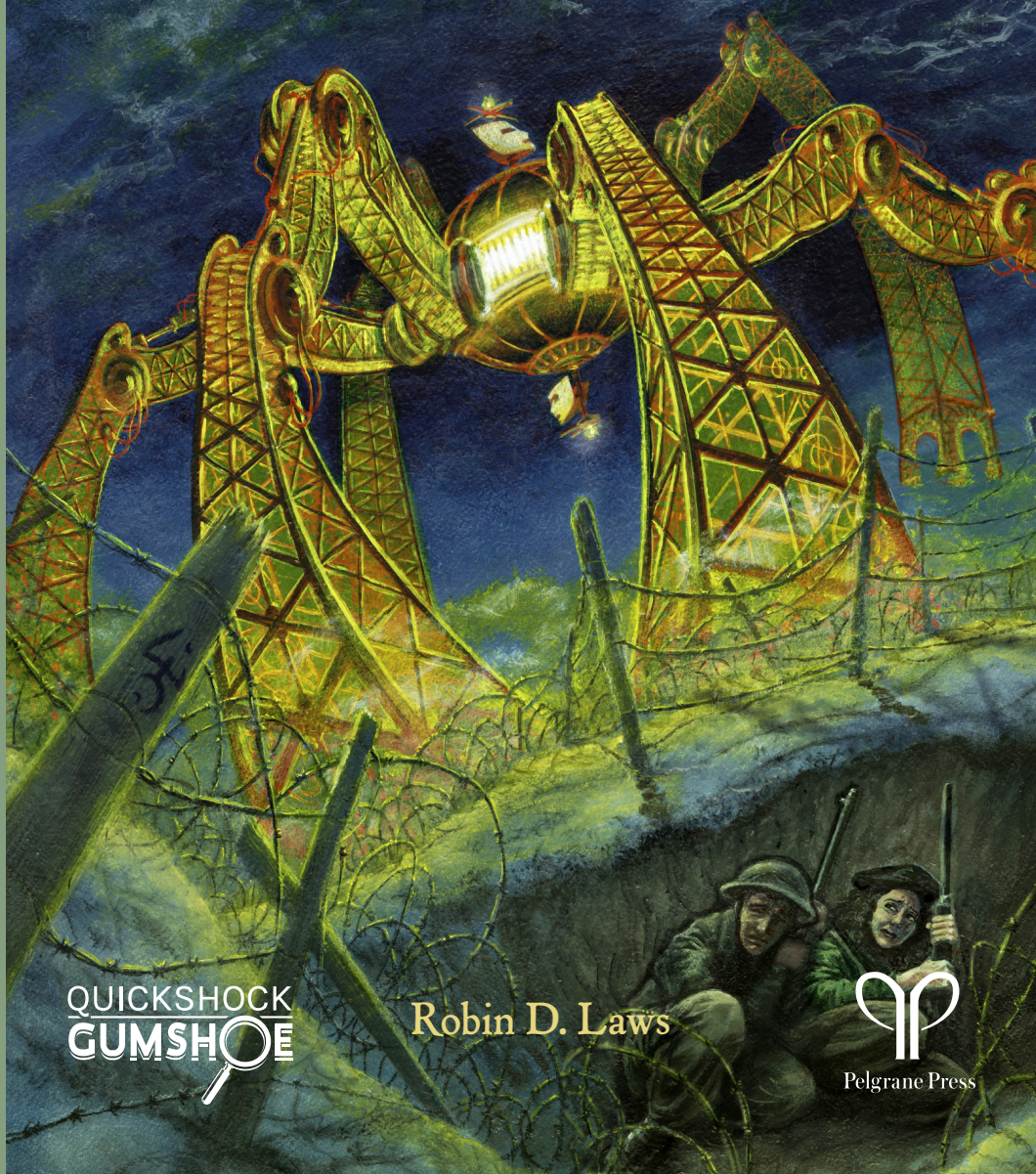


THE **YELLOW**
 **KING**
ROLEPLAYING GAME

THE WARS



QUICKSHOCK
GUMSHOE

Robin D. Laws



Pelgrane Press



BOOK TWO

THE WARS

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INTO THE WARS

In this, the second sequence of *The Yellow King Roleplaying Game*, players portray a squadron of soldiers fighting on the European battlefield of 1947. There they unravel supernatural mysteries arising from the Carcosan phenomenon that generated this alternate reality. This struggle reflects not one specific war from our timeline, but all of them from 1914 on.

In a typical episode, the squad faces both a conventional military problem and a weird mystery stemming from the increased influence of the Yellow King over the world. The story never requires them to sacrifice the first in order to deal with the second.

What the Squadron Does

Weird mysteries of *The Wars* go something like this:

- Soldiers billeted in a remote village disappear. The locals are too frightened to tell the truth.
- Assigned to hold an old church as a sniper tower in anticipation of an enemy advance, the squad encounters a malign entity that intends to drive them to violent madness by altering their perceptions.
- The squad investigates reports that a brilliant but eccentric Loyalist commander has gone rogue. They find that he has carved out a swathe of crucial territory not for your side, but as his own domain, supported by enemy deserters who worship him as a living god. When they meet him, they find that his face has gone pallid and mask-like, and his discourse now runs to feverish monologues about Hastur and the Hyades.
- Desperate holdouts the group is dispatched to flush from their cavern turn out to be much less human, and considerably hungrier, than their orders indicate.
- Dispatched on a deserter hunt, the squad finds the targets dead. But still running around the countryside shooting anything that moves.
- Sent to find out why a bridge can't be bombed, the squad sees the glowing sigils on its support pillars. Now they have to figure out how to deactivate this otherworldly protection, before enemy troops arrive and cross it, pushing further than ever into French territory.
- An enemy special forces

team penetrates the squad's base security at will. What power allowed them to assassinate the commanding officer and then seemingly dissolve into thin air?

- A walker (a tank on mechanical legs) acquires a murderous mind of its own and turns on its former masters. Can the squad figure out how to take it down?
- Behind enemy lines, the squad finds a dairy farm stocked with mutant cattle. A weird antennae juts from its central barn. What's going on here, and how do the investigators stop it?
- The squad discovers that a French brigadier general was also a powerful figure half a century ago. She looks the same today as she did back then. The *characters* suspect something sinister about her personal agenda. The *players* recall her as a terrifying villain their Belle Époque characters never managed to defeat.

Navigating This Book

"Characters" takes you through character generation, including the connections, mundane or eerie, between this new group of PCs and the ones from *Paris*. (If you're restricting play to *The Wars* alone, you'll skip that step, naturally.) The section ends with a few adjustments to the rules as provided in *Paris*.

"Shattered Europe" gives you the elements you need to build

out your version of the Continental War, from its contending alliances to the role the King in Yellow and his court play in driving the conflict. It also covers the culture and organization of the French army in this timeline.

"Battle Wears No Mask" covers the mental and physical dangers of the battlefield, as well as the setting's Carcosan-influenced retro-tech war machinery, from stalkers to dragonflies.

"Enemies" features foe profiles for both the mundane and eerie opponents the squad may wind up fighting.

"People" sketches out some supporting characters to pull into your scenarios as needed.

"Running the Game" ties these elements together with advice to assist you in GMing this sequence.

The sample scenario, *A Feast for Wolves*, pits the squad against a village of cannibal peasants in thrall to that legendary demon-wolf, the Beast of Gévaudan.

"Appendices" include the character sheet, tables used in this sequence, and an introductory handout for players, "You're in the Wars Now." Give this last item, available as a PDF from the *YKRP*G resource page at pelgranepress.com, to the players before your first session of *The Wars*.

CHARACTERS

Character generation proceeds as follows.

Pick Your Premise

Before starting your series, choose a premise. Here are three to start with; you might prefer to devise your own.

- **Shadow Squadron.** The squad forms the core of a unit specializing in reverse camouflage operations. It stages scenes meant to be picked up by enemy reconnaissance, using props and stagecraft to make it seem as if key positions are occupied by forces that are in fact nonexistent. As the only unit that does this, they get dispatched all over the place. This gets them moving and encountering a wide variety of situations from which to springboard into weird mystery.
- **Report for Execution.** Early in the sequence, the characters are released from their military duties to submit themselves for execution. Instead they choose to seek freedom and safety elsewhere. But as in a dream where you try to get somewhere but always wind

up in some other trouble, they can only continue to explore the battlefield, encountering supernatural mysteries all the while. This option suits groups who chafe at the mission structure otherwise implied by a military setting.

- **Military Police.** The team serves as a military police unit. Most of their cases occur offscreen, revolving around finding and hauling away drunk and disorderly soldiers. Scenarios feature their less-routine investigations, which lead them into confrontations with Carcosan mystery.

Who They Fight For

The players belong to a unit of the Loyalist infantry, one of the two international alliances mired in a conflict that grinds across the map of Europe. Some refer to it as the Continental War; others, as the War of Reclamation.

“Who’s trying to reclaim what?”, your players might ask. On that point, no two arguing soldiers quite agree. And thinking too hard on the matter hurts a poor grunt’s head: Difficulty 3 Composure

test to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major:** Dulled Thinking/
Throbbing Migraine.

Loyalists call the enemy by a variety of insulting nicknames, but mostly simply as the Enemy.

The forces of Carcosa covertly manipulate both sides, in a manner you choose; see p. 26. The players may or may not discover the truth behind the war in the course of their investigations.

Nationality

This book assumes that the players portray French soldiers.

If played in isolation, without an arc tying together all of the *YK RPG* sequences, you might prefer to adapt this to another nationality the group finds more familiar. This is left as an exercise for custom-tailoring GMs.

When Women Fight

Players can choose to play women. If any do, that means that your version of this alternate history has women serving in full combat positions.

If none do, that means that your 1947 battleground hews closer to our timeline and does not yet allow women to serve in combat.

When including female PCs, ask the players if they want the series to:

1. Address their participation in combat in an idealized way, where equality between the

sexes is assumed and goes without comment.

2. Treat the additional stresses they face as women on the battlefield in a way that allows them to fight and overcome misogyny and sexism.

Go with choice 1 unless the entire group expresses a preference for 2.

This preference does not override your X-card protocol, if you're using one. Whatever the initial agreement, players can still raise their cards to dial back or edit out situations they find distressing.

Orientation and Heritage

The setting imposes no restrictions on player characters of any sexual orientation. As with female characters, have the group decide whether they prefer to handle this in an idealized way, or as a source of story conflict. Go with conflict only if everyone finds it acceptable. Making this choice implies that attitudes about orientation in this 1947 remain as far from ideal as in our 1947.

Members of the French Foreign Legion may have transferred into your squad—meaning that you can play people of any extraction, heritage, or national origin. You might be French citizens or not. If none of the players choose to play French citizens, clearly you're a Foreign Legion unit seconded to the European battlefield.

Kits

As seen in *Paris*, characters are created by combining one item apiece from two sets of **kits**.

Investigative Kits

As before, the first kit, the **Investigative kit**, lays out each character's Investigative abilities.

Lieutenant

- Blueblood
- Leadership
- Military Science
- Political Science

Terrain Private (Civilian Occupation: Medical Student)

- Intuition
- Medicine
- Reassurance
- Science

Private

(Civilian Occupation: Merchant)

- Accounting
- Assess Honesty
- Military Logistics
- Negotiation

Private

(Civilian Occupation: Peasant)

- Farming
- Hunting
- Salt of the Earth

Private (Civilian Occupation: Photographer)

- Flattery
- Intuition
- Photography
- Science

Sergeant

- Interrogation
- Intimidation
- Law
- Military Logistics

Private

(Civilian Occupation: Writer)

- Humanities
- Inspiration
- Lowlife
- Occultism

Distribute kits to players as follows.

When continuing on from the *Paris* sequence:

Start by selecting the player you think would best handle the role of leader. You're looking for a player who moves the story forward, contributes positively to decision-making, and will still collaborate well with the rest of the group when given a measure of imagined power. Look for a player who can comfortably occupy the spotlight without hogging it. Oddly, spotty attendance can be a plus. This means that sometimes the Lieutenant will be a hands-off GMC leader, and other times a PC.

In the bizarre case in which every single player would do equally well in the role, give the Lieutenant kit to the player who portrayed the Architect. If no one played the Architect, choose a player at random.

Now distribute the rest of the kits based on the types each player took on in *Paris*, as seen in this table. At the end, match up players without kits to kits without players.

<i>The Wars</i> Character		<i>Paris</i> Equivalent
Lieutenant	→	<i>Pick player best suited to command role; if all equal, use Architect</i>
Medical Student	→	Poet
Merchant	→	Portrait Painter
Peasant	→	Landscape Painter
Photographer	→	Muse
Sergeant	→	Sculptor
Writer	→	Belle-Lettrist

When starting with The Wars:

Lay the kits out on the table and let the players negotiate who gets what.

Do you still have kits left over?

Invite the players to distribute the abilities from the unused kits between the group, using whatever method makes sense to them.

General Kits

Use General kits with a group unfamiliar with GUMSHOE, or in a one-shot game. Lay them out on a table and leave players to negotiate who gets what.

