

Background to the Fortress Farm Story

All across America the one thing that people can agree on is...something just isn't right. For the first time in human history, we don't know how to feed ourselves. As a society we are now nine meals from chaos, and if tomorrow the grocery store was empty, what would we do to feed our families?

In the world of the Fortress Farm series, the entire world's electricity has shut off and those hypothetical grocery stores are now empty. Those who claimed to help the country now want the entire surviving world for themselves. What happens next is not just a story of the collapse of a fragile society, but a blueprint for how we might rebuild afterwards.

Fortress Farm Terms:

Solar Storms—Similar to the Northern Lights, waves of particles from the Sun illuminate the night sky all over the world. While not a catastrophe, the storms do cause inconveniences in a modern world built upon sensitive electronics. The world's economies are already ailing, and the drain of damaged electronic devices is hampering any attempt to jumpstart trade and innovation. In response, the US Government pushes through legislation known as The Pullback which will print trillions of new dollars to pay for grid updates. To pay for the new spending, all US military forces are withdrawn from overseas and onto just a few coastal bases, leading to the omnibus bill's name. To provide the necessary computing power to control the new network, the artificial intelligence system known as GRAPEVINE is tasked with monitoring the Solar Storms and protecting all electronic devices from its effects.



The Pullback – Omnibus spending bill that effectively gives a blank check to the Federal government to spend whatever they need to combat the Solar Storms. Partially paid for by eliminating the United States military, pulling back all troops from overseas and stationing those left in defensive bases surrounding Washington DC. The massive spending gets the support of both Conservatives and Progressives in Congress (Con-Pro Coalition) by steering rivers of money into the districts of prominent leaders. The bill also concentrates all money into select urban areas, bypassing all rural communities.

GRAPEVINE – Artificial Intelligence finally gets its big break with funding from the Pullback Bill. Touted as the solution to all electro-magnetic problems caused by the Solar Storms, a massive computer brain called GRAPEVINE reaches out from its Silicon Valley home, taking control of any and all electronic devices in the world. Spreads both by hardwire connection and also via WiFi. There is nothing unaffected unless specifically built to be segregated from the world wide network.

Regional Capitals— As another token spending cut to those concerned about the debt, The Pullback eliminates all local government as well as state capitals, replacing them with Regional Capitals located in major population centers. Due to the massive amounts of new money flowing into the Regional Capitals, people flock there from smaller cities and rural areas to escape high unemployment.

Ratbars—Short for ration bars, these are the standard issue food source for all but the wealthiest in society. Each week, the nutritionally balanced ration bars are distributed to the general population from the last remaining major retailer; **Get-Mart**. Government run warehouses distribute the ratbars to the retail centers, making control of those facilities akin to controlling the food supply. Cash is no longer printed, and all food and supplies are purchased with a device known as a **Wristband**, which provides access to an individual’s digital wallet. Wristbands also provide your doctors with health monitoring on a real time basis allowing the ratbar with the appropriate vitamins and calories to be assigned. Without a Wristband, you cannot legitimately purchase any item or service. A thriving black market exists in major cities for real food in modern day speakeasies referred to as supper clubs, providing a source of income for farmers who don’t live in the cities. Many of these connections provide the basis for post-Reset alliances.

Great Reset – The night the entire electrical grid, internet and communications ceased to function. After the Great Reset, a literal Dark Age falls across the world, leaving billions of people without access to food, fresh water, heat or security.

Biofuel – Fuel made from organic materials. Ethanol and soy diesel are the two most widely known biofuels in America before the reset. Because of economic pressures and the relocation of most of the population to densely populated city centers, less vehicle fuel is needed leading to many of these facilities to be closed before the Reset. The members of the Shelby County Cooperative, the precursor for the Okaw Valley Self Defense Cooperative (**SDC**), use on-farm biofuel refineries to create their own economy. Most diesel engines can easily be modified to run biofuel. Allowing residents of the SDC to have heat and power after the Reset shuts off the main electrical grid.

Fortress Farm – While the small town residents of the defense cooperative (**SDC**) retreat into **School Shelters** for defense and resource conservation, the more remote farms are still vulnerable to bandit attacks. Utilizing the multi-story concrete towers formerly used as grain elevators, the SDC creates Fortress Farms all over the prairie. Each silo has reinforced concrete walls several feet thick, providing enough protection to withstand even an F5 tornado. Surrounding earthen walls are bolstered by large drainage tiles from a local concrete plant. In the event of an attack, residents can retreat inside the walls. At night, all residents sleep in the concrete towers, safe from anything short of heavy artillery. The basic defenses for a Fortress Farm can be created in just a few days, which combined with School Shelters provide protection for every Okaw resident.



