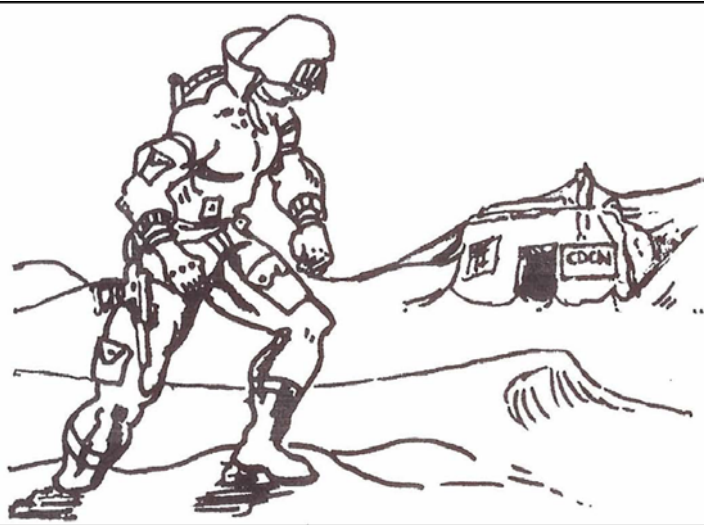


CDCN 2100 AD

by

DAVID JOHNSON

CDCN REGISTRY



A slight breeze whips across the open sands.

The bright sun shines on the unbroken line of dunes.

In the blue sky circle vultures searching for prey.

A lone figure strides out across this barren wasteland. Tall and powerful, one of the world's new race of men. His uniform is dazzling silver and gold; heat resistant and weapon proof. On his head a helmet with full face visor.

He is searching for yet another ancient "temple" built before the wars of the 1990s that made Britain and most of the world a desert. And inside, for anything to connect it with the others. Then his keen eyes spied something angular and alien jutting from a nearby sand dune.

As he approached he saw the shattered entrance to some square building. Outside on a semi-burned plaque were the letters CDCN. Could this be the greatest of the world-wide "temples" of which the old Chronicles spoke?

Through the shattered entrance he walked. Broken beams and scattered glass lay all around. Through this dull and dusty place he trod warily until he came to a second door. This sliding wooden door, with small glass panels, was broken and twisted.

Upon peering through the entrance he saw gaping below him a deep black shaft.

Was this that dreaded bottomless hole spoken of in terror-filled legend? The shaft where people went down, but never came up?

The dreaded L-I-F-T?

An involuntary shudder shot up his spine.

Cautiously he stepped over the edge of the entrance and gently floated down on his anti-gravity back-pack. After thirty seconds he touched down gently on the bottom.

Cautiously he emerged from the tall shaft. The pitch black surroundings seemed to harbour almost real and tangible beings that waited for him. His torch beam cut a bright hole through the darkness as he approached a dust covered wooden plaque. On it, in

faded golden paint, were several lines of illegible words, but above there was a strange symbol. The same as the one on the surface. Again the letters CDCN presented themselves.

His heart beat quickened. This must be the centre of the world-wide network of "temples".

He turned right and moved through the remains of some swinging doors. Then he began to move steadily down the long main corridor before him. By the light of his powerful torch he could see several passages that had caved in to his left. He pressed on.

Down the dusty, ancient corridor he moved. He could feel an age old presence lurking in this place. In its day it must have been a place of growing importance.

Then, several turns to the left, he went down the only intact side passage. Just before the blockage in it caused by broken beams, he spotted a door marked REGISTRY.

Through the buckled steel doors he stepped. With his torch beam he scanned across the dust-covered tables, strewn with papers and other objects.

Was this to be like all the other "temples" found around the world? Like the sacred "COMMCENs" and "SUs" that shared similar characteristics? Could he find some scrap of evidence to link them all together, some shred of evidence to finish the puzzle of DCN?

Then suddenly his torch beam passed over the crumbling form of a skeleton. It lay there slumped over a desk with its arm outstretched. What had made one of this underground temple's priests stay behind to certain fate?

Then he saw in its dusty hand a thin, tissue-like piece of paper. On it were printed rows of unintelligible words. But stamped in bold, red print stood out the words that connected it with all the other "temples" discovered around the world.

The missing link to the secret of the pre-cataclysmic age!

The words...

IMMEDIATE SIGNAL.