

The Brotherhood of Steel – Short overview

Introduction:

The Brotherhood of Steel is, in the words of President Tandi Aradesh, “a riddle surrounded by a mystery and shrouded in an enigma” and on first glance, everything about it seems contradictory. The Brotherhood of Steel is one of the technologically most advanced fractions of the Wasteland – but when it comes to conventions, ranks and behavior, nearly medieval. The Brotherhood of Steel was founded in 2077 – the year of the Great War – and after 150 years of history full of stories, pretty much no outsider knows details about the Brotherhood: About their ideals, methods and their contact with the outside world, there are countless accounts – that keep contradicting. Sometimes they truly are knights in shining Power armor that protect the Wasteland, then merciless mutant hunters; sometimes pure and unadulterated isolationists, sometimes explorers and scientists that research without par.

History:

The History of the Brotherhood of Steel begins in the Mariposa Military Base, far to the west of Shady Sands, east of San Francisco. West-Tek, one of the greatest armaments manufacturers of the pre War time, was moved from their own installation in California to the Mariposa Military Base for security reasons.

Among the military personnel that was tasked with protecting these important research and researchers, was a US-Army Captain, Roger Maxson.

West-Tek, as far as Maxson, the military personnel and the greater part of the researchers that weren't working on the FEV project, knew, was working on modern, conventional weapons systems, among other things on improved power armors and plasma and laser weapons. As pertains the biochemical research division, the rest assumed that they were working on an improved cure or a vaccine for the “New Plague”, Actually, the Forced Evolution Virus was being developed in the Mariposa Base: instead of turning soldiers into unstoppable fighting machines by giving them extremely expensive power armors and nearly as expensive energy weapons, the West-Tek scientists tried to reach the same goal by manipulating of the gene code. Through FEV they created that which would later be called Super Mutants. The first persons subjected to these tests, were Chinese prisoners of war.

On the tenth of October 2077, one of the test subjects managed to escape the biochemical research division. While tracking the fleeing one, Captain Maxson and his company found out what was really happening there – and who the test subjects were. Appalled by these war crimes, the morale of the troop crumbled quickly. Colonel Straley, Maxsons only superior officer at the base, snapped under the stress and committed suicide.

Maxson, together with his First Sergeant Ullyses Rhombus, managed to more or less get a grip on his Company. He completely locked down the Mariposa Military Base, executed all scientists involved in the FEV project and finally declared himself, his unit, the base and the rest of the West-Tek R&D people that willingly joined his soldiers as deserted. He did so by radio on the 20th of October.

For three agonizingly long days, Maxson and his band of renegades were left wondering when they might receive an answer to his missive, when on October 23rd finally all questions were answered by the Great War.

To the great relief of Maxson's people, the security provisions of the Mariposa base held and protected the soldiers from radiation and the FE Virus that had started seeping into the Wasteland.

Two days after the Great War, Captain Maxson sent one of his men, Corporal Platner, out in powered armor, to do a reconnaissance of the immediate area. Platner reported the immediate environs of the base as secure. For the next five days, Maxson and the rest of the base prepared themselves for leaving Mariposa for a better alternative. They combed through the whole base and

took as many highly developed weapons, plans and blue prints, medicines, food and other equipment as possible with them and started on their way to the Lost Hills Bunker: a nearly completed Fallout Shelter for government officials Maxson knew about.

The Mariposa Military Base was sealed by the soldiers and remaining technicians and scientists and they started their long march on foot. To their great joy, they met some well acquainted faces in the Wasteland: Miranda Maxson, the wife of the former Captain had, together with their son Roger junior, gathered some more dependents of the company around herself and started towards the base, as the first news reports about the attack came in.

After this joyous start this voyage, that is called "the Exodus" by later Brotherhood historians, got a lot more arduous: the group had some losses due to radiation, sickness and the first raider gangs, among them, Miranda Maxson.

They reached the Lost Hills Bunker only in the middle of November. About the first few years of the Brotherhood in the Lost Hills Bunker, little is know. Least of all how exactly it came to be, that the fusion of a military unit, a group of researchers and technicians and a motley mix of family members transformed into a feudal, but very modernly equipped order of knights, whose mission Roger Maxson saw as rebuilding civilization.

In 2134 a small group within the Brotherhood of Steel, led by Sergeant Dennis Allen, left – against the will of the Elder – for a deserted West-Tek research facility, since they assumed they could salvage useful technologies there. Half a dozen Paladins joined him and with stolen equipment they went on their way to the irradiated ruins that the locals call "The Glow". None of the seven was ever seen again.

