

The interior of Megaton was... very similar to [what I remembered](#). There were hundreds of buildings built from scrap, stacked on top of and next to each other, with ramps and walkways crisscrossing between them. The difference between reality and the memory of the game was not only that it seemed to be considerably larger, with double, maybe even triple the number of buildings and people, but the buildings themselves were more realistic. They had foundations, even if it was only a few boulders with beams of angle iron bolted to them, and looked actually safe, in a post-apocalyptic way.

The whole city, which, by my world's standards, would have barely counted as a town, or even a village, was built around a central crater. The front entrance, which we were walking through, led directly down to the center, which was marked by a horribly familiar bomb. Around that, built in vague layered rings, were the buildings, ranging from simple metal shacks to concrete and cinderblock structures. Everything looked like it had been torn down, reused, and recycled at least once, but it was much more sturdy and reinforced than I would have expected. These structures, at least in the state that they were now, were built by someone who knew what they were doing.

Looking around, I easily recognized some of the buildings, some looking almost exactly like I remembered, while others simply followed their "original" vibe. I could see the "restaurant" down by the bomb, as well as the sign for [Moriarty's Saloon](#), which was among several other raised signs around the city. It was clear that while some establishments remained, a lot of this place was different, including the number of places you could stop by to grab a drink or something to eat.

Either way, the town was still impressive, clearly built and maintained well, despite the scrappy materials that were used in its construction. I had a feeling that the original founders must have located a construction yard or three to raid, given that several buildings had poured foundations for their support pillars.

As we slowly walked deeper into the town, Carlos spotted the large bomb sitting at the center of the crater. He let out a low whistle and shook his head.

"Damn, sir," He said, nearly stopping in the street before he caught himself and continued walking. "I didn't think you were lying, but... They actually built a town around a nuke."

"I'm hoping the more realistic setting will mean it's already been disarmed," I responded. "If not... keep an eye out for a creepy-looking man in a white pinstripe suit. If he seems to be having a particularly fruitful discussion with someone in a vault suit... tackle them both to the ground."

My men nodded in understanding as we pushed further into the town, while I considered the reality that this place may or may not have a nuclear timer attached to its lifespan. I would have to do some investigating of my own before we left, to see what part of the story we were in, if the story was even going to happen here. This world was "more realistic" after all, and

some random teenager surviving the Capital Wasteland, especially a version as bad as this, was far from being likely.

"Keep an eye open for an older black man in a sheriff's duster as well."

Eventually, after wandering a bit, trying to use my old knowledge to locate a wasteland doctor, I passed a cap to a kid and asked for directions. After a bit of negotiation and a second cap, I was directed to two "doctors." One was more akin to a back-alley bonesaw, while the other was more akin to an actual clinic. The bonesaw was closer, so we stopped there first, with Joseph and I stepping under a small scrap awning where a man wearing a blood-spattered shirt was standing smoking a cigarette.

"You need something?" he asked, not moving save to raise his eyebrow. "You don't look injured."

"We aren't," I responded, stepping forward slightly. "We have some medical supplies we thought you might be interested in looking at."

"...Well, alright. You look put together enough not to try and scam me with crap goods," the shady wasteland doctor commented, standing up from the wall and nodding to the small shack's entrance. "Let's head inside."

Joseph and I followed the slightly older man inside his shack, trying not to judge the grungy, gross interior. When the door was shut behind us, Joseph showed him some of what we had in stock. Once he got over the shock of the incredible quality, he became more than a little suspicious, wanting to know where we had obtained the supplies.

"No staining on the labels, no sign of water damage... no off colors on the pills... This is all good stuff," he said with a frown, before fixing me with a long look. "What did you boys do, crack into a Vault or something?"

"No, we are a new branch of a large mercenary group, not from around these parts," I explained. "Back home, we have the facilities to make these things new, which is why they look the way they do."

"Actual new medical supplies? Well, I'll be damned... How much are you looking for?"

We haggled for a bit, and eventually the doctor dropped just under five hundred caps on various different bottles and pills. I was honestly a bit surprised he had that much to spend, but I had no doubt he would be making his money back.

