

It begins here, with [Voices from Below and the Long Stairs](#). Thanks to [+Benjamin Baugh](#) for the inspiration.

In this version of the world of Project Long Stair, the emphasis will be on action adventure spyjinks upstairs. My players read this blog, so I'll keep out the details, but it's going to look a little like this:

A breach into the long stairs has emerged in [LOCATION REDACTED]. [WARLORD OR CRIMINAL ELEMENT REDACTED] appears to have sent agents into the breach at least once. The utter destruction of [WARLORD'S ENEMY] three days ago in a way indicative of the use of basement tech suggests that [WARLORD] is now in control of powerful [BASEMENT TECH]. Your team of Long Stairs veterans has been assembled to neutralize [WARLORD], recover [BASEMENT TECH], and close the breach, conducting a veil out to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence of the breach in this region.

Rules will be D&D 5e (with modern backgrounds and weapons added, see below for details). Thank you [+Mike Mearls](#) and team.

Scenario structure will steal liberally from [+Robin Laws's The Esoterrorists](#) and [+Kenneth Hite's Night's Black Agents](#). A reskinned version of The Ordo Veritas will stand in for the benevolent international conspiracy that is trying to contain these breaches (pp. 35-43 of the Esoterrorists 2nd edition, for those reading along at home). Modern firearms and armor and gun rules pull from [Spycraft 2.0](#) by [+Alex Flagg](#), Scott Gearin, and [+Patrick Kapera](#) to some extent, albeit greatly simplified. I'll have a copy of the Spycraft 2.0 handy for its incredible lists of cool equipment. I'll just make on the fly rulings as necessary to use them.

So take that mix of inspirations and resources, stir in GI Joe and classic Dungeons & Dragons and Street Fighter and action movies. That's where we start.

Let's talk about how D&D 5e will serve for this and about characters. (This all assumes you've read at least the first post in the [Voices from Below and the Long Stairs](#) thread.)

So the world is like that.

Everyone who hasn't been downstairs... in fact, everyone who hasn't acclimated to the downstairs, been infected by it, everyone else in the world is 0 level. That will mean almost every single NPC in the world will have stats like this:

Regular People

Abilities: 3d6 (in order or assigned, depending on how I feel like making the NPC or whether it's a non-acclimated character played by a player)

Backgrounds: Each character has a background, which provides the usual two skills, two tool proficiencies, and one trait granted to a background in D&D 5th edition. In addition, military and espionage backgrounds may provide additional weapon and armor proficiencies, listed in the category of "Military Training." This goes beyond what a background provides in D&D, but it is a useful accompaniment for the kind of modern era action adventure heroes I'm looking for here. In practice, for NPCs (as well as relevant PC activities), I'll probably treat a Background kind of like a cliché from [+S. John Ross's Risus](#), with a flat bonus to reflect the character's level of competence. This bonus will range from 1-4.

Hit Points: 1d6 + Con bonus (if any)

No classes or class levels for characters who haven't been downstairs.

The PCs, of course, will have been downstairs. They're veterans of the Long Stair. They'll have class levels just like any other D&D 5e character. For the one shot, I'm thinking I'll go with level 3 or level 5. (I'll have to see the Basic pdf first, which will come very soon now.) Importantly, the proficiency bonus does apply to every skill or trait the character is proficient in. It doesn't add to the competence. You just take the higher value.



Some Long Stair veterans prefer more archaic weapons.