In 2135, Roger Maxson died of cancer. His son became High Elder Roger Maxson II. After the mourning period for this great man ended, the new High Elder began an ambitious project: the complete, formal restructuring of the Brotherhood of Steel, that until then had worked on an informal basis. As it happens, the name 'Brotherhood of Steel' had until then only been a nickname. The former soldiers continued using their ranks, the researchers and technicians worked without clear structures, resources were used and allocated without a plan.

The new High Elder divided the Brotherhood of Steel into it's three components: Scribes, Knights and Paladins, created a completely new system of ranks, that had nothing in common with the one formerly used by the US armed forces. After having reinvented the Brotherhood with his far fetching reforms, the new High Elder began looking outwards. Around 2150 the Brotherhood started having increased contact with the settlements in the near vicinity of the Lost Hills Bunker and was soon seen as one of the strongest and most important factions in the Wasteland. At the same time, a raider gang, the Vipers, became an increasing problem for the population. Led by fanatical, religious fervor, the Vipers plundered and murdered indiscriminately all and everything that got close to them.

In 2155 the Brotherhood eventually sent a handful of troops, led by the High Elder himself to destroy the Vipers. The other Elders saw this action not as a real war, but as a glorified training mission. No one assumed that, even though numerically inferior, well trained troops in power armor, wielding laser and plasma weapons would have any problems fighting a gang, that for the most part used spears, knives and bows and arrows.

The troop found the camp of the Vipers within a few days and attacked without hesitation. Maxson assumed that the Vipers would, upon coming face to face with their enemy, break and run for it. He forgot about their fanaticism. Again and again the Vipers pressed against the paladins. Again and again they were cooked away by plasma, dismembered by lasers and smashed in close combat by the super human strength of power armors. The battle lasted less than half an hour.

As Roger Maxson II took of his helmet after the battle, he learned, due to a single arrow that grazed his exposed skull, that he also forgot about their poisoned blades. Roger Maxson II died a few hours after the battle, suffering immense pain.

His son, John Maxson, became the third High Elder and his first official act was no big surprise: he gave the leader of the Paladins, Head Paladin Rhombus the order to search and destroy all

remaining Vipers. As Paladins of the Brotherhood stepped foot directly into the Hub for the first time, to pursue two fleeing Vipers, the first true cooperation between Brotherhood and the outside world happened. Soon after trade caravans from the Hub to the Lost Hills Bunker came on a regular basis.

In 2161 the Brotherhood encountered an enemy that was a lot more dangerous than a raider gang could ever be: on October 1st, a patrol found the dead body of a Super Mutant and brought it to the Lost Hills Bunker, so that Head Scribe Vree could perform a detailed examination. Vree found out that the mutation wasn't natural in origin and could make some educated guesses about the combat power of a living Super Mutant. Further information failed to appear, until in 2162 the Vault Dweller came to the Lost Hills Bunker, to enlist the aid of the Brotherhood against the Super Mutant army. At first, he was treated like all outsiders that wanted to join the Brotherhood: he was sent on a hopeless quest without return; to the Glow to recover the diary of Sergeant Dennis Allen.

To the great surprise of the guards at the entrance, the Vault Dweller returned three weeks later – with the diary. He was granted entrance and after a rather short discussion with the High Elder the Vault Dweller was admitted into the ranks of the Brotherhood of Steel. With the support of several Paladins, the Vault Dweller destroyed the Mariposa Military Base later that year, where the Master had created his Super Mutants with the enhanced FEW.

The Vault Dweller thus not only ended the great danger of the Army of the Master: he also ended the illusion that the Brotherhood could expect nothing but trouble with recruits that didn't come directly from their own ranks. Within the next years, tensions within the Brotherhood increased, between those that wanted to remain isolationist and those that wanted to fill their ranks with outsiders. At the height of the tensions it was decided to send away that fraction, that wanted to cease the isolationism. A small fleet of air ships was built and they were sent far into the east, ostensibly to pursue down the rest of the Army of the Master. The fleet encountered a storm and crashed in the vicinity of Chicago. The Brotherhood in the west never found out if there were survivors or what happened after the storm. From time to time though, there came rumors out of the east, about a great army under the banner of the Brotherhood.

Weakened by internal strife and the loss of the expeditionary force and the resources that went into the air ships the Brotherhood was but a shadow of its former power as they first heard about the Enclave around 2270. Not only was the Enclave the first power the Brotherhood had ever encountered, that was technologically its superior: the Brotherhood was lacking internal cohesion, resources and personnel. It barely managed, thanks to a descendant of the Vault Dweller, to obtain the blue prints for the Vertibirds used by the Enclave. As that crisis ended surprisingly, thanks to the same young woman, the Brotherhood slowly began orienting itself anew.

