

Bartering with Adam didn't take long. The goods were high quality, which meant he was going to make a profit off them regardless, so dickering over the few hundred caps I asked for on top of his first offer clearly didn't faze him. On top of that, since he had time to prepare for the extra cargo, he didn't even have to pick and choose what he wanted to buy. Instead, he gave a simple, cursory check to make sure it was all in the same quality before confirming he wanted all of it. He clearly came prepared for a large purchase, and that is exactly what he got.

The two of us discussing how much he owed us took the longest from the whole process, but again, since we both knew what the goods were worth, there wasn't much room for dickering. Instead, we quickly settled on just over two thousand five hundred caps. It was more than double what he had purchased the last time he came through, but we had significantly more in stock, and it was all medical supplies that sold much faster.

"You know... I seemed to remember you saying you would do the opposite of this last time," I brought up as the bags of medical supplies were being taken away, replaced with sacks of bottlecaps. "You said you wanted to take the medical supplies to Megaton, not away."

"Ah, I was wondering if you would remember that," Adam said with a sly smile. "Just a slight change in plans. I managed to find several distributors who were willing to purchase the supplies directly from Canterbury Commons, the trade hub up North."

"So you're bringing it there?"

"That's right," He confirmed with a nod, watching his people strap packs to the bramins. "I would likely get more by selling them myself in smaller packages across the wasteland, but that would take time and be quite dangerous. This way, I just transport them, divide them up, and hand them off, no risk beyond what I usually take and prepare for, all reward."

"And you're just telling me this?" I asked, confusion clear on my face. "Aren't you worried I would cut you out, take the cargo up to this Cateerry Commons myself?"

"I suppose it's possible, but I'm relatively confident you won't," he responded with a shrug. "You don't strike me as someone out to make the most caps from every transaction, but rather the convenience of the sale. I save you time, effort, and manpower, and to you, that's worth the cut I make from the process. Besides, the distributors already signed contracts. If they broke them, they would owe me a considerable amount of money, or be banned from the Commons, which is a death sentence to wandering merchants."

"... I'll take your word for it," I responded, leaving it at that. He was at least partially correct anyway. I didn't have the time or manpower to make my group into traders or merchants. Selling things to people who came to us and going to Megaton was more than enough.

After everything was loaded up, Adam and Reed said their goodbyes, and the trade caravan left the protection of the HQ. After seeing them off and sealing the doors again, everyone headed inside the main hall, the caps already stored away for safekeeping in the

secure storage safe, just waiting for me to spend them. When we all settled in for lunch, Leon spoke up with a curious look.

"I would have thought you would jump right to upgrade the barracks," He said with a slight frown. "Why wait?"

"I want to give Adam and his people some time to put some distance between us," I explained, vaguely gesturing in the direction they had left in. "If he comes back and sees our buildings have changed shape out of nowhere... well, I don't think he would immediately assume we have an eldritch entity backed system at our fingertips, but he will definitely know something is up."

Leon nodded in understanding, and we all focused back on our food. We ended up waiting for a full two hours, playing cards and walking around the grounds to keep ourselves busy. When we were finally ready, I grabbed the main HQ tablet and made our first purchases.

First was the most important upgrade, the barracks. I quickly made the upgrade, but resisted the urge to immediately head out and purchase as many soldiers as I could. Before that, I wanted to make sure I wasn't going to overspend and end up short. I would need one thousand six hundred caps to buy eight new standard soldiers, which gave me just enough wiggle room to buy my second purchase, the second level of the armory.

After I made the purchase, we made our way to inspect our changes, heading to the armory first. The building had expanded and could now generate weapons on top of ammo using weapon scraps or other weapons. I could also purchase new weapons and attachments for them, which I could then assign to my soldiers as part of their standard soldier's kit. These new weapons would temporarily replace their standard weapons, receiving the same general upgrades as the default rifle, and receive a quasi-equivalent amount of ammunition. This was excellent news, as it meant I wouldn't have to repurchase upgrades for multiple weapons.

There were three new weapons I could purchase: a sniper rifle in the form of the [M40](#) chambered in .308, a shotgun in the form of a [Mossberg 590](#), and an LMG in the form of the [M249 SAW](#). A Mossberg loadout cost a hundred and fifty caps, the M40 cost two hundred, and the SAW cost two fifty. Any one of them would be useful, but I desperately wanted to get a few of the LMGs and Snipers into my soldiers' hands, as either one could be an absolute game changer in the right scenario. The shotgun could also be useful, of course, but not nearly as much as the other two, at least in my mind.

"Are you going to buy anything?" Leon asked after I described the options. "I wouldn't mind having sniper support for something like this."

"... I want to, but I think more soldiers trumps more gear," I said with a frown. "I want to get as many soldiers as possible, as it will even the odds."

"So would superior firepower," Joseph pointed out. "A pair of snipers on the water tower would make clearing the town significantly easier."

"I know..." I agreed, chewing the inside of my cheek as I tried to put together a plan that would let me buy a few upgrades and still get plenty of soldiers for the raid on Springvale. "We could put it off for a bit longer. Make an early delivery to Megaton, sell some weapons by scrapping the junk we have been collecting so far..."

I went silent as I considered the metrics of delaying the raid for a few more days, before eventually deciding it would likely be for the best. I would likely make less money from the medical supplies, since the hospital at Megaton wouldn't need as much, but with all of the junk weapons we had been collecting, we would likely be able to make quite a few to sell.

"Okay, we will get more soldiers today, and then make a trip to Megaton," I said, finally making my choice. "That will all but guarantee we will be able to get as many soldiers as we can, and have enough for some upgrades. But, just to make sure, before we start buying anything else, let's see just what we have in stock to sell."