PCs (and other Long Stair Veterans)

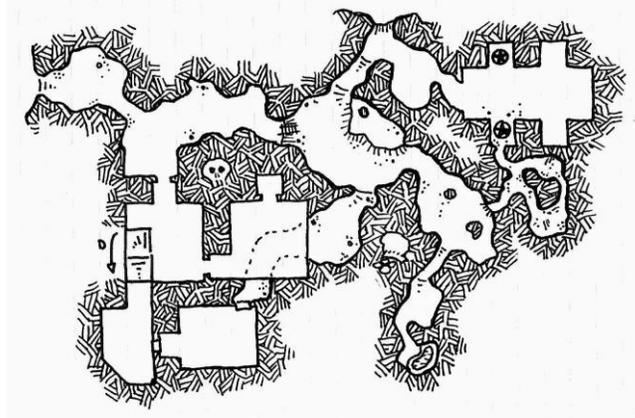
1. **Abilities:** 4d6 drop lowest, assign. (Being downstairs changes you.)
2. **Backgrounds:** Choose a background from the list below. The background works just like every other background in D&D 5.
3. **Race:** Human. Add the human racial features to your character as well.
4. **Class:** Roll 1d4 to determine whether your character acclimated as a Fighter, Cleric, Rogue, or Wizard. Once the Player's Handbook is out I'll expand this to include all the classes for future one-shots, of course.

The order above is important. Players should assign attributes based on background before you roll for class.

The backgrounds below all contain an additional "Military Training" line. This does make them more powerful than other backgrounds in the default game. This is intentional and is meant to support action adventure type gameplay.

Here are the backgrounds:

Architect: Specialist in basement architectural, layout, habitation, and xenotechnological distribution patterns. Architects contribute to a shared mapping database including common recurring basement geomorphic patterns as well as a complete database of known Dyson Class Stairwells. Architects serve as scouts during missions in the basement or in breached stairwells.



Even a small Dyson Class Breach must be treated with caution.

Note: The player of an architect will be given a folder containing images of the layouts of known Dyson Class Stairwells -- that is, a folder filled with copies of [+Dyson Logos's maps](#) or a copy of [Dyson's Delves I](#) and/or [Dyson's Delves II](#) (print copies via [Lulu](#)). Any time the party enters a breach or other stairwell, it's up to the player to match the layout of the place they are traversing with one of the known maps. Once they identify which map they're working with, they can use that to guide the party through the dungeon.

Skills: Arcana, Perception

Tools: Dyson Class Delve Database, Climbing Gear

Trait: Wanderer (Basement)

Military Training: Moderate Body Armor (Tactical Armor), Small Arms

Caver (Special Environment Specialist Terrestrial): Specialist in natural cavern environments, xenofoms, and threats.

Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics

Tools: Caving Gear

Trait: Wanderer (Caves)

Military Training: Partial Body Armor (Tactical Vest), Handguns

Cleaner: Specialist in cover ups and veil outs following Long Stair breaches upstairs. This specialization includes training in psychological and media ops. Cleaners must have Long Stair experience even though most of their work is carried out upstairs.

Skills: Deception, Persuasion

Tools: Veil-Out Kit

Trait: Contact

Military Training: Partial Body Armor (Tactical Vest), Handguns



A diver hauls an escaped xenofom up from an undersea breach.

Diver (Special Environment Specialist Aquatic): Specialist in aquatic environments, xenofoms, and threats.

Skills: Athletics, Nature

Tools: SCUBA / Diving Gear, Speargun

Trait: Wanderer (Aquatic)

Military Training: Partial Body Armor (Tactical Vest), Small Arms

Field Analyst: Long stair data collection and analysis specialist. Some specialize in field investigations downstairs. Others specialize in investigations upstairs, tracking down unauthorized Basement tech and Long Stair breach points.

Skills: Arcana, Investigation

Tools: Digital Surveillance Equipment, Portable Xenochem Lab

Trait: Researcher

Military Training: Partial Body Armor (Tactical Vest), Handguns

Medic: Combat medic. Medics assigned to the basement train and prepare not only to deal with standard combat trauma but also with the special dangers posed by basement xenofoms.