In 2273 it happened that again, a young Maxson assumed the position of the High Elder: Roger Maxson III, grandson of John Maxson. He began collecting reports about the outside world and soon came to the realization, that the Brotherhood was neither a great super power nor possessed a monopoly on the best of the best when it came to science and technology. Slowly but surely and against the resistance of several Elders, this third Roger Maxson wants to open the Brotherhood to the outside.

Organization:

Before the second High Elder of the Brotherhood of Steel completely reorganized the Brotherhood, it was more or less a half informal, half formal, not nearly coherently organized organization. What later became the Paladins, kept to the military discipline, that is to be expected of especially well trained troops. What later became the Scribes, consisted mostly of especially pronounced intellectuals with often enough especially pronounced egos, that were working in all directions at once. What later became the Knights had no time to greet the clash of those two groups with the appropriate laughter, since they were constantly busy repairing the weapons of the soldiers and the labs of the scientists.

Roger Maxson II divided the Brotherhood not only into three sub-groups, he created a structure for the whole society of the Brotherhood of Steel.

At the top he put – not very surprisingly – the High Elder, in other words, what other people would call the head of state or the head of government. Below the High Elder stood the 12 Elders, that represented a mixture of parliament and cabinet and that were elected in a democratic manner out of the three groups.

The three groups, within the BoS often referred to as the “Three Pillars” became the Paladins, the fighting troop, the Knights, as engineers and part of them even as combat engineers and pioneers and the Scribes: the researchers and scientists, but also the physicians and historians.

All Three Pillars have the same amount of ranks (and share the lowest ranks, and the ranks have similar names, which is not really a coincidence).

High Elder

<u>The Elders</u>		
Head Paladin	Head Knight	Head Scribe
Sentinel	Fortator	Sapientis
Star Paladin	Star Knight	Star Scribe
Paladin Captain	Knight Captain	Scribe Captain
Paladin	Knight	Scribe
Paladin Sergeant	Knight Sergeant	Scribe Sergeant
Senior Squire		
Squire		
Junior Squire		
Initiate		

The Heads are each the highest ranking representatives of the Three Pillars: accordingly, there are only three Heads in total. The ranks beneath the heads come a lot more often, though the handling of rank differs between the three Pillars.

Initiates are the youngest members of the Brotherhood of Steel: As they turn 16, the juveniles of the BoS have to decide whether they wish to join completely (and for their whole life) or, if they aren't ready for this type of commitment, if they leave the Brotherhood. Most stay and spend the next two years of their life as Initiates in a basic training course, that does not yet specialize on one of the three Pillars. After these two years, they are promoted to Junior Squires – and are now part of one of the three Pillars. Further advancement comes through seniority and performance.

One can only be nominated for a position as Elder, once one has reached the rank of Paladin Sergeant (or Knight Sergeant or Scribe Sergeant). Elders are furthermore elected for life.

Goals:

After a long, isolationist period, the Brotherhood is now actively looking for more contact to the outside world. They maintain an official embassy in Shady Sands and a few reconnaissance posts in other areas of the Wasteland, among others in San Francisco's Chinatown and in the Den. The Brotherhood tries to get new resources and connections in small quantities there, and recruits especially distinguished persons, if those are interested and have useful skills.

The highest goal of the Brotherhood under Roger Maxson III is, to once again become an actual power in the Wasteland. Maxson is convinced, that the Brotherhood represents one of the greatest hopes of mankind. He hopes to achieve that less with power armors, than with medicine and similar research endeavors. Likewise, he wishes to bring a squadron of Vertibirds into service of the Brotherhood as soon as possible.

Contacts with other factions:

As mentioned earlier, the BoS maintains embassies in the capital of the NCR and with the Shi. The contacts with the NCR government are polite, but there has yet to be an exchange about themes that are important to one of the parties.

The exchange with the Followers of the Apocalypse was more fruitful, but the Followers have their doubts about the military orientation of the Brotherhood and their former mutant hunts – apart from the fact that the Followers are still holding a grudge against the Brotherhood and their reluctance to share knowledge and technology.

The Brotherhood is negotiating with the Shi about an exchange of resources and personnel to cooperate in the building of Vertibirds. For the moment, none of the two parties is in a position to build more than a prototype alone, but the Shi are lacking trust in the enigmatic Brotherhood.