control, favoring tilapia as a robust forage species and for anglers. Phoenix and Mesa Arizona have them in their fresh water canals to eat the vegetation and detritus.”

“Arkansas? Southern Arkansas perhaps? Wait, I read a newspaper article. Someone grows them in Missouri. Uh...Uh...West Plains, S&S Aqua Farms. Let me get a map.

“Here we go, east of Springfield on 63, close to Willow Springs. Why does Willow Springs ring a bell?”

“One of the stories?”

“Yeah. Jerry. Computer guy. Family into preps since the Cuban Missile Crisis or before. *Bugging Home*, that’s it.”

“How far?”

“Maybe 3 hours. We can try to buy some live fish.”

“How much are we talking about here?”

“I’ll take a roll of silver dimes and one of silver quarters. Won’t need a lot of fish. The article said they grow fast. They like to eat vegetation. Won’t have to mess with worms. Maybe dig a pond and plant it with some kind of vegetation and add the fish.”

We went. There was someone there. The fish were one silver quarter each. He gave us a hand out that he’d printed off a website explaining *all about* tilapia farming. The fish we bought were breeding size. He suggested using solar heat, ergo, black hose in the sun to heat the pond and keep it at around 85°. What’s duckweed?

We finally figured it out; we think we’ll put in a pond for the big fish and two aquariums. The envelope of seeds the guy included was duckweed, the species we needed and it

went into the pond. Except for the one day trip and shopping trips for aquariums, we were in the fish business. Once we figured out the fishing operation, we went looking for other protein, four legged and 2 legged with wings. Found a lot of dead livestock but we found a little that was not only alive, but well nourished. Probably wouldn't drink the milk but we found cows with calves and a mean old bull. Kind of herded the cattle into a corral with the pickups and backed up a livestock truck to the cattle loading ramp and persuaded them in our imitation of Indiana Jones, to get up the ramp and into the truck, with whips. Loaded the ramp into the pickup and headed home.

We unloaded the ramp and then the cattle followed by 3 bales of hay. We got back aboard the truck and went back and spent the remainder of the day loading the truck with hay. A closer look showed shelled corn and soybeans and we got the farmer's old truck running and filled the box with half beans and half corn, sort of all mixed together. We set some sort a feeding table on top of the grain and back home we went. They still were munching hay so we washed up and ate.

"You got fish and you got cattle, what next?"

"We want pigs and chickens. Need some kind of shed for the chickens."

"Get one of those prefab sheds at the lumber yard."

"And, then what?"

"Build some shelves, sort of like a set of stair steps and put a little straw down for the hens to nest. If you get lucky, you might find some broody hens and a couple of roosters and we'll be set."

"You know about chickens, Stella?"

"A little. I used to go out to my aunt and uncle's farm when I was little, say ten to twelve."

"You'll be in charge of the chickens."

"Who is in charge of the cattle?"

"I'll do that, Scott."

"So, I get the pigs?"

"Don't you just love pork chops?"

"Not that much, pigs stink."

“Well. Old son, that’s the smell of money.”

“The pigs go on the east side, do you hear me!”

“Yes Honey, when we get some. How about we do the lumber yard tomorrow and get the sheds and fencing for the chicken lot? We can either find or build a cage and go find some chickens the next day?”

“You’re going to need fencing for the hogs too. Same T posts but a different kind of wire. I think it’s called woven wire. Chicken wire is much finer. I’ve seen chicken pens with nothing but T Posts except for the corner posts. Most of the pig fencing I’ve seen had 2 T Posts between a wooden post and double wooden posts at the corners with a brace between each pair of posts because the woven wire and barbed wire was stretched tight.”

“Honey is in charge of designing our fences. So we need T Posts and wooden posts?”

“You’ll need a T Post driver and a posthole auger or a mounted posthole digger. A corner will require five posts. You then put in two T Posts followed by another wooden post and so on until you reach a corner. You put the woven wire on the bottom to contain the pigs or sheep and two stands of barbed wire above that to contain cattle. If we get horses later, the fence should be all wooden.”

“How do we attach...”

“Staples in the posts and wire clips on the T Posts. In the corners, you put one diagonal loop of wire between the corner post and each wood post, stapled in place. Above that, you use a wood post. Now, tension the two loops as tight as you can get them.”

“Anyone want to know how to drive a forklift?”

“The whole place is fenced and except at the entrance gate, the blackberries have made it just short of impossible to get through the fence. We can fence in a pig pen in the right rear corner (northeast), the cattle from there to the front fence (east and southeast). The chickens can go in the right rear corner (northwest) and we’ll line up the tankers between the chicken and cattle. We should get every drop of diesel we can lay our hands on so we have it. It would be nice to double check on supplies for the generators to keep them in operating condition for as long as we need them. If someone can figure out how to empty a distributor’s propane tank, we’ll do that and move the tank here.”

“Ok, good plans David. The only problem will be if Stella or Honey objects.”

“It wouldn’t matter Scott. Once David gets his mind made up, he doesn’t let the facts confuse him.”

“Let’s establish some priorities. I suggest diesel first, the propane second, fencing third and the livestock last. I’m assuming that we’re committed to the lumber yard already.”

“How long can you leave those fish in the kids’ swimming pool?”

“Right, same list with stock tanks numero uno along with aquariums and some way to oxygenate the water.”

“Not to rain on your parade, but the cattle and hogs will need shelter too.”

“No sweat, we’re going to the lumberyard any way. We’ll just get more. Since both homes have southern facing roofs, we can face the livestock buildings with a south facing roof and create more room for solar panels. As far as solar heating the water for the fish, what we need is a greenhouse large enough for several fish tanks and winter gardens.”

“Mighty big plans.”

“I have *High Hopes*.” (Frank Sinatra – *A Hole in the Head*)

“Lumberyard tomorrow. Erect the enclosures. Back to KC the day after?”

“I’m wondering if we could get all eight in one trip. It would take a road train, but I think it’s doable.”

“Doable or doubtful?”

“Doable.”

“We shall see what we shall see.”

“At the worst, it will take two days. After the fuel is here for the generators, we’ll erect fencing and go find the livestock. After that, I say we get the solar and a large hobby greenhouse for the fish. We’ll need stock tanks too. We have the cattle feeder. Stella, can we just toss out loose feed for the chickens?”

“I think that will work. We’ll need waterers.”

“We’ll need a 2’ high tank for the cattle, a 1’ high for the hogs and some kind of chicken waterers. Float switches on the cattle and hog tanks.”

The lumberyard was *easy*. They had a tilt bed delivery truck that started. The two completed sheds they had on hand had 4x4 skids on the bottom and we extended the winch, pulling the cable under the larger building where we looped it around a 4x4 and

winched it onto the bed. We backed off the winch and backed the truck up to the second shed where we repeated the process. Leaving the winch cable tight, we raised the bed and were set to go. We couldn't find fencing or posts and detoured to a farm supply.

There, we loaded T Posts, Creosoted Cedar posts, a driver and a hand auger plus barbed wire, pig wire, chicken mesh, #9 wire, the wire clips and staples. We grabbed a tamper to tamp the soil around the cedar posts. We were about to head back when Scott said we'd forgotten the lumber to build the chicken roosts. Before returning to the lumberyard, we looked around for things we'd forgotten at the farm supply and found the water tanks, float switches, chicken waterers and chicken feeders. We took two hog waterers, planning on using the second as a feeder. Once we had the additional items at the farm supply, we returned to the lumberyard and added dimensional lumber and nails for the chicken roosts.

Once home, we unloaded the two buildings and had a bite of lunch. We put up the chicken wire first and realized we needed some kind of gate. That went on the *to-do* list and we slapped together the chicken roosts. We were getting tired so we stopped there and unloaded the remaining materials and returned the truck to the lumberyard. We returned to the farm supply and got three gates, one for the chicken yard, one for the hog pen and a third for the cattle lot. Once home, we augered two post holes and installed the posts and mounted the gate for the chicken yard. We stacked the bags of chicken feed on a pallet and covered it with a tarp in case it rained. At this point, we sat down to enjoy a cold Bud Light and consider our plans.

"That fuel probably isn't going anywhere if we wait a day or two. What say we finish this project up tomorrow and get the fences and gates up?"

"What do you propose David?"

"One long fence, back to front with adjacent gates. Run a fence from the common gate post back to the east end perimeter fence. It won't matter which way the gates open and that's one less post hole to dig."

"It would be a lot easier if we had a tractor with a posthole digger."

"Probably. We might spend two days trying to find one. It's up to you."

"Nah, we seem to have a knack for doing things the hard way, why change now?"

It really wasn't that bad. First, knowing what the next day would bring, we limited ourselves to one beer apiece. Second, it didn't take that many cedar posts. We put in all of the cedar posts, strung a tight line and drove in the T Posts at the 10' intervals we decided to use. With the cedar posts tamped firmly, we hung the gates. Next, we strung the pig wire and stretched it tight with the pickup. It may not be how it's supposed to be

done, but we were improvising. We next stapled it to the posts and used the wire clips to hook it to the T Posts.

When it came time to string the barbed wire, those leather gloves Scotty grabbed came in handy. We strung the first strand pulling it tight with the pickup and attached it in place. We next did the fence to separate the two yards, completing the hog pen. We started at the front and strung the wire back to the gate to complete the cattle lot. We hadn't stopped for lunch and Honey had thawed some frozen lemonade and passed it around while Stella fixed sandwiches. It had been the longest day yet, sunrise to sunset with a 15 minute lunch. On the other hand we were ready for the livestock. The cattle were herded to their dry lot and we were ready for the chickens and pigs.

The road trains worked good on paper. The one time we'd done it, we may have gotten lucky. The next day, we armed ourselves and drove the semis back to KC. Stella followed in the pickup towing the three phase generator. We hooked up to the tankers, a pair at a time and filled them. When all 8 9,000-gallon tanks were full, we set about hooking up the fifth wheel dollies. We assembled the road train quickly. That is if you consider four hours quick. It was a bitch getting them home and well after dark when we finally pulled in. Honey was frantic because neither of the semis had radios and Stella hadn't thought to turn on the radios in the pickup.

"Why didn't you radio? I've been worried sick!"

"No radio in the semi Honey."

"Yeah, me too."

"Stella!"

"What?"

"Why didn't you radio to say you were on the way back?"

"I didn't want to get on the radio in case some bad guy heard me and figured out where we were."

"Fair enough. Why didn't one of you guys call then?"

"We were having a hard time assembling the road train and getting it moving. I simply didn't think of it until we were coming south on 71 right around Archie. Plus none of us thought to bring the portables."

"Well, did you get it?"

"Yes dear, all 72,000-gallons."

“Those fish are still in the kids’ swimming pool.”

“That’s an easy solution, stock tanks from the farmers supply. But we still need a greenhouse plus the chickens and hogs.”

“Let’s get the stock tanks tomorrow and move the fish, David. We also have to move those tankers and get them lined up to minimize the space they’re taking. We still have the generators to hook up too. Oh, that reminds me, I’ve got to hook that generator back up to the house; I’ll be back.”

“Sounded like Arnold for a moment, didn’t he?”

“What’s the fuel situation, David?”

“Our tanks are nearly full and we brought in 34,000 the first time and 72,000 today. We have over 140,000 gallons. When we add the solar, we’ll cut our usage to nil.”

“You guys are starting to get disorganized. You need to finish one thing before you start another. You have the fish and know where to get tanks, so do that tomorrow. If time permits, look for a greenhouse with a heater to keep the fish alive through the winter. It may come early this year, you know.”

“What would you suggest after that?”

“The pigs and chickens. You have the holding areas built and the feed on hand. You can run a garden hose to fill the tanks until you can put in permanent plumbing. Get some more lumber and build tables for the greenhouse and we’ll do an indoor garden this winter. My dad can teach you what you need to know to butcher. They were by today, everyone is fine. Mom brought me all her spare jars. Dad said he saw you at the Farm Supply.”

“Didn’t see him. Guess Scott and I need to work on our situational awareness.”

“You get yourself killed because you’re not paying attention and I’ll bury you face down.”

“Huh?”

We got all of the very large stock tanks. The fish were separated with the breeders going into one tank and the fry into a second. They went crazy when we fed them weeds. The tanks were located in the southwest corner of our plot of land. We went looking for a greenhouse and found a nursery that sold them in Independence. This time we had to pay, but we got the largest he had in stock. We had the lowboy and he had a forklift. Six ounces of gold later, we were loaded and headed home. It was after six when we arrived.

“How big is it?”

“About 17’5” wide by 32’ long and is full glass to ground construction. Built by Texas Greenhouse.”

“How long to get it up?”

“If your dad and my dad help maybe a week.”

“We’ll go tomorrow and ask. Stella, tell Scott he has the day off tomorrow except for feeding the cattle.”

“Ok. Will they be moving out here?”

“Why would they?”

“There’s security in numbers.”

“David, would we have room for two more homes?”

“If we forego the pond, yes.”

“Will that be a problem?”

“Since we’ll have the tilapia in the greenhouse, it shouldn’t. We can grow that duckweed in the greenhouse, maybe in a pool or something. I guess we should have gotten better directions.”

“So, we erect the greenhouse, move the fish and those tables you’re going to construct in there and we get the livestock?”

“We’ll do it that way. The propane situation isn’t that urgent. And, we need to haul that firewood we saw, if it’s still there.”

“Might be gone, David. We saw it from the highway and if we saw it, who knows who else saw it?”

Honey – Chapter 9

“Greenhouse, livestock, firewood and then the propane?”

“Unless we have to move in homes for your families. We have to get that done before winter sets in.”

"If they decide to move."

"Right."

We had enough rifles, shotguns and pistols to go around. Didn't have many of the more historic pieces like single action revolvers and carbines, for a fact, not yet anyway. The advantage to something like the .45 Colt round was you only needed lead, a mold, primers and black powder. The original load was 40 grains of black powder. It was the .44 Magnum of its day. The .45-70 rifle would work fine with 70 grains of black powder. Black powder is 75% carbon, 15% potassium nitrate and 10% sulfur, unless you could find a store that sold Pyrodex.

The bullets aren't exactly the same with the Colt being .454" in diameter and the .45-70 bullet being .458" in diameter. The revolver was originally loaded in 250gr and the rifle in 405gr; modern loadings vary since they use smokeless powder and companies like Buffalo Bore load *magnum* loads.

"I don't know David; I'm not as young as I used to be."

"If you can't do it Alan, I understand. The suggestion was also made to offer you a place at our little corner of the world. Bring in a double wide or triple wide and set it up. You'd have running water, sewer and electricity."

"Say yes Daddy."

"I never could say no to you Honey, that's not really fair. Janice, what do you think?"

"Do it. We can move our furniture and get back to a semi normal life."

"When?"

"Tomorrow?"

"What time?"

"Come for breakfast? Seven."

"Ok."

"Dad we need your help. We got a greenhouse to assemble. Alan has agreed to help us assemble it. We're going to use it to grow Tilapia and fruits and vegetables. We offered them the opportunity to live out at the acreage. We have water, sewer and electricity. Even have a bunch of radios."

