

DEADLANDS

SHOOT OUT AT CIRCLE-R CORRAL

BY JOHN GOFF

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Shootout at the Circle-R Corral

The Iron Men plague Kempe County's financial establishments. This gang of bank robbers relies on an array of gizmos and weird science creations to give them a decided edge over any small-town law dogs that might oppose them. Time to call in a posse, amigo.

This adventure is recommended for characters of Seasoned Rank or higher.

Although this adventure is set in "Kempe County," moving it elsewhere is as simple as changing the place names, Marshal.

Ropin' in the Posse

The Iron Men have been so successful of late, there's a growing bounty on the heads of the gang's unknown leader and any of its members. Bounty hunters or concerned citizens might need no further incentive beyond that to poke their noses into the gang's territory.

Several outside groups — which might otherwise turn a blind eye to simple robbery — know the gang is rumored to employ some of Wasatch's automatons as metal muscle in their raids. Given the fact that no one outside of Wasatch's highest ranks knows how the not-so-good Dr. Hellstromme's signature inventions work, Smith & Robards, the Agency, the Texas Rangers, and even the other Rail Barons are all keenly interested in the truth to these rumors. Even Wasatch itself is keen to learn how the Iron Men managed to hijack an automaton — and at the

same time prevent any working models from falling into its competitors' hands.

If altruism or the promise of not-so-easy money doesn't draw the posse to Kempe County, one or more of these groups may sweeten the pot in the hopes of laying hold of a working automaton!

The Iron Men

The gang is actually the fund-raising mechanism of one Professor Liam Riegel, a skilled inventor with just a mild case of delusions of grandeur. He's currently putting the finishing touches on the latest weapon to end all wars, his massive "steam walker." However, getting a foothold in the merchant of death business carries a substantial overhead, and Riegel is too paranoid to court investors and risk one of them running off to another inventor with his brainchild.

Fortunately, the professor isn't burdened with a sense of morality, and he's decided there's little point in trying to convince folks to give him money

when he can outfit a gang to take it at gunpoint. Ne'er-do-wells are a dime a dozen in the Weird West, so in no time, he raised a fairly formidable gang.

Trademark Infringement

Probably a big part of Riegel's worry about others stealing his idea stems from his willingness to steal those of other inventors. Producing bulletproof vests, dynamite launchers, and the like was child's play to the professor. These gizmos gave his desperados a decided edge against any bank guard, marshal, or posse that tried to stop them, but Riegel is a firm believer there's no kill like overkill.

Although the gang does indeed employ metal men in its raids, the professor wasn't actually able to crack the secret workings of Hellstromme's automatons. He did manage a reasonable facsimile of the war machines' appearance and armament, though. His "automatons" are actually controlled by a difference engine running a relatively fixed program, similar to a player piano. However, since most people don't spend a lot of time analyzing the intricacies of the social behavior of Gatling-equipped iron juggernauts, his secret is currently safe.

BANK ROBBERS!

Pinpointing the gang's next likely target isn't exactly rocket-pack science. While Professor Riegel is a mad genius when it comes to cranking out weird inventions, he's no criminal mastermind. He's left the planning of the bank jobs to his hirelings, and laziness has led them to go after the targets closest to their hideout.

Anyone looking at a map of the area—or just making a Common Knowledge roll if they've even passing familiarity with the region—realizes the bank robbers have yet to leave Kempe County. And there's only one town they haven't struck yet—Badwater Junction.

In Progress

The Iron Men aren't long in either the smarts or patience departments, so shortly after the heroes arrive in Badwater Junction members of the gang roll into town looking to make a withdrawal. Most of the outlaws arrive individually or in pairs on horseback. One of them wields a gizmo created by Liam Riegel called an "electromagnetic focusing device." They begin taking up positions on the street around the bank as a steam wagon putters into town.

A pair of men are on the steam wagon, and a large crate or pile of cargo sits on the back, covered by a tarp. The wagon stops near the front of the bank. The men walk around to the rear of the bank and lower a wooden ramp. Stripping off the tarp, they reveal what is, to all appearances to any who've had the misfortune to encounter one, an automaton!

This is the signal for the other robbers to start moving toward the bank. Unless stopped, two bandits enter the bank to clean it out, while the rest guard their retreat. The automaton trundles down the ramp, but doesn't fire until someone shoots at it. The Iron Men, on the other hand, open fire at anyone and everyone standing in their way.

Once the fight starts, the bandit packing the electromagnetic focusing device tries to line up as many opponents as possible. The others let the automaton draw fire and pay particular attention to any snipers or sodbusters packing Heavy Weapons. The automaton follows its programming, targeting random quadrants each round.

Once more than half their number fall—not counting the automaton—the rest of the gang tries to flee. They do not surrender.