We spent the next hour going over inventory and feeding all of the crappy weapons to the armory. Each weapon we slid down the material chute bumped up the resource bar of the armory. I was also happy to learn that we had a variety of options that the armory could use those resources to make. When we had finished feeding all of the junk weapons, we went through the list. It was clearly nothing massively advanced, just basic weapons, but I was hopeful that that would change as I upgraded the armory more. The next level was seven hundred and fifty caps, and I was looking forward to what that unlocked for us.

"Our weapons are on the list, as are native weapons," I commented, focusing on scrolling through the inventory. "A variety of pistols, an intact version of the hunting rifle... It even has some of the basic options from other Fallout games."

"We should make a variety, it would be easier to sell them," Andrew pointed out. "And we are looking to make this quick, right?"

"Good point," I said, patting his back in approval. "I'll get a bit of everything."

I selected five different weapons, and instructed the armory make three of each. Just a few moments later, fifteen pristine weapons appeared in the room, all stacked neatly on shelves and tables. Three [10mm Submachine Guns](#), three [Assault Rifles](#), three [Service Rifles](#), three [Hunting Shotguns](#), and three [Submachine Guns](#), all in pristine condition. Judging from what we had made just selling pristine pistols, this would be more than enough to buy a few upgrades for our loudouts.

After dealing with the armory and weapons, we also checked what medical supplies we could make from the resources we had been stocking up. Originally, I was under the impression that we would have plenty for a decent-sized delivery to the hospital in Megaton. Unfortunately, the resources stored in the medbay didn't go nearly as far as I would have hoped. After seeing the few piles we managed to get out, I decided that we would likely be better off holding off on selling the medical supplies for now. It would mean making another trip to Megaton later, but with more people, that wouldn't be nearly as risky or time-consuming as it was now.

Finally, after finishing with the guns and medical supplies, we headed to the barracks to see what had changed, and to access its purchasing options.

Of course, even if we had been holding off any close inspection, we couldn't have missed the obvious. The facility was now two floors, and looked even tougher than it had before. Stepping inside showed that not much had changed in terms of quality, with the second floor being a more or less copy of the first. The only difference was that in one corner, there was a room rather than just another bed. It wasn't anything massive, but inside there was a bed, a small desk against the wall, a locker, some shelves, and a few drawers. It was strange, as there were still eight beds outside the room, meaning that even if I bought all eight soldiers, there would still be a spare.

While my soldiers debated what it was for, the two primary theories being that one, it was in case I gave someone a promotion, or two, it was for me, I went through the tablet to see what was new. It didn't take long for me to stumble on the real purpose of the private room.

I could purchase a hero unit.

The description stated that the hero unit would be a more advanced version of my soldiers, though not nearly enough to make them superhuman. Not only would they have more refined skills, i.e. they would be a better shot and have other improved skills, but they would also have leadership skills, combat knowledge, and strategy. I could even choose to have them be a soldier from a media source I knew, though I couldn't choose which one. They explicitly stated they would not have any sort of powers or abilities that would set them apart, beyond being more experienced and skilled.

It also noted that, technically, if I chose to get one based on soldiers in media, that they weren't actually that person. Instead, it was a copy of their memories, made at some point in their career, overlaid on a new soul. The same concept of rescuing the souls trapped in the space between realities was true, they were just injected with already existing memories.

"It makes sense," Joseph admitted, after I read most of the description out loud. "None of us has the experience to lead, and if you're going to be expanding the group so much, it's only logical that they give you the option of getting someone who can. The fact that it's another person from media is a bit strange, but so is all of this."

"How much are they?" Carlos asked, leaning over to look at the tablet.

"The hero unit is four hundred caps. I also want to get a medic," I added, counting the numbers up in my head. "That means... I could also get five normal soldiers on top of all that."

"That doesn't leave you with much left over, does it?" Joseph asked, clearly trying to keep up with the math as well

"Ten caps."

The group understandably winced, as that did not leave us with much wiggle room. I hadn't expected to be able to buy any of the weapon upgrades, but I would have liked to have some caps left over, just in case.

"You could hold back from one soldier," Carlos pointed out, though he didn't sound convinced. "Just until we get back from Megaton with more money.

"No, there is no real point," I said, shaking my head. "Yes, having some pocket money would have been nice, just in case, but we can always barter if it really comes down to it. I would rather get as many soldiers now as possible, as well as the hero unit and the medic. I'm pretty confident we are going to make some good money off the weapons, plenty to buy a few kit upgrades, and the last few soldiers to fill the barracks."

With the choice made, I open the soldier purchasing tab, my finger hovering over the screen for a long moment, considering who I should purchase first. After thinking it through, I realized another leader would make corralling everyone together easier, so I selected the hero unit and quickly purchased them. For a moment, nothing happened. We stood there, looking around, wondering why no one was appearing in the room around us. Then, after a few seconds, the door to the sectioned off room opened, and out stepped a very familiar face.

He was dressed in dark combat fatigues, a fatigue cap on his head, and a utility belt around his waist. He had a K-Bar strapped to his chest, with his 1911 already on his hip, the weapon gleaming silver. As he stepped out of the private room completely, he gave my soldiers and I a look before sticking something into his mouth. He flicked out a lighter, a small flame appearing as he lit the end of his cigar, taking a long pull before exhaling. As a cloud of smoke billowed away from him, he gave me a nod.

["Sergeant Avery Junior Johnson, reporting for duty, Sir."](#)