"I don't know. Ruth, what say you?"

"Where would we live?"

"We'll bring in a double wide or triple wide mobile home Mom."

"Got a spare rifle?"

"A lot of them."

"Ammo?"

"That too."

"Now if you had an M14, an M1911 and a pump shotgun and enough ammo, I'd consider it. Throw in a few LAW rockets and you'd have a deal."

"M61s or M67s"

"M61s."

"See you at seven tomorrow morning for breakfast. Mom, Janice and you can spoil the kids and Stella and Honey can lend a hand."

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The US adopted the M67 in 1971. It replaced the M61 before Vietnam ended but there is no record of actual use in Vietnam. That was some more of my pre-war research when the subject of the M61s came up.

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With six pairs of hands and limiting the base to concrete footings, we had the footings poured with Quikrete in short order. After we poured the footings, we looked for and found two triple wide mobile homes. By the time we had the sections assembled and leveled, the concrete was nearly ready for the greenhouse. Instead, we ran water, sewer and electricity to the two homes. We decided to do the decks after the greenhouse was erected, the Tilapia tanks were installed and the tables set up in the new greenhouse.

The duckweed was planted all around the Tilapia tanks and watered heavily. As it leaned over into the tanks the fish had a Thanksgiving feast. Our mothers took over the greenhouse planting various plants in little peat moss (Jiffy) pots. We built the decks in two days and then Scott and I went one direction and Alan and Dad the other looking for hogs and chickens. We both did very well gathering enough hogs and chickens to

butcher and breed. The so called 225 pound market weight hogs went about 350 pounds, yielding extra meat and lots of lard. We also butchered 200 chickens, keeping some roosters and brood hens.

We were finally ready to lay in a huge supply of propane. Our first step was to find four 5,500-gallon tanks. We next found a propane dealer's location with a 30,000 gallon tank. We filled the two ten wheel delivery trucks with propane, first topping off our buried tanks and reserve tanks. My Dad and Alan plumbed the new tanks into the manifolds Scott and I had for our existing homes. We found one more delivery truck and managed to empty the last of the propane from the big tank.

The next step was to locate a crane big enough to lift the huge propane tank and set it on a 53' flatbed trailer. We loaded the tank cradles on another trailer and hauled everything to the acreage. We set the cradles first and lowered the tank into place. As the tank was lowered, the cradles were pulled to one side or the other to perfectly align them with the tank. We now had 2 1,100-gallon tanks, 2 1,600-gallon and 4 5,500-gallon tanks filled and three delivery trucks containing about 9,000-gallons just sitting there.

The 1,100-gallon tanks held 1,000-gallons each, the 1,600 held around 1,450-gallons and the 5,500-gallon tanks held 5,000-gallons each bringing the total to 24,900-gallons in tanks and 9,000-gallons in the delivery trucks. We planned to put a total of 27,000-gallons in the huge tank and fill the delivery trucks one more time if we located enough propane. It wouldn't be long before we had fish, chicken, pork and beef to sell in addition to blackberry and strawberry preserves and honey, fruit and vegetables.

The delivery trucks were emptied into the big tank and we went looking for more. Every time we saw a tank, we pumped it dry using a single delivery truck and the mobile 3 phase generator. By the end of August, we had all of the propane we could use in the foreseeable future.

We then turned to the firewood that we'd seen months before, half expecting it to be gone. Scott said it looked to him like maybe a third of what he'd seen earlier had been salvaged and we loaded the wood onto pallets and used a metal strapping machine to hold the firewood in place. We took a truckload back at a time. Our definition of a truckload was two pallets wide, two layers high and 13 rows deep. Each pallet held $\frac{1}{2}$ cord so a truckload was 26 cords. We'd unload it with the forklift and go back the next two days and strap up another 26 cords. We'd spend each night soaking in a tub of the hottest water we could stand and then had our wives apply a liberal coat of Icy Hot.

The well had a maximum flow of 35gpm, a high rate of flow. With four homes and a shelter plus the livestock all running off the single well, we found it necessary to add a water tank with a separate pump in case everyone and everything needed water at the same time. It also let us have a ready reserve for firefighting should the need ever arise. We installed a galvanized 10,000-gallon water tank with its own backup gasoline fueled Honda powered pump.

“Have we completed everything on the list?”

“I can’t find the list, but I think so, except for gasoline. What now?”

“We need jelly jars, pints and quarts and all the lids you can find.”

“What about rings?”

“New jars come with a lid and ring. Stores sell both lids and lid and ring sets. We can recycle the rings if necessary. If Scott and you could find a gross of each size jar, we’d be ok for this season. We’ll need more lids and about 5 gross of quarts, 5 gross of pints and 2 gross of jelly jars for next year.”

“Where do you want us to look?”

Industrial warehouses. You might start with Wal-Mart and work your way down.”

“There must be a lot of Wal-Mart warehouses.”

“Try Bentonville, Arkansas first. You may come up with a list of their warehouse locations, not to mention some jars and lids.”

“Do you have any idea how many Distribution Centers Wal-Mart has?”

“I think more than forty. Bentonville is the Corporate Headquarters. If anyone knows, it would be them. I read that somewhere.”

“What about the butchering?”

“We’ll do the chickens now. The beef and pork will have to wait until cold weather. We really need those jars.”

“Alright, we’ll take the big box trailer and head for Arkansas, Monday.”

“You do that son and Alan and I will take the flatbed and find more hay. Grain too if we can find it. Where did you leave that farm truck you used to haul in the first load of corn and beans?”

“Next to the gate for the cattle lot and pig pen. We didn’t have anywhere to unload it. So, you either have to spread out some plastic and unload it or find a second truck.”

“You mean unload it one shovel full at a time?”

“Exactly.”

“We’ll look for another truck.”

“Don’t forget to take weapons and ammo.”

“We got the rifles sighted in, the .45 has fixed sights and the ghost rings were right on.”

“Right. Ok, with any luck we’ll be back before dark and will have the jars, lids and rings and anything else we can use. Honey, why don’t you four ladies get together and come up with a short list of must have items? Toilet paper, feminine hygiene, spices, mixes, sauces and things of that sort. We’ll get all we have room for after we load all of the jars, rings and lids. I’ll check and see if they have any hybrid vegetable seeds. We might as well use them up before we use any more heirloom seeds. We’ll take the forklift on the equipment trailer behind the box trailer.”

“Here’s your list.”

“Macaroni and cheese?”

“Kraft macaroni and cheese. Nestles hot chocolate. Just get what you have room for and put a tic next to things they have that you didn’t have room for.”

When we located the Bentonville warehouse, there was an empty 40’ trailer backed up to the loading dock. We dropped the equipment trailer and backed our trailer up to another bay. After jimmying the lock, we manually raised the doors for the two bays and began checking for the items on our list. As planned we got the Mason jars, lids and rings first.

Then, we went down the list using a Wal-Mart forklift to load the trailers. Firearms and ammunition went into the sleeper compartments. We had space left in the 53’ trailer for more items and got some clothing in children’s and adult sizes. We found a list of Distribution Centers in the office for the warehouse. Next, we filled the 40’ trailer completely full. The weigh stations were all closed, after all. We pulled away from the dock and backed up the trailer and connected the fifth wheel on the 40’ trailer.

“Oh, oh.”

“Oh, oh what?”

“We need another trailer dolly.”

“What for?”

“To hook the equipment trailer to the second trailer.”

“It has a built in fifth wheel coupling on the back. Do you want to back up to the equipment trailer or do you want me to?”

“For all the times we’ve assembled road trains, I’ve never had to backup.”

“Ok, I’ll do it and you give me hand signals. Move your left hand to indicate that I need to move the rear of the trailer left, your right hand to indicate I need to move the rear right and hands together to indicate to back up straight.”

“Who’s on first?”

“What’s on second?”

“I don’t know is on third?”

“Right. Ready?”

“Yeah but I hope you aren’t in a hurry.”

I got it on the second attempt. We had another road train and some nasty roads between Bentonville and home. It took five hours to get home. We didn’t really have anywhere to store the second trailer and just parked the tractor and trailers and got cleaned up for a late supper. Honey told me that they’d gotten a flatbed load of hay and a second truckload of mixed grain which contained oats, corn and soybeans. We briefly ran down the list of what was brought back and Honey noted what went where. The canned goods would go in the basement or shelter and the shelf-stable foods and paper products would be sorted and stored in the trailers.

“We had visitors today.”

“Good or bad?”

“We’ll, they talked a good story but asked too many questions. They wanted a tour which we declined to do. They were armed with handguns only and we had shotguns and handguns. They said they’d be back to talk to the men folk. We talked after they left and all agreed there was something strange in their demeanor and they gave all four of us the creeps.”

“Did you tell Dad and Alan?”

“My mother had a word with dad and Ruth had a word with Don.”

“We’ll be around pretty much full time from now on. It might be a good idea for all of the adults to be fully armed with a handgun and long arm.”

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“Time to up the security.”

“I heard. Suggestions?”

“You do hold the high ground with that castle you built. The gate I put together should keep all but the most determined out. I should have lined it with chain linked fencing since you can squeeze between the bars.”

“There’s fencing we can use, right?”

“Pig wire. Good enough for now.”

“Let’s get it done. We have to figure out what to do with the trailers we brought back last night but that can wait.”

“Give me a hand with what’s left of the fencing. Think we can get away with using that #9 wire to attach it to the gate?”

“Won’t be easy, that stuff is really stiff. But yeah, we’ll get that done and start sorting through the trailers.”

“We’re going to add pig wire to the gate and then work on the trailer loads of goods we brought from Wal-Mart.”

“Jars first?”

“They’re in the 53’ trailer at the front on pallets. We’ll have to hand them back one case at a time. We’ll need a hand with that so we can pass them hand to hand. We’ll put an empty pallet on the ground and stack the boxes on it. We’ll move it anywhere you want when the pallet is full. I think we should have loaded the jars last instead of first.”

“Where are we going to store everything?”

“I thought we covered that last night. Canned goods in the basement or shelter, dry goods remain in the trailers.”

“Do you have room for the two trailers?”

“We’ll make room, somewhere. You have the list of Distribution Centers so try to find one closer to home.”

“I’ll look. You didn’t exactly say how many jars, lids and rings you got.”

“Several pallet loads. Enough for this year and probably next. There’s a bunch of coffee and tea and the Nestlé’s hot chocolate. More feminine hygiene supplies and toilet paper. Got cigarettes too.”

“But you don’t smoke.”

“I might take it back up. Smoked like a chimney over in the sandbox.”

“I didn’t know that.”

“Broke the habit in the hospital. Cigarettes got so expensive it would have cut into our preps funds so I didn’t pick it back up.”

“No smoking in the house!”

“I’ll smoke in the shelter.”

“Like hell you will.”

“I didn’t know you cussed.”

“I don’t. Doesn’t mean I don’t know most of the words. Ladies don’t cuss.”

“The roof of the shelter?”

“Open air, feel free. Better yet, go smoke by the hog pen.”

“Now, once we get the trailers spotted, what’s on the agenda?”

“Keeping what we have would probably be a good idea. How about coming up with a guard schedule and an alarm system?”

“Easy, old fashioned door bells and a 12 volt battery activated with a switch.”

We ended up with 102dB Piezo Sirens from Radio Shack. A knife switch on the shelter roof closed the circuit and a knife switch in the kitchen of each home had to be opened to turn off the siren. The battery was kept on a trickle charger and once activated the sirens would run for days unless deactivated. The ladies worked out a guard schedule that included Stella and Honey but excluded Janice and Ruth who would be responsible for getting the children into the shelter and protecting them. The guard had to check the alarm system each evening at 6pm to ensure the system was ready to use during the nighttime before starting his/her four hour shift.

The nighttime guards used the AN/PVS-27 night sight to survey the area because it was the logical choice, given its range and our large supply of AA rechargeable batteries.

Even under the worst conditions, it had an effective range to cover the entire 2½ acres. Typical operating range is 1857 yards in moonlight / 1232 yards in starlight / 650 yards in cloud cover. We changed batteries at every shift change. We left the scope mounted on my Tac-50. I thought I'd seen the last of guard duty when the Army gave me the medical discharge. Not only was I on the guard schedule, Scott and I had the 10 to 2 and 2 to 6 schedule. Scott took up smoking too.

"You need a larger place."

"Either that or less goods. I had no idea we could pack this much stuff on 2½ acres."

"Might not be a problem David. Not when the real owners come here to claim it. Janice and I don't really approve of this scavenging you've been doing."

"It's not like we weren't prepared ahead of time Alan. With what we had on hand, we could have gotten by for a minimum of three years. However, the fuels were in tanks at Distributors and weren't being used. We had to break into the Wal-Mart Distribution Center to get things there. We took possession of essentially abandoned property. We were lucky some of the canned goods at the Wal-Mart warehouse hadn't frozen and burst. Did we take the livestock from anyone? No, we did not. When Dad and you gathered the hay and grain was the farmer there with his hand out wanting to collect?"

"No, there was no farmer there."

"Now if we really need something and it's in someone's possession, we're prepared to trade or pay for it. Scott has a large amount of gold and silver. We have some too, but not like him. With our salvage efforts, we're better prepared to lend a hand to others should they show up and ask. However, we're also inclined to not help if they try to take anything by force. We can and will protect this acreage against all intruders. There are six children here, ages five and younger. They're our future and will eventually contribute to rebuilding this country. I hope they choose to follow Jefferson's example.

"Jefferson believed that each individual has *certain inalienable rights*. That is, these rights exist with or without government; man cannot create, take, or give them away. It is the right of *liberty* on which Jefferson is most notable for expounding. He defines it by saying, *Rightful liberty is unobstructed action according to our will within limits drawn around us by the equal rights of others. I do not add within the limits of the law, because law is often but the tyrant's will, and always so when it violates the rights of the individual*. Hence, for Jefferson, though government cannot create a right to liberty, it can indeed violate it. The limit of an individual's rightful liberty is not what law says it is but is simply a matter of stopping short of prohibiting other individuals from having the same liberty. A proper government, for Jefferson, is one that not only prohibits individuals in society from infringing on the liberty of other individuals, but also restrains itself from diminishing individual liberty.

*“We will fight and die to maintain our individual liberty. If we relinquish that liberty, we will be submitting to some form of tyranny. He said, *The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time; the hand of force may destroy, but cannot disjoin them.* He also said, *The strongest reason for the people to retain their right to keep and bear arms is as a last resort to protect themselves against tyranny in government.* Remember the Declaration of Independence?”*

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inherent and inalienable Rights; that among these, are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness; that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

For the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

“Or this, I hold it, that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical. Or this, God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. The people cannot be all, and always, well informed. The part which is wrong will be discontented, in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive. If they remain quiet under such misconceptions, it is lethargy, the forerunner of death to the public liberty. ... What country before ever existed a century and half without a rebellion? And what country can preserve its liberties if their rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.