- **Magnet Bandit (1):** Use the Iron Man Bandit profile, page 6. Armed with an Electromagnetic Focusing Device (page 6), Peacemaker (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1).
- **Bandit (2, plus 1 per hero):** Use Iron Man Bandit profile, page 6. Half are armed with Peacemakers (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1) and the rest with Winchester '73 rifles (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, AP 2).
- **Knock-Off Automaton:** See page 6.

On the Trail

Whether or not the heroes take down all the bank robbers, it's obvious from their advanced weaponry the Iron Men have some fairly advanced tools at their command. And since none of the outlaws seemed to be particularly cerebral types, the gang boss must still be out there. Fortunately, there are a number of ways the heroes can track the gang's back to the hideout.

The posse can interrogate any surviving bandits using Intimidation or Persuasion. The captives resist with Spirit rolls, but with success the characters learn the gang is based within half a day's ride. With a raise, the lily-livered cowards admit they're hiding out at the Circle-R Ranch.

DEADLANDS: SHOOTOUT AT THE CIRCLE-R CORRAL

Anyone examining the horses can see the Circle-R brand. If the cowpokes don't think to look for a brand, call for a Notice roll as they're corralling the horses. Anyone local to the area—whether one of the posse or just a local resident—can make a Common Knowledge roll to recognize the brand and the location of the ranch.

If any of the Iron Men escaped the shootout, a saddletramp can also try to follow their trail. This is a Tracking roll at +1 due to the conditions, or +3 if the bandits make their retreat on the steam wagon. Following the trail all the way to the Circle-R requires three successful Tracking rolls. Each attempt consumes an hour whether it succeeds or not. A failure sends the posse off track, but trackers can try again.

A Streetwise roll reveals a townsperson who recognizes one of the horses as being from the Circle-R Ranch. A raise on the roll learns no one has seen anyone from the Circle-R in town for a

few months—roughly as long as the Iron Men have been active.

THE CIRCLE-R RANCH

The Circle-R is located half a day's ride out of town. Riegel and his Iron Men seized the ranch a few months ago as a temporary base of operations. The ranch was not fully finished at the time the Iron Men took over, and they're not exactly the building types. Riegel managed to keep them working long enough to complete the barn, but other than a rough adobe building they use as a kitchen outhouse, no other construction has been completed. The gang beds down under the stars or in the adobe building.

The barn is the site of the professor's lab and workshop. In addition to his more run-of-the-mill inventions, it also houses his prototype steam walker—which is fully functional at this point. There are also eight crates of dynamite stored in the



barn, for use in both the dynamite launcher and the walker's rockets.

Getting in Close

The rest of the gang is at the Circle-R when the posse arrives. The bandits know there are plenty of folks looking for their hides, so they have one of their number on guard at all times.

If any of the bandits escaped the botched robbery in Badwater Junction, treat the guard as active with regard to any Stealth attempts. Otherwise, he's inactive and a successful Stealth roll gets a cowpoke into cover within 12 yards (6" on a battlemat). If the guard spots a hero, he sounds the alarm.

Order of Battle

Once the guards are alerted, they all immediately engage with the posse. The round after the guards sound the alarm, half the remaining Iron Men emerge from the adobe kitchen. None of them are armed with unique weapons.

On the second round after the alarm is raised the remaining outlaws emerge, half from the adobe building and half from the barn. The bandit armed with the flamethrower comes out of the barn and enters the gunfight. Professor Riegel gives the last Iron Man his dynamite launcher.

On the third round, all the knock-off automatons lumber out of the barn and engage the nearest hero. The bandit with a dynamite launcher exits the barn, targeting any groups of heroes with his weapon. Professor Riegel also pokes his head out to assess the situation, but doesn't enter the fight. He remains inside the barn, only using his acid gun (bolt) as necessary to dissuade any brave souls from rushing the barn.

🎲 **Professor Riegel:** See page 7.

- **Bandit (2, plus 2 per hero):** Use the Iron Man Bandit profile, page 6. Half armed with Peacemakers (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1) and half with Winchester '73 rifles (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, AP 2).
- **Flamethrower Bandit:** Use the Iron Man Bandit profile, page 6. Armed with flamethrower (see *Deadlands Reloaded Player's Guide*) and Peacemaker (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1).
- **Dynamite Launching Bandit:** Use the Iron Man Bandit profile, page 6. Armed with dynamite launcher and Peacemaker (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1).

- **Knock-Off Automaton (1 per 3 heroes):** See page 6.

We're Gonna Need a Bigger Gun!

Riegel uses *teleport* to enter steam walker once half of his forces are Incapacitated, he takes a wound (whether or not he soaks it), or the heroes enter the barn. The walker emerges from barn on next round, bursting through one or more walls.