Skills: Medicine, Nature

Tools: Medical Kit, Anti-Toxins

Trait: "I Owe You One"

Military Training: Moderate Body Armor (Tactical Armor), Small Arms



[A negotiator should keep extensive field notes.](#)

Negotiator (Xeno-Ethologist): Specialist in both sapient and non-sapient xenofom behaviors and sociability. Trained in techniques for communication and negotiation with sapient xenofoms. Expert in xenofom biological and behavioral traits.

Skills: Insight, Persuasion

Tools: Xenofom Database

Languages: Lingua Infera (colloquially known to veterans of the stair as "Chaotic")

Trait: Friends in Low Places

Military Training: Moderate Body Armor (Tactical Vest), Small Arms

Soldier: Fire team special operations soldier. Common roles in a fire team include *rifleman*, *automatic rifleman*, *grenadier*, and *fire team leader*. The rifleman is the standard fire team member and gains an additional +1 with Rifles. The automatic rifleman carries a squad automatic weapon and has proficiency in Machine Guns. The grenadier is armed with an indirect fire weapon and has proficiency with Grenade Launcher. The fire team leader is the operational commander for combat operations and can come from any of the above specializations.

Skills: Athletics, Perception

Tools: Moderate Body Armor (Tactical Armor), Small Arms

Trait: Military Rank

Military Specialist Training: Grenades and one additional proficiency or specialty, as noted above.

Sapper (Combat Engineer): Specialist in combat constructions and demolitions, including the destruction of the diverse hazards (colloquially known as "traps" to many soldiers and agents) of the basement.

Skills: Perception, Sleight of Hand

Tools: Demolitions/Explosives Kit

Trait: Life or Death

Military Training: Full Body Armor (EOD Suit), Small Arms

Search and Rescue Inferus Trooper: Specialist in rescue and recovery down below. When things go horribly wrong, these are the soldiers who get down there and pull you out.

Skills: Athletics, Medicine

Tools: Emergency Medical Equipment, Para- and Rapid Descent Gear

Trait: "I Owe You One"

Military Training: Partial Body Armor (Tactical Vest), Small Arms

Because the Background is chosen but the class is rolled randomly, yes, this does mean that you could roll up a "Negotiator" who is acclimated to Fighter. Or a Soldier acclimated to Wizard. This doesn't mean your soldier won't also be a badass. As a soldier, you would have the Small Arms tool proficiency and the Moderate Body Armor proficiency, and you would have 3d6 HD at 3rd level + Con mods (which you probably have, since you're a soldier). With most NPCs being regular people, you're still a competent soldier even if your class is wizard.

Veterans of the stair are heroic upstairs, though they do have to be careful not to create new breaches by doing the impossible.

Things could get hinky downstairs or when dealing with escaped basement dwellers, of course.

And Also Some Gear

Equipment: Modern Body Armor

Partial Body Armor (30% coverage, can be worn beneath clothes)

AC 13 + Dex modifier

Examples: *Tactical Vest (military), Correction Vest (prison), Duty Vest (standard law enforcement), Low-Profile Armor (used by bodyguard and security personnel)*

Moderate Body Armor (40-60% coverage, meant to protect against military grade threats)

AC 15 + Dex modifier (Max 2)

Examples: *Tactical Jacket, Modular Tactical Armor, Motorcycle Suit*

Full Body Armor (90-100% coverage, meant for specific high-danger situations)

AC 18, STR 15, Stealth Disadvantage

Example: *EOD Suit (bomb squad), Riot Gear*

WEAPONS



SMALL ARMS

Handguns (Light, one-handed)

Holdout Pistol 1d6 Piercing, Single-Shot, 15/75 ft

Service Pistol 1d10 Piercing, Single-Shot, 25/250 ft

Service Revolver 1d6+1 Piercing, Single-Shot, 25/250 ft

SMGs (One-handed)

Light SMG 1d6 Piercing, Imprecise, Single-Shot, Burst, Full-Auto, Light, 20/200 ft

Heavy SMG 1d10 Piercing, Single-Shot, Burst, Full-Auto, 30/300 ft

Rifles (Heavy, two-handed)