Honey – Chapter 10

“Did you memorize that stuff?”

“I made a hobby of studying Thomas Jefferson while I was in Iraq. It was better than sitting around worrying about the next convoy we were going out with. When we got hit by that IED, I woke up on a plane bound for Germany. From there, I went to the stateside hospital and eventually was medically discharged. Some of my things caught up with me in the hospital stateside so I had some reading materials on Jefferson. He was an interesting man, and, a totally imperfect human being.”

“I understand Scott was a trained sniper.”

“Three tours and never managed to get shot. He still has three military issue rifles, two of which he had in Iraq, the Barrett and the Remington.”

“I can’t imagine how the two of you acquired some of the things you have.”

“Scott was working in logistics prior to his discharge. That’s how he got some of the ammo, the M25, the LAWs and assorted grenades. We made a trip to Ohio to pick up an order of British surplus and stopped at a guy he knew on the way back. That got us the 40mm grenades and two launchers. Some of what we have is pure post war scavenging. If you’re willing get close to the hot zones, you can do rather well.”

“Your father seems to be pleased with the M14.”

“It’s not actually an M14. It’s a Springfield Armory Loaded model M1A. Not much difference and the one I have is loaded with Match features. That’s why it’s called the Loaded model M1A. Are you ok with the Ruger Mini-14?”

“Not a bad carbine.”

“When we find another M1A, you can switch to a Main Battle Rifle. The action is, for all practical purposes, identical. Or, close enough that you won’t have much trouble switching over. Ruger had made a few changes to the Mini-14 that has improved accuracy but it’s no MBR. We’ll find some more eventually and get you outfitted. The Super Match I have is the same rifle as Scott’s M21 with a standard black synthetic stock. Very accurate to 800 meters and I can make most 1,000 meter shots.”

“What’s the recoil like on your fifty?”

“Not half bad; you should know, you saw me shoot it. It is guaranteed by McMillan to shoot ½ MOA or better. Scott’s Barrett is *capable* of ½ MOA but not guaranteed. We can shoot the Hornady A-MAX 750gr, the M1022 and the Mk211MP. We have access to a 1,500 meter shooting location and it has little wind. We’re probably shooting to the limits of the rifles.”

“Your Dad filled me in on using the LAWs and said you or Scott could fill me in on the AT-4s.”

“We don’t have enough of those to really bother with training anyone on them. They come five to the case and we only have 2 cases. The LAW comes fifteen to the case and we have two cases. The M61 and M67 both work the same way and have the same delay in the fuse. The late model M61 had the same safety clip as the M67 has. You have to exercise the same amount care using either grenade.”

“Will it come to that?”

“I hope not. We prepared for just such an eventuality. After the weapons fly, those that can will take shelter. If they’re properly equipped, they know when the radiation level is low enough to safely come out briefly and for extended periods. Initially they use what they have on hand. Next they probably check around their neighborhood and recover supplies from less fortunate neighbors. That won’t last long and they then try the grocery stores. If the stores have been heavily picked over, it happened right before the weapons hit or more likely when people came out too early.

“Those that came out too early because they didn’t have food either have radiation poisoning or are dead from the radiation. Not many of those people will survive. The food supplies are now spread out and who knows where they might be? So you make do with what’s left, you go door to door or you find another source, like we did. They will be some that start looking after we did because maybe they looted a store while the warheads were incoming. They have enough food and enough shelter that they can stay in the shelter until they run out of food.

“Preppers only stay sheltered for the required amount of time. Then, regardless of what they have on hand, they look for more. You can grow food but manufactured goods probably won’t become available for a long time. Analyze what we’ve taken and you will soon realize that it’s mostly manufactured goods. We collected various livestock and bought the fish. Petroleum products and mobile homes don’t grow on trees. You could have stayed in your home; absent water, sewer, power and gas. Instead, you agreed to move here where you have all of those things plus the security of being in a group.”

“I’m just waiting to see if this turns into the wild, wild west.”

“You mean six guns, lever action rifles and horses? It will probably come to that. Horses eat grass and grain, a renewable resource. Their manure makes great fertilizer. We have a lot of diesel but not an unlimited supply. We don’t have the equipment or chemicals to make biodiesel. Some day we might be on foot or on horseback. Despite the large quantities of ammo we have, some isn’t reloadable. We can reload until we run out of components. After that, it is cast lead bullets and black powder; so, don’t be too surprised to see .45 Colts and .45-70 rifles.”

“Why didn’t you give me one of those Bushmaster rifles you cobbled together with the full auto lowers and gas piston uppers?”

“Are you willing to take orders from the younger generation about when it’s appropriate to use full auto?”

“Is that all the time?”

“Hardly. Full auto is basically reserved for when you get ambushed or are ambushing someone. There is also an occasion to use it as suppressing fire to permit an escape or retreat. Have Dad explain it to you.”

“I never realized how focused you were on firearms.”

“It’s my hobby. You ask six guys which is the best main battle rifle and you’re likely to get six different answers. An MBR is generally considered to be .30 caliber or larger like the 8mm Mauser. The US had several good rifles beginning with the 1903 Springfield followed by the M1 Garand and the M14. In close spaces like the jungles in Vietnam, the M14 was awkward. They went to the Armalite rifle which had some pros and some cons. It wasn’t really until we got into a war in open spaces, like Iraq and Afghanistan, where the MBR was appreciated. Though the M14 has remained in service longer than any US infantry rifle with the exception of the Springfield M1903 rifle, it also holds the distinction of serving as the standard infantry rifle of the US Army for a shorter span of time than any other weapon.”

“You don’t like the M16?”

“In a word, no. With a 20” barrel and a short stroke gas piston, it’s a great little gun. The direct gas operating system introduces an element of unreliability. So does shortening the barrel. The shorter the barrel, the lower the velocity of the bullet. That’s why we used the A1 lowers and the new Bushmaster uppers to build six carbines. They have full auto capacity for when it’s needed, the longer barrel and a reliable operating system.”

“You sound like your father. He called it a Mattel Toy and a Poodle Shooter.”

“They replaced his M14 with an early M16 and told them it never needed cleaning.”

“How did you get that particular upper from Bushmaster?”

“We had a catalog and it showed several choices but nothing exactly like we wanted. We wanted chrome lined 20” barrels in gas piston uppers with one turn in seven and didn’t care if it was A2 or A3. Apparently they can assemble anything you want if they normally have the parts. The longest barrels they had in one in seven were 16½”. They add here subtract there and eventually come to a price. We gave them the name of a local dealer to accept delivery but they said an upper wasn’t a complete weapon and they’d ship directly. The best they could do on short notice was one turn in eight, the

Predator upper. So Scott got them and added the uppers to the A1 lowers he borrowed from the Army. He wanted one turn in seven so we could use the heavier ammo.”

“What else you got? Maybe a .50 caliber Browning machinegun?”

“Well, sorta. It’s a Browning but in .30-06 caliber; Browning Automatic Rifle M1918A1. We were short on ammo, but Scott found a few cases somewhere. Cost close to a buck a round for 150gr FMJ. It’s American Eagle brand.”

“You can’t get .30-06 surplus anymore?”

“The CMP, which replaced the DCM, sometimes has Greek surplus Garand enbloc clips of ammo. They also have it in 240 round cases with each case holding a dozen 20 round boxes. It was on order and paid for when the missiles flew.”

“What’s this fish you’re growing in the greenhouse?”

“Tilapia. It’s a tropical fish that does best if raised in 85° water. Eats plants. Mesa and Phoenix have them in their freshwater canals to reduce the plant growth. According to the handout, you starve them the week before you harvest them and it cleans any bad tastes out. The main problem with fish is that it doesn’t have any fat. I figure we’ll bread them and deep fry the fillets. With the overweight hogs, we aren’t going to be short of lard.”

“How did Don and I end up with the day shifts?”

“Scott and I were put on the night shifts and our wives wanted either early morning or late evening so they had time for harvesting and canning. That left the two of you for the day shift. It’s no problem; we’ll put up a table with an umbrella and a chair. Put some ice and either water or soft drinks in a cooler. We have some good binoculars, a spotting scope and you’ll have a rifle, shotgun and handgun. You’ll also have a portable radio and can explain the problem if you have to give the alarm. I figure you know most of the folks in and around Butler so you’ll know whether or not we should be concerned.”

“Anything specific to look for?”

“Aggressive behavior for one. A guy with a rifle slung isn’t nearly the threat as one with it at low ready. Groups of people who give you a fluttery feeling in your stomach. I’m sure Janice told you about those guys the other day.”

“I wish we’d have been here.”

“In the future, only two of us will be gone at any one time. And the trips will be few and far between. We’ll mostly be looking for livestock feed and more stock. We won’t need propane for the next ten years, if then. If we do get the solar panels, batteries, charge

controllers and inverters, we probably have enough diesel for years. Our full capacity including the tankers is 146 thousand gallons and at one quarter load, the generator burns 2.4 gallons per hour and at full load 6.8gph. I figure about 12kw per home which is 48kw or half power. The burn rate at that level is 3.8gph.

“One hundred forty six k divided by 3.8 is a shade over 38 k hours and the average year has $365\frac{1}{4}$ days at 24 hours per day. Thirty eight four twenty one divided by 8,766 is about 51 months.”

“How do you do that?”

“New math. You do a lot of rounding and adjusting and you get pretty darned close.”

“I remember that, but by the end of the sixties, it was out.”

“True. Sort of self-taught if you must know. I sort of just see numbers in my head and make the adjustments. Of course with the advent of pocket calculators nobody does it much anymore. You should talk to Scott about how he estimates ranges and bullet deflections due to cross winds. Those Barrett BORS will do the range but you’re on your own when it comes to windage. Ideal is no wind and second best is having the wind in your face or a straight tailwind. In the latter case you lower your point of impact slowly and in the former raise it slightly. When we get time, we’ll put out some range stakes to help out. All the perimeter locations are 100 meters or less.”

“How do you know that?”

“The lot is square and contains $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres. An acre contains 43,560ft². The area is 108,900ft² and since it’s square, each side is 330ft. And, 330ft is ~100 meters.”

“You did that in your head?”

“Well yeah. 43,000 times 2.5 equals 107,500 plus 500 times 2.5 equals 1,250 for a total of 108,750 plus 60 times 2.5 is 150 hence a total of 108,900. Since the area is square, I just needed the square root and my calculator has a square root function which is faster than doing it by hand. That’s the essence of new math to my way of thinking, divide the problem into parts, work the solutions and add the solutions up.”

“Can you do square roots in your head?”

“Gives me a headache.”

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“Daddy said he didn’t realize how smart you were. What did you do?”

“One of those math tricks, pointing out that all targets with the area of the acreage were within 100 meters or less. It just happens that the shelter is in the exact center of the acreage.”

“Each side is 100 meters long?”

“Yeah.”

“Then that means the diagonal distance is greater. A squared plus B squared equals C squared.”

“Right and the distance from corner to corner is about 141 meters and that’s about 71 meters from the shelter.”

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“Scott, Alan was asking about one of the A1s.”

“Did you explain that 95% of the time full auto isn’t required?”

“Yes and I explained the 5% when it’s appropriate.”

“Ammo isn’t a problem for now, what do you think?”

“With our static defense, it might be a good idea to take them to the gravel pit and check him and Dad plus all four women on those A1s. I know we bought Stella and Honey MSAR STG-556s and I really doubt they can be converted. But, those may be better for our mothers.”

“Do they make both a select fire and a semi-auto only?”

“Yes.”

“The AUG had a feature that allowed the full auto to be blocked. I don’t know, but it would be interesting if we could get a gunsmith to check out those AUGs. Maybe they’re just missing the component that would permit full auto. If I recall correctly, pulling the trigger halfway back was semi-auto and full back was full auto. Even if that’s not the case, he might be able to enable the full auto function, someday.”

“Even if he could, would he do it?”

“The guy I have in mind would, if we can find him.”

“Another questionable Army buddy?”

“You know this guy. Remember Randy Markham?”

“Randy? Sure, nice guy. He wasn’t hurt bad enough in the IED attack to get a medical discharge. What happened to him?”

“Last I knew he had just reenlisted for another hitch.”

“Stationed where?”

“Fort Bliss.”

“The missile test base? White Sands?”

“That’s the place alright. I wonder if we could contact him through MARS.”

“MARS, who?”

“Military Affiliated Radio System. I’d have to contact a MARS operator and see if he could pass a message. Are you up to a trip to El Paso?”

“El Paso? We’ve been gone a lot. As much as I’d like to go to El Paso or Laredo, Maybe I’d better pass.”

“What’s in El Paso and Laredo?”

“Two of the best gun leather companies in the country. Alan and I were just talking about cowboy guns. As I told him, their greatest advantage is you can reload them using black powder. Let me check something. I’ll come see you when I have the information.”

El Paso was listed as being 985 miles and Laredo was shown as 870 miles. “Too far,” I thought, “And they may well not have what I want made up. Plus it’s getting into the fall and winter will probably come early. I’d better tell Scott no can do.”

“I’ve thought it over. It too far this late in the year. We have to dig those potatoes while they finish up the canning. I’d be willing to go next year, in late spring.”

“Ok. Who knows we might find some additional full auto or three round burst weapons. You know they had problems crop up with the three round burst feature didn’t you?”

“What kind of problems?”

“If you release the trigger at just the wrong time, the next time you fire, it goes semi.”

“Given a choice, I opt to look for more of the M1As closer to home. We could drive up to KC and check out three or four gun stores. A couple more M1As and some magazines and we’d be sitting pretty.”

“I have 2 M1As, the same as you. I could give you my M21 and you could give your Super Match to your dad and the Loaded to Honey’s dad. That would let us equip all four women with the gas piston full autos.”

“Let it be. Alan just wants an A1. Dad is happy with the Loaded. We can give Stella and Honey a choice between the A1 and their AUGs but I think they’ll want to keep their AUGs. We just give Janice and my mother A1s and tell them not to use full auto.”

“That might be better. It would leave three of the A1s available and you never know when you or I might want one. You know, for when the mythological attack comes.”

“You should read more of that fiction. It’s never a question of if. It’s only a question of when and what and where and how. Why doesn’t matter and who is the other guy shooting at you.”

“Next time we’re out, we need to find something else for night vision. Say something like the AN/PVS-14s”

“I don’t have night vision for my rifles. If we could find more AN/PVS-27 MUNS, we could leave them on my rifles and use the AN/PVS-14s to spot the bad guys.”

“Are you crazy? If we get a second, it’s going on my rifle.”

“You don’t have an AN/PVS-27? I thought you had a Raptor.”

“I did. The tube went bad and I sent it in to be repaired or replaced. Didn’t get it back before my discharge.”

“Do you think they got it back before the war?”

“Had to have gotten it back. Probably sitting on a shelf in supply because no one knew what to do with it.”

“Would they have night vision in that supply of yours?”

“Are you suggesting...you are aren’t you?”

“It was just a thought. Think we could get in and out without being caught?”