School Shelters – Offering a large gathering place that is easily defended, large school buildings are quickly commandeered by the SDC for use as living quarters. Hospitals and Churches also function this way. Built strong, these structures offer centralized food preparation and each classroom can be assigned to families as living quarters. Adults can leave the structure during the day to forage, build and tend gardens knowing their children are safe in a familiar place. At night, the facility provides a place for meeting and common defense. The Fortress Farm/School Shelter system are replicated in each area that joins the SDC.

Quarterbushels – The hard currency used in the Okaw Valley SDC after the Reset. Each Quarter coin, formerly the twenty five cent piece in US currency, represents one quarter bushel of soybeans. This means of exchange

becomes widespread throughout the surviving communities of the Okaw. Demand is so high for the coins that certain industrious individuals make salvage trips into the cities, where some coins are still hidden in old bank vaults. Because of the large volumes needed, paper scrips soon supplement the coins, but the term still remains. *i.e. That vehicle is worth about 1500 quarterbushels*

Wizards – Rural America is still populated by a generation of retired engineers from the major industrial companies that once were headquartered there. In the Okaw, these men and women are mostly veterans of Caterpillar, John Deere, and the power plants that fed the larger urban centers. Both by training and birth they are true mechanical geniuses. Many are gentlemen farmers and use their time making improvements to what they consider the modern world's substandard quality of machining. Even before the Reset, they are tasked with helping to make cooperative biofuel refineries work. After the Reset, their expertise allows the Okaw to create machines to defend themselves from larger more powerful forces that would destroy them.

Snapping Turtles – In the aftermath of the Reset, the SDC realizes they'll have to make salvage trips into city ruins to find spare parts and other important items they cannot yet produce on their own. After several disastrous trips into dangerous areas, the **Wizard** engineering corps of the SDC design armored trucks to protect the salvagers during their travels. The odd shaped vehicles are dubbed Snapping Turtles, reflecting both their shape and the powerful bite their weapons proved. Also called Mark 1s in a nod to the original tanks of World War 1.



Mark 2 (Rhino) – For heavier armor, the Wizards soon discover that the multitude of bulldozers around their rural area can be armored. While much slower than Snapping Turtles, the Mark 2 is nearly unstoppable against anything short of a tank or RPG. Because they are too slow for salvage missions, each Fortress Farm is assigned several Mark 2s to use for farming. The heavy armor and weaponry prevent bandits from attacking the otherwise exposed farm workers.



Razorback – Technically referred to by the Wizards as the Mark 3, the SDC troops call their ultimate weapon the Razorback (so called because of the ridges running down the back of the machine used for cooling the diesel engine cocooned inside steel plates). But the odd appearance is anything but funny to the enemies of the SDC. A purpose built weapons platform built off of the tracked chassis of a track hoe, the Razorback can rotate its weapons 360 degrees while still on the move. Most have a crew of two, one main gunner and one driver. Expensive and difficult to build, the Razorback is nowhere near as numerous as the Turtle or the Mark 2. Most are held back in packs, to be used in the event of a New America invasion.



RedHawkRepublic.com

Major Midwest societies after the Great Reset (state names left for geographical reference)



- 1. Okaw Valley Self Defense Cooperative (later known simply as the SDC, and the core territory of the future Red Hawk Republic)** — The SDC began as a cooperative of farms and small towns united by their biofuel and food sources. Because of high unemployment and neglect, the remaining locals attempt to form their own economy even before the Great Reset crashes the electrical grid. While money flows like water into the cities, small towns struggle to survive. After the Reset, the informal farm cooperative is well positioned to transition to a self-defense force. A group of retired engineers known as the Wizards help the farmers of the SDC create machines for food and fuel production as well as defense from outlaws known as Ditchmen. Fortress Farms are established throughout the country side, built around the soaring concrete grain elevators present every few miles throughout the prairie. With a safe base of operations, and expertise in fuel and food production, the Okaw Valley SDC becomes a shining example of how to rebuild in the new Dark Ages. Primary post-Reset technologies are mechanical and organic, not electrical, to prevent interference from the still present Solar Storms. Shelby County is the heartland of the SDC and is home to the families of Founder Phil Hamilton and Sherriff Clark Olsen.
- 2. Old Main College**—Before the Great Reset, Senator Julia Ruff and her family returned to become President of Old Main College, a private institution that had once been a public university in eastern Illinois. Under her leadership, Old Main invested in Agriculture faculty (Applied Sciences), providing their local community with expertise in decentralized food production. Ruff's connections established while serving as a US Senator help funnel money from the The Pullback spending bill into Old Main; a benefit counterbalanced by the federal spies in her faculty that track her every move. Old Main Applied Sciences faculty and SDC members work together before the Reset to create biofuel, leading to a fast alliance in the post collapse chaos.

- 3. New America**— Headquartered on the former campus of Illinois University (the entire university system in Illinois was combined into one as a cost saving measure, initiating the name change), New America is led by Colonel Darien Walsh. Colonel Walsh is a veteran of many tours in the Sandbox (Middle East) theater of operations for the United States Army. The Pullback omnibus bill removes funding for the military, leading to the consolidation of all branches and integration of units into other government departments. With political connections, Walsh is able to keep his base open in the midst of mass closures. Immediately after the Reset, Walsh seizes civilian authorities and treats the surrounding area as a tribal area to be pacified. Through his organization, modeled after the Legions of Rome, and grand plan for a reunified America, Walsh rapidly expands his area of influence. He uses massive stashes of MRE (Meals Ready to Eat) leftover from overseas operations to influence communities that survive the Reset, causing most to join New America. Those that resist peaceful overtures are assimilated by force. Walsh and his allies are the first organized threat to the Okaw Valley Self Defense Cooperative and Old Main.
- 4. ARK**—Tony Diamante and his law firm R.K.A., better known as ARK and made up in large part by his family, get fabulously wealthy from channeling Pullback spending through their allies in government and construction. The Diamante's are electronics experts, and have suspicions that the artificial intelligence now controlling the country's economy and electrical grid may not be as benevolent as the masses think. Using their profits to build firewalls around their own onsite supercomputer, Tony and his Peacekeeper security forces are well prepared to act when the lights go out on society. Quickly moving to establish control, Tony eliminates the leadership of his rival law firms and brings their organizations under his. Peacekeepers then create a safe zone in the skyscrapers that made up downtown St. Louis, allowing the rest of the surrounding area to destroy itself in an orgy of violence. Once on the opposite side of the law, the Diamantes now *become* the law after establishing a modern feudal system in the ruins of a once great city. Pre-Reset connections providing black market food deliveries lead ARK and the SDC to become allies despite their radically different backgrounds and forms of government.
- 5. Blackhawk Confederation**— Post-Reset, a tenuous collection of Iowa towns along the Mississippi River band together for trade and self-defense. While the participating towns make it through the initial collapse better than most, outlaws and bandits living in the unpopulated areas raid the survivors continuously, bleeding the resources needed to establish a strong civilization.
- 6. The Grange**—Vast in territory but sparse in population, The Grange exists more as an idea than an actual society. Due to the lack of long range communications, communities that agree to the terms of the Grange can only interact via messenger. Most major population centers cease to exist, replaced by large ranching centers where beef rules the economy. Security and economic pressures make continued existence difficult, leading to a closer relationship with ARK who provides strong leadership to the otherwise stubborn independent ranch owners.
- 7. Northern Caliphate (Sunni)** - The African immigrant community in the Minneapolis area suffers less than most when modern conveniences evaporate after the Reset. With strong religious ties and a powerful Islamic leader the Somalis form a new Caliphate that encompasses most of Minnesota by the second year post-Reset. Their expansion is checked by the Great Lakes Republic in what was once Wisconsin, the Provincial Canadian Government based in Thunder Bay, and the Blackhawk Confederation. Believing the Reset to be a sign from Allah, the Northern Caliphate allies with the Shia Muslim community of Michigan to wage Jihad against any they consider infidels.
- 8. Northern Caliphate (Shia)** - Arising from the Muslim communities that dominate eastern Michigan at the dawn

of the Reset. Shia leaders assume that the collapse of America is the sign from Allah heralding the arrival of the Twelfth Imam, a Messiah that will lead Muslims of the world to victory over all others. Eventually, the Northern Caliphate exerts tremendous pressure on the Great Lakes Republic from east and west. Small towns are converted or killed until they butt up against New America's Legions in northern Indiana.

- 9. Great Lakes Republic**—Tough as nails farmers and outdoorsmen of rural Wisconsin band together in the aftermath of the Reset. Early success establishing a safe and prosperous community is halted when the first Northern Caliphate Jihadists out of Minneapolis appear. After making early contact with other free peoples, the GLR is soon also cut off in the south by New America. Squeezed from multiple sides, those who can begin to flee from the approaching Caliphate soldiers, known to them as "Jijis". Faced with impossible choices, many become refugees in New America territory, where they are forced to become provisional soldiers in exchange for food and safety. Others stay in their homes and fight, with most moving out to the islands of the Great Lakes where it becomes nearly impossible for the Jijis to reach them in sufficient numbers.
- 10. Vincennes**— The overnight collapse of all electrical power and communication found one of the last remaining whole units of US Marines making the trip from their former base in Texas to their new home in the Federal District (what was once Washington DC). Camped just outside of the small city of Vincennes Indiana that night, the next morning brought quick action from General and his men. General convinced civilian authorities that the situation was serious and not just a temporary inconvenience. While retaining civilian control, the mayor and city council quickly signed over all security matters to the Marines. In short order, the General himself became the de facto government. A form of martial law remained in effect, though once citizens realized the horrors of what was happening outside the protective umbrella of one thousand highly trained and well-armed Marines, little dissent was present. The Wabash River separates Vincennes controlled area from Little Egypt, the river being the only barrier to all out religious war between the two (Vincennes is strictly secular and Little Egypt is a form of theocracy). Both New America and the Okaw/Old Main alliance are actively courting Vincennes.
- 11. Little Egypt (later renamed Grand Shawnee)** - While not a formal government, communities that make up Little Egypt agree to live by the words of the Ten Commandments. Believing the Great Reset to be God's judgment on the evil and decadence that had seized America, Little Egypt residents, soon known by the outsiders as "Buckles" (Buckle of the Bible Belt) adhere to a more strict interpretation of the Old Testament. A simplified Bible is produced and considered simply "The Testament". Followers are quite adamant about their beliefs, leading more secular societies like ARK and Vincennes to ban Buckles from entering their territory. Little Egypt is considered an ally of the Okaw Valley SDC, but a source of tension between them and other allies. The leader of Old Main, Julia Ruff, is tasked with helping Little Egypt focus on creating a functioning Post-Reset society.
- 12. Chicagoland**—Little is known about the fate of the great metro that once served as the Regional Capital for the Midwest. Tens of millions of people are thought to have perished there in the aftermath of the Reset. Rumors are trickling in that a charismatic leader has risen to consolidate the survivors under a united banner. Also, there are some who say that the Northern Caliphate is working with this mystery man and many Jijis believe he is the Twelfth Imam because of the power he possesses. If just five percent of the Chicagoland population still survives, the free peoples will be vastly outnumbered. All that is really known is that a powerful force is building in the former western suburb of Chicago known as Aurora, where the Imam's followers get their name.
- 13. The Thirteens**—Known for their symbol, thirteen stars on the old American flag, this group of survivalists from

the area known as the Great Redoubt (Idaho) spread out to help rural communities survive. Not much is known about the Thirteens but they are clearly an enemy of the Northern Caliphate, helping keep their expansion in check. Thirteens operate more as advisors to small groups, not attempting to force ideology or systems on anyone. They are led by a family named Rawles.

Other groups present in various Fortress Farm volumes:

- Jenkins family—A strong family unit living in the Federal District. When the Reset happens, they band together with their Church and extended family to take over a century old brick school building which they turn into a fortress. Led by Lamar and Charlotte Jenkins, along with Lamar’s former boss, the Jenkins try to restore some form of civilization to their neighborhood.
- Fruit of the Valley (Also referred to as The Assembly)—Rowan Shayam, the man who created the artificial intelligence system known as GRAPEVINE, also establishes Continuity: a faith that believes a person’s Profile can live on the Network forever. Following a dogma that allows improvement of your Profile through a system called Progressions, only worthy Profiles will make the cut. His faith is tested when the network crashes, but his partner Angela and other followers help him see the path and he begins to expand the faith throughout the survivors of Northern California. Followers of Continuity now await the Awakening, the moment when the Network is restarted and power returns.
- Secretary of the Interior Herman Johnson—Once a professor at Stanford, Johnson is the real power behind President Aguilar and Speaker of the House Reed. He also holds the reins of the secret followers of Continuity, of which Aguilar and Reed are both recent converts.
- GRAPEVINE—The artificial intelligence system tasked with saving modern life from the Solar Storms affecting the world’s economies. GRAPEVINE and The Pullback spending bill that pays for it create a massive bubble in urban living standards that can never be paid for. But the debt is a moot point after an apparent glitch in the system puts the entire world’s computers to sleep and ushers in the new Dark Ages.
- Ditchmen—There are some who see the Reset as a chance to take advantage of others. Criminals, non-medicated psychopaths or just those who have always harbored resentment to civilization take to the unpopulated rural areas. From there, they band together like packs of wild dogs, raiding and pillaging the unprotected. Millions of square miles throughout the Midwest give shelter to clusters of these savages who lose a bit more of their humanity with every murder and theft. Okaw Valley SDC deputies coin the Ditchmen name, because of how the bandits use the drainage ditches cutting across farm fields to travel unseen.
- Rateaters—The same psycho-type as Ditchmen, Rateaters live in the ruins of cities instead of rural areas.
- Gangstars— A Pre-Reset criminal organization that pulls the meanest and brightest gang members into a mafia type structure. Known to have many politicians and bureaucrats on their payroll, the Gangstars are well poised to seize control of cities when the chaos of the Reset hits. Also major producers of Syn, the synthetic drug that allows minds to be altered and easily influenced.



RedHawkRepublic.com