In Occult Adventure mode, modify each kit ahead of time, adding 2 points apiece to Composure, Battlefield, and Fighting.

As players paw through the

choices, they may notice that a couple of them pair naturally with particular Investigative kits: the Lieutenant with the Tactician, and the Medical Student with the Shepherd. You may wish to point out that the Shepherd is metaphorical, as in “shepherd of people” rather than a literal sheep herder.

Players may modify kits, moving around any number of points, provided the total remains 54 points for Horror mode, 60 for Occult Adventure.

For groups who know GUMSHOE, including those who have just played a *Paris* sequence, have them build from scratch. Remind players that Composure, Battlefield, and Fighting are survival abilities; they likely want to spend 6-8 points on each.

Bruiser

Artillery	6
Athletics	6
Battlefield	6
Composure	6
Driving	3
Fighting	8
First Aid	0
Health	6
Mechanics	2
Morale	4
Preparedness	2
Riding	0
Scrounging	0
Sense Trouble	2
Sneaking	1
Traps and Bombs	0

Conscience

Artillery	0
Athletics	5
Battlefield	6
Composure	8
Driving	1
Fighting	6
First Aid	8
Health	5
Mechanics	2
Morale	8
Preparedness	0
Riding	0
Scrounging	0
Sense Trouble	2
Sneaking	2
Traps and Bombs	1

Fox

Artillery	0
Athletics	5
Battlefield	7
Composure	7
Driving	1
Fighting	8

First Aid	2
Health	5
Mechanics	2
Morale	2
Preparedness	0
Riding	0
Scrounging	8
Sense Trouble	2
Sneaking	6
Traps and Bombs	0

Ghost

Artillery	0
Athletics	5
Battlefield	7
Composure	7
Driving	1
Fighting	
First Aid	0
Health	5
Mechanics	0
Morale	0
Preparedness	2
Riding	0
Scrounging	0
Sense Trouble	4
Sneaking	8
Traps and Bombs	7

Grease Monkey

Artillery	2
Athletics	5
Battlefield	6
Composure	6
Driving	5
Fighting	6
First Aid	0
Health	5
Mechanics	6
Morale	0
Preparedness	3
Riding	0

Scrounging	1
Sense Trouble	3
Sneaking	2
Traps and Bombs	4

Mathematician

Artillery	4
Athletics	5
Battlefield	7
Composure	7
Driving	1
Fighting	5
First Aid	1
Health	5
Mechanics	2
Morale	0
Preparedness	6
Riding	1
Scrounging	2
Sense Trouble	2
Sneaking	1
Traps and Bombs	5

Raw Recruit

Artillery	1
Athletics	4
Battlefield	6
Composure	7
Driving	2
Fighting	4
First Aid	5
Health	5
Mechanics	2
Morale	0
Preparedness	3
Riding	3
Scrounging	4
Sense Trouble	6
Sneaking	2
Traps and Bombs	0

Tactician

Artillery	1
Athletics	6
Battlefield	6
Composure	6
Driving	2
Fighting	6
First Aid	1
Health	5
Mechanics	2
Morale	5
Preparedness	2
Riding	2
Scrounging	0
Sense Trouble	6
Sneaking	3
Traps and Bombs	1

Names

Each player invents a name suitable to the character's nationality or heritage.

Drives

Invite the players to specify why each of their characters will move toward supernatural danger, even amid the perils of the battlefield. Use the common answers below to help hone player suggestions and tag them with a brief term you can remember when you need to use them. Share them with players who'd like a prompt or two.

Advancement: "If there's a ladder, I will climb it. If there's a rank, I will achieve it. By solving this mystery, I will increase my chances for promotion."

General Ability Master List

Ability	Type
Artillery	<i>Physical</i>
Athletics	<i>Physical</i>
Battlefield	<i>Physical</i>
Composure	<i>Presence</i>
Driving	<i>Physical</i>
Fighting	<i>Physical</i>
First Aid	<i>Focus</i>
Health	<i>Physical</i>
Mechanics	<i>Focus</i>
Morale	<i>Presence</i>
Preparedness	<i>Presence</i>
Riding	<i>Physical</i>
Scrounging	<i>Presence</i>
Sense Trouble	<i>Presence</i>
Sneaking	<i>Focus</i>
Traps and Bombs	<i>Focus</i>

Approval Seeker: “Before the war everybody, my family especially, told me I was worthless. Now I can have a new, better family—the army. I’ll do anything to win their admiration.”

Competitive: “Nobody shows me up. If there’s a chance somebody else is going to stick their nose into trouble, I’ll be right alongside them—to show ‘em how it’s done.”

Comradeship: “In war you don’t fight for your country. You fight for your buddies. If something weird threatens the unit, I’m throwing myself on it, just as I would a grenade.”

Decoration Seeker: “I like my accomplishments in tangible, gleaming form, which no one can take from me. They might have to make up a new honor for tackling this weird phenomenon, but you bet they’re going to.” (In a Report for Execution series, the Decoration Seeker assumes that his exploits will redeem the group’s current condemned status, paving the way to that medal ceremony.)

Family Tradition: “My father fought bravely for his country, and his father, and his father, as well. Now it is my turn to bear the weight of sacrifice.”

Financial Ambition: “War bristles with opportunity. I enlisted without a sou to my name and will come out as rich as Croesus. I will figure out this phenomenon, and then I will work out how to make money from it



after peace breaks out.”

A Funny Feeling: “Ever since we arrived in theater I’ve been unable to shake the sense that we were all brought together by inexorable destiny. Like we’re all part of some vast puzzle. And right now that feeling’s telling me a piece of that puzzle lies just over that ridge.”

Honor: “I will do anything to preserve my personal honor. None shall call me coward.”

Monstrous Incident: “Monsters are real. I saw one once, when I was young. They’re what I really want to kill—not my fellow man.”

Patriotism: “Soldiers of many nations, allies and foes alike, watch what we do. This is a problem ideally suited to the French mind. With cool intellect, mastery of procedure, and, if necessary, ruthlessness, I shall make short work of it.”

Occult Fascination: “The weird and magical have always intrigued me. I’d much rather plumb arcane mysteries than suffer the daily miseries of war.”

Passion for Order: “I despise a mess. Chaos, I doubly disdain. An unanswered question is like an unmade bed—intolerable!”

Problem Solver: “Soldiers solve problems. Something that looks like it defies logic is a problem all right. And there ain’t a problem that can’t be solved.”

Procedure: “I see here on page 245 of the Manual of the Infantry Squad Leader, 1936 edition, that we must treat this as a matter

warranting further investigation.”

Rationalism: “Science governs all, even amid the chaos of war. Magic is only a phenomenon we don’t understand yet. I won’t rest until I’ve found out why this is happening, and fit it into the great, ever-widening framework of human knowledge.”

Shattered Ethos: “The madness of battle has destroyed my former certitudes. To truly find my place in the universe, I must find the truths mere academic philosophers never grappled with. Including the truths behind that thing over there.”

Shell-shocked: “The trauma of war has upended my judgment. When the threat of death rears its skeletal head, I trudge dully toward it, just as my drill sergeant trained us to do. This is not an impulse I would articulate or acknowledge. It drives me on a level beyond conscious thought.”

Waa-hoo! “When I see trouble, I holler and run toward it, my face a rictus of insane glee. Not that I’d ever explain it this way. All I say is, *waa-hoo!*”

War Stories: “As a child I envied old soldiers with their tales of horror and bravery. Decades from now, I want to tell anecdotes that put theirs to shame. And what is that weird manifestation over there, but the start of the hairiest war story of all?”

Connection

Use this step only when moving from Paris to The Wars.

Each player in turn describes a connection between their *Paris* character and their new character.

The connection can be literal or metaphorical.

Paris characters were by default in their early twenties in 1895, leaving open the possibility that at least some of them are alive and in their seventies half a century later. If not, they could have met the new characters in the past.

This allows players the chance to describe the later lives of the characters they just played—in this timeline, anyhow.

Though the *Paris* characters are probably American, and *The Wars* character likely aren't, some members of this new ensemble might be their grandchildren. A player might specify that the past character married or had a child with a French person after the events described so far in the game. The new characters might be fully French or maintain dual citizenship.

Other possible connections (where the new character is W and the previous one P):

- W is a devoted fan of P's art or writing.
- W sees P in dreams or visions.
- W has written about, or researched, the life of P.
- W has written what she believes to be fiction about a character whose personality, appearance, and actions match the events of 1895.
- W keeps drawing sketches of P, who he believes himself to have imagined.
- W owns an item once precious to P.
- W has or had a close relationship with a GMC who featured in *Paris* and had cause to speak of P.
- W and P share a Drive, quirk, outlook, or other key trait.
- W and P share an uncanny physical resemblance.
- Under hypnosis, W experienced some of the events of 1895 as if remembering them personally, from P's perspective.
- W's parent or grandparent bore a grudge against P. The black deed P did was passed down as a part of family lore.
- W has constructed an elaborate historical conspiracy theory in which P prominently features. Depending on what happened in the prior sequence, it could well be true.
- During a recent battle fought in an old graveyard, W fell into P's coffin, which had just been exhumed by a bomb.
- W committed a crime against the now-elderly P.

Could it be murder?

- W met P while on leave, or before coming to the front. P gave W a warning, talisman, or other bit of cryptic information. Afterwards W discovered that P was dead and *had been a ghost all along*. (This is not inconsistent with being the grandchild or other much younger relation of P.)

That Damn Peculiar Thing

This works pretty much exactly like the Deuced Peculiar Business from *Paris*, p. 18. Ask each player in turn to specify something uncanny or inexplicable they experienced not long ago while deployed to the front.

Here are a few examples tuned to this setting. Share them with players seeking an inspiration nudge.

- You glimpsed an enemy soldier creeping through the woods behind your lines. He wore a peculiar, pallid mask.
- A fog encircled you as you returned fire from a sniper's nest. Suddenly you were in a peaceful, green pasture, far from any sign of battle. A local man came up to quizzically ask you if he could help. You looked down at yourself and you were in civilian clothes, a camera around your neck. Then the fog rolled up and you were back in the fight once more.
- A Loyalist plane crashed near you. If you didn't know better, you'd swear you saw a flying creature pulling apart its tail section.
- A raven-haired woman in old-timey clothes strolled through a hail of bullets, unharmed. You could swear she was real, but no one else saw it.
- Someone who meant a great deal to you died in combat hundreds of miles away. You woke up in the middle of the night, feeling a premonition of doom. Staggering to the edge of the tent you found something at your feet—his severed head.
- That bullet the medic dug from your flesh came out remarkably intact. It had a weird sigil on it, and in engraved letters you had to use a magnifying glass to see, your name.
- You saw a vulture dining on a pile of dead soldiers. It was as big as a man.
- The precious photo of your sweetheart back home has started to weep blood from its eyes.
- You came upon a circle of civilians performing a strange ceremony in the woods. You ordered them away and they slumped off as if drugged. Or was it a play they were rehearsing?
- You came upon a squadron of soldiers, all dead, each staring in frozen terror. None had a scratch on him.
- You emptied the entire contents of your sidearm into an enemy soldier, but he kept on coming. And he looked like he was already dead. He would have got you, too, if he hadn't stepped on that land mine.
- You heard a baby crying in No Man's Land. But after risking your neck to save it, you found only a hideously misshapen cat. It flashed you a hungry grin and bounded away into the fog.
- You just transferred to this new unit after the members of your old one opened fire

on you. You kept calling out to them, but they remained unresponsive, eyes glassy and jaws gaping open. They snapped out of it at the last minute, then denied that anything had ever happened.

- You're sure there's a worm inside you. Your rations were contaminated, you're sure of it. The docs say it's all in your head. But it's not in your head, it's in your leg, where you can feel it squirming, and dreaming.

Hey, Where's the Relationships Step?

Group cohesion comes baked into the premise in this sequence, so this step is not needed this time.

New Abilities

This section describes abilities that appear for the first time in *The Wars*. Some are versions of previous abilities, renamed to catch the flavor of the times.

Investigative Abilities

Let's start with the new Investigative abilities.

Blueblood (Interpersonal)

As a born and bred member of the ruling class, you know the exquisite manners needed to gain cooperation from others of your station. Instinctively trusting your discretion and honor, they share information with you they would

withhold from social climbers or impertinent bumpkins.

You can also gain information from those of the serving class, and anyone else accustomed to showing deference to their social superiors. This may require a certain sternness of tone, but more often happens without either party quite noticing what is going on.

Farming (Technical)

Your knowledge of agriculture starts with the practical and may extend to the theoretical. Possible uses while investigating mysteries include:

- distinguishing between normal and abnormal domestic animal behavior
 - telling which dangerous farm implement caused those wounds
 - identifying the source of crop damage, if natural, or aver that crops have been damaged by no ordinary cause
 - predicting upcoming weather
 - recounting the superstitions, wives' tales, and folkways of a rural community
- Spend a Push to find a hidden food cache, refreshing your Scrounging pool.

Flattery (Interpersonal)

Extract information from people by appealing to their vanity. This approach works on anyone who desires recognition, whether they are usually denied it and crave it,

or are accustomed to receiving it and become agitated without a steady resupply of it.

After briefly speaking with a person, you can intuit which traits or features they are most proud of.

Spend a Push to gain non-informational favors from anyone who would be pleased to gain your approval.

Humanities (Academic)

Humanity, or at least the good side of it, is in short supply on the battlefield. This umbrella ability encompasses a wide range of fields that other GUMSHOE settings separate out. Your education in the culture allows you to pull from memory facts concerning:

- anthropology and sociology
- linguistics
- political and social history
- the arts
- theology and philosophy

Hunting (Technical)

As an experienced hunter, you know not only how to find, kill, and prepare edible game, but also how to:

- follow a track in the wilderness
- find your way out of the woods when lost
- understand the behavior of wild animals
- tell which creature a bone, hank of fur, or feather came from

- tell whether other people have been in a wild area, and how long ago they passed by

Spend a Push to put hunters at ease or gain assistance from them. Spend a Push to bag a game animal of your choice (must be native to the area), refreshing your Scrounging pool.

Interrogation (Interpersonal)

Special training allows you to elicit information from prisoners in custody. Unlike the common soldier—and worse, the demanding, temperamental superior officer—you understand that this is more about establishing a rapport than issuing threats. Sure, sometimes you have to make it hard on some poor wretch. But you need a sense for when to do it, and how much pressure to exert.

Intimidation (Interpersonal)

Through a mix of physical presence and unyielding personality, you squeeze information out of people by instilling fear. You can also frequently tell which people won't respond to threats, implicit or otherwise.

Law (Academic)

Before you mustered in, you studied the laws of your home nation. As part of your studies, formal or casual, you also acquainted yourself with the basics of other European legal systems, and those descended

from them. Once in uniform you expanded your knowledge to the specialized world of military law. You can rattle off the terms of the Geneva Convention and know when they have been violated. You can act as prosecutor or defense advocate in a court martial procedure. You understand lawyers, including military ones, when you overhear them talking. You can glance at a labyrinthine legal document and not only decode it but explain it in simple language to the rest of your squadron.

Leadership (Interpersonal)

Gain information from others who are your inferiors in the military hierarchy, and from others, civilians included, who crave or respect formal assertions of authority.

Spend a Push to impel soldiers lower than you, in your chain of command, to execute an order not only diligently but to the absolute tiptop of their ability.

Spend a Push to gain calm and cooperation from civilians who desire order or clear direction.

Spend a Push to impress a superior with your ability to command your inferiors, gaining recognition or assistance.

Lowlife (Interpersonal)

You may be in the army now, but you brought your civilian affinity for the seedier side of life. Plenty of your fellow soldiers did the same. With this ability you can:

- identify, befriend, and get information from soldiers with criminal or vice-riddled backgrounds
- make yourself at home among civilian criminals and win their trust
- find the nearest gambling game or brothel
- locate the local black marketeer
- tell who's diverting military goods for resale or engaged in embezzlement
- sense which military police officers are honestly working to crack down on crime within the military, and which ones are on the take

Medicine (Technical)

You use your medical training to figure out what's going on. You can:

- tell what diseases a sick person suffers from, or which ones led to the demise of a dead victim
- study wounds and tell what weapons caused them and under what likely circumstances
- identify drugs, rhyming off their uses and side effects
- discern from visible side effects which medications a person might be taking
- identify healing herbs and other natural treatments, specifying which ones might be effective and which are used only out of superstition

Military Logistics (Academic)

You look at warfare from a practical angle, as an exercise in constant problem solving. You can:



- tell whether a unit is well supplied and, if not, what is causing the problem
- guess at the combat effectiveness of a unit by assessing the maintenance of its equipment and weaponry
- understand the thinking and behavior of non-commissioned officers
- watch a unit on the battlefield and tell how far they've strayed from their orders
- suggest better tactics to implement the objectives behind an officer's commands
- immediately size up an officer and determine whether he is solid or an idiot
- disguise from the above officer that you're making that assessment

Military Science (Academic)

You learned about fighting at a war college or other academic institution. Now you apply the latest theories to the mysteries you encounter. You can:

- comprehend the strategic implications of any engagement
- make solid assumptions about the internal political pressures behind an officer's seemingly ill-advised decision
- understand officer culture, classing the behavior of an officer as typical or unusual
- guess at the likely strategy and order behind a given tactic you see deployed in the field
- tell whether enemy or allied forces taking part in an engagement are acting in accordance with good practice, or are doing something inexplicable
- remember and verbalize the difference between strategy and tactics

Political Science (Academic)

You study the relationships between nations, and between competing branches and factions of government. You can:

- impress visiting civilian dignitaries, gaining their trust and the disclosures that come with it
- tell whether a civilian leader is honest or dishonest, competent or incompetent
- ease disputes between French forces and their allies, or between contending groups from two different allied forces
- gauge the mood of civilians toward the military
- enter a village and tell who's really in charge (which may or may not be the mayor or other official who is supposed to be running things)
- predict the reactions of a village, town, or city to a proposed action
- tell when a population's behavior has gone somehow awry

Salt of the Earth (Interpersonal)

As a farmer or other humble laborer, you get along well with peasants and other ordinary folk.

You can:

- gain their trust, getting them to reveal information they wouldn't share with a bourgeois or high-hat
- tell whether a manual task has been done well or poorly
- at a glance, tell whether a peasant is hardworking or lazy, clever or dimwitted, guileless or treacherous
- understand the limits of rural civilian cooperation

Terrain (Technical)

You understand geography from a warrior's point of view. You can:

- read maps
- point out anomalies and mistakes on maps
- spot the best available sniper position
- distinguish readily defensible positions from those the enemy will easily overrun
- find good places to hide—which are also likely spots to be ambushed from
- tell when something bizarre has affected the landscape
- predict lighting conditions in a given location at various times of day under various degrees of cloud cover
- rattle off the current lunar phase without resorting to an almanac
- orient yourself without a compass

Investigative Ability Master List

Investigative abilities used in *The Wars*, including those carried over from *Paris*, are as follows:

Accounting (Academic)
Assess Honesty (Interpersonal)
Blueblood (Interpersonal)
Chemistry (Technical)
Farming (Technical)
Hunting (Technical)
Inspiration (Interpersonal)
Interrogation (Interpersonal)
Intimidation (Interpersonal)
Intuition (Interpersonal)
Law (Academic)
Leadership (Interpersonal)
Lowlife (Interpersonal)
Medicine (Technical)
Military Logistics (Academic)
Military Science (Academic)
Negotiation (Interpersonal)
Occultism (Academic)
Photography (Technical)
Political Science (Academic)
Reassurance (Interpersonal)
Salt of the Earth (Interpersonal)
Science (Academic)
Terrain (Technical)

New General Abilities

More action-oriented than *Paris*, *The Wars* adds several genre-appropriate General abilities to the mix.

Artillery (Physical)

Allows you to operate weaponry systems too large to be carried by a person, including mortars and high-caliber mounted guns.

Battlefield (Focus)

Since Agincourt the main way not to be killed in battle is to remain outside the kill zone created by incoming fire. Use this ability to remain alive in the midst of a mass combat or while under bombardment. In *Paris* you mostly used Athletics to avoid injury hazards; here you rely chiefly on Battlefield.

Driving (Physical)

Allows you to perform dangerous or difficult maneuvers while driving any mechanical vehicle on wheels, treads, or skis.

Morale (Presence)

Think of Morale as the outward-going counterpart to Composure. When the terrors of war impel other soldiers to flee or curl up into a ball, a Morale success returns them to their senses and keeps them fighting.

As long as your character can be heard by another PC, you can spend any number of points from your Morale pool to refresh that PC's Composure pool by the same number of points. The GM may ask you to describe or act out the inspiring speech or exclamation that fills the recipient with renewed resolve.

You can't use Morale to refill your own Composure pool.

In addition, you can make Morale tests to:

- allow other PCs to discard certain Shock cards (when the text of the card

says this is possible)

- motivate GMC soldiers to risk their lives, as they were trained to do

Scrounging (Presence)

Allows you to find needed items in or around a war zone, through a mixture of ingratiation, horse-trading, and perhaps the odd moment of outright stealing.

Think of it as Preparedness for needs you had no way of preparing for.

In a restful moment or pause in the action, you can refresh a single other PC's Battlefield pool by producing a scrounged item that brings cheer or solace. You must describe it and can't describe the same item more than once in a single scenario. Items might include: baguettes, sausages, champagne bottles, books, cigars, shaving cream, or shampoo. Choose a number of Scrounging points to spend: the recipient refreshes Battlefield by the same amount. You can't transfer points from Scrounging to your own Battlefield pool.

Use Scrounging to refresh the entire squad's Battlefield and Athletics pools by Hunkering Down; see p. 24.

Traps and Bombs (Focus)

Use this ability to set or disarm mines, explosive charges, and booby traps. The latter may be explosive or purely mechanical.

RULES ADJUSTMENTS

The Wars introduces a few other twists on the rules as seen in *Paris*.

Fighting

The battle-hardened soldiers of *The Wars* find it easier to kill opponents than their art student counterparts from *Paris*.

On the other hand, their foes, toughened by the rigors of battle, are harder to flee from.

Hunkering Down

Once per scenario, the group can stop to temporarily Hunker Down, partially or fully refreshing their Battlefield and/or Athletics pools.

When the players ask for an opportunity to Hunker Down, allow it if the interlude fits the pacing and situation. As guidelines, you might require that the squad be:

- traveling on foot
- through dangerous territory
- at least three hours of

Relative Challenge	Difficulty (Escape)	Difficulty (Other)	Difficulty (Kill)	Toll
Weak	2	3	3	0
Tough but Outmatched	2	4	3	0
Evenly Matched	3	5	4	1
Superior	4	5	4	1
Vastly Superior	3	6	7	2
Overwhelming	5	7	7	2
Too Awful to Contemplate	5	8	8	3

world time away from your point of departure

- one hour of world time away from your destination

As GM, you can offer an opportunity to Hunker Down whenever the group needs it and it feels right given the current situation. When you offer, remind the players that they get to Hunker Down once per scenario.

Designate one character to make a Difficulty 3 Scrounging test. The character must have a rating of 1 or greater in Scrounging.

Difficulties increase in especially inhospitable, bombed-out, or alien territory: +1 for a denuded no man's land, +2 for a twisted briar in Carcosa.

On a success, the scrounger finds a spot of relative safety where the squad can rest and regroup, momentarily relaxing their constant vigilance. This might be:

- an abandoned farmhouse
- a cave
- a gully
- a burbling creek bed at the bottom of a secluded ravine

The GM invites the player to describe the spot, suggesting adjustments should the narration contradict details essential to the current mystery.

Each player, including the scrounger's, refreshes a number of points equal to the margin of the test. A margin of 0 is upgraded to a 1, so everyone gets at least one point. Points

can be used to refresh Battlefield or Athletics.

The GM then invites a player who could use, and would like, some spotlight time, to commence a quick session of classic wartime dialogue between the squad members. The group might:

- try to make sense of this blasted war
- reminisce about the sunlit days before the first guns rumbled
- guess what their loved ones are doing on the home front
- imagine what they'll do next time they get leave
- make plans for their civilian futures after the war

When this interlude loses momentum, the GM calls for a player who could use the spotlight time to explain why the group has to get a move on and leave this safe location. "We have a mission to accomplish/mystery to solve" is a perfectly solid reason. When the narrated explanation suggests danger, describe the group getting away from it. Giving the group a chance to refresh points and then putting them in a situation that immediately yanks them back will strike your players as an unfair waste of time.

SHATTERED EUROPE

This chapter presents background information on the War of Reclamation, Continental War, Yellow War, or whatever its combatants choose to call it.

Why Carcosa Fights

Either before you start or when you finally have to decide one way or the other during play, choose one of the following driving explanations behind the war:

- The King in Yellow battles against a rival member of his court for control of Europe, as a stepping stone toward broader command of Earth.
- The King and one or both of his daughters have staged the war as a game for their cruel amusement. When one side obliterates the other, the winner will claim from the loser an amphora of indigo wine.
- The King and his daughters fight the war as proxy for control of Carcosa. They don't want to wreak havoc across their own planet but see Europe as eminently expendable. If a contending daughter's side signs articles of surrender, she will relinquish her claim on her father's throne, sealed by an

unbreakable ritual oath. If the King's side loses, he abdicates in favor of his daughter.

- The King and perhaps others don't want the war to stop or either side to win. Instead they prolong a static conflict which generates enormous horror and misery. They use this negative psychic energy to power their magic. The Carcosans might need this energy for some or all of the following reasons:
 - to grant them their personal might and ability to warp reality
 - to maintain their immortality
 - to parcel out to their vassals, as a magical currency
 - to keep the gates between this world and theirs open
 - to sustain the depleted environment of Carcosa, which without it would wither and die

In addition to the motivation behind the war, choose whether the King battles Cassilda, Camilla, or both. If in the *Paris* section the players found themselves drawn more toward one of these figures than the other, that character puppets the Loyalists from behind the scenes.

- If that's one of the sisters, the King controls the enemy. The

remaining sister could be on either side, or on the sidelines.

- If it's the King, the two sisters jointly control the enemy.

Alternatively, the war in Europe might be fought by secondary figures battling for key positions as the King's vassals. The King does not care to rule Earth, but will have it ruled for him. The Loyalists fight on behalf of a recurring adversary—either new to this sequence or returning after being introduced in *Paris*. This could be a Carcosan noble you create, the vampire countess Addhema, a powerful human bearer of the Yellow Sign, or some other figure the players will respond to as a potent frenemy. Then invent or choose a counterpart figure to serve as force behind the throne for the enemy forces.

Choosing a big bad other than the big three members of the Carcosan court opens up the possibility of the player characters defeating that lesser threat here, while keeping the King, Cassilda, and Camilla as primary villains in *Aftermath* and *This Is Normal Now*.

The Loyalists

Two alliances battle for control of Europe. The French, and thus the player characters, fight for the Loyalist side.

Choose fellow Loyalist nations based either on events from *Paris*, or your plans for this series.

Main choices include England, Germany, Turkey, and Russia. Loyalist countries of lesser import might also include Italy, the Nordic bloc, Spain, Portugal, Poland, and the various Balkan states. An amalgamation or two will make this feel more like an alternate timeline: Spain and Portugal might be one country called Iberia. Poland plus the Balkans could be called Boznovia, Chambers' go-to name for a fictional European nation.

To use *Paris* as the basis for your Loyalists, review what the players did during that sequence. Whenever *Paris* characters had a positive or mixed interaction with representatives of a nation other than France, their countries now count among the Loyalists.

In my game, the group worked with German diplomats engaged in the effort to suppress the play and its effects. In one particular scenario, they dealt with an Italian agent intent on using the Yellow King's power to aid his country's invasion of Ethiopia. When it came time to start The Wars, my Loyalists were thus France, Germany, Italy, and Ethiopia. For added balance I decided that some former Austro-Hungarian powers were now part of a greater Germany.

To make the war easier for players to envision, keep the alliances as geographically contiguous as you can manage.

Be sure to leave about half of the continent to comprise the enemy alliance.

Having sliced Europe in half, ask yourself what outward ideologies might divide the two sides. Really they're fighting because competing supernatural beings have manipulated them into it, but, as the action begins, not even the player characters know that.

What you're looking for is the justification for war ordinary people understand and regard as credible.

The Enemy

The answer to this question tells you how to characterize the enemy and what name to give it.

Are the Loyalists republican democracies? Then the enemy consists of authoritarian monarchies. They are called the Royalists or Monarchists. Your squad refers to them by the derisive term "Crowns."

Or is it the Loyalists who backslid into old-fashioned autocracy? They fight the republican nations, insulting known as "Reps" or "Blics" (pronounced *bleeks*).

Want to get even weirder? The enemy call themselves Exoterics, after their embrace of occult wisdom. They claim that their conquest of Europe will bring about a metaphysical as well as a political sea change. In fact, both sides are driven by alien magic, but only the big bad behind the

other side decided to take this as an overt theme. Pejorative terms: "Exos" or "Cones," the later a reference to the conical wizard hats that none of them actually wear.

Warped Timeline

Having chosen your opposing sides, you can then work backward, incorporating a detail or two from "The Repairer of Reputations," to create the alternate history that leads from the 1895 we all know to this very strange 1947.

Incorporate the following details from (or extrapolated from our alternate version of) "Repairer":

- In the late teens Germany fought a war with the United States America, which included an attempted invasion of the eastern seaboard.
- The USA turned this invasion back, aided by the valor of its mounted Hussars.
- It withdrew into its own borders, becoming the United Empire of America, under its first Emperor, Hildred Castaigne.
- America has remained isolationist since then. Emperor Castaigne I, now in late middle age, has declined to intervene in the Continental War.
- In the wake of the Germanic-American War (and possibly also widespread reading of *The King in Yellow*) Germany, Italy, Spain, and Belgium succumbed to anarchy. Russia swept

in to fill the vacuum, taking over these nations either:

- Directly, through military occupation.
- Indirectly, aiding putatively independent puppet governments who restored order and now answer to the Tsar's ambassadors.

Squad members will likely care more about immediate survival than the intricacies of politics since the turn of the century. You may be able to keep the past a matter of vague hand-waving. That said, you might have players who need to know the deep background details, or just enjoy messing around with timelines. In that case, have fun connecting these dots into a credible historical narrative—where “credible” means, “suffered ongoing interference of wildly powerful alien sorcerers.”

Battlefronts

The Carcosan royals behind the war don't necessarily follow the tactical doctrines mortal generals would adopt.

Those on each side could be fighting to win, using a parageometrical logic beyond our ken.

Or, depending on your choice from “Why Carcosa Fights” (p. 26), they might deliberately be dragging out the conflict, because it increases their sadistic pleasure in the game, or yields

a richer harvest of suffering and misery to power their magic.

Also, the existence of alternate-reality war tech may change the logic of battle. Walkers can scale steep slopes, making a mountain range that would otherwise impose an insurmountable barrier into a feasible battlefield.

This conceit lets you to place the front lines in your Continental War in any arrangement that serves the scenarios you want to build.

On a broad scale, you'll be:

1. looking at the contiguous nations that make up the two warring alliances, drawing a preliminary line around their borders from our world circa 1895
2. pushing those lines to hem in closer to France, to show that the Loyalists are presently on the defensive and have ceded territory to the enemy
3. finding the particular spot where you want to set your first scenario and pushing that line to place the front nearby

Alternately you can stop at step 2, and then pick a location for your introductory scenario near the front.

Behind the Lines

It's hard to investigate mysteries in the middle of No Man's Land. Instead the assumption is that the scenarios take place near the front lines, in Loyalist-controlled territory. Of course that can shift as the

progress of the war ebbs and flows. One week's case may take place in a recently captured or recaptured area, while the next happens after the Loyalists have been pushed back further into French or allied territory.

This doesn't preclude the occasional scene in which the soldiers take part in an offensive or find themselves under fire during an enemy push into their area.

Combat can also embroil them on a skirmish scale, as they encounter enemy units that have penetrated into their territory in pinprick advance raids. These might be paratroopers, infiltrating snipers, or stray walkers. Needless to say, the PCs remain vulnerable to air power wherever they go.

These encounters can remind the players that their characters are fighting a war, even if they belong to a specialist unit with unusual freedom of movement across the theater. Treat these as Antagonist Reactions triggered not by particular events within the scenario, but by the vagaries of warfare.

The Fighting French

However warped the timeline, the institutional traditions of the French army have remained in place. This French army much resembles the one that fought our WWI. The main differences are visual. As is broadly the case

throughout the conflict, French uniforms retain a color and ceremonial sash that disappeared amid the grim practicalities of warfare in our 20th century. This reflects the taste for ornament typical of the Carcosan court.

Officer Class Culture

The French army steepes itself in a culture of pride and honor. It has changed little since the reemergence of the generals into public life in the 1890s, a generation after the humiliation of the Franco-Prussian War. On the whole the officer class values the following objectives, in order of priority:

- Maintain the honor of the French military.
- Protect the political power of the French military.
- Win the war.
- Protect the supplies and equipment of the forces they command.
- Protect the lives and property of influential French civilians.
- Protect the lives of bourgeois French civilians.
- Protect the lives of their soldiers.

Any one officer might care more about one item in the hierarchy than another.

The higher up the chain of command you go, the more fervently the officers prize the top items on the list over the lower ones.



Conversely, the further down you go, the more you find officers who care about winning battles and proclaim a grumbling disregard for rear echelon types with their heads up their asses.

Individual officers have their personal goals, chief among them being promotion. To win promotion, they must be seen to further the above objectives, by higher-ups who share them. Against those of like rank they frantically jockey not only for prestige and recognition, but more importantly for equipment, munitions, and soldiers.

Some high officers speak of these priorities with erudite self-awareness and irony. Others bluster and take offense at any suggestion that they have their priorities mixed up.

To further lock into French officer culture, watch Stanley Kubrick's 1957 film *Paths of Glory*. Depict its higher-ups just like every officer from that film not played by Kirk Douglas—albeit with the additional possibility that they have been suborned by Carcosa.

Rank Structure

The Wars translates certain French ranks into their English equivalents, so that Anglo players don't have to do constantly do this in their heads. For most of us "Private" is easier to remember and say than *soldat de deuxième classe*. We also simplify the structure a little,

skipping gradations within ranks. Those who find these distinctions evocative may wish to restore the I left *capitaine* as-is because it's immediately understood and more fun to say. French terms are otherwise given in brackets.

Here are the ranks in the French infantry, from lowest to highest.

Enlisted ranks:

- Private (Soldat de deuxième classe, Soldat de première classe)
- Corporal (Caporal, Caporal-chef)

Non-commissioned officers:

- Sergeant (Sergent, Sergent-chef)
- Adjutant (Adjutant, Adjutant-chef; performs the duties of a Lieutenant without the opportunities for advancement)
- Chief Quartermaster (Maréchal des logis-major)

Junior officers:

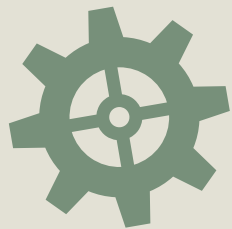
- Second Lieutenant (Sous-lieutenant)
- Lieutenant
- Capitaine (commands a company)

Senior Officers:

- Commandant
- Lieutenant-Colonel
- Colonel (commands a regiment)
- Generals
 - Brigadier General (Général de brigade; commands a brigade)
 - Division General (Général de division; commands a division)
 - Corps General (Général de corps d'armée; commands a corps)
 - Army General (Général d'armée; runs the whole shebang)

BATTLE WEARS NO MASK

This section covers the mental and physical hazards of war, and the outlandish war machinery that separates this 1947 from the one on the History Channel.



Shell Shocks

Whether supernatural or mundane, the horrors of war may dole out Shock cards to characters failing their Composure tests.

Situation	Difficulty	Minor	Major
You See a Weapon Do Something Eerie or Impossible	3	Disbelief	Weird Weapon Trauma
You Think Too Hard About the Causes of the War	3	Dulled Thinking	Throbbing Migraine
A Leader Falls	4	Bereft	Rudderless
You are Targeted for the First Time by a Particular Weird Weapon	4	What th—?	World Gone Mad
You Meet a Creature Posing as a Dead PC	4	Haunted	Profaned Memories

Situation	Difficulty	Minor	Major
You Promise to Protect a Civilian, and Fail	4	Hollow Promise	Resounding Failure
You See a Comrade or Innocent Civilian Killed with a Weird Weapon*	4	Tenuous Reality	Life's Value Ebbs
You See a Particular Horrible Battlefield Sight for the First Time	4	Revulsion	Nightmare Fuel
You Show Fright, Inviting the Mockery of Fellow Soldiers	4	Lily-Livered	Yellow-Bellied
You Use a Particular Weird Weapon for the First Time	4	Flirtation with Carcosa	Embracing Carcosa
Your Ship Is Taking on Water	4	Sinking Feeling	Panic
The Ghosts of the Fallen Come for You	4	Ghost Touch	The Vengeful Dead
You Consume Human Flesh	5	Tastes Like Chicken	A Crossed Line
You Let a Comrade Needlessly Die	5	Callous	Pit of Remorse
Your Submarine Has Sprung a Leak	5	Panic	Rat in a Can
Your Submarine is Under Attack by a Giant Squid	5	Rat in a Can	Tentacled Doom
You Take Part in a Mass Execution or War Crime	5**	No Blood More Cold	Atrocity

* -1 Difficulty for each previous time you've seen someone killed with this particular weapon

**+3 if victims are innocent civilians

War Hazards

Battlefield tests cover hazards to life and limb the PCs can actively try to evade. Injuries they can't weave, duck, and dive their way out of are resisted with Health.

Danger	Difficulty	Ability	Minor	Major
An Aircraft Crash Lands on You	3	Battlefield	Flying Leap	Flaming Debris
Inside a Structure When Bombers Take It Out	3	Battlefield	Beside Yourself	Pinned by Debris
Strafed	3	Battlefield	Your Lucky Charm Caught a Bullet	Perforated
Aerial Bombardment	4	Battlefield	Caked in Ash	Three Inches to The Left and You'd Be Dust
Cholera	4	Health	Muscle Cramps	Rapid Dehydration
Exposure to Earthly Parasites	4	Health	Unwell	Dysentery
Hunger	4	Health	Hunger	Respiratory Failure
Hypothermia	4	Health	Confusion	Gangrene
Influenza	4	Health	Sore Throat	Influenza
Land Mine	4	Battlefield	Shredded Flesh	"Am I Still in One Piece?"
Machine Gun Fire	4	Battlefield	Bruised While Taking Cover	Sprayed
Marched Past Endurance	4	Health	Winded	Exhausted
Mortar Fire	4	Battlefield	Ringing Ears	Hurled and Scorched
Poison Gas	4	Battlefield	Light-Headed	Lung Damage

Danger	Difficulty	Ability	Minor	Major
Sharks Feed on Drifting Sailors	4	Battlefield	Those Telltale Fins	Shark Bite
Sleep Deprivation	4	Battlefield	Bleary	Dead on Your Feet
Small Arms Fire	4	Battlefield	Bruised While Taking Cover	Through and Through
Small Arms Fire (Discourager Round)	4	Battlefield	Discourager Graze	Discourager Hit
Small Arms Fire (Quisling Round)	4	Battlefield	Quisling Graze	Quisling Hit
Small Arms Fire (Suppurator Round)	4	Battlefield	Suppurator Graze	Suppurator Hit
Small Arms Fire (White-Sky Round)	4	Battlefield	White-Sky Graze	White-Sky Hit
Sub-Sonic Barrage	4	Health	Sub-Sonic Thrum	Sub-Sonic Disruption
Sunstroke	4	Health	Light-Headed	Rapid Heartbeat
Tetanus	4	Health	Tetanic Fever	Lockjaw
Thirst	4	Health	Agony of Thirst	Kidney Failure
Trenchfoot	4	Health	Necrotic Tissue	Gangrene
Tumble Down a Hillside (Exposed to Enemy)	4	Battlefield	Scuffed Up	Torn Ligament
Tumble Down a Hillside (No Enemy Present)	4	Athletics	Scuffed Up	Torn Ligament
Artillery Fire	5	Battlefield	Shell-Shocked	Hit Bad
Giant Squid Attack the Lifeboats	5	Battlefield	Tentacle Lash	Squid Bite
In a Forest as Artillery Explodes the Trees	5	Battlefield	Splinter	Struck by Wood Debris

Danger	Difficulty	Ability	Minor	Major
Nerve Gas	5	Battlefield	Blurred Vision	Circulatory Damage
On a Torpedoed Boat	5	Battlefield	Shrapnel's Sharp, Water's Hard	Into the Drink
Radiation Poisoning (Earthly)	5	Health	Convulsions	Internal Bleeding
Rifle Fire	5	Battlefield	Bruised While Taking Cover	Rifle Hit
Stalker Fire: Flame Thrower	5	Battlefield	Burned	Roasted
Trapped on a Ship as It Sinks	5	Battlefield	Slammed Against the Hull	Into the Depths
Exposure to Carcosan Parasites	6	Health	Soul Decay	Black Blood
Radiation Poisoning (Carcosan)	6	Health	Susceptible	Black Tears
Stalker Fire: Machine Gun	6	Battlefield	Worse Than It Looks	Thoroughly Perforated
Stink Grenade	8	Health	Stink Grenade	Drenched in Stink
Grenade	special	Battlefield	Light Shrapnel	Grenade
Stalker Fire (Cannon)	special	Battlefield	Struck by Debris	Cannon Fodder

Explanatory Notes

Discourager Round: Exotic ammunition is described on p. 57.

Grenade: When more than one character is at risk of harm from a thrown grenade, players choose one to take a Difficulty 5 Battlefield test; the rest take a

Difficulty 3 Battlefield test. If they can't quickly agree, Difficulty for all is 6.

Hunger: Tests begins after three weeks without food, repeating once each day until food is found.

Suppurator Round: Exotic ammunition is described on p. 57.

Tetanus: Difficulty 4 Health to avoid infection when bacteria has chance to enter an open wound. The Injury card is only dealt to the player a week after the infection occurs (world time) and only if the character is actively involved in a scenario—either the one in which the infection occurred, or a subsequent mystery set shortly afterwards.

Thirst: Tests begin after a week without water.

Quisling Round: Exotic ammunition is described on p. 57.

White-Sky Round: Exotic ammunition is described on p. 57.

Travel on Foot

In a typical scenario the squad travels from a base to a remote location, discovering a mystery either along the way or at their destination. Further long-distance travel on foot may occur during the investigation.

Depict this like you'd see in a war movie, as opposed to a tactical board game. Which is to say, handwave it.

In a film you rarely hear characters discuss exact distances, unless they're using the word "klicks" for kilometers to show that they speak in hard-bitten military lingo. You see the actors strain under the weight of their packs, but again they don't put a number on it.

When you really, really need

specifics, weight matters as much as distance in determining the exertion required to travel on foot through unwelcoming territory. In relatively even, which is to say exposed, terrain, the group can cover about 6 km per hour lugging their gear, which comes out to 35 kg per character, give or take. Rocky, snowy, hilly, or heavily forested terrain can cut that time in half.

On occasion, as a part of your plot, you might introduce time pressure, requiring the group to march at a faster than comfortable speed. This calls for the Marched Past Endurance test, above.

Secondary Injury Cards

Certain Injury cards gained from fights or hazards can be traded, under conditions specified in their text entries, for less punitive secondary cards. These are:

- Impediment
- Patched Up
- Permanent Injury
- Dazed
- Recovering
- Shot Up Good
- Still Crispy
- Cough, Choke, Splutter

The Machinery of War

Carcosan influence has altered the development of military technology. This reality's implements of war both look and behave differently than the guns, tanks, and aircraft you'll find in

the Osprey Publishing catalog.

This setting choice reinforces the game's horror tone and theme of reality-bending. The Jules Verne vibe provides a point of entry for players who aren't military buffs and are worried about being constantly well-actuallyed by players who are. It also provides a ward against conversational sidetracking during sessions. Players might know more about T-10s and bomber transport units than you do, but they can't trump your expertise on stalkers and dragonflies. You might still have to steer them back to the action at hand if they start to wax poetic over analogous weapons or other martial trivia, but at least you'll have a leg up on the tangent control front.

Visually, the armaments of the Continental War appear more ornate than those of our early 20th century. The Art Nouveau style of the Belle Époque maintains its hold on European decorative trends. Its love of elaborate lines can be seen in everything from rifle stocks to dashboards to the shape of barbed wire. The style's use of organic shapes is reflected in aircraft mimicking bats or insects, tanks with spidery legs, and grenades that unfold like deadly tulips.

Some military equipment defies natural law as we know it and can be explained only as the inbreak of a supernatural reality into our world. These are known as weird

weapons, a term used in the text of certain Shock cards.

The Boîtenoire

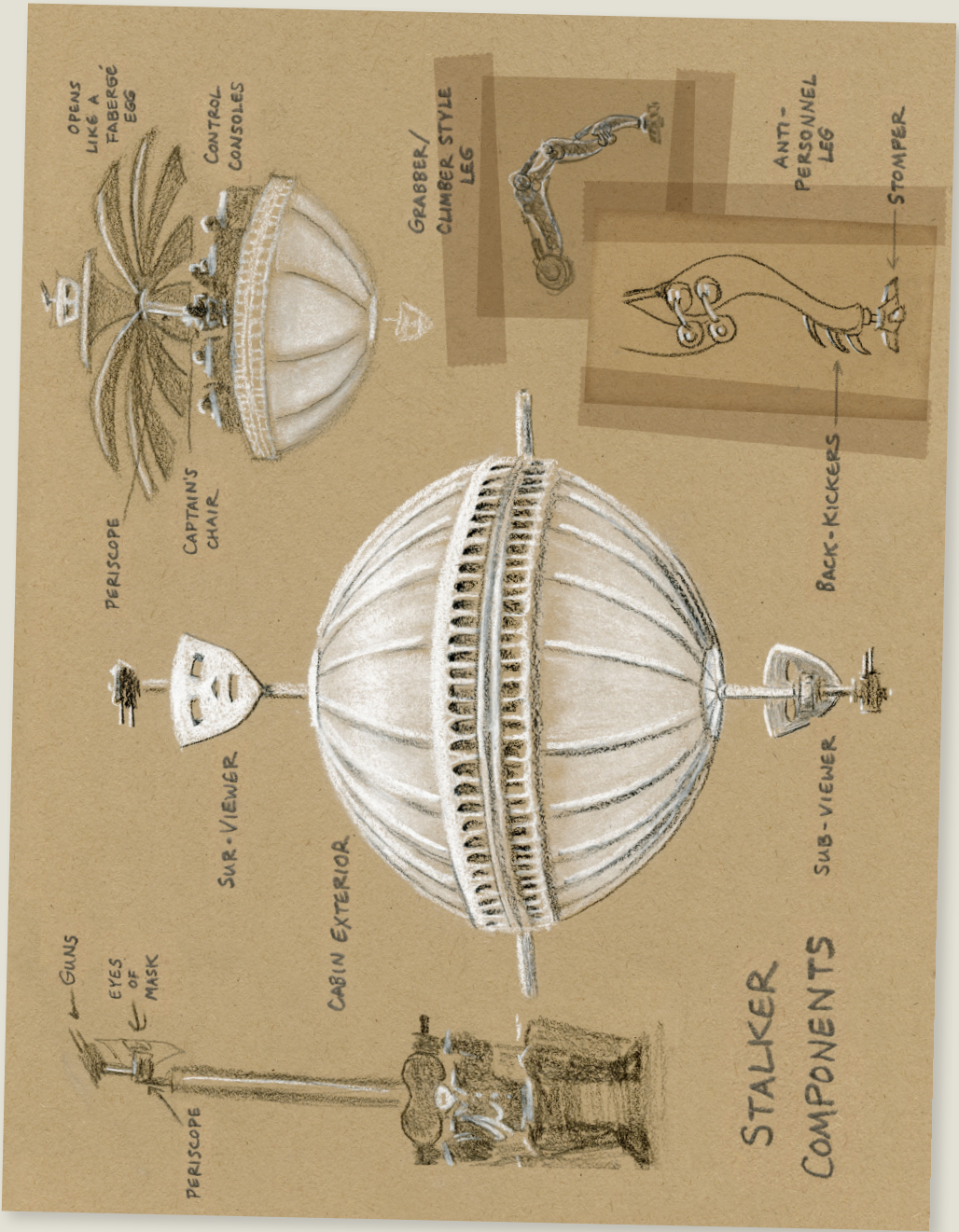
The item of technology most important to the investigators is not a gun or a mechanism of destruction, but their communications device, the boîtenoire. In a reality where radio and television have yet to be discovered, this typewriter-like device provides wireless, two-way, near real-time contact between soldiers and their distant commanders.

The field model the squad lugs around is 36 cm wide, 16 cm high, and 40 cm deep. It fits in a slightly larger carrying case. The device and case are both covered in pebbled black leather. Cases which have not been torn in spots to reveal the steel beneath have not been in the field very long.

To send a message, the operator types on the Dvorak keyboard, hitting the red send button on the side of the unit when finished.

A buzzer inside the unit sounds when it receives an incoming message. The operator then places a sheet of paper in the roller and hits the button. The unit prints out the message using keys striking a ribbon, as per a normal typewriter.

Surprisingly rugged and designed to be easily repaired, a boîtenoire can be knocked out but is hard to kill. A Difficulty 4 Mechanics test generally coaxes



a busted boîtenoire back to life.

Be careful, as a GM, in parceling out the number of times when the boîtenoire is taken out. Do it too often and the horror movie cliché of cutting off communications becomes too glaring. In a war zone, a multitude of other reasons exist to explain why the heroes can't count on the cavalry to do their job for them.

Every army uses its own boîtenoire equivalent: the resilient English black box, the heavy but reliable Russian chernyash, the alluring yet fragile chrome Italian parlacassa, the elegant Danish tallekasse, and the Turkish kirmizikutu, covered in red dyed sheepskin.

The slipcase/GM screen for the YK RPG core book set evokes a boîtenoire.

Stalkers

In this timeline, heavily armored land vehicles bash through unfavorable terrain not on treads,

but on thick legs of reinforced metal, powered by arcane hydraulics. Known as **stalkers**, or sometimes walkers, they strike deep terror into the hearts of foot soldiers.

A stalker consists of a heavily fortified metal bulb, containing the controls for the soldiers inside to fire one or more central guns, plus one to three machine guns. Gunners find targets by peering through periscopes protected by mask-shaped shields.

Sophisticated gyroscopes operate four or five jointed legs. A miracle of locomotion, the legs allow a stalker to move up or down almost any slope, no matter how debris-choked. The legs can fell trees, punch through walls, and crush or impale unlucky soldiers. Characters with visions of tripping a stalker by running a rope around it will be disappointed, and perhaps horribly killed, when the legs easily snap through the rope.

Stalkers fall into three classes: light, heavy, and ultra-heavy.

Model	Type	Nation	Main Armament	Additional Weaponry
Thiers-20	Light	France	.37 cannon	1 machine gun
Thiers-25	Heavy	France	.37 cannon	2 machine guns
Thiers-35	Ultra-Heavy	France	.47 cannon	3 machine guns
Boudicca "Little Boo"	Light	England	.37 cannon	1 machine gun
Elizabeth "The Lizzie"	Heavy	England	.47 cannon	1 machine gun

Model	Type	Nation	Main Armament	Additional Weaponry
Victoria “The Vickie”	Ultra-Heavy	England	.75 cannon	1 machine gun
Panzer II	Light	Germany	.37 cannon	flamethrower
Panzer III	Heavy	Germany	.47 cannon	2 machine guns
Panzer IV	Ultra-Heavy	Germany	.75 cannon	2 machine guns
A-20 “Tsarina”	Light	Russia	.37 cannon	1 machine gun, aft flamethrower
A-32 “Tsar”	Heavy	Russia	.47 cannon	2 machine guns or 2 flamethrowers
A-46 “Tunguska”	Ultra-Heavy	Russia	152 mm howitzer	2 machine guns, aft flamethrower
M-II “Istanbul”	Light	Turkey	.37 cannon	2 machine guns
M-III “Ankara”	Heavy	Turkey	.47 cannon	2 machine guns
M-IV “Izmir”	Ultra-Heavy	Turkey	.47 cannon	2 machine guns, aft flamethrower

A step down from the stalker is the **tripod**, a less formidable, more penetrable but cheaper offensive vehicle. A bubble of steel and stained glass grants rudimentary protection to a pair of gunners operating containing twin machine guns. As the name suggests, the bubble sits atop a trio of slender metallic legs. Tripod operators receive scant training and do not live long but can mow down dozens of

opponents before being brought down by anti-stalker weaponry. All Continental forces field tripods. No one bothers to coin the colorful nicknames for the various models of tripods.

Aircraft

The aerial vehicle infantry soldiers are most likely to step into is the **dragonfly**. This helicopter equivalent consists of a glassed-in cockpit divided into



two bubbles recalling the eyes of its eponymous insect. This makes it not an ornithopter but an entomothopter. A segmented fuselage transports up to eight soldiers, houses a bomb bay, or functions as a roving field hospital.

The dragonfly’s four wings flap up and down, granting it flight in either vertical or horizontal mode. Each wing consists of a wrought iron frame into which dozens of stained glass panels are fitted. These panels are made from levitation glass, a Carcosan technology.

Most infantry soldiers think of them as medical evacuation vehicles. Combat dragonflies strafe the battlefield with mounted machine guns. Special grabbers attached to the bottom of the fuselage retool the dragonfly to carry cargo. The dragonfly’s great maneuverability comes at the cost of fragility: dragonflies are vulnerable to small arms fire and crash all too frequently.

Other aircraft of the Continental War likewise exploits the alterations to the laws of aerodynamics caused by the ambient presence of subatomic Carcosan wave-particles.

Fixed-wing fighter planes are known as **vampires**, as the scollops on their wings remind one of bats. These single-seat craft accompany bombers on raids or defend against incoming aerial attacks. The pilot aims their machine guns at enemy aircraft or can strafe ground forces.

Most feared models include the Addhema (France), Varney (England), Nosferatu (Germany), Vourdalak (Russia), and Laiotă (Turkey). Students of Ottoman history may note that the Turkish name departs from convention and is not that of a legendary vampire, but instead the leader whose forces slew Vlad the Impaler.

Type	Feature	Model # (France)	Model # (UK)	Model # (Ger)	Model # (Rus)	Model # (Tur)
Evacuation	Medical equipment	LB-M	D1	WJE	MOTH-3	YUSUc
Attack	Machine gun	LB-F	D2	WJA	MOTH-1	YUSUa
Cargo	Grabber	LB-C	D3	WJF	MOTH-2	YUSUb

Specially equipped vampires may include such technological fillips as:

- the baller, which releases non-explosive flak from the plane's tail, shattering pursuing craft
- loft, a highly toxic gaseous substance that increases the weight of surrounding air, allowing safer crash landings
- ghost gas, which fills the sky with illusionary figures of the tormented damned

At the war's outset all sides flew **biplane** fighters. Though mostly superseded by more efficient single-wing craft, the squad may occasionally spot a few buzzing overhead. Like other less-than-cutting edge craft, biplanes may be fobbed off on volunteer foreign auxiliary air forces, such as the American Flying Bobcats, Canadian Auroras, or Australian Black Buzzards. If the Brits fight with the Loyalists, the latter two belong to the allied side. Black sheep of prominent Castagnite families make up the Flying Bobcats and could as easily fly for the enemy as with the Loyalists.

Light bombers fly with a pilot, co-pilot, and an engineer to unjam, as needed, the spiraling mechanism that automatically loads explosives in its bulbous aft-carriage. The round housing for the bomb mechanism makes these craft resemble **spiders**, after which they are named. The design omits room for a gunner, making the spider entirely dependent on fighter support

for defense. When a spider crashes, all of its remaining bombs explode at once. This forces fighter pilots trying to bring them down to carefully calibrate their attacks so that their targets plummet earthwards only over unpopulated areas. State-of-the-art models include the Violon (France), Fiddleback (England), Dornfinger (Germany), Karakurt (Russia), and Akrep (Turkey).

Medium and heavy bombers more closely resemble their WWII counterparts, except of course that the fuselage design evokes a praying mantis. For this reason, they are also known as **deathpriests**. Six- or seven-person crews include a pilot, co-pilot, gunner, bombardier, navigator, flight engineer, and sometimes a float ready to take over any role in the event of a casualty. Weird-tech defensive measures vary between models but might include:

- Reactive camouflage, changing the plane's paint job to vanish against a blue, gray, or night sky.
- Air torpedoes, used against enemy aircraft or ships.
- Subsonic barrage, emitting a sound inaudible to the human ear that stresses the metabolism of enemy fighter pilots and troops on the ground. Crews of bombers equipped with the barrage device, and their fighter escorts, must train to resist the effect through exposure. The training process has a high failure

rate, rendering otherwise qualified fliers useless. As a result, only a few deathpriests have been outfitted with these devices, and are deployed only on missions justifying the high toll on personnel.

Spy planes, also known as **eyes**, resemble fighter planes with the visual flourishes removed. Most seat two, a pilot and an observer. The latter either spots troop movements and enemy installations with the naked eye or operates an automated camera device. Most boast reactive camouflage. Some eschew cameras for a device called an oculum, which detects concentrations of Carcosan energy. Oculum readings go only to the very highest officials in the war effort—perhaps only to behind-the-scenes nonhumans. Their use may point to events revealing the alien hand behind the war.

The squad may from time to time hitch a ride on a transport plane. Too boring to warrant a cool nickname or extravagant visual design, they typically demand a crew of two, have a 30-40 m wingspan, and can carry either 24 soldiers or 2 tons of cargo. Some transport planes add a gunner array, bringing the crew size up to four.

Test facilities in France, Germany, and England are all working on glass dirigibles. These enormous aircraft, held aloft by enormous frames of levitation

glass, move slowly through the air but would be able to carry a tremendous bomb payload. Those who know of these top-secret projects wonder what kind of bomb would require such gigantic craft.

Naval Nightmares

A weird nautical mystery may call for the squad's superiors to arrange for their temporary deployment on board a naval vessel.

Both forces muster various sizes of battleships along with less glamorous vessels to transport troops and supplies. Each side's submarines wreak havoc on the other's fleet, sinking ships faster than the yards can build them. Despite the imbalance in favor of offense and the resulting high ship destruction rate, each side madly continues to build and sail new tonnage. Fear of troopship destruction has slowed the enemy's plans for mass-scale land invasion.

Ships

Ship classes the heroes might interact are listed here, from (mostly) smallest to largest.

That said, here are the ships:

Torpedo boats, 21 to 26 m long and crewed by twelve to fourteen sailors, zip out to fire at larger vessels and then peel away. Players may think of them as PT boats, though that name is not in use in the Continental War. Torpedo boats rely on stealth, striking primarily at night.

A **patrol boat** might be anything from a fishing trawler jury-rigged with machine guns to a 30-40 m purpose-built craft whose crew of 20-30 hugs the shoreline, warding off covert infiltration and watching for incoming enemy fleets.

Minelayers do what the name says, filling harbors and marine shipping routes with floating explosive devices. They can vary widely in size, from repurposed frigates to smaller boats. (Submarines can lay mines, too.) Typical minelayers come equipped with anti-ship cannons in case they have to defend themselves. Let's keep it simple and say that the first minelayer the squad has cause to investigate is 75 m long and is crewed by 40 or 50 sailors.

What minelayers lay, **minesweepers** sweep. Filled with naval engineers capable of disabling mines of all types, a minesweeper lacks defensive capability and may rely on camouflage to disguise itself from surface and air. Between 45 and 55 m long; crewed by 30-40.

The smallest vessel classifiable as a warship, the scrappy **corvette** provides convoy protection. What it lacks in firepower it makes up for in ability to close to the enemy quickly. Crew size ranges from 45 to 70; overall length, from 55 to 65 m.

Frigates often lend support to destroyers, protecting them from submarines with depth charges and weirder weapons. This specialization comes at the cost

of punching power against other surface ships. They range from 85 to 95 m and are run by a crew of 40-60.

Destroyers sail fast, maneuver well, and bristle with big guns. They provide armed protection to convoys of smaller, less defensible vessels. Crew size ranges from 50 to 70; typical length, from 90 to 110 m.

Cruisers, sometimes called pocket battleships, pack considerable firepower into their 140 to 160 m frames. When a cruiser goes down, 75 to 110 sailors must either escape to the lifeboats or go down with it.

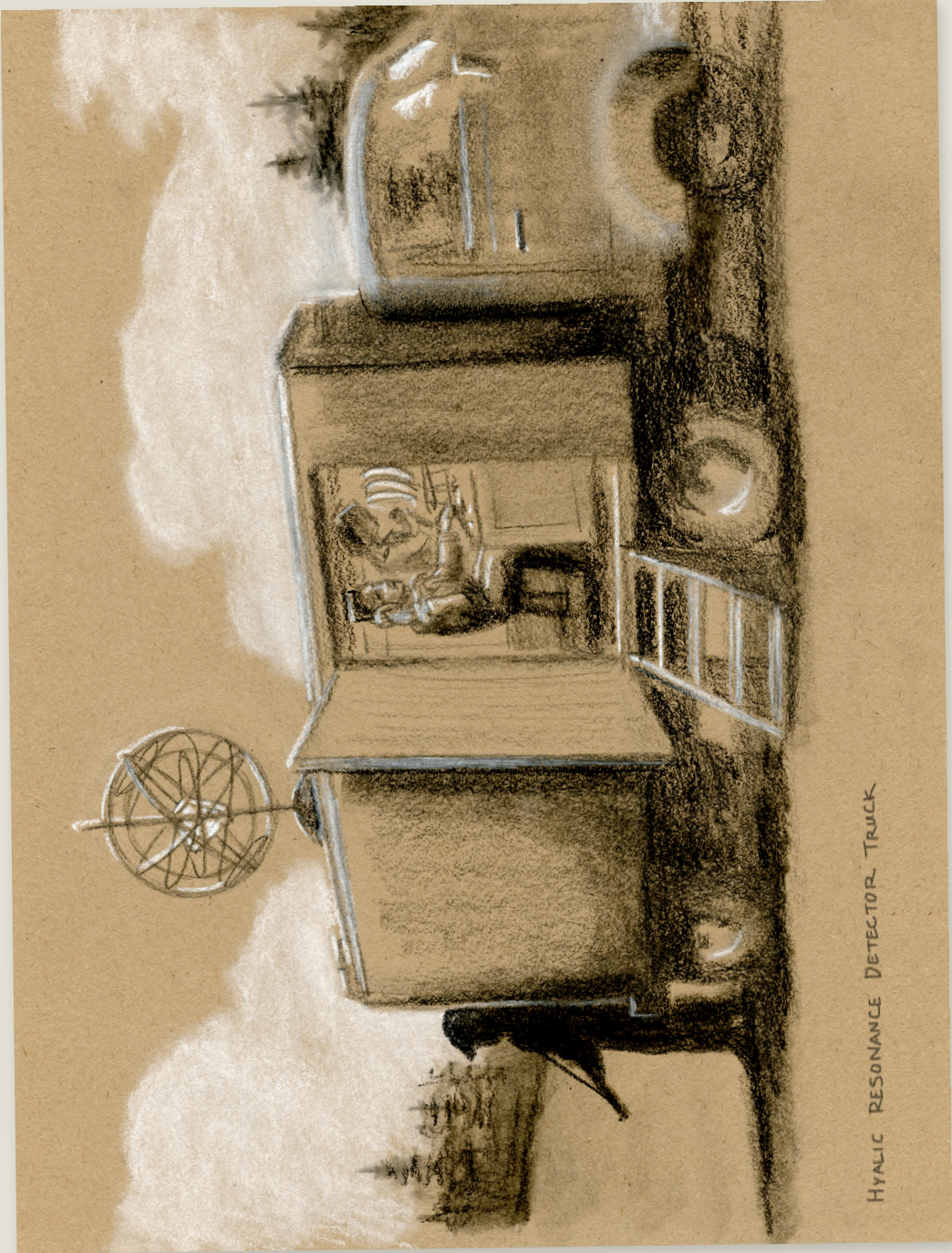
The titan of ship classes, the **battleship** packs the most and biggest guns. Crew size ranges from 90 to 125; overall length, from 160 to 180 m.

Aircraft carriers, in this timeline called **platforms**, have yet to make it past the blueprint stage.

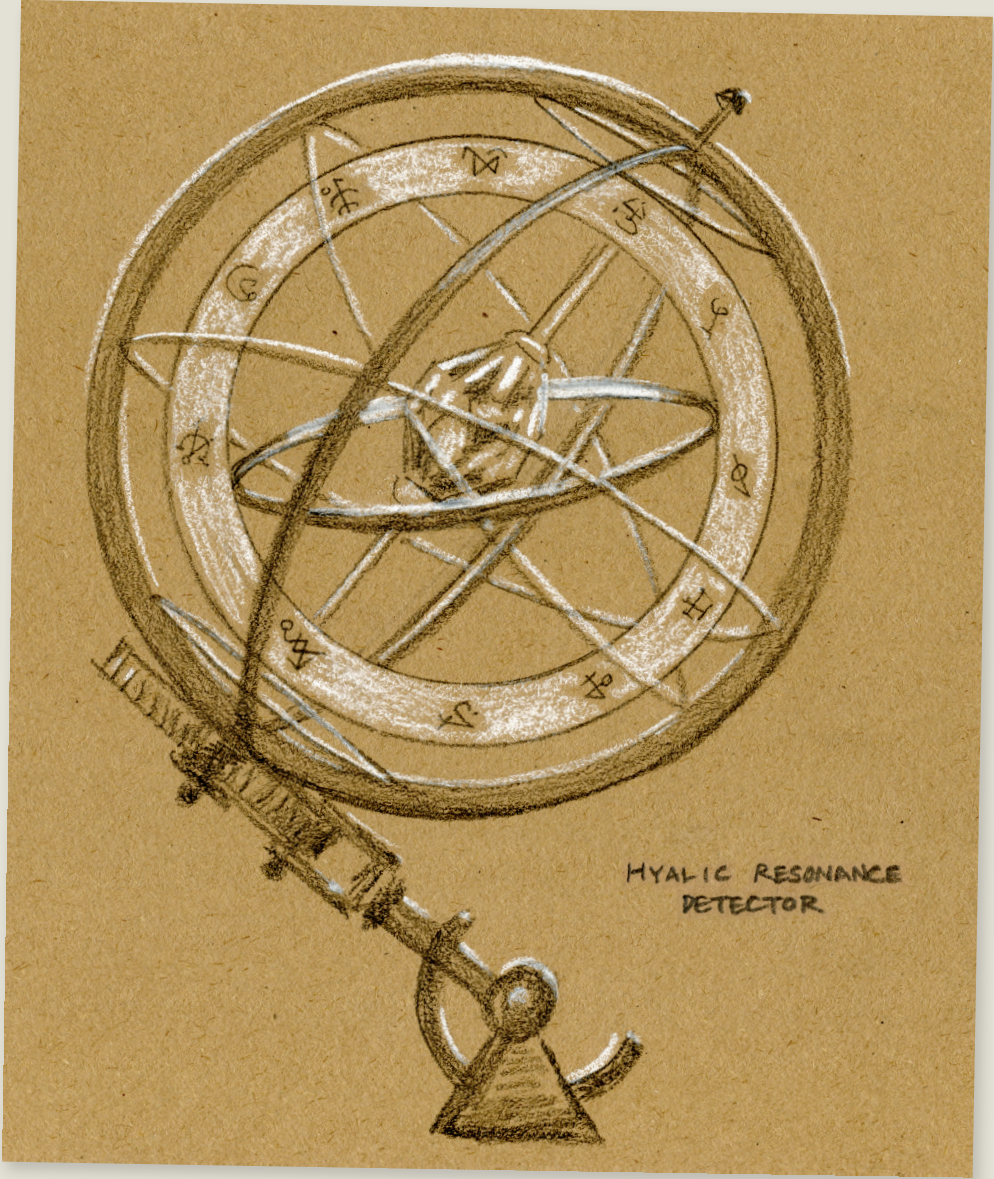
Instead top naval engineers on both sides work on **dreadnoughts**, amphibious battleships designed to walk on land on gigantic legs. Both alliances race to be the first to get this hybrid of battleship and stalker out of drydock to end the war with city-smashing power.

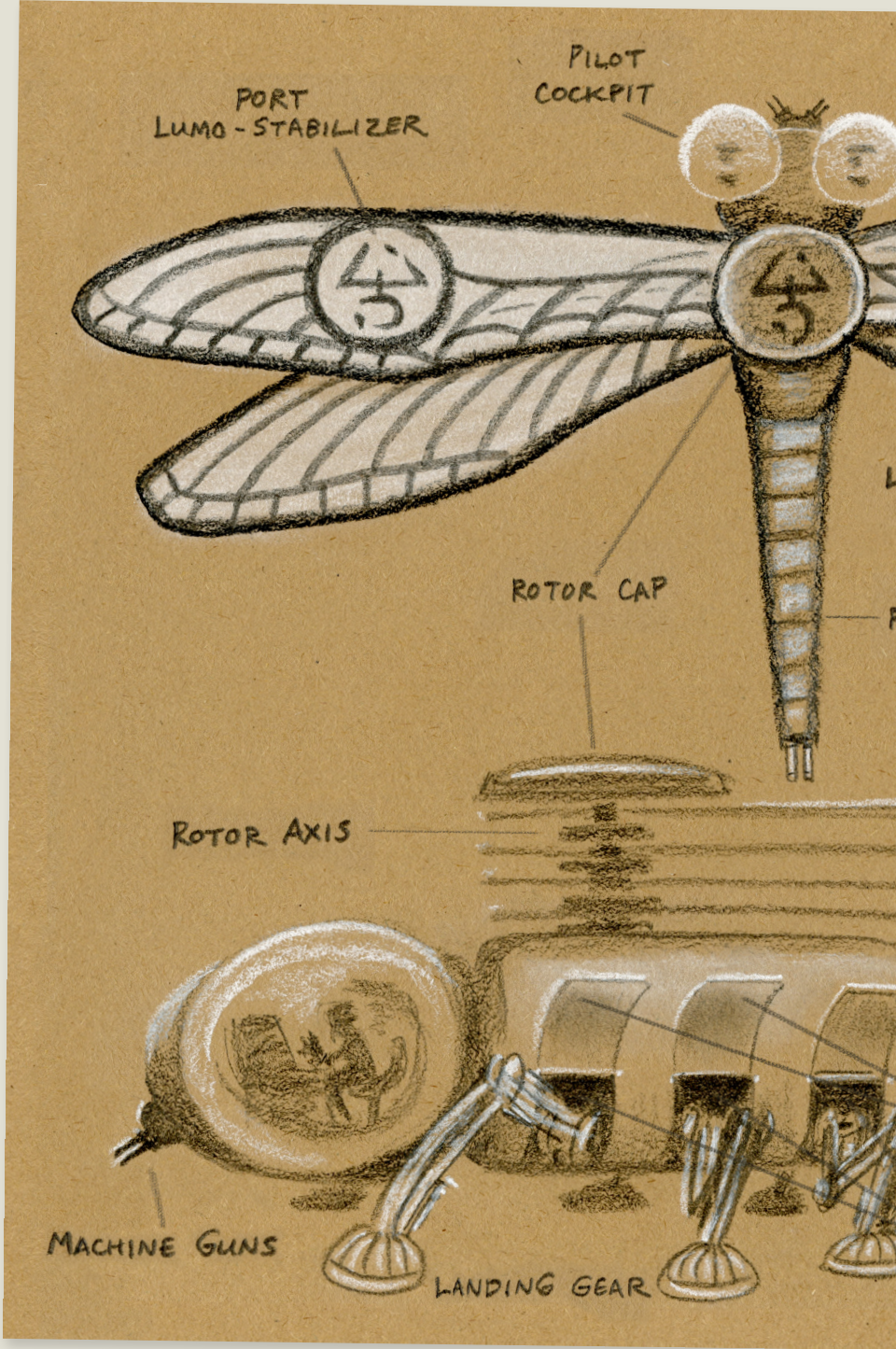
The appearance of dreadnoughts stomping from the sea onto shore might occur in the climactic sessions of your *Wars* sequence, signaling the upshift to the conflict's shattering final days.

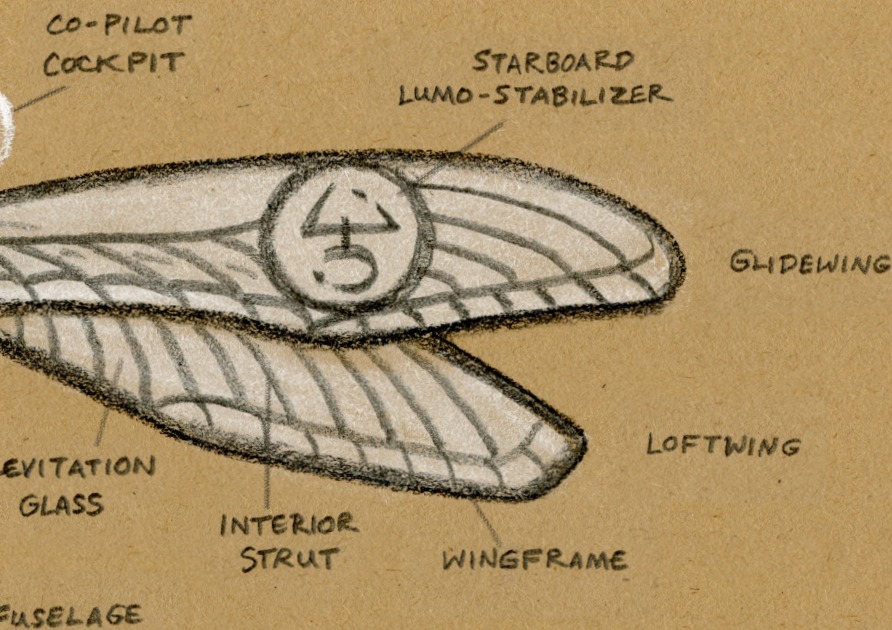
In addition to the enormous artillery pieces and machine gun emplacements you might expect



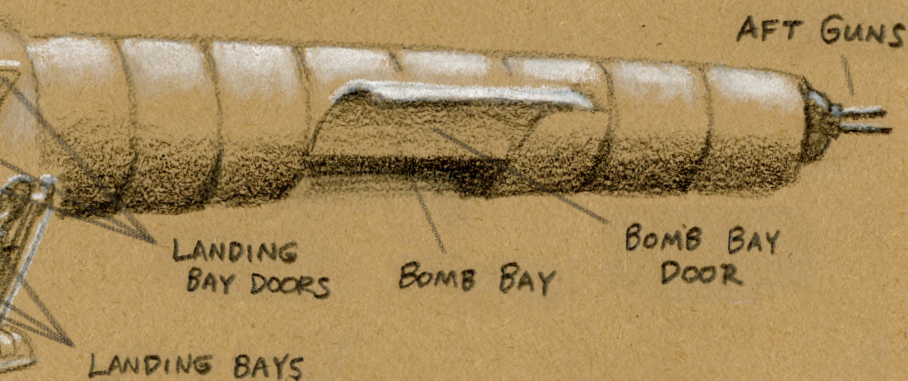
HYALIC RESONANCE DETECTOR TRUCK

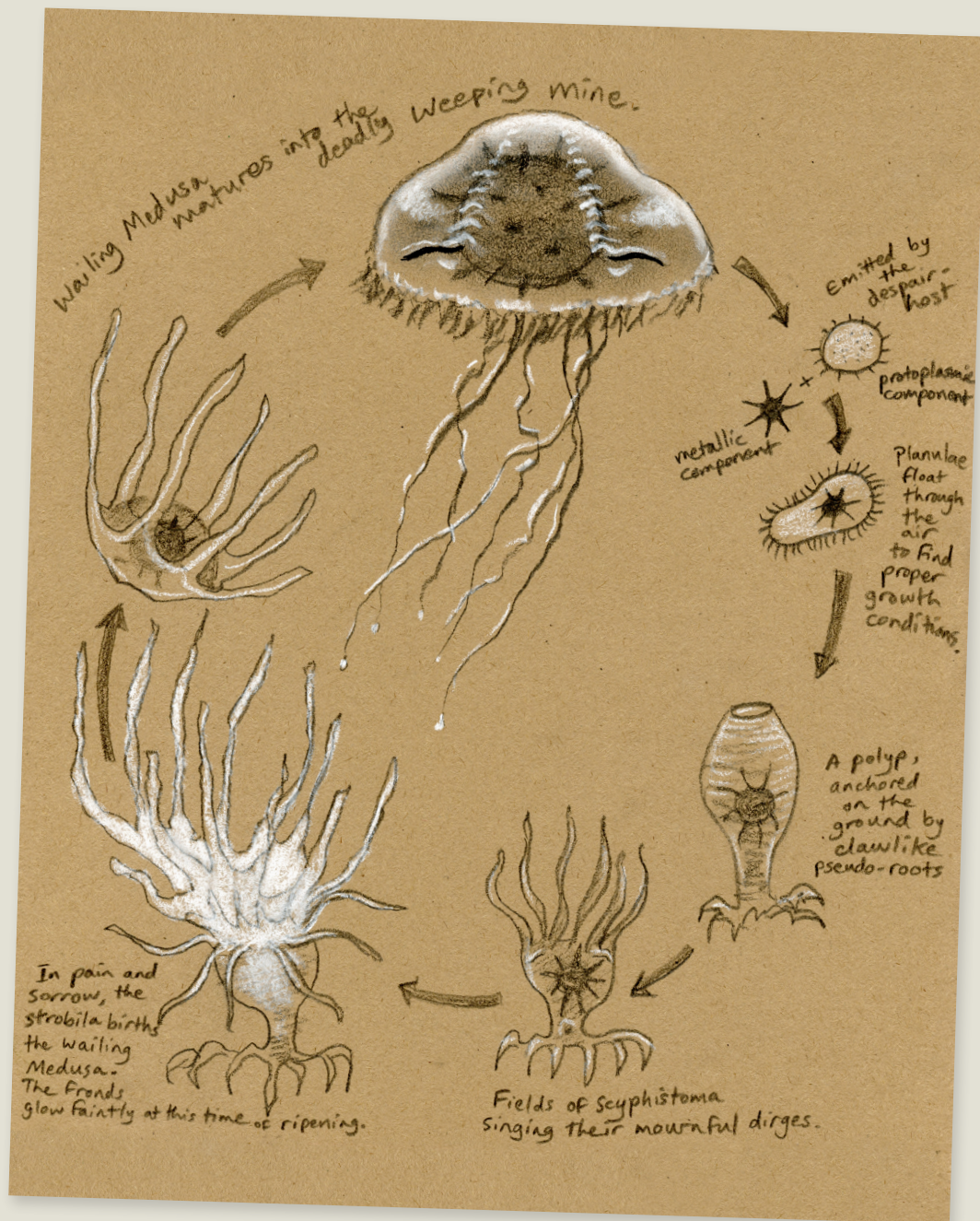






DRAGONFLY LB-F





from our reality, ships may be equipped with any of the following weird weapons:

- Spoofers fool enemy sonar and radar arrays into detecting nonexistent ships.
- Hali clusters, a type of anti-submarine depth charge, attach themselves magnetically to the hulls of underwater vessels, causing the crew to vividly hallucinate their past misdeeds. Difficulty 4 Composure tests to avoid **Shocks, Major and Minor**: Overwhelmed/Pervasive Distrust.
- A variation of the above, the cackler, inflicts auditory hallucinations of hideous laughter. Difficulty 4 Composure: **Minor Shock**: Unearthly Sounds; **Major**: Melted Perceptions.
- To deal with enemy sailors left in the water after a shipwreck, artillery crews aboard a vessel might fire a special cannon shell called a **Neptune**. The Neptune-A attracts giant squid; the Neptune-S, sharks.
- Minelayers may be equipped with **seekers**, marine mines that sniff out the psychic trails left by human fear, distress, and claustrophobia, using them to locate manned vessels. Seekers sometimes spontaneously reconstitute themselves from debris after exploding. Self-refurbished seekers emit the screams and wails of the sailors their previous attacks drowned.
- A device called Lord of Poitou detects enemy radar pings and follows them back to their source, wracking the sending vessel with bio-electronic interference. These alien frequencies damage electrical circuitry and cause nosebleeds and vomiting in humans. The weapon's name derives from the master of the Wild Hunt in French folklore. Variants used by other nations include the Herne (England), Wotan (Germany), and Baba Yaga (Russia). The generic term for this weapon is the **wildhunter**. Avoiding harm from such an attack requires a Difficulty 4 Battlefield test to avoid **Injuries, Minor and Major**: Woozy/Ructious Innards.

Submersibles

Naval engineers find little room for improvement on the revolutionary submarine designs of Sekhar Rao, aka Prince Dakkar, nearly a hundred years ago. The largest submarine class in the Loyalist fleet requires a crew of 50 and is called the **Nemo**, after the inventor's catchiest *nom de guerre*.

Armed with a dozen torpedoes and capable of firing from a kilometer away, the heavily armored Nemo survives a depth charge hit one time out of two. Like all submersibles with crews larger than eight, it can surround itself with a powerful electrical field. Designed to fend off the giant squid that have come to infest the Mediterranean since the

two warring sides began sinking each other's vessels, the fields also prove useful during boarding attempts when the sub has surfaced. Difficulty 4 Health test to avoid **Injuries, Minor and Major:** Burned/Hurled and Scorched.

Smaller subs require fewer crewmen, are likelier to sink when hit, and field shorter-range torpedoes.

Today's submarine engines run on blackstar diesel, a fuel infused with an energetic bonding solution made possible by Carcosan science. Each nation uses its own unique formulation. Should the investigators perform a chemical analysis, they find that it contains trace elements of human, horse, and leech blood, plus several substances undocumented in

Class	Nation	Crew size	Torpedo range
Nemo	France	50	1 km
Nautilus	France	38	.75 km
Aronnax	France	22	.5 km
Drake	England	60	1.1 km
Morgan	England	44	.75 km
Hawkins	England	28	.5 km
Ivan	Russia	66	.8 km
Rasputin	Russia	55	.7 km
Saltychikha	Russia	44	.5 km
Leviathan	Germany	38	1.2 km
Meerwunder	Germany	30	.8 km
Aal	Germany	22	.7 km

journals of chemistry. Submarines say that the blackstar in an engine lets out a keening wail hours in advance of deadly danger to a vessel's crew. Rumors of an improvement to an enemy's blackstar formulation may see the squad sent on a spying run without ever having to set foot in a submersible.

The Continental War spurred the recent invention of the minisub, an underwater vehicle manned by a crew of three to seven sailors. Known colloquially as "Lethal Chambers," after the American booths in which citizens commit suicide, they all too often take their crews on a permanent voyage to the bottom of the sea.

The **hammerhead**, a class of minisub, essentially serves as a manned, maneuverable torpedo. Their skippers pilot their heavily reinforced nose-cones into the hulls of enemy ships and submarines. Half the time those on board survive to ram another day. Hammerhead crews undergo special psychological training to prepare themselves for their near-certain casualty rate. Loyalist commanders deny rumors that they select prisoners, asylum patients, and the terminally ill for this duty. Investigators meeting a hammerhead crew probably note a glassy expression and a slow, measured speech pattern suggesting some sort of hypnosis.

If required themselves to crew

The Nemo Effect

Captain Nemo's existence in this timeline's backstory points to a retroactive alteration of history. If your *Paris* characters ever have reason to research submarines, they find that engineers haven't quite worked out how to build a vessel as sophisticated as the *Nautilus*.

In *The Wars*, however, a look at the history books turns up Nemo's exploits and the mid-1900s invention of the modern submarine.

That means that in the ensuing reality of *Aftermath*, Nemo was also a real person.

But in *This Is Normal Now*, the history of submarines unfolded as it did in our world.

Should the investigators learn of the parallel realities created by *The King in Yellow*, they may also look into this discrepancy and wonder what to make of it. The Nemo Effect suggests that, although the Carcosan invasion started in 1895 or shortly prior to that, it was able to generate alternate realities in which events prior to that year diverge from those known to the root timeline.

If our world *is* the original, that is...

a minisub, they may prefer less fraught missions aboard such vessels as the:

- Claw, notable for the grabber arm used in salvage missions.
- Poseidon, with special antennae that can quell or cause oceanic storms.
- Amphritite, with a retractable net for rescuing sunken sailors. Oxygen pumps through its hollow fibers; the saved can latch onto its breathing attachments and fill their lungs.
- Vortex, designed to survive the shocks and shakes of a journey through a reality vent to the Carcosan Lake of Hali. (Well actually this mission is more dangerous than the hammerhead's.)

Small Arms

Individual weaponry of the Continental War lags behind our 1947 overall, with a few weird tweaks.

Infantry units carry bolt-action rifles, like the Lee-Enfield of our world. Their telescopic sights beat the resolution and accuracy of our 1947 equivalents, while also serving as primitive long-range surveillance microphones.

Automatic pistols exist but out of a sense of traditionalism are disfavored as sidearms by the regular army, who instead tote the trusty revolver. Elite forces and military police can be identified by their propensity for magazine-fed handguns.

Machine guns reach the tech level of our WWII.

All handheld weapons bear heavy ornamentation. Inlaid carving on wooden gun butts feature patriotic scenes or portraits of historical generals. Napoleon appears most frequently on French weaponry, with Charlemagne making the occasional cameo. The image of Henry V takes the same role on English small arms. (Unless Britain and France are allies, in which case they go for a shared hero, King Arthur.) German munitions portraiture heavily features General Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, chief of the general staff during the Franco-Prussian conflict—unless France and Germany are allies, in which case good old mythical Siegfried takes his place. Russian armaments depict 18th century general Mikhail Kutuzov.

Sculpted images of Marianne, the national symbol of reason and liberty, perch atop French rifle scopes. Boudicca performs the same duty on English rifles. Russian scopes sit framed in miniature minarets. The equivalent ornament on German guns looks like a blend of the Iron Cross from our timeline and the Yellow Sign.

These decorations make equivalent weapons of the combatant nations dead easy to spot from a distance. A PC wearing a Russian uniform as part of an imposture had

better equip himself with the appropriately ornamented corresponding firearms.

Players foolishly raised in the expectations of this reality may assume that soldiers nip off all of the gewgaws, flanges, and gears from these ornate weapons. In fact, removing them makes the weapons somehow less effective—as if reality has been warped to please the aesthetic sense of game-playing aliens.

Most soldiers carry only conventional ammunition. Special forces or favored officers may have rare supernatural rounds in their ammo belts. These include:

- Discouragers, bullets that implant a psychic revulsion against crossing enemy lines.
- Quislings, which implant a compulsion to betray superiors. Named after their inventor, the Norwegian armaments alchemist Vidkun Quisling.
- Suppurators, which inject the wound with parasites that leak a distressing black ichor and interfere with the immune system.
- White-sky rounds, which induce an inhibition against attacking Carcosans.

Injury cards for these ammo types appear in “War Hazards.” Use them as such or substitute them for the Injury cards normally dealt by a gun-toting foe.

Grenades

Most grenades thrown in the Continental War mirror their WWII counterparts. Decide whether to portray them as the portable super-explosives seen in action movies, or the less spectacular but still plenty deadly weapons of real-life physics.

The group may occasionally face, or gain access to, weirder grenades:

- Stinkers clear people and other earthly creatures from an area with a horrifying smell of putrescence and excrescence. Depending on the grenade, the area, as referenced on the accompanying Injury cards, might have a radius of 100, 200, or 350 m from the point of impact. Carcosans, Warspawn, and individuals with no sense of smell pay them no heed.
- Ragers release a gas containing a hormone ramping up the fight or flight reflex of human subjects. When fighting a ragered opponent, decrease Fighting Difficulty by 2 and the foe’s Tolls by 2. PCs struck by a rager gain 2 Fighting when the Goal is Kill, but lose 2 for any other Goal. On a victory, they pay Composure equal to their respective Fighting margins.
- Concussors emit a non-fatal, incapacitating electrical field. Used by PCs, who must pay 1 Athletics per fight, they grant a -1 to Fighting Difficulties for Goals other than Kill. Warspawn are immune to

concussors. When used against PCs, substitute “When You Regain Consciousness...” for the Injury card the foe would normally deal.

- Nightmares disperse low-level Carcosan radiation sheathed in fungal spores. When inhaled, the spores cause humans to relive their worst traumatic experiences. When used by PCs, they allow the group to overrun or escape from Weak or Tough but Outmatched human foes on a single, simple Athletics test against the foe’s lowest Fighting Difficulty. Against PCs, they require a Difficulty 4 Composure test to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major:** Disbelief/Nightmare Fuel.

Terrifying Terrain

The Wars scenarios often feature interludes in which the squad travels between dangerous spots near the front line. When inspiration for yet another description of a place ravaged by battle eludes you, grab one of these free-floating snippets of narration.

Should players decide to have their characters engage with these situations, so much the better. Improvise a quick, disturbing vignette, or use them as prelude to an Antagonist Reaction.

As always, words you paraphrase in your own voice, no matter how roughly, feel more

spontaneous to players than a chunk of text you’re obviously reading straight from a book.

You may decide that some of these sights warrant the “You See a Particular Horrible Battlefield Sight for the First Time” Composure test.

- The blackened corpses of burnt pine trees tower in a jagged expanse before you. Their charred bark still smokes, giving off the reek of spent diesel fuel.
- Scraps of olive-drab fabric float through the air like a rain of confetti. An awful realization dawns—these are the uniforms of vaporized men.
- Toppled gravestones complicate your trudge through a crater-filled cemetery. Old bones, pulled from the earth by exploding ordnance, crunch beneath your hobