

Wickham's Bestiary of Occupied America

Hello, I'm Captain Adrian Wickham, formerly of NORAD and now an officer of the Cheyenne Mountain defense force. I've spent the better part of a year since the invasion travelling America gaining intelligence on the strategic situation, and I've run into some nasty situations. Since I've been fortunate enough to live through them all so far, my CO has asked me to put together a list of some of the monsters I've had to fight, and what you can expect from them.

Not all of this information is first hand, unfortunately, but anything that isn't is from sources that I trust. Still, it's safer not to take anything for granted, so look at this only as a guide please. I'd rather not hear that anyone died because they took my word as canon.

Artificers

The Artificer invaders appear to be from an environment quite different from ours. Every reported Artificer has been in some sort of environment suit, with a full face mask or helmet. They are about as tough to fight as a competent soldier, but they have some unusual technology, including exotic firearms, mechanized armor suits, and what appear to be personal force fields.

The Artificers have a pattern of attacking humans and attempting to capture them alive. Some people that have been rescued from them have been subjected to medical experiments, and vivisected human corpses have been found in areas they have used as bases.

Caramahz

The Caramahz are a common hazard now for travelers in any part of America. They are a primitive, savage race, grey skinned and horned. They seem to have a tribal social structure, and often war with other tribal groups, as well as anyone else they come in contact with. They seldom have weapons more complex than a sword or bow. While a skilled human soldier should be able to beat

You can say that again, Adrian. No offense to Wicky, folks, he tried hard, but he's got a certain...perspective. I marked this up with a little added info, to make it more complete, and then ran off a few copies myself. Hope it's useful.

*Good luck out there!
-Anna Verastin, San Francisco
Resistance Community, scout*

The Artificers' stuff may look like tech, but I've seen some taken apart, and I'm assured it shouldn't really work at all. Some people think those weird symbols on it are what really make it work, instead of batteries. I've also seen some of these guys without their helmets on, and with the same kind of symbols drawn on their faces. Maybe they're figuring out how to breathe our air.

one, they often travel in groups of half a dozen or more.

The Caramahz don't seem to be a major, independent race like the Dominators or Ghostwalkers, and many of the other Invaders use them as slaves and cannon fodder.

Dominators

The Dominator race could almost pass for human. The only sign that they are something else, are the veils that they seem to wear, covering the lower half of their faces. The veil is actually a part of the creature's body, and can't be removed. Many of them have some sort of caste markings on the veils, that look as though they have been tattooed on.

Dominators are so-called because they have strongly developed extra-sensory talents, making them very dangerous. They can inflict pain or crushing despair from a distance with the power of thought. Fortunately, few of them seem to be very skilled fighters, and they only take about the same degree of punishment as a human could.

These invaders often travel with humans, most of whom appear to be compelled in some way to serve them. Attempts to break this compulsion with hypnosis, counseling, or medication have so far failed.

Ghosts

Everyone has heard of ghosts, and by now most of us have either seen one, or felt the presence of something otherworldly. What isn't clear, is whether they actually are what they appear. It would be easy to assume that they are actually the spirits of departed humans, as they seem, but they may well be illusions created by the Ghostwalkers to trick us. Assuming that a ghost is actually the spirit of a deceased family member, and trusting it, can be very dangerous.

Regardless of their actual origin, ghosts seem to have some things in common. Typical ghosts have difficulty physically harming the living, or interacting with solid objects in any way. It takes a great deal of energy for them to even talk audibly or pick things up. However, they are able to draw strength from the attention of the living, particularly "sensitives" who can commu-

Most of the Caramahz are simple thugs, but you'll sometimes run into one bright enough to have learned some magic from one or another of the

major Invaders. If you're expecting to just mow them all down, a tribal leader with Warping can be a nasty surprise.

Plus, not all Caramahz tribes look the same. I think they've got an unstable genetic structure or something. The ones that live near radiation, use powerful magic, or have served another race for a long time take on new traits, and they can be a fun surprise too.

Sometimes these things come right up and attack, but just as often they come in and talk. They worship something called Rhysis, and they're looking for converts for their weird cult. I've heard of cult brainwashing before the invasion, but this is something of a totally higher order, and they don't handle "no" very well. They can kill you with their brains; hide, or shoot them on sight.

He's half right about this one. Some ghosts can change their shape, and might take the form of someone you trust to catch you off guard or trick you into helping them manifest. Others are the real thing. It's hard to tell which without talking to them, and even if you can manage that, then Wham! they have enough power to manifest. Nasty.

nicate with them, and if they gather enough energy they can manifest. Manifested ghosts can interact as though they were physical, including attacking people with waves of cold, bare-handed blows or claws, and levitated objects. Some are even eerie enough to cause harm or even death purely from fright. Obviously, giving any attention to a ghost of unknown origin is unwise.

Ghosts are also all tied to the world in some manner, either to an object, a location, or a person they knew while alive. Most of them have some purpose or mission that they want to accomplish, which seems to hold them here. Even if they manifest, and are confronted and destroyed, they seem to reform as long as their anchor or purpose remains intact. Helping a ghost accomplish its purpose, or destroying its anchor, may will sometimes cause them to “move on” and leave the living in peace.

Ghostwalkers

The Ghostwalkers are the most subtle of the foes we have in our catalogue. They can mimic quite a few abilities of ghosts, and are sometimes hard to tell from them. Worse, like some ghosts many of them can shapeshift; many of them take on human form while they are here. They also take on forms with a resemblance to animals with cultural associations toward death or dying, such as crows, jackals, sparrows, vultures, or hyenas. It’s likely that they have studied our folklore, and take these forms to frighten or intimidate.

We only know as much as we do about the Ghostwalkers because they have approached many people to offer them power in exchange for servitude. It saddens me to say that a good number of people have become collaborators, in exchange for access to Ghostwalking science, or out of self-preservation. A few of those have regretted their choice, and managed to escape or slip us information about their masters.

Ghostwalkers in combat can be very dangerous, due to their mastery of ghostly abilities. They are also elusive, able to become intangible or even escape into the Underworld, often without needing a Gate to do so. It appears that even when they are in human-seeming form, they are still vulnerable to techniques that specifically harm ghosts, so that may be one way to reveal their disguises.

He’s talking here mostly about the rational ghosts. They’re a minority, and if he hasn’t run into the other sort, he’s a lucky guy. The Ghostwalkers call the other sort spectres. Spectres are ghosts that have gone crazy, either from dying, or from whatever they go through in the Underworld. They’re completely mad, and most of them are incoherent, but they’re still smart and cunning. Their madness gives them great strength, and lets them twist reality around in ways that sane ghosts wouldn’t think to do. Manifested spectres are nasty. Stay clear of them, and don’t even talk to a ghost that acts too weird.

Some collaborators who have gotten away from the Ghostwalkers say that they aren’t all one race. Supposedly, there’s some alliance called the “Spectral Accord” that was formed by the original Ghostwalkers, with a whole bunch of different types of Invaders in it now.

Kudzu

The invader race that people have taken to calling the “Kudzu” appear to be animate plants. They do not seem to speak, but clearly have enough intelligence to fight tactically and support each other in combat. They act with a territorial imperative, and constantly seek to move outward and claim new areas, spreading like the plant they have been named after. While they are still expanding they can be vulnerable, but once they have claimed an area solidly they are extremely difficult to dislodge.

Kudzu fight mostly hand-to-hand with their branches and other natural weapons. Some of have various toxins and spores that they use in combat; anyone intending to fight them would be well advised to have anti-venoms available. They are fibrous and tough, but guns and conventional weaponry work against them. Fire hurts them significantly, but also sends them into a killing frenzy.

Mutants

Large areas of the country are now populated with mutated humans and altered animals. Some of these are creatures that have been twisted by Warping science. Others seem to have been mutated by the radiation from the nuclear strikes that hit the country during the invasion. The scientists at Cheyenne Mountain assure me that the sort of mutation I’m talking about isn’t scientifically possible, and that giant insects, humanoid animals, and other nastiness can’t actually be caused by radiation. My eyes and Geiger counter tell me otherwise though.

This sort of thing is most common near the hot zones around LA, Atlanta, and Chicago, but given the way the landscape is shifting around lately, they can show up pretty much anywhere. In addition to claws, pincers, carapaces, and whatever other natural weaponry they have, some of these creatures are still radioactive enough to cause harm to anyone near them. Some of them have even learned to direct the radiation as a weapon. Try not to come into direct contact with mutants, or you risk deadly infection.

Unlike a lot of the other monsters, these things don't like to come out at night. Probably they live off sunlight. If they show up in your area, kill as many as you can right away before they take hold, or you'll never get rid of them.

“Scientifically possible” isn't really an issue anymore. I don't know enough about these creatures to really add a whole lot here. He seems to be using “Mutant” as a catch-all, to lump together all the stuff we don't know anything about yet. Sloppy, maybe, but it's the best we can do for now.

Walking Dead

At first, a lot of us thought these things absolutely could not be real. I was never a big fan of movies, but even I saw hundreds of zombies on film over the years. How could that actually happen?

Then I saw them.

There's a lot of argument between people who have fought the walking dead as to what they actually are. Cheyenne Mountain scientists are convinced that they are not actually dead, but infected with an incurable virus that destroys their intelligence. Some other people think they are actual corpses brought back to life with an evil spell. Whatever caused their condition, they don't really feel any pain anymore. A lot of them want to eat live flesh, and at least some of them can transmit their condition to other people.

Individually, zombies aren't that great a threat to a trained soldier in a straight fight. They aren't very skilled fighters, and they don't have anything resembling human intelligence. They do have several distinct advantages though. They don't seem to feel pain at all, and can take quite a bit of punishment before they're incapacitated, and their touch can transmit the deadly virus that created them. Also, while not intelligent, they have an animal cunning, and will sometimes hide motionless waiting to ambush an unwary victim. Finally, it's not common to encounter a lone Walking Dead; groups of a dozen, or even hundreds or more, are the general rule, as if they're somehow drawn to each other.

If you have to engage the Walking Dead, I recommend killing them from range. Normal bullets can damage them, but not very much, so if you have grenades, fire, or explosive rounds, I suggest using them. If you are forced into hand-to-hand combat, try to take out one or more limbs; their limbs are just as vulnerable as a normal human's to disabling strikes.

Warpers

This race seems to be the one that invented, or at least practice, the science of "Warping." They look somewhat human, but their skin takes on tones that no human ever did, like stark white, gray, or light blue.

Spells that warp or freeze work pretty well on these, too, compared to bullets anyway. Disease and pain, not so much. Mental attacks? That's a tough one. Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Some of my friends think there are more than one kind of zombie, that just look a lot alike due to the walking around rotting theme.

Science? Right. We're talking magic here, guys. Warpers use raw chaos to change things around at their whim. Like, for instance, your intestines.

All of the warpers I've heard about have had obvious scarring or open wounds on their faces, some of them bad enough that they can be mistaken for walking dead. These wounds are often symmetrical, and sometimes look like symbols or runes.

Warpers seem able to alter their own bodies, and often have toughened flesh, claws, and other adaptations, which make them very effective in combat. One that I was forced to engage bounced bullets from its bare skin, destroyed half of a squad without apparent effort, and then walked away as if bored. I strongly advise against fighting Warpers unless you have no other option; we need to learn more about these creatures' weaknesses before we try to take them out.

These invaders often travel with support, in the form of humans or animals that they seem to have altered with Warping science for use as servants. These followers are fanatically loyal to their masters.

The word Adrian is looking for is "minions." And, you can never tell what these guys are going to do next. I was scrounging on a college campus once a couple of months ago with some friends, and one of these appeared right next to us, completely out of nowhere. Like, poof. It waved its hand at us, and the muscles in our legs knotted up bad, so that my face hit the floor. Couldn't even get up, nevermind run. Then, it casually asked us if we had found anything interesting to read while we were searching the library. I ended up handing over a couple of volumes of Britannica and a copy of Rosemary's Baby, and it thanked us politely, and walked off. Without fixing our legs, of course.