“We both have ACUs and M16s, I don’t see why not. Have to use those wire cutters we used installing the fencing.”

“Honey, Scott and I are leaving Monday for a day or two to get some much needed equipment. Can’t really say where we’ll be but is there anything that you want me to pick up while we’re gone if we have a chance?”

“We could use some of those ACOG sights for the A1s. But you probably won’t be anywhere near a military base. The rifles parts Scott got from Bushmaster had the removable handle. I read somewhere that there’s one with a built in bullet drop compensator for 600 meters and a different model has a BDC for 800 meters.”

“The TA01NSN has the 600 meter BDC and 4X magnification. I think the TA31RCO has the 800 meter BDC.”

“Well, if you go by a military base, you might look around.”

“If we do, I will.”

What you don’t tell them might save your life or keep you off the couch. I didn’t lie; I just left out a salient element. You do recall I said one time that we should have a few MREs in case we went out on patrol? Never had the chance. It hasn’t been all that warm since the war either; I’ll have to check supply for a case or three.

“Would you believe I have a shopping list?”

“Really? What?”

“ACOGs, the TA01NSN.”

“With the 600 meter BDC? For the A1s?”

“Yeah. Sure glad you got the A3 instead of the A2. They’re easier to mount on the A3 by removing the handle.”

“I was thinking of scopes at the time, but yeah, good idea. Yours?”

“Not me, Honey.”

“Wow. I was think maybe we’d go with the AN/PVS-14 night vision. I do have an AN/PVS-10 day/night scope I can mount on my M24SWS.”

“It’s ironic, I guess would be the correct term. You have a semi-auto fifty and a bolt action seven six two. I have a bolt action fifty and a semi-auto seven six two.”

“I could mount the AN/PVS-10 on my M25 or M21 and have semi-auto with night vision on both. Maybe we should look around and get you an AN/PVS-10.”

“No thank you. The scope on my Super Match is a dream come true. Carl Zeiss Victory Diavari 6 - 24x72 T with the RZ1000 Illuminated Reticule.”

“That’s a Sniper/Tactical scope and cost as much as or more than your rifle.”

“Don’t I know? Honey once asked me why I got such an expensive rifle and shot surplus in it. I told her because I couldn’t afford two rifles. I told her I’d use the red dot for surplus and the scope for the match ammo. When the scope came in, she kind of looked at it cross-eyed but didn’t ask what brand it was or how much it cost. She’d have killed me if she knew the scope cost as much or more than the rifle. Of course later I got the Tac-50 and complete with everything, it was less than the Barrett.”

“Do you ever wonder if you’re crazy investing the kind of money we have in firearms?”

“Sometimes, maybe. But I think about what it means to have a rifle with the accuracy we have and how the accuracy and our skill employing it could maybe save a life. I can’t really put a price on a human life, so the weapon and the attendant skills are cheap in comparison. There’s something gratifying about being able to keep an enemy at bay out to 2,000 meters on a good day and 1,500 meters on an average day.”

“Right, I couldn’t agree more. I should mention that the post Commander was gung ho on the subject of enforcing that damned assault weapons ban. If any of the troops are still there and under his command, we’d be between a rock and a hard spot if we got caught.”

“You know those two suppressed Mark IIs you put in the gun safe?”

“Should have brought them, huh?”

“I brought them and some of the subsonic ammo you had. It’s a shame we don’t have some of those Surefire suppressors for the A1s.”

Honey – Chapter 11

“We had some in supply and that gas piston has a setting for using a suppressor. If they’re still there, we’ll get those two. We should have bought the AUGs. It just occurred to me that one of the armorer’s was familiar with the AUG.”

“Is he familiar with the MSAR STG-556?”

“Now that I don’t know. Could be risky trying to track him down too. I was thinking of a quick in and out, grabbing the night vision and the ACOGs now that you brought them up. The suppressors are under lock and key, but you know, I forgot to turn in my keys.

That was another determining factor in my decision to try and recover some night vision.”

“The quicker the better, I think.”

“This is as close as we dare go. This section of the fence is rarely patrolled. We look the part, let’s hope it works.”

“Don’t forget those keys.”

“We’ll cut here next to the post and use a few turns of wire to hold it closed.”

“Here’s your .22.”

“Thanks.”

It took about 7-8 minutes to cut the fence, slip through and wire it in place. Anything more than a casual inspection would reveal the breach. We moved quickly but cautiously with Scott leading the way. He moved to a door, stuck the key in the lock and entered a four digit code into a keypad. When the light turned green, he opened the door and we were inside.

He first located several AN/PVS-14s and AN/PVS-27s. He moved to a different location where he checked the model numbers and got six ACOGs.

“This is the tricky part; they periodically change the keypad code. If my first entry is declined, we’ll leave. It takes three wrong entries to trigger the alarm. Here goes.”

He entered the code and the green light came on.

“I’ll be damned. We’re looking for NSN 1005-01-554-3051. They’re complete. Let’s get six and boogie.”

“If we have time, check for NSN 1005-01-554-6164, the M1A setup.”

“We have to hurry. Someone will be around soon checking the building.”

“Got ‘em six each, complete.”

“I found 10 of the M16 packages. Check for the guard on patrol.”

“Let’s move over here.”

“Hey, MREs.”

“Try to limit yourself and get those with the longest expiration date.”

I took 2 cases and put the suppressors in a box on top of my pile. Scott found two empty boxes and put his things in those boxes. He grabbed one more case of MREs and we slipped out. He grabbed the batteries for the night vision and the ACOGs went in one box and the TA31RCO and TA01NSNs and extra batteries in the second along with the 556 suppressors.

When the guard was long gone, we slipped out, relocking the door. Our movement was hampered more by the bulk than the weight of what we were carrying. We temporarily secured half our loads in a dumpster and took the remainder to the fence and stacked them on the other side. We returned and recovered what we'd left behind and took it to and through the fence. While Scott worked to secure the chain link fence, I moved the loads to the pickup. We both finished up about the same time.

“They used to have a larger guard force. Doing what we just did wouldn't have been possible. Sorry, David, I gambled on the force being cut due to the war.”

“We aren't home yet. We can pat ourselves on the back when we are. I was almost tempted to suggest we stay another day and go back in again. There we all kinds of goodies in your supply building.”

“But you didn't?”

“None of it was worth getting killed over. We've been beyond lucky considering the places we've gone to scavenge. It's past time to hunker down and protect what we have.”

“Surely some of the survivors in Butler have seen us coming and going?”

“Some probably, especially when we hit the lumber yard and the farm supply. I can't promise that we weren't observed when we gathered clothing but more of that came from out of town than in town. Those thorny blackberries will slow down anyone trying to get through the fence. With the night vision equipment we have and a total of seven full auto weapons, we should be able to repel most attacks.”

“We need to do some nighttime practice don't we?”

“You haven't?”

“Afraid not.”

“Put that at the top of the to-do list. You have shot the McMillan with the scope mounted, right?”

“Only to sight it in at 1,500 meters.”

“Nincompoop!”

In case you don't know, the term nincompoop is an offensive term that deliberately insults somebody's intelligence or competence. What could I say, with respect to my night vision scope, the term was appropriate probably in both senses. It wasn't too bright to have a night vision scope that cost between seven grand and ten grand depending on where you bought it and not be competent using it. It was a situation that could be remedied, forthwith.

“That didn't take long.”

“Got you those ACOGs you wanted.”

“Go by a military post?”

“That was the destination all along. I didn't tell you because I didn't want to worry you.”

“Un-huh. It just so happens that Scott told Stella and Stella told me. She asked Scott what might be the best red dot sight for the A1 and he told her the ACOGs with the 800 meter BDC. Did he find night vision?”

“Yes. We got several suppressors while we were at it.”

“Did you get batteries?”

“How did you become so knowledgeable suddenly?”

“Talking to Stella and Scott. He had eight years to your three and a half.”

“I'd much rather you talk to me first, if that's ok.”

“You're jealous!”

“Maybe a little.”

“You are the only man in my life besides my father and he's just Daddy.”

“This is a far different world than it was when the Army discharged me. We've never discussed what we'd do if something happened to one of us.”

“And, we aren't going to discuss it now.”

“We should you know. Make plans, just in case.”

“Only as it relates to Donald, Scott and Susan. I don’t know about you, but if something happened to you, it would be a long time before I considered having another man in my life.”

“I feel the same; it would be a long time before I had another woman in my life. Most likely after the children were grown.”

“How realistic is it for either of us to say that? A single parent home would be difficult enough in normal times. In this PAW, that might not be possible. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not looking. It’s a matter of having someone here to protect our children.”

“I guess I see what you’re saying. A mother figure to raise the children and a father figure to protect the family unit.”

“That’s as good of an explanation as I’ve heard of what I had in mind. A person doesn’t stop loving a deceased spouse. The nature of the love changes but it remains to death. A second spouse or companion may be a necessity more than anything else.”

“That’s covered. Got anything to eat? I’m starving.”

“Bacon, eggs and biscuits with sausage gravy ok?”

“Forget the bacon. Biscuits and gravy with eggs on top.”

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Soon after that, Scott had me at the gravel pit at oh dark thirty sighting in the scopes using night vision for 1,500 meters and noting the sight settings at the various ranges. He took a closer look at my Super Match and looked through the Carl Zeiss scope. He was instantly jealous. I got a look through his AN/PVS-10 day/night scope and while it was nice, it sure wasn’t a Carl Zeiss Victory Diavari. And that particular scope had one of the most useful reticules available for a sniper rifle. It had built in ranging to 1,000 meters and windage to ten miles per hour.

There was one thing that I was beginning to appreciate. Some of the authors had battles breaking out right and left while others might only have one or two in a story, if that many. That far into the PAW, we’d had exactly zero. That’s right; we were armed to take on the Mexican Army and about any size of marauder group of MZBs. We shot a fair amount, at the gravel pit, but that was it. And, to keep ourselves proficient in reloading, we reloaded the ammo as it was shot up. The fifty caliber was all reloaded with the Hornady A-MAX 750gr bullets that Rob Furlong used to great effect.

Scott claimed to have met Furlong. I was dubious because Furlong was in Afghanistan and Scott did three in Iraq. It didn’t matter. The Hornady ammo that Furlong used was a

substitute because they ran out of their regular ammo and switched to the US ammo. Furlong said it proved to be hotter than what they used previously and that accounted for his record shot. He fired at the target 3 times. The first missed and the second hit the target's pack. The third killed the target at 2,400+ meters. Some kind of military inquiry arose and the involved snipers all ultimately resigned. Furlong became a policeman.

"I never said I met him. I said I knew of him. I mean, hell, everyone knows who Carlos Hathcock was. You say Hathcock and anyone who shoots says *Lông Trắng* or White Feather. That story about his stalking the General and running into a bamboo viper has always scarred the crap out of me. The bamboo viper was what some of the troops called Two Steps."

"You're wrong Scott. Two Steps is the many-banded krait, which dwells in the jungles of India and Southeast Asia. Drop for drop, its venom is the deadliest of any land serpents, apart from a few rare species found only in the outback of Australia. American soldiers during the war in Vietnam called it the "two-step snake," in the belief that its venom is so lethal that if it bites you, you will fall dead after taking just two steps. That's an exaggeration, but the bite of the many-banded krait is astonishingly potent. The venom is a neurotoxin, which means that it disables the victim's nervous system – like yanking an electrical plug out of the socket. Death comes when neurotransmission ceases. With no instructions to breathe, the muscles of the diaphragm are stilled, and the victim asphyxiates."

"You're wrong David."

"Ok, you ask my father, he was there."

"Don, David told me that you could confirm that the Two Steps snake was the bamboo viper."

"He never said any such thing. He knows that Two Steps is the multi banded krait."

"Was it true that the snake killed you before you could walk two steps?"

"Not really. In September, 2001, while doing research deep in an isolated region of Myanmar, Dr. Joe Slowinski was bitten by a juvenile 10" multi-banded krait. He died 28 hours later from the effects of the bite because Slowinski had no krait antivenom with him and because members of the expedition were unable to get adequate medical care in time."

"Not an American snake though, right?"

"Southeast Asia area. Any in the US would be in zoos or Serpentariums. There was a Serpentarium in Miami that closed in the middle '80s. Run by one Bill Haast who had

survived 170 snake bites including one from a blue krait and one from a green mamba. I'm sure he's dead because he was 100 in 2010."

"You happy with that rifle David gave you?"

"Sweet. Better than the one I was issued before Vietnam. Why?"

"We have six of the A1 lowers mated with the Bushmaster gas piston uppers. Keep it in mind as a backup gun."

"Nah, I'll use a Mini-14. Won't have to overwork the brain."

"Sure, but keep them in mind. They're in that gun cabinet in the shelter."

"Any problem with ammo?"

"You're kidding, right? We can reload all the reloadable ammo 6 times before we run out of components. And based on something David said, we might be looking for black powder arms like Colt .45 SAAs and Marlin 1895 Cowboys."

"Alan and I were discussing that very thing. Apparently David and he discussed the subject. The only question that comes to mind is where in the name of God would we store a string of horses?"

"We'd come up with something. Maybe use the empty 2½ acre parcel which adjoins David's."

"Smart, the owners are dead."

"The war?"

"Radiation poisoning. Has chain link fence, though. Have to put in a second gate between the two acreages. It's has clover for a cover crop. Just need two gate posts and a gate."

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"I was talking to your father. You were right on the snake. The discussion turned to the black powder cartridge arms and that led to horses. Since the adjacent acreage is 2½ acres inside a chain link fence, he thought all we might need was two gate posts and a gate."

"Where would we cut through?"

"Either the dry lot or the pig pen."

“Why not take the gate that opens to the road and move it? Surely we could find some more of the six foot chain link fence and fill the hole. Maybe extend the new fencing to the post past the replacement posts we’ll have to put in.”

“I know where there is a part roll of six foot fence. I’m not sure about the posts, but we could use galvanized pipes.”

“If we could get galvanized pipes, why not get them the same diameter as the gate posts and leave the gate posts where they are? The less work, the better.”

“I’ll ask your father to go with me and we’ll get that done tomorrow. Maybe you could work with Alan and get the fence down between the old lot or pen and the new acreage.”

“So do we want the cattle or the hogs running around while we take down the fence?”

“Good question. That bull is a mean one. On the other hand, the sows have new litters of pigs. Any way you slice it, it will be dicey.”

“Trying to be funny? Slice it versus dicey?”

“Not at all. How about we get a halter on that bull and rope him to a post so he can reach the feed and water? Let the cows and calves run around inside the compound?”

“On second thought, let your Dad and I get the pipes and fencing first. When we get back, we’ll put in the new gate posts, move the gate and patch the fencing where the gate was. We can cut the fencing, remove the blackberries and let the livestock into the new pasture.”

“Are we going to plant blackberries around the new acreage?”

“It would be a good idea. I think on the outside of the fence instead of the inside. Those plants inside the chicken yard, dry lot and pig pen have taken a beating since we got the livestock. We can salvage the green shoots and plant them outside the fence. The fence will still act like the trellis the blackberries need.”