Bolt-Action Rifle 3d6 Piercing, Single-Shot, Accurate, 200/2000 ft

Semi-Automatic Rifle 3d6 Piercing, Single-Shot, 150/1500 ft

Assault Rifle 3d6 Piercing, Single-Shot, Burst, Full-Auto, 100/1000 ft

Shotguns (Heavy, two-handed)

12 Gauge Shotgun (slug) 2d12 Piercing, Imprecise, Single-Shot, 30/150 ft

12 Gauge Shotgun (shot) 4d6 Piercing, Imprecise, Single-Shot, 30/150 ft

HEAVY WEAPONS

Machine Guns (Heavy, two-handed)

Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW, infantry use) 3d6 Piercing, Burst, Full-Auto, 200/2000 ft

General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG, fixed/braced) 2d10 Piercing, Burst, Full-Auto, 200/2000 ft

Heavy Machine Gun (HMG, vehicle use) 3d10 Piercing, Burst, Full-Auto, 300/3000 ft

Special Weapons (Heavy, two-handed)

Flamethrower 2d6 Fire, 15/75 ft

Grenade Launcher 4d8 Explosive, Armor Piercing, 40/400 ft (On a miss, the grenade lands in one of 8 directions, 5-20' away if fired at short range or 5-30' away if fired from greater than short range)

Rocket Launcher 4d12 Explosive, Armor Piercing, 50/500 ft (On a miss, the grenade lands in one of 8 directions, 5-20' away if fired at short range or 5-30' away if fired from greater than short range)

GRENADES

Grenades, Thrown (On a miss, a grenade lands in one of the 8 adjacent directions, 5-10' away)

Concussive Grenade 8d4 Explosive 15/60 ft

Flash & Bang Grenade Roll 4d8 tp determine save DC for Flash & Bang 15/60 ft

Fragmentation Grenade 4d10 Explosive 15/60 ft

Tear Gas Grenade Con Save (DC) or be blind and choking for 1d6 minutes, 1d4 rounds onset time.

When blinded and choking, character takes disadvantage on all actions and must make a Con save each round he wants to take any action other than cough, retch, choke, and try to mitigate the effects of the tear gas. 15/60 ft

EXPLOSIVES

Charge, Breaching 2d6 Explosive, Armor Piercing

Charge, Satchel 5d10 Explosive

Mine, Anti-Personnel 3d8 Explosive

Mine, Anti-Tank 3d10 Explosive

Plastic Explosive, 1/4 lb 6d6 Explosive

Weapon Qualities

Accurate: If a round is spent aiming, attacks with this weapon may be made with advantage even if the shot is taken at a distance beyond the short range value.

Armor Piercing: These weapons ignore non-magical damage reduction.

Burst: This weapon may be fired in burst mode.

Explosive: Dex save for 1/2 damage and to move out of the center of the blast. Con save or be stunned for 1d6 rounds.

Flash & Bang: Dex save for 1/2 damage and to move out of the center of the blast. Fort save or be blinded for 1d6 rounds and stunned for 1d6 rounds. All damage is temporary and is recovered with a short rest.

Full-Auto: This weapon may be fired in full-auto mode.

Imprecise: Grants Disadvantage to any attacks made on targets within 5 ft. of allied characters or creatures".

Single Shot: This weapon may be fired in single-shot mode.

Other Gun Things



Burst Fire: Use three shots of ammo if your gun has a burst fire setting and five rounds if it simply has full-auto. Gain advantage on your attack roll. Advantage from burst fire alone does not license a Rogue's "Sneak Attack."

Cover Fire: Name the character you are covering and identify your field of fire. Enemies in your field of fire take disadvantage to attack that character.

Suppressive Fire: Name a square / space / location you are riddling with suppressive fire. Any enemies who pass through that space take disadvantage that turn & you get an attack roll against them when they enter the space.