The walker is a very dangerous foe, especially when supported by a gang of outlaws and one or more metal men. Fortunately, the professor is more engineer than tactician, so he doesn't always make the wisest choices once he gets behind the walker's wheel. Randomly choose both which weapon and which posse member he chooses to target each round. He's not concerned with collateral damage—in fact, Riegel is somewhat interested in seeing just how much devastation he can wreak with his new toy!

Even if they came unprepared for a mechanical monster with Heavy Armor, there are a few options available to take down the smash-happy inventor and his gang. A sharpshooting sodbuster can target Riegel through the view ports, completely bypassing the machine's formidable armor. A smart posse can also turn the professor's inventions against him. Both the dynamite launcher and flamethrower can damage the walker.

Finally, there is a sizeable quantity of loose dynamite in the barn as well. Remember the dynamite has to be bundled in groups of at least four sticks to work as a Heavy Weapon, though.

The Iron Men shoot it out until either three-quarters of their number go down or the walker is neutralized. Riegel fights until the walker is Wrecked or he himself suffers three wound levels. After he exits the steam mech—or upon his death—the walker detonates in a devastating blast. The explosion reduces the machine to a useless pile of smoking wreckage so thoroughly destroyed it can't be reverse-engineered.

- **Steam Walker:** See page 8.

Round 'Em Up!

Once the battle's over, the posse can wrangle the Iron Men back to Kempe to claim the bounty. If word of the steam walker gets out, any number of powerful organizations are likely to pull strings to get the inventor turned over to them, long before any trial takes place.

DEADLANDS: SHOOTOUT AT THE CIRCLE-R CORRAL

VILLAINS AND VARMINTS

Iron Man Bandit

The Iron Men are the usual sidewinders and bottom feeders you find in an outlaw gang, just with nicer toys.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d6, Notice d6, Repair d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Wanted

Edges: Quick Draw

Gear: Bulletproof vest (+2), knife (Str+d4), Peacemaker (12/24/48, 2d6+1, ROF 1, AP 1) or Winchester '73 (24/48/96, 3d8, AP 2).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Bulletproof vest. Protects torso; malfunctions on Soak rolls. See *Deadlands Reloaded Player's Guide* for details.
- **Pistol Rounds:** Outlaw pistols use flash rounds. A target hit by a pistol shot must make an Agility roll or be blinded for 1d6 rounds. Blinded victims suffer -6 penalty to all Trait rolls (except Spirit and Vigor) and have Parry reduced to 2. *Malfunction:* If the Shooting die result is a 1, the round explodes as it leaves the barrel, and the shooter must make an Agility roll (-2) or suffer the effect.
- **Rifle Rounds:** Outlaw rifles use explosive rounds. The round explodes in a Small Burst Template for 3d8 damage. *Malfunction:* If the Shooting die result is a 1, the round explodes in the chamber, detonating any remaining rounds as well. This causes 2d6 damage in a Small Burst Template, +1d6 for each other round detonated.

Knock-Off Automaton

Unlike Hellstromme's creations, which rely on a zombie brain to give the construct the ability to "intelligently" interact with the world, Riegel's automatons run on a fairly straightforward program determined by a difference engine inside the housing. In effect, it's a heavily armed player piano. After an automaton is attacked, it focuses attacks on the most recent cowpoke and attacks them until either they're destroyed or their target is dead—or another target draws their attention. Therefore, these automatons are fairly easy to defeat

ADDITIONAL MAD SCIENCE WEAPONS

In addition to copying standard designs, Professor Riegel has outfitted a few of his henchmen with mad science weapons of his own devising. The stats for a flamethrower can be found in the *Deadlands Reloaded Player's Handbook*. His other unique devices are described below.

Dynamite Launcher: Treat this weapon as the *blast* power from *Savage Worlds*, using the Shooting skill. **Power Points:** 20.

Electromagnetic Focusing Device: Treat this device as the *pummel* power from *Savage Worlds*, with a magnetic trapping. A Smarts roll activates it. All metallic objects in the area are also knocked back. Any character holding a metallic item—say, a six-shooter—must make a Strength roll to keep from having it thrown from his hand and 2d6" away. **Power Points:** 20.

once the weakness of their simple programming is discovered.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (4)

Gear: Gatling gun (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 3, AP 2), 60 rounds of ammunition.

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Heavy steel plating
- **Claw:** Str+d8.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to Disease and Poison.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Gyrostabilizer:** No autofire penalty when firing the Gatling.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a wound.
- **Inflexible:** Until it is attacked, roll a d12 for the automaton each round and read the die like a clock's face; it aims **Suppressive Fire** (see *Savage Worlds*) at targets in that direction. Once it's attacked, a knock-off automaton aims its