After leaving the back alley doctor behind, we went up directly to the more clinic-like office, which was one of the few properly built buildings in the area. By modern standards, it wasn't anything impressive, but it was a considerable improvement over a leaking metal shack.

The clinic was built from cinderblocks, with a genuinely finished exterior, matching the reinforced houses we had been raiding in the residential area near the HQ. It was one of the largest structures in the town, although most of it was hidden beneath other buildings. As Carlos

and I entered through what was marked the front entrance, a woman about my age approached. She was wearing a genuine doctor's coat over simple pre-war clothes.

"Hello, yes? What can I do for you, gentleman?" She asked, eyeing our weapons but still remaining calm. "Is one of you injured?"

"No ma'am, we actually have some goods you might be interested in," I explained, gesturing to the pack Joseph was holding.

After showing her some of what we had, the woman quickly led us into a side room, where I gave the same explanation I had given everyone. The woman, clearly excited by what she saw, stepped out quickly and soon returned, this time with someone new. The newcomer stepped into the room slowly, as if worried they would startle us if they didn't. They were dressed as if they were prepared for surgery, with extra coverings on their head, completely covering their face, head, and neck. In fact, the only part of them that I could see was some of the skin around their eyes, though that looked decidedly off. It wasn't until they spoke that I realized why.

"Nurse Larissa tells me you have some high-quality medications for us?" He asked, his voice sounding like he was holding a fist full of gravel in his throat.

He was a ghoul, potentially one alive before the war, and he was covering himself completely to most likely make his patients feel less put off. Judging by how clean his uniform was, he took cleanliness seriously.

"We do, quite a bit of high-quality medical supplies that I think you will like," I assured him, before nodding to Joseph to show off what he had.

The bundled-up ghoul doctor inspected the supplies with increasing enthusiasm, even chuckling as he pulled out a single tube.

"Well, I haven't seen anything like that since before the war," the ghoul admitted. "My name is Dr. Berker, and this is incredible! It's like it's fresh off the shelf, two hundred years ago!"

"That's because it essentially is," I explained with a smile. "As I was explaining to your nurse, all of this is made back at our production facilities, far away from here. We are mercenaries by trade, but we dabble in production mostly to keep our own forces supplied, but also to give us something to trade to locals when we explore or settle new locations."

I happily spun the doctor a tale to explain our access to goods. I had no doubt that our less-than-stringent connection to the metaphysical laws of this reality would eventually become at least a common suspicion, if not common knowledge, but for now, I wanted to appear as normal as possible. We weren't the source of all these incredible supplies, we were just the stopping point.

With any luck, that would deter the larger, more intelligent groups from attempting to start anything, as attacking us would only disrupt the flow of goods. We would still have to deal with the stupid ones who thought cutting open the golden goose was somehow a good idea, but we could prepare for them.

Hopefully.

"I assume you found some sort of existing production plant," He comments, turning a tube of anti-fungal cream over in his hand. "Even the logos are correct."

"I'm afraid that's not something we can discuss," I explained with a shrug. "But I can assure you that it is all at the same level of quality you are familiar with, potentially even better, since it's all made for our own use first."

"I can see that," he agreed, looking up from the tube and back at me. "How much of this are you selling?"

After showing off that we had a considerable amount, Dr. Berker happily agreed to pay two thousand caps for our entire medical stock. Most of it was intended for use in his own clinic, but a small portion was also reserved for the town itself, serving as a sort of emergency stockpile. It ran through Dr. Berker, as he was the town's official doctor, who, in the case of such an emergency, whether it was an attack or an outbreak, would lead the recovery attempts.

"Tell me, how often would you be able to field deliveries like this?" I asked, watching as several other nurses, as well as another doctor, carried away our goods, leaving us with empty bags and a rising number of sacks filled with caps.

"Of things like this?" Dr Berker asked, pausing to direct a nurse carrying an eight-pack of aspirin. "This will last us two months, maybe two and a half if we are slow. Why, do you think you can make these deliveries consistently?"

"I think it's a possibility," I admitted. "We are still adjusting to the area, and we have another order to fill, coming from Megaton and heading elsewhere."

"If possible, a delivery of this size every two months would be incredible," the doctor explained. "It would go a long way in making Megaton a healthier, safer place to live. Hell, we might even make some progress in getting these people into some semblance of good health, rather than just barely keeping them alive."

"I'll know more as we get our bearings, but for now, I think we can manage another delivery in two months, but I can't make any promises that it will be quite this large."

Dr. Berken nodded, and for a while we discussed what sort of things he would need the most of, and I adjusted my lists appropriately, making detailed notes of exactly what he was looking for. Turns out Adam had only been partially correct. Civilians might not be overly interested in basic sterile supplies, but the Doctor was ecstatic to hear I could get him sterile gloves.

"I likely won't be able to pay you as much, but boxes of gloves, bandages, and other materials would be a huge boon," He assured me, his gravely voice still catching me off guard occasionally. "If we could fully convert into the same sort of system we had before the bombs dropped, it would revolutionize emergency treatment. Well... re-revolutionize it at least."

"You seem to have set up a pretty efficient system already," I noted, looking around the office. "I won't pretend to know exactly what it should look like, but it matches what our information says, as far as I know."

The space was still assuredly post-apocalyptic, looking closer to the medbay than a doctor's office or hospital room. Still, it was clear that the ghoul doctor had brought with him his "modern" sensibilities, especially in the way things were organized. The fact that I could see nurses taking actual notes on things was a level of treatment I did not expect.

"It's hard with what we have, but any extra supplies would make everything easier. Again, I won't be able to pay you as much, as technically it's just not required, but..."

"We can put in a request for a small delivery," I suggested. "We can then use that to discuss amounts and prices. If there is a way to make the process worth it, even at only a minor profit, we can make it happen. As you can imagine, we have some positive views of proper medical treatment, so spreading supplies to people who need them is something we greatly encourage."

We continued to discuss the possibility of making frequent supply deliveries until everything was taken away and we were fully paid. One by one, we put the sacks filled with caps into our backpacks, sealed them up, and prepared to move. We were considerably lighter after selling all the supplies, with only a few bags of guns remaining.

Selling our supplies had gone considerably faster than I had hoped, as I hadn't anticipated a clinic as large as the one Dr Berken was running. It was also the only reason I had bothered to sell to the back alley bonesaw. I anticipated having to hunt down different buyers, selling things off in chunks, looking for anyone willing to pay appropriate prices rather than "taking it off my hands."

Instead, I found one excited doctor who was having a good chuckle at brand names and logos.

After our business was completed, we left the clinic behind, heading to a corner of the city that one of the passing guards had suggested as a place to sell our weapons. Unsurprisingly, there were a couple of gun stores in town, and most of them were tucked in the market corner, which was around the outer wall of the heart of the city, on the opposite side from the clinic.

Before making our way over there, however, we found a quiet edge of the wall to sit along and eat our rations. It was just a few hours after noon by this point, and we were carrying enough food for another full day here, so there was no reason to hold back.

While I had no doubt we could have found something to eat around the city, I was not about to risk my soldiers on post-apocalyptic street meat. I'm sure there were reputable food sources somewhere, but we didn't have the time or the will to hunt down and verify one. Besides, as tasteless and bland as the ration packs were, they weren't rat, or radroach, or whatever other culinary horror was waiting for us in the nearby food vendors.

It sucked, but for now, it was better to be safe than sorry. Besides, with any luck, we would be able to upgrade the MREs when we got home.

We sat around our bags, keeping a close watch on them since they contained around two thousand five hundred caps. Once we were done, we gathered our bags, double-checked that we had everything, and made our way over to the market area. As we did, I noted we were drawing closer to [Craterside Supply](#), which more or less sat at the entrance of the market space.

Just like in the game, it was a large building with a jetliner cockpit resting on top. Unlike the game, however, the building underneath was a bit larger, so the cockpit wasn't nearly as precariously placed. It still sent a nostalgic thrill through me as we approached, though.

"You gonna visit now?" Carlos asked, recognizing the shop from one of my previous descriptions.

"No, I would rather wait until after," I explained, shaking my head. "We have time, and she is one of the few places that might know just where along the story we are, if we are on it at all."

Carlos nodded, and together we pushed past the large shop, making our way to the market space built almost around it.