“On the subject of livestock, how are we on feed?”

“We have ½ of the second truck of grain left and will need hay soon. The pasture will help, but we need to be out and about looking for more grain and hay. The ideal situation would be to find a surviving farmer and trade him diesel fuel for hay and grain. If we did find someone, I’m sure that he’d want more than diesel fuel, though.”

“Like what?”

“I’m not sure, depends on what he’d need. He’d probably have a garden, most farmers do. Maybe some fish. It could be anything, clothes, shoes, toilet paper, cigarettes, booze...who knows?”

“Are we going to trade guns and ammo?”

“Are you willing to give up the M1 Garand’s?”

“Sure; maybe some of the M1 carbines too. There’s only one thing wrong with this whole idea.”

“What’s that?”

“The distance from the castle roof to the far side of the new pasture.”

“No problem, it’s less than 200 meters, well within A1 range not to mention the M1As and the fifties.”

“But what if a horse gets in the way?”

“Shouldn’t be a problem. We don’t have horses yet and when we do, they’ll shy away from gunfire. We have suppressors on most of our weapons and I believe they’d huddle up against the fence between the pasture and the dry lot and pig pen. Moving the blackberries should improve the chances of that happening. The other three fences will have the plant coming through the chain link fence. We’ll build a shelter against the fence and run a water line for a water trough.”

It didn’t take long once we decided on a plan. Alan and Dad told us where to get the last of the hay and grain they’d found. After the fence was done, the blackberries moved, the grain and hay gathered, we went looking for a surviving farmer to meet future needs. We were also on the lookout for saddle horses and bridles, saddles, halters, saddlebags, pommel bags and old fashioned firearms. The cartridges had to be old fashioned but the firearms could be the latest, greatest state of the art.

By the time we found the farmer, we had the horse and tack. Dad and Alan had put in the water trough, extended the water line and had it set up on a float valve. They’d been in Butler getting materials and had built a rather larger horse shelter, complete with a small propane heater mounted up in one corner. Scott and I were out and about, driving an empty deuce and a half farm truck, our third.

“Is that smoke?”

“Where?”

“Off to your 2 o’clock.”

“Could be. Want to check it out?”

“Yeah. But before we do, lock and load.”

“Which weapon?”

“All of them.”

We came prepared and both had our fifties, a long range 7.62x51mm rifle (M1A), shotgun and the ever present pistol in .45acp. We had located and appropriated various Marlin rifles in .357, .44, .45 and .45-70. We also found some of the original Ruger Vaqueros, the heavy ones, in various calibers and several more New Blackhawks and Super Blackhawks. They were at home, stored in the shelter. For all practical purposes the shelter had been turned into an armory since we doubted we’d have a World War Four.

“It’s coming from that chimney, there. We’ve got a live one.”

“Watch your six. Shotguns and pistols, I think.”

We parked the truck and began to dismount. A man wearing an old denim working coat stepped out the door of the house holding an AR-15 or M16. He was joined by two younger men, probably his sons. One had another AR-15 or M16 and the second a shotgun.

“Help you fellas?”

“I hope so, sir. My name is David Ritter and this man is my friend Scott Herman. We’re from Butler and have been looking for an operating farm for some time now. We have fish, chicken, cattle, hogs and horses but our place is too small to grow livestock feed. If you’re operating and growing grain and hay, we can trade for it or pay for it, whichever you choose.”

“Dollar bill ain’t worth the paper it’s printed on.”

“Gold and silver, sir, as a means of payment or bartering stabilized diesel and gas.”

“Steal that did you?”

“I had the gold and silver since my grandfather died,” Scott blasted back. “And while I was in Iraq fighting, most of my pay went to purchase gold and silver.”

“You don’t say. What did you do in Iraq?”

“Sniper. David was infantry his first tour and had convoy escort duty his second tour until an IED got him a medical discharge.”

“You kill some Iraqis?”

“Yes. Why?”

“They killed my oldest boy with one of those IEDs. Sling those arms and come on in.”

“Excuse me, what’s your name?”

“Johnson.”

“Was your son named Mark?”

“As a matter of fact it was. You’re that David? The one that was hurt bad enough to get mustered out. Mark never said what your last name was.”

“Mr. Johnson, I can’t really tell you what happened. I came to on a plane bound for Germany and was transferred stateside almost immediately. I learned that Mark was dead but I never remember him saying where he was from other than the northern Ozarks.”

“You’re looking for grain and hay?”

“Yes sir.”

“And you have gas and diesel and can pay the difference in gold and silver?”

“Again, yes sir.”

Honey – Chapter 12

“You got an 8,000-gallon trailer load of diesel?”

“Yes sir.”

“What about gas?”

“The smallest trailer of gasoline available is 8,000-gallons.”

“Not gasoline, propane...gas.”

“Ten wheel delivery truck.”

“What do you use to keep warm?”

“We have propane appliances and wood burning fireplaces.”

“We have firewood harvested in addition to the hay and grain. Don’t have a lot of hay or grain because we couldn’t find diesel. You need the hay and feed now or next year?”

“We could get by until next year on the hay and feed if we can find just a little more.”

“Tell you what. You go back to, Butler was it, and get a tanker of diesel and a truck of propane and bring it and that truck of your’n back here. We’ll fill the truck with mixed grain and if you have a flatbed, you’ll get a flatbed of hay. You come back and we’ll give you 20 cords of split firewood. How’s that sound?”

“Sounds great. How much for the grain and hay next year?”

“Truckload of grain and flatbed of hay for another tanker of diesel and a delivery truck of propane. Firewood will be five ounces of silver per full cord. How’s that sound?”

“Sounds good. What if we need more grain?”

“Gold or silver. We won’t cheat you. Ok?”

“It will take a day home, a day to set it up and we’ll be back the day after, late. We’ll bring the propane, diesel and a lowboy plus the grain truck. We’ll get my father and father-in-law to drive two of the trucks and Scott and I will drive the other two.”

“What kind of stabilizer you use boy? Don’t want none of the Sta-Bil.”

“PRI-D and PRI-G.”

“Oh, ok. Three days you say? You’d better get a move on.”

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“How’d it go?”

“You remember my mentioning Mark Johnson? He was in the Humvee when we got hit by the IED? Got killed.”

“I’m not sure, that was a long time ago. Why?”

“We spotted smoke coming from a chimney and went to check it out. We were down in the northern Ozark region in St. Clair County. Anyway, we went to check out the smoke and low and behold it turned out to be Mark’s father, mother and two brothers. Other family members could have been there, but we didn’t see them. The deal we worked was 8,000-gallons of stabilized diesel and 3,000-gallons of propane in exchange for a truckload of grain, a flatbed of hay and 20 cords of split firewood.”

“How is that going to work?”

“What do you mean?”

“A cord of firewood is four by four by eight, right?”

“Right.”

“Ok, a forty foot flatbed loaded with two rows of five cords each would be the load firewood. How much does a cord of firewood weigh?”

“I don’t know, maybe 2,500 pounds.”

“So ten cords would weigh 25,000-pounds and if piled two layers deep, 50,000-pounds. What the weight limit on a 40’ flatbed?”

“At least 70,000-pounds. But, since there’s no DOT, probably all we could load on the trailer without breaking down.”

“So you’re taking two tankers, a flatbed and the grain truck down?”

“Yes.”

“Won’t work. You need two flatbeds and that means five trucks.”

“Five trucks mean five drivers. We’re a driver short.”

“Either Stella or I can drive the empty truck down and switch to the empty propane truck on the way back.”

“You’re not going to drive the diesel tanker down and the flatbed of firewood back?”

“I may be a lot of things David, but crazy isn’t one of them.”

“Where will we store the firewood?”

“I thought in the new pasture with the horses.”

“Oh, ok. David, you know with this small acreage of ours as full as it is, Scott or you should find something to remove snow. Maybe a skid steer or 4 wheel steer bucket.”

“Something like a Bobcat?”

“Either that or a Toolcat. Maybe one of those Unimogs that Jerry used to write about in his stories. They’re sort of universal, aren’t they?”

“If I recall correctly, yes. They were sold by Freightliner. Surely they have something at the Butler City Yard. I think the smaller, the better, we don’t have much spare room. Something I didn’t mention was that Mr. Johnson harvests firewood for sale and the price is 5 ounces of silver per cord. With the nominal 50 to 1 ratio between gold and silver, one ounce of gold should buy ten cords of firewood.”

“We can burn coal in the stoves can’t we?”

“Yes and it has more energy than wood. I’ll add coal to the shopping list.”

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DSM-V (2013 update)

309.81

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

A. The person was exposed to the following event(s): death or threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violation, in one or more of the following ways:**

1. Experiencing the event(s) him/herself
2. Witnessing the event(s) as they occurred to others
3. Learning that the event(s) occurred to a close relative or close friend
4. Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the event(s) (e.g., first responders collecting body parts; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse)

NOTE: Witnessing or exposure to aversive details does not include events that are witnessed only in electronic media, television, movies or pictures, unless this is part of a person’s vocational role. Exposure to aversive details of death applies only to unnatural death.

B. Intrusion symptoms that are associated with the traumatic event(s) (that began after the traumatic event(s)), as evidenced by 1 or more of the following:

1. Spontaneous or cued recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive distressing memories of the traumatic event(s). Note: In children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the traumatic event(s) are expressed.
2. Recurrent distressing dreams in which the content and/or affect of the dream is related to the event(s). Note: In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content. ***

3. Dissociative reactions (e.g., flashbacks) in which the individual feels or acts as if the traumatic event(s) were recurring (Such reactions may occur on a continuum, with the most extreme expression being a complete loss of awareness of present surroundings.) Note: In children, trauma-specific reenactment may occur in play.
 4. Intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event(s)
 5. Marked physiological reactions to reminders of the traumatic event(s)
- C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic event(s) (that began after the traumatic event(s)), as evidenced by efforts to avoid 1 or more of the following:
1. Thoughts, feelings, or physical sensations that arouse recollections of the traumatic event(s)
 2. Activities, places, physical reminders, or times (e.g., anniversary reactions) that arouse recollections of the traumatic event(s)
 3. People, conversations, or interpersonal situations that arouse recollections of the traumatic event(s)
- D. Negative alterations in cognitions and mood that are associated with the traumatic event(s) (that began or worsened after the traumatic event(s)), as evidenced by 3 or more of the following: Note: In children, as evidenced by 2 or more of the following:****
1. Inability to remember an important aspect of the traumatic event(s) (typically dissociative amnesia; not due to head injury, alcohol, or drugs).
 2. Persistent and exaggerated negative expectations about one's self, others, or the world (e.g., "I am bad," "no one can be trusted," "I've lost my soul forever," "my whole nervous system is permanently ruined," "the world is completely dangerous").
 3. Persistent distorted blame of self or others about the cause or consequences of the traumatic event(s)
 4. Pervasive negative emotional state -- for example: fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame
 5. Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities.
 6. Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others.
 7. Persistent inability to experience positive emotions (e.g., unable to have loving feelings, psychic numbing)
- E. Alterations in arousal and reactivity that are associated with the traumatic event(s) (that began or worsened after the traumatic event(s)), as evidenced by 3 or more of the following: Note: In children, as evidenced by 2 or more of the following:****
1. Irritable, angry, or aggressive behavior
 2. Reckless or self-destructive behavior
 3. Hypervigilance
 4. Exaggerated startle response
 5. Problems with concentration
 6. Sleep disturbance -- for example, difficulty falling or staying asleep, or restless sleep.
- F. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in Criteria B, C, D and E) is more than one month.

G. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Specify if:

With Delayed Onset: if diagnostic threshold is not exceeded until 6 months or more after the event(s) (although onset of some symptoms may occur sooner than this).

* Developmental manifestations of PTSD are still being developed. The term 'developmental manifestation' in DSM-V refers to age-specific expressions of one or another criteria that is used to make a diagnosis across age groups.

** For children, inclusion of loss of a parent or other attachment figure is being considered.

*** An alternative is to retain the DSM-IV criterion

**** The optimal number of required symptoms for both adults and children will be further examined with empirical data

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As it happened, Honey proved to have the edge over Stella driving the deuce and a half and she was the fifth driver to go back to the Ozarks. While we were busy filling the propane tank, putting the grain in the deuce and a half, loading the hay and so forth, she was inside visiting with Mrs. Johnson. Apparently the Johnson's had a remembrance display set up with a picture of Mark in his uniform, his Purple Heart, High School Yearbook and so forth. Mrs. Johnson really bent her ear discussing Mark and what a lost cause the war in Iraq proved to be.

As I was soon to learn, Honey spent the entire drive back to Butler searching her memory for when I'd mentioned Mark to her. By the we arrived home, she was totally convinced that I had never brought up anything about the IED attack other than I'd been in the right front seat and woke up on the airplane to Germany,

"David, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson had a remembrance display for your friend Mark. I spent the entire drive back trying to remember when you told me about him. You never did, you know. If you think about it for just a moment, you'll realize that you don't really ever talk about what happened."

"I don't really know what happened, Honey. One moment we were moving down the road and the next moment I was on an airplane bound to Germany. That's ten years ago, what difference does it make?"

"Do you know what PTSD is?"

"Yes, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I don't have it, if that's what you're asking."

"Are you sure? You experienced the event. You tense up at times almost as if experiencing an intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or

external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event. On the anniversary of you getting blown up you tense up. You seem to have several negative mood swings periodically. You are hyper-vigilant and have an exaggerated startle response since the war. I'm not saying that you have PTSD; you need to examine that yourself. I'm afraid if something happens, you might freeze up."

"Hey buddy, answer a question for me."

"Yes, I'll help unload the firewood."

"It wasn't that. Honey suggested that I might be suffering from PTSD because of what happened in Iraq."

"I think most of us are to one degree or another, David. I know exactly how many people I shot during those three tours. I have to assume that most of them died. I would never tell anyone what that number is, that is just the way I am. It's neither good nor bad, it just is. The problem with being a sniper is magnified by using a high powered scope where you actually get to look into the eyes of the person you're about to kill. You do it because it's your job and he is doing it to your fellow soldiers or whatever. If you remembered each face, you couldn't live with yourself."

"Do you think I am?"

"I'm not a shrink, David. I do know that you've never been a sniper. You have the equipment and skill, but will you be able to pull the trigger? Only time will tell. You might clutch and you might not. Remember who you are protecting, it may help. Unless you can tell me eye to eye you have for a fact killed more than once, I can't tell you how you will react to the situation. As we've said before, we shall see what we shall see. You won't be alone. I'll be there and you will likely have a spotter."

"We really have to select spotters."

"Anyone you'd like?"

"My Dad?"

"So ask him. I'd like to ask Stella, but won't. It's not right having us both on the same team if something were to happen. Maybe I should ask Alan."

I asked Dad and Scott asked Alan. Dad said yes immediately but Alan hesitated when Scott suggested that he would prefer Alan carry a M1A. They went to the quarry with the M21 and adjusted the stock to a perfect fit for Alan. By the time they had the rifle sighted in, Alan had changed his mind. While a weapon using the 7.62x51mm cartridge has more recoil than the Poodle Shooter, it really isn't that bad. Honey had no serious

complaints the few times she shot my Loaded before I loaned it to Dad. The AUG was designed, probably unconsciously, for a woman.

When I checked the location of their farm on my map, I discovered that it was only 30 road miles away. Something else tugged at my mind and I went back and found *The Lodge*. I checked and just like the story said KCPL had a power station on Montrose Lake with all the coal we could use in 10 lifetimes. We could get a dump truck from the City Yard and use KCPL's loader to fill the trucks, bring back 6-7 yards of coal at a time. On a warm summer day, we could easily make 10 trips and bring back maybe 65 yards of Wyoming coal, if we could find an empty corner to dump it in. It was only ~30 miles one way.

This winter was much more like a normal winter and between what we were producing in the medium sized greenhouse and the garden that went in the following spring, we'd produced more than double what we'd produced the previous years. With that in mind, Honey selected another Wal-Mart Distribution Center and we pulled the 53' and the 40' box trailers plus the flatbed and the one more box trailer we'd found on a side street in Butler.

The generator was pulled behind the flatbed and 34' trailer. The shopping list was unspectacular, jars, lids, spices, shelf stable foods, clothing, feminine hygiene, toilet paper, plus our list of firearms, ammo, liquor, tobacco products including pipe tobacco, matches, aluminum foil, Ziploc bags, pharmaceuticals and OTC medical supplies.

We dropped the generator and backed up the four trailers to the loading dock. After popping the door, we checked the door power system and used the generator power to raise the doors. Uncertain that Wal-Mart forklifts would still be operable, we used the one we brought. The canning supplies were moved first but set aside to be loaded last. It wasn't that much different from the trip to Bentonville. Things Bentonville had an excess of, the Center was short of and vice versa. We filled all three box trailers plus the flatbed about half full. Scott grabbed the Yellow Pages and scanned it looking for solar.

"Bingo! Found a solar place. Can't tell from the ad, but it's a start. Want to check it out?"

"Close by?"

"I don't know the town. See if you can find a map."

"I know the town Scott, what's the address?"

"Here you go."

"That's out on Route C. It runs southwest out of the city. We got everything we came for?"

“Except for boots, but they can wait.”

“Alan and I’ll lead the way. You two get the trailers hooked back up and don’t forget the equipment trailer.”

“After you old guys get hooked up, use the generator to lower the doors and we’ll get ready to go.”

“I’ll show you old.”

“I think he was just teasing Dad.”

“I’m old, but not that old.”

We finally left and found the solar place. It was a medium sized two story block building with a large fenced in storage area. Inside the building were large bundles of solar panels. Schott had discontinued manufacturing the panels in mid-2009. But they had pallets of 24v Solar World 175w panels by the 40 panel pallet. My new math said 7kw per pallet and we took all 10 pallets. Batteries came next and we took all the Surrrette 8-CS-25PS-8v-820ah batteries they had at 425 pounds apiece (wet). Since we had 24v panels and the inverters that they had the most of were Outback 24v, 3,500w, we went with those. Finally the charge controllers were also Outback, FLEXmax 80 amp Charge Controllers.

It was the best trip we’d made to date. With the solar installed, our diesel supplies would last a whole lot longer. We still had to top off our propane tanks and make another run to refill the delivery trucks to finish that chore. We also need to find either 8 or 9,000-gallon diesel tank and stabilize it for next year. We were getting cocky and in for more than we bargained for. Our long convoy of scavenged items pulled in and was routed to the pasture. Each of we four men went to give the wives a rundown on our success.

My momma always said, "Life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get." I’ll tell you what we got, a mob of local residents that had watched our coming and goings since the war who were feeling more than a little left out. And, they weren’t exactly armed with baseball bats. Not once had any of them come to our place and asked for help or offered to work for a share. Our policy of live and let live was about to come to a screeching halt. They were standing up inside our gate, yelling. “You’ve got to share what you brought back.”

“You got that wrong, mister. All I have to do is die and pay taxes and there’s no government to collect taxes.”

“There ain’t but 4 adults and 6 small children here. You can’t stop us.”

“Really? Scott, you ready up there?”

“We’re ready, give the word.”

“Who’s that?”

“You see that funny looking building in the center of my little plot?”

“Yeah, so what?”

“It’s my bomb shelter.”

“Like I said, so what?”

“Are you familiar with the terms parapet, merlons and crenels?”

“No, but what’s that got to do with anything?”

“That top wall there called a parapet is heavily reinforced concrete. Those uprights are called merlons. The spaces between the merlons where people shoot from are called crenels. Look up at those crenels and tell me what you see.”

“I see three people, one with some kind of oddball rifle and two with funny looking shotguns.”

“Very observant. The funny looking rifle is a Browning Automatic Rifle M1918A1. The strange shotguns are HK69A1s similar to the M79s we used in Vietnam. The other two people you don’t see are my wife and my friend’s wife. I’m not totally sure, but I think they may have you covered with M16A1s. And this handgun I’m now pointing at your head is a Taurus PT1911B. Any questions so far?”

“Uh...”

“I didn’t think so. Oh, you have the numbers wrong, 8 adults and 6 children.”

“Hank, this is Don Ritter up here with Alan Ritter. These M69s are loaded with buckshot, the same rounds we used in Vietnam. David’s friend Scott has a 40 round magazine in the BAR. Both women have A1s. We can put out 100 rounds of rifle fire and 54 pellets of 00 buckshot with five simple pulls of the triggers. Put down the weapons or die. I’ll count to five. One...two...three...”

“Ok, ok. We’re putting them down.”

“David, collect the weapons and set them aside after they’re spread eagled on the ground away from the weapons. Move it people, on the ground spread eagled. No not there, away from those weapons. After you get the weapons set aside, pat them down.”

Three people had concealed pistols which I collected and added to the pile. Several others had hunting knives, if one can call Rambo I, II and III hunting knives. Even got one Crocodile Dundee knife.

“Ok, we’re coming down, one at a time. David, you keep them covered.”

The first one down was Dad followed by Stella then Alan followed by Honey with Scott bringing up the rear.

“Ok David, this is your place what do we do with them?”

“We do have a backhoe and can dig a slit trench for the bodies. But that’s a lot of work. Tell me something, Hank is it, why didn’t you just ask? Or, why didn’t you volunteer to help out in exchange for food? Since you weren’t asking, we assumed you found enough food in Butler and other places to keep you going.”

“You could have offered.”

“I don’t work for FEMA, the Red Cross or the Salvation Army. I’m a forklift driver doing the best he can to survive in a Post-Apocalyptic World. My wife and I have scrimped and saved for years preparing for what happened. Now because we have it and you don’t, you think you can just demand your share? Your share is equal to the contribution you made getting all of this set up, nothing.”

“That’s not very Democratic.”

Honey – Chapter 13

“I’m a Republican. How many people are left in Butler?”

“Between 100 and 125.”

“Did anyone plant a garden?”

(Silence)

“I take it that means no.”

“Well we formed a committee, and...”

"I've searched all the parks in all the cities and found no statues of committees. (Gilbert K. Chesterton) Has anyone even looked for a rototiller?"

"The gas is no good and the tiller wouldn't run."

"Don't you know about the Power Research, Inc.'s products? They have two, PRI-G and PRI-D that preserves and restores old fuel. Do you have seed?"

"Hybrids, they won't grow true."

"No they won't, but you can eat what you manage to grow. We can provide you with some open pollinated heirloom seeds that will grow true. Won't do you any good if you eat everything and don't let some of it get to the seed stage."

"What's in it for you?"

"We won't have to dig a slit trench and get your relatives angry with us. We maintain security all the time, twenty-four/seven/three sixty-five. You want us on your side, not against you. There're a lot of things in this area you can salvage to keep you going. For example, Montrose Station, the power plant over on Montrose Lake has something like several hundred thousand tons of Wyoming coal for their boilers. If you get one semi running and restore the fuel with PRI-D, you should be able to recover food and goods from any of the Wal-Mart Distribution Centers and several other grocery distributors."

"What makes you think you have the right to dictate to us?"

"Well, let's see: we're better armed than you are; and, none of you helped us to get what we have; plus, there's the Castle Doctrine. Simply stated, one's place of residence is a place in which one enjoys protection from illegal trespassing and violent attack and it gives a person the legal right to use deadly force to defend that place, his/her castle, and/or any other innocent persons legally inside it, from violent attack."

"Big words but that was before the war. The same rules don't apply anymore."

"Then you can rape and pillage at will?"

"I didn't say that."

"You can't have it both ways Hank, your choice. Scott, there are 125 people in Butler, do we have enough ammo?"

"To kill them all? Maybe 500 rounds per person."

"You wouldn't dare."

“I just might, Hank. What’s your decision?”

“Can you spare some gasoline?”

“Will a drum of stabilized gasoline be enough to get you started?”

“Hopefully.”

“What do you do each morning when you get up?”

“I use the stool, shower, shave get dressed, why?”

“So, shit, shower and shave mostly cover it, right?”

“It does if you insist on being vulgar.”

“Our version is different. We shoot, shovel and shut up. Keep that in mind. Ok. We’ll bring in the drum of gas and food for 125 people for a month. It won’t be fancy. Flour, sugar, yeast, oil, beans, rice, canned meat and vegetables plus some canned fruit. The dump truck at the City Yard runs and the tank is full of good diesel. We’ll toss in a gallon of PRI-D, enough to stabilize another 2,000 gallons. You’ll get your weapons back then.”

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“I hope you don’t expect me to grind enough wheat to provide the flour they’ll need for a month of baking bread.”

“There’s all of that bread flour I froze way back when and sealed in Mylar bags. I was thinking of giving them that, Honey. Also give them a jar of dry yeast, three pails each of beans and rice, Spam and that grated tuna I bought by mistake for canned meat, assorted canned vegetables and two cases of that canned mixed fruit from the Wal-Mart warehouse. No filet mignon or lobster tail for this bunch.”

“David, this puts us in a bind as far as our scavenging trips. Each trip will have to be two heavily armed people and those that remain here will need to remain on alert against an attack from the locals.”

“I know it does Scott. It’s going to be you and me making those trips. I want to find a coil of concertina or razor wire. You can weld some brackets on top and front of that gate and we’ll make it harder for them to get in by stringing the wire.”

“That pig wire didn’t work, did it?”

“We should have made the gate higher and used chain link fencing. We’d better take a pair of the A1s when we deliver the goods and give them their weapons back.”

“Is that a good idea?”

“Maybe not; but would you like to be out there unarmed?”

“I see your point. I sure would like my Interceptor back right about now.”

“We’ll put it on our shopping list in case we get to another military installation. I’d like to know how they got over the gate without being spotted.”

Of course when they saw the beans and rice plus the Spam and grated tuna, they were less than happy. They wanted to know if it was the best we had. We explained that once they got off they’re dead butts and located a generator they could access the fuel in the tanks and restore it with the PRI products. We’d loan them a semi tractor and trailer and they could go shopping. In the meantime, they’d better get a move on because winter would be here before they knew it. They could get garden spots tilled and ready for next spring and they’d soak up the moisture from the snow when it melted. It would probably be a good idea to put in outhouses if they hadn’t already. The generator should be big enough to power the pump on the city well so they’d have water and power the sewer pumps. And if someone could butcher a couple of hogs and a beef, we could spare the livestock.

The city of Butler had gone from around 4,500 to only 125 survivors, not counting us? Ninety-seven percent of the population was dead or had fled the scene for a safer location? They probably went from the frying pan into the fire. It made me wonder what the death toll around the country was like. We sure hadn’t heard many hams on the amateur bands. We’d seen people when we’d gone up to KC although they’d been rather furtive. The Johnson family had come through just fine. Plus they had the enduring quality of hillbillies everywhere; they were as honest as the day was long.

“You know Scott, something strange is going on. You started putting red push pins in the US map as soon as we started making contracts with hams. We discussed it and replaced the red pins with black pins when we lost contact for more than 30 days. Look at the map, it started in southern California and spread all the way north to Washington. Do you see how the line keeps moving to the east?”

“I know. What do you suppose it is an epidemic or something? Maybe one of the countries that attacked us included a biological weapon for a target instead of a nuke?”

“You did most of the comms with those hams. Did any of them give any indication that something was wrong?”

“Not really. The usual PAW situations, limited food, radiation sickness, loss of infrastructure, fuel shortages, a lot of vehicles with fried computers. Most of the people on the air were preppers.”

“Is it just me or is that line moving from the west to the east?”

“Actually, it’s moving to the middle from the east and the west. There’s nothing coming up from the Gulf or down from Canada.”

“My money is on an engineered biological weapon.”

“How can that be? A bacterium or a virus requires a host to survive. If the loss of life was anywhere near what we theorized based on Butler, There aren’t many living carriers to spread a disease like that. Chemical weapons are out too because they’re too localized.”

“The Black Plague used rats as a host.”

“I don’t know what to think Scott. The problem with Special Forces on ships floating around in the Pacific and Atlantic is the amount of time involved. It would be especially bad for the ships in the Atlantic because of the prevailing winds from the west. We’re just north of the Horse Latitudes which run from about 30°N to 35°N. The Westerly’s run from about 35°N to 65°N and generally blows from west to east. Most of the fallout had to be blown into the Atlantic.”

“What if they landed the ships in locations with low levels of radiation and holed up?”

“All of this assumes that it has to be foreign troops invading the US. I find that hard to believe because we destroyed all of our enemies. I’ll bet we still have some boomers out there with missiles they didn’t launch. Don’t have any idea how they’re getting resupplied, but they’re out there, I’d bet on it.”

“No last group of survivors in Australia with a lone US nuclear submarine? That was anti-war crap of the first order. David, our only opposition so far has been the local townspeople, those few that survived.”

“Perhaps we did this backwards. Maybe we should have checked out Butler first and then moved out in a widening spiral, checking for salvage as we went. Let’s get the stabilized fuel and food around for them. The sooner they get something growing, the better.”

“Well, they say hindsight is 20/20. We did what we did and there’s no point in looking back.”

“Then, Scott, let’s look prospectively. Something is killing people and it’s moving from both coasts toward the central US. It can’t be a chemical weapon, that’s not how they work. It could be advancing armies or marauders, but we surely would have heard something on the ham bands; which brings me to the conclusion that it’s biological and has a non-human host. We can go with that unless you have another idea?”

“I could believe advancing armies or marauders, but like you said, we should have heard something. Just how in the name of God do we protect ourselves from something like a biological weapon?”

“I don’t really know... that said my first thought is isolation. Get a dozer and dig a moat and put in a drawbridge or something similar. String the opposite side of the moat with hardware cloth or something similar with a fine mesh. To that we add DEET or some other insect repellent. Finally, we can start wearing N-100 facemasks. I’m open to suggestions.”

“City Yard or County Yard?”

“What’s the difference, they’re both in Butler?”

“County Yard has a dozer, on a transport.”

“Fuel up a truck and let’s go. I’ll tell the others. Better take a loaded M1A, shotgun and .45. I’ll grab some grenades and a couple of M72s.”

“What’s up David?”

“Scott and I are going into Butler to the County Yard and pick up a dozer. We can all sit down and Scott and I will explain when we get back. How many 3M 8293 P-100 facemasks do we have?”

“Five cases of twenty... one hundred, why?”

“We’ll need more than one hundred. We’ll get the masks before we get the dozer. If you’ll excuse me, I need to get some things from the shelter.”

“What?”

“M72s and M61s. Maybe we’d better take some M18 white smoke.”

“You sound like you’re expecting trouble.”

“I am and the remaining population of Butler is the least of our worries.”

“Be careful.”

“We will be... I promise.”

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“Ready to go?”

“All fueled up and I have my weapons.”

“Honey says we only have 100 P-100 face masks. When I think back on it, we only got 100 because the 8293 P-100s are so expensive. They make an 8233 N-100 and the 8293 P-100. The 8293 costs more but can be used in an atmosphere containing oil vapors. The instructions say, *If respirator becomes damaged, soiled, or breathing becomes difficult, leave the contaminated area immediately and dispose of the respirator. If used in environments containing only oil aerosols, dispose of respirator after 40 hours of use or 30 days, whichever is first.*”

“Then you want to get the masks first?”

“Yes. By the way, they’re also good for protection against radiological particles. Do you know where we can get some hardware cloth?”

“A hardware store? But, we’re going to need T posts to support the wire mesh. Before we added the pasture, the circumference was 400 meters. Now, it will be 600 meters plus whatever we add for the moat. It’s funny your suggesting a moat, that should drive Butler resident’s bonkers because you’re protecting your Castle with a moat and drawbridge.”

“We need to get the dozer last so put your thinking cap on and figure out where we’re going to get the posts and mesh.”

“How about a farm store? It wouldn’t be Butler, just a little further north. We could get what we need for the fencing and the drawbridge plus a pair of heavy duty electric Warn winches. We should probably get a few bags of Quikrete, too, to make bases for the winches. We can build the drawbridge from 2x12s three layers thick so we should probably get some 5” and 6” carriage bolts plus a box or two of washers. The longer bolts are in case we top the bridge with some OSB or plywood.”

“That’s a good idea. Can we get the lumber in the same place we get the fencing supplies and Quikrete?”

“We sure can and we can check out the drug stores plus industrial supply houses for those face masks because welders use them.”

“It would be nice to avoid Butler entirely.”

“No can do buddy... the only dozer I know of is the one at the County Yard.”

We got everything we needed in Harrisonville but didn't see or find a dozer. That meant that we'd have to get the dozer from the Bates County Maintenance Yard. We managed to slip in and get the trailer hooked up to the 2½ ton truck before our luck ran out.

“Where are you going with the dozer?”

“We're going home Hank. We'll bring it back after we do some repair work on my ditch.”

“Building a moat for your castle, are you?”

“You bet. Know where I can find any piranhas? If not, alligators or crocodiles will do.”

“Yeah right; we'll be keeping an eye open for you to return our dozer!”

“Your dozer?”

“Anything inside the city limits belongs to the residents of Butler now.”

“I'll keep that in mind. We have to be going, take care.”

Scott gunned the motor and the loaded down truck picked up speed slowly. I opened the canvas bag containing the grenades, just in case. The people just stood there and watched us leave.

We had 4 12k Warn winches, 18 sacks of Quikrete, enough pressure treated 2x12s for the drawbridge plus enough OSB to cover the 2x12s. We also had the T posts, several rolls of ¼” hardware cloth, rolls of aluminum screen fabric, boxes of 5” and 6” bolts and large flat washers. The last item came from multiple locations and it was cases of 3M 8293 P-100 facemasks. Everyone that sold them had a different price on the boxes although they probably all came from the same supplier up in Independence or Kansas City.

We all sat down for supper and I announced that Scott and I would explain what we were thinking and what we had done during the day to see the plan we developed come to fruition after we ate. The supper conversation was led by my father, Don, and Alan who were discussing where to get leather for the Marlin rifles and SAA revolvers. After supper, Scott and I explained what we had done and why.

“Scott's been keeping map pins in a map of the US since the war. Scott started putting red push pins in the US map as soon as we started making contracts with hams. We discussed it and replaced the red pins with black pins when we lost contact for more than 30 days. Looking at the map, I realized it started in southern California and spread

all the way north to Washington. After that, the line kept moving to the east. It was the same on the east coast, starting in the south and moving north and finally west. We concluded it had to be biological and whatever it was had to have a live host.

“Assuming it was something biological, I suggested isolation; in this case, a moat and drawbridge. Plus DEET in case it was an insect and an outside fence in case it was rats or something smaller. We got ¼” hardware cloth for the fence and aluminum screening in case the varmint was smaller than ¼”. We also got a load of pressure treated 2x12s to build the drawbridge and OSB to cover the top. We didn’t do anything about a hinge, yet.

“However, we did get 4 electric 12K Warn winches (Endurance 12.0) to raise and lower the drawbridge and 18 bags of Quikrete to pour bases for the winches. We have T posts to mount the fencing on and bolts and washers to assemble the drawbridge. From the looks of it, we have four to five months to get prepared. If Dad and Alan can build the drawbridge, Scott and I can use the dozer to dig out the ditch. I suppose since the 2x12s are 24’ long, we’ll make the ditch about 20’ wide. We didn’t get beams to support the drawbridge because that didn’t occur to me until just now.

“We can get all the lumber we need in Harrisonville so Dad and Alan can figure out what supports are needed and go after them. Finally, assuming none of the defenses just mentioned work, we got all the 3M 8293 P-100 facemasks we could find in Harrisonville. That about covers it, any questions?”

“One,” Alan said. “Why do you assume a biological and not an invasion force?”

“One reason, Alan, the prevailing winds. Radioactive fallout would be carried to the east and dowsed anyone invading from the Atlantic. It was just an assumption and as you know, when you assume, you make an ass out of u and me.”

“David, I have a question for you. Assuming it is a biological weapon being carried by a living host; can you speculate what it might be?”

“No, Dad, I can’t; it could be anything from the plague to who knows what.”

“Then why wouldn’t the radiation have killed off the host species?”

“Again, I don’t know. It has been speculated that when all other forms of life are extinguished from the planet Earth, the cockroaches will survive. I will say that if the host was cockroaches, we’re probably doomed. I’m not sure how to stop cockroaches.”

“Boric acid crystals, David. It acts as a stomach poison affecting the insects’ metabolism, and the dry powder is abrasive to the insects’ exoskeleton. The cockroaches walk over the crystals sprayed on a surface and it cuts open their bodies; they sort of bleed to death, losing fluid and dehydrating, resulting in death.”

“Can you get some when you go to Harrisonville?”

“Count on it. It works on other insects too, like termites, fire ants, fleas, silverfish, and many other insects. As far as getting beams, if you have enough 2x12s, we can laminate some boards and build some I-beams.”

“Maybe we should go back tomorrow and clean out that lumberyard of the pressure treated lumber and get more sizes of carriage bolts. Where would we look for boric acid crystals?”

“A farm store would be a good place to check or a pharmacy. If you didn’t get some kind of sealer for the OSB, you’d better pick up a few pails of that while you’re at it. We’ll start on the drawbridge tomorrow. I’d suggest that the ladies start planting the blackberry shoots they have growing in the green house. Ladies, plant them outside the fence on the new pasture, please; maybe 3-4 feet from the fence if you expect to harvest them.”

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Everyone had a set of tasks assigned by the time we broke for the evening and in the coming days we set about accomplishing the tasks. Additional Quikrete was picked up for the winches and to mount the drawbridge hinge in. The hinge was fabricated from metal straps heated red hot and formed around 6” iron pipe and welded. The hinge pin was a solid piece of 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ ” solid steel rod 15’ long.

Excavation of the moat began at the site where the drawbridge would be installed and moved in either direction. Scott, Dad and Alan went into Butler and took a Toolcat to lift the extra soil from the moat, putting all of it on the outside. When the front moat was complete, a second gate was built of 6” pipe and it too opened outward but was hinged on the other end. The moat was to be lined with 10 mil plastic sheeting and the seams carefully sealed.

Time wise, the front section took one-third of the excavation time while the ends each took one-sixth of the excavation time. We were working on the back one-third ninety days into the project. The drawbridge had been installed and worked as planned once we added upright iron poles with pulleys for the cables. Once raised, the 13’ wide drawbridge would be locked in place with a hook on each pole.

We were finished up 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ months after we started. The lines had advanced to within 100 miles on the west and the Mississippi River on the east. We’d been too busy with the project to get into Butler, so they came calling, looking for more handouts.

“What do you want now?”

“More food would be nice. You haven’t returned our dozer, either.”

“Look, you can get corn, wheat and oats at an elevator or a feed store. You can get a grain grinder at a health food store. We gave you PRI-D to restore 2,000 gallons of diesel, so use a diesel truck. That fuel tank at Montrose Station contains hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel. Show some initiative and use your imagination... everything you need is out there for the taking.”

“That’s stealing.”

“Not if the property is abandoned.”

“You actually dug a moat, huh?”

“We’re just finishing up with the digging and still have to line it with plastic sheeting and seal the seams before we fill it. Count yourself lucky we couldn’t find any piranhas, alligators or crocodiles. Did you plant gardens?”

“Yeah, but they’re struggling because of the temperature and sunlight. It’s cold out.”

“You only notice the cold when you’re sitting on your ass not working. Is there anything else? We have work to do.”

“What’s with little fence made out of hardware cloth and screening?”

“It’s intended to keep out small varmints.”

“Obviously, it wouldn’t keep out anything larger.”

Honey – Chapter 14

“Now that you mention it, you’re right. We’ll have to fix that. For the suggestion, we’ll be giving you 6 pails of wheat, 3 of beans, 3 of rice and another jar of yeast. Honey can you get that for the folks? Get Scott, Dad and Alan to help.”

Our outside fence was intended to keep out pests, but nothing larger. We could make a trip to Harrisonville and get a few rolls of pig wire to slow down larger animals. I was thinking about a week to install that. We had removed and stored the barbed wire from the other pasture and the two strands would be close to enough to add a strand of barbed wire above the pig wire. We’d replaced it with strands of #9 smooth wires all because of the horses.

“We’ll be expecting that dozer back when you’ve finished.”

“We’ll keep that in mind.”

“That’s the last of the soil from the moat.”

“Ok, good. Next, we line it with 10 mil plastic sheeting and seal the seams. We need to pick up several rolls of pig wire and maybe a roll or two of barbed wire to keep out larger animals.”

“Did you just think that up?”

“No, Hank made an observation that the varmint fence wouldn’t keep out anything larger than a varmint and I happen to agree. The moat isn’t wide enough to keep much out, being only 20’ wide. For that reason, I think we’ll only add 12’ of water instead of the full 20’ depth. That will make it harder for anything that manages to cross the moat.”

“Anything or anyone?”

“Same difference, Scott. How long do you think it will take to install and seal the sheeting?”

“Best guess would be six days. How long to add the fencing?”

“It will take the same six days. We’ll have to split into two crews and do both at the same time.”

“I think we overlooked something and maybe drew some wrong conclusions. In case you haven’t noticed, all of the black map pins are on major highways. Why would a biological stick to major highways? That gets us right back to advancing armies or marauders.”

“HalfFast’s Mutant Zombie Bikers, huh?”

“That would be my best guess. If that’s the case, we’d better get to the Fort before they do and pick up some heavier firepower plus more of what we already have. It might not be a bad idea to arm those folks in Butler. If the marauders concentrate on them, they might not come looking out here in the boonies.”

“Man, that’s cold. How about we send Dad and Alan to Harrisonville tomorrow and we make a trip to the Fort?”

“Cold?”

“Yeah, cold; but that doesn’t mean it’s not a good idea. We probably won’t have to worry about returning the dozer or Toolcat.”

“Talk about the pot calling the kettle black...”

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We discovered that Fort Leonard Wood was abandoned, so... we concluded that anything we wanted constituted salvage. It was like setting two kids loose in a candy store with unlimited funds. In 1984, as part of the Base Realignment and Closure process, most of the US Army Engineer School's operations were consolidated at Fort Leonard Wood. Before that, officer training was conducted at Fort Belvoir Virginia.

In 1999, again as part of the Base Realignment and Closure process, Fort McClellan Alabama was closed, and the US Army Chemical Corps and Military Police Corps schools were transferred to Fort Leonard Wood, which was concurrently redesignated the US Army Maneuver Support Center.

In 2009, the US Army Maneuver Support Center was redesignated the US Army Maneuver Support Center of Excellence (MSCoE); the "center of excellence" designation was placed on almost all US Army training institutions.

Add it up, Engineer's spell explosives, Military Police spell assorted weapons and Chemical covers what the others don't. And, there was nobody home and we had a 53' box trailer and a forklift on the equipment trailer pulling the 3 phase generator. The Fort teaches CBRN so, we could get all the meters and whatnot we wanted.

It took two days of careful selection because we didn't want to come back. Fort Leonard Wood was half a state away from Butler. We did call home at night with the FT-857 but they didn't have news except that Dad and Alan had been to Harrisonville and gotten what we wanted and had started installing the sheeting with Honey and Stella's help. It was apparently going faster than we thought.

Correction, they had been laying out the sheeting but hadn't sealed the seams yet so maybe an estimate of six days was about right. They said they were planning on using water based rubber cement (Copydex). When I questioned their choice, I was informed that they tested it and it worked. Besides, they claimed, the weight of 12' of water on the seams would serve to close the seams tighter. Un-huh.

Our trip took a day down, two days salvaging and a day back. When we arrived home, we unhooked the forklift and thereby the generator and barely made the turn onto the drawbridge. There was water in the moat! Not much, about one inch, but it was filling. Dad and Alan hooked up to the forklift and generator and pulled them in and raised the drawbridge.

“It works! I'll be damned.”

“Probably because of all the cussing you’ve been doing. Man does that glue stink. It’s imported from the UK and smells like fish. But, it really holds well; which is surprising considering it is water based latex.”

“How much does the moat hold?”

“Each foot of water is ~39,600ft³ and one ft³ is 7.48 gallons so one foot is ~296,208 gallons. Your pump puts out 35 gallons a minute and a foot of water in the moat is ~8,263 minutes of pumping. Twelve feet of water will be 3,554,496 gallons or 475,200ft³. It should reach the 12 foot mark in about 70 days. That assumes a steady rate of flow from your well.”

“That’s ten weeks!”

“Yep, 70 days is 10 weeks or something over 2 months. Another way to look at it is about two inches a day. How did you make out at the Fort?”

“Like we said, the place was abandoned. We got everything we wanted and spares. Any new information on whatever is moving this way?”

“Not one word on the ham bands. However, it seems to have paused at the Mississippi River and in line with the Kansas state line. Hams in Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas and Louisiana are still on the air if they’re not close to the state borders.”

“Huh, it’s conundrum for sure. First contact should be from the west, it’s closer.”

“We won’t know until Missouri hams go silent.”

“True; and that still won’t tell us what IT is.”

“David, all we can do is to prepare for the worst and hope for the best. It would be nice to know what the worst is.”

“Let’s get some of the crew served weapons that we loaded last set up on the shelter roof. Scott and I were especially careful how we packed what we took after the Bentonville incident. The next things in are the weapons we picked up for the Butler residents. As soon as the crew served weapon are unloaded, we can transfer those with ammo and magazines to my pickup and I’ll run it into Butler. Who wants to ride shotgun with me?”

“Let Scott back you up and Alan and I can set up the weapons. What do you want up there?”

“I want a pair of Ma Deuces and a pair of M240s plus two crates of LAWs and sixty hand grenades on the roof. Give us about an hour to arm the residents of Butler.”

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“What do you want now?” Hank asked.

“We’ve been following something we’re having a problem explaining Hank. It started in Southern California and moved north to Seattle. At the same time, it started in Atlanta and moved north to northern Pennsylvania. Our first thought was some kind of biological weapon.

“Later, Scott pointed out that it seemed to be following major transportation routes, leading us to conclude it might be groups of organized outlaws. They stopped on the eastern side of the Mississippi and just west of the eastern border of Kansas. That leaves a strip of unaffected states including Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas and Louisiana.

“Early on, we made a trip to Fort Leonard Wood and borrowed a selection of individual weapons and ammo. When they seemed to hole up, we made a second trip and brought back a semi load of personal and crew served weapons and all the ammo we could haul. We have enough firearms, magazines and ammo to equip the entire community of Butler and we came in to distribute them.”

“We don’t need any stolen weapons.”

“The Fort was totally deserted, meaning what we got was salvage. The weapons are in the pickup and the munitions in the trailer. Surely there are enough veterans here to provide instruction to anyone who needs it. By the way, our moat is finished and filling so we’re entirely protected. In exchange for arming the community, the only thing we ask that no one mention our little 5 acre patch of Heaven.

“We really can’t keep anyone determined out, even with the moat. That’s means our best hope is slipping under their radar. If I can have your assurances that we won’t be mentioned, feel free to help yourself to the carbines, magazines, ammo, hand grenades and Light Anti-tank Weapons. If you have anyone who knows demolitions, we can supply some C-4, det cord and electric blasting caps.”

“No strings?”

“Just the one I mentioned. I won’t look kindly on being found out.”

“Ok, deal. Do you have any idea what we’re up against?”

“Not really; the evidence points to two legged rather than 4 legged varmints. We included two M2HB and two M240 machine guns in addition to the LAWs. We couldn’t find enough Interceptor Body Armor to go around. And the best we could come up with

was ballistic shields from the Military Police training group. We got the M9 bayonets for the M16s and M4 carbines. There was a small supply of M1014 Benelli M4 Super 90 shotguns with an assortment of shells.”

“Keep in mind that if they get close enough for you to need to use the bayonets, you’ve allowed them to get too close. Unfortunately, we couldn’t find any M9 pistols but did bring some 9mm and .45acp ball ammo.”

“What about our dozer and the Toolcat?”

“We’ll return them as soon as possible, God willing.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“We’ve been tracking this phenomenon for a while now. We started out by putting red pushpins in US map indicating contact with ham radio operators. After they began to go off the air, we replaced the red pins with black. We only recently realized that the pins follow major US highways or Interstates. We suspect they stopped where they are to regroup and resupply, but it’s only a guess.”

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Rather than waiting for *them* to come to us, we took a full complement of our weapons with ample supplies of ammo and headed for *them*. What we found was totally different from what we expected. There was no biological and the varmints were two footed, specifically US Military. We observed and confirmed that they were being resupplied. We really couldn’t tell if they were regrouping.

The underlying question remained unanswered, what were they doing? Both Scott and I were aware of the possibility of camps being set up to house the people being *rescued* by the military. On the other hand, the operation was strictly military with no indication of FEMA involvement. We decided to cross the border, traveling light with a pistol, shotgun and Super Match or M21.

We eventually located a camp filled with survivors. The camp wasn’t fenced and didn’t have any guard towers. The residents seemed to be allowed to come and go as they pleased. We identified mess facilities, a MASH unit and even a laundry facility. Hiding our weapons, we entered the camp for a closer inspection. The laundry facility was large with 18 washing machines and 18 dryers. Soap, bleach and fabric softener sheets were supplied gratis.

No one seemed to have any form of identification or pin to indicate they belonged in the camp. So, we decided to join them for lunch. Rather than MREs, the residents were served typical military fare. The housing was 16 person tents for singles and divided tents of the same size housing 2-3 families.

Everyone was unarmed, but they could check out personal weapons to go hunting. The weapons were stored under lock and key and the individual had to present a tag stub and ID to receive his/her weapon. When they returned to the camp, they turned in the weapon after cleaning it at the armory and were issued a replacement tag stub. With that information in mind, we crossed back into Missouri and returned to Butler. We finally asked someone, "What the Hell is going on?"

"The US Army, Marines and Air Force troops have been moving from the east and west coasts, assisting survivors. They're erecting open camps like this one. No strings, except one. They're afraid that Americans have read too much PAW fiction where the people are forced into FEMA Camps. Therefore to prevent having problems providing assistance, they've shut down all form of communications upon their arrival. The equipment is stored like the weapons, but unlike the weapons, can't be checked out. It will be returned when the east and west coast forces meet up."

"What did you find out?"

"It's a US military operation and is being well run. The folks are provided adequate accommodations, decent meals and are free to come and go. They have to check their weapons but can check them out when they leave the camp. They even have laundry facilities and laundry supplies are being furnished for free. They even have a MASH unit. Communications were shut down to avoid possible misunderstands of their actions."

"We should have 16" of water in the moat by tomorrow night. Give it another week and we'll have 30"."

"I'm not so sure we want to keep them out if they do show up. Is everything set in the event we do decide to keep them out?"

"About as far as we can take it, yes."

"I would like to see them hold off long enough to raise the water level to 72". We'll be there in 4 weeks. If we dump some compost into the moat, the incoming water should mix it fairly well with the water and no one will be able to visually tell how deep the moat is."

"Did you see any armor?"

"Bradley's but not Abrams. Still, the Bradley's have those 25mm chain guns and we'd have to surrender. I've seen what they can do and I'm not going to take them on. We've been flying by the seat of our pants, making one assumption after another. The facts we now have, while limited, suggest something else entirely so... what say we store the crew served weapons and stick with the individual weapons for the time being? Scott?"

“I agree.”

“Anyone who doesn’t agree?”

(silence)

“Where is the extra matériel stored?”

“It’s still in the box trailer David, we’ve run out of places to store any more of anything. We did sort it for ease of access and you two should take a minute or two and get familiar with where everything is in the trailer. We didn’t add that much stuff, but your lot was small to begin with and adding the 2½ acre pasture for the livestock didn’t really create additional living space for 14 people living here. Alan and I will move the crew served weapons and accoutrements back into the box trailer and lock it up. It does say Wal-Mart so maybe the Army won’t tumble to it containing weapons, ammo and explosives.”

“Your Dad and I built a walking bridge that can be lowered to allow a single file column or an individual to cross the moat. We should have thought of that earlier.”

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We began to add compost to the stream of water slowly filling the moat and it did muddy the waters somewhat. We didn’t get the four weeks I hoped for, but we did get two, bringing the water level in the moat to 44”. That lying SOB, Hank, couldn’t wait to tell the Army about our castle and moat and the day after they hit Butler, four UA HMMWVs were parked at the ramp for the drawbridge.

“Hello the house.”

“Hello yourself. Who is in charge of your group?”

“Lieutenant Pyle.”

“Who is the NCOIC?”

“Sergeant First Class Gomez. Lower the drawbridge.”

“Why?”

“We need to take a census and check out your acreage.”

“We can give you the census by radio.”

“We have information that leads us to believe you’ve been looting.”

“We haven’t been looting, but we have performed salvage operations. Looting is taking something you don’t need from someone in possession. Salvage is taking something you need that has been abandoned. Scavenging is going through someone’s trash to recover discarded items you can use.”

“Nonetheless, we need in. We’ll make the determination if the goods we find are loot, salvage or scavenged.”

“How? One man’s garbage is another man’s treasure. I don’t think so. We’ll lower the walking bridge and Sergeant Gomez can come in alone and conduct the census. Sergeant, are you familiar with the M21, M25, M107 and Mk15?”

“I am. LT, maybe we’d better do as they suggest, if they wanted to, they could protect this compound from a range of up to 1,500 and maybe 2,000 meters. The weapons are all precision sniper weapons. If they have those, there’s no telling what they might have.”

“Go ahead Sergeant, but we’ll cover you with the machine guns.”

“I wouldn’t LT; it would only take a couple of seconds to bring them to bear. These people probably fall into the class of those who prepare for the worst and hope for the best. There’s no telling what else they may have salvaged. Two are old enough to have served in ‘Nam and the younger guys in Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom. I’d give odds that at least one of them is sniper trained.”

“I don’t like it Sergeant Gomez. What if they take you prisoner?”

“Well, like you said, you have machine guns.”

“Watch your back.”

“I will sir, count on it.”

“Ok, it will be just me gentlemen. Armed or unarmed?”

“You can bring your M9 and an M4. Dad, lower the walking bridge. Sergeant Gomez, just take it nice and easy and no fast moves.”

Sergeant Gomez crossed the bridge when it was lowered and Dad raised it after he crossed. Honey handed him a sheet of 8½” by 11” paper containing all of the information pertaining to those currently residing on the acreage.

“Here you go Sergeant,” Honey said. “That’s the census data for the fourteen of us living here. It includes David and me and our three children, Scott and Stella also have three children. The seniors are my mother and father and David’s mother and father.”

“What’s with the castle?”

“It’s an aboveground bomb shelter Sergeant. The roof is accessible from the inside and the roof is set up to allow us to use it as a fighting position, if necessary. It’s heavily reinforced solid concrete block.”

“Had to use it much?”

“Once. Had some folks from Butler show up wanting their fair share of what we had. We collected their weapons and ran them off. The following day, we returned the weapons, a 55 gallon drum of stabilized gasoline and food for 125 people for a month. We also told them where they could get more fuel and so forth.”

“And recently, you armed them with military weapons. Fort Leonard Wood?”

“The Fort was abandoned.”

“It was only temporary. We haven’t done an inventory yet, how much are we missing?”

“The majority of what we took is what we used to arm the Butler residents. We kept a small selection of crew served weapons, M240s and M2HBs with tactical ammo for each.”

“What else do you have?”

“We acquired some Mk 211 on the black market together with some LAWs and assorted hand grenades. Scott is sniper qualified and did three tours in Iraq. I did one and a half tours in Iraq.”

“Get shot or IED?”

“IED. Ended up with 75% disability, but haven’t seen a check in a while.”

“They’re working on getting the VA pensions and Social Security back up, with VA pensions getting the highest priority. I won’t mention the weapons if I can avoid it; there’s been quite a bit of salvaging of military equipment. I feel like it’s a Second Amendment issue, the militia should be armed the same as the active duty military.”

“Is that LT green or does he have an idea what he’s doing?”

“He’s getting there, but he’s still a ways from first Lieutenant. He tends to be a hard ass. I keep telling him that if he keeps it up, he’s going wind up dead.”

“We haven’t had any word on the country since the war; what’s going on out there?”

“The military is establishing open camps for the locals and providing food, shelter and medical care. The best estimates we have are that the US went from a population of 300 million plus to less than 75 million. The strikes were divided between large military installations and large metropolitan areas. China is a third world county at the moment and North Korea no longer exists as a nation.

“The Middle Eastern countries pushed the Jews just too hard and the Israelis didn’t hold back. Anyone within range of their missiles or fighters who opposed them is gone. Some didn’t of course and they avoided the initial attacks. The word is they’re keeping their mouths shut to avoid Israeli ire. I got the information we needed so I better get going before the LT has a cow.”

“Dad, lower the walking bridge.”

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“What’s the word?”

“The US has seventy-five percent dead. We need to put crew served weapons back in place, not all of the soldiers are friendly. That Sergeant was all right but that Lieutenant could be trouble. I wonder if they collected the weapons from the residents of Butler.”

“David, if Gomez had his way, probably not. However I’ll give you ten to one odds the LT ordered the weapons collected.”

“That was what I was thinking Scott. We need to tie up any loose ends, like fuels, coal and anything we could run short of. I suspect our salvaging days are coming to an abrupt end.”

We managed to get 100 yards of coal from Montrose station before they locked it down. We also got enough propane to fill all of our tanks and provided a 10,000-gallon tanker of propane to our feed supplier along with 36,000-gallons of diesel and extra PRI-D. We essentially had a lifetime supply of most things and enough to last us until the country reestablished itself.

There was an ongoing military presence around the country until local state governments were again functioning.

Honey – Epilog

During the initial years after the war, life was hard. Despite the military presence, gangs appeared seeming out of the woodwork and made life miserable for many just trying to get along. The hit small towns and farms that were ill prepared for an attack. One would have thought that the gangs, which are typically associated with large metropolitan areas, would have vanished. They were like the cockroaches we had discussed earlier. By Presidential Decree, they were hunted down and eliminated with the military being judge, jury and executioner. When the majority of the trouble died down, the Decree was rescinded.

Many of the large metropolitan areas were beyond economical repair and they were abandoned with new cities built in their stead. Medium sized cities which had been spared attacks grew to become the new metropolitan centers.

Elections were held and vacant local, county, state and national seats filled. Washington D.C. had taken multiple strikes and the new seat of the national government was moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, closer to the geographical center of the lower 48 states, Lebanon, Kansas. Note, I said closer, not close to.

Our children grew up and despite early expectations didn't inter-marry. None of them settled down far from home, however. My Dad Don and Alan passed on first and my mother Ruth was next to go. Janice held onto the bitter end and succumbed to cancer at age 76. There were many cases of cancer, mostly among the elderly and persons who hadn't sheltered long enough.

Money was extremely tight in the days, weeks, months and years following the war. And, hard money was king. Each of the six children and their spouses ended up with a half section or larger of prime ground. Each household was well equipped when it came to those things necessary to see that they kept what they had.

We made few trips after the military made an appearance and bought additional firearms otherwise missing from our inventory including more Tac-50s, Super Match or M-21 rifles and Mossberg shotguns. We ran into a supply of Kimber .45ACP pistols, the Custom TLE/RL II. Nice. Scott got a dozen HK416s and eighteen HK417s with the longer barrels, giving us all the select fire 5.56 and 7.62 rifles we wanted or needed. Why not Glocks one might ask? They're fine pistols if your hands are large enough, but the 1911s were just enough smaller to be first choice and we couldn't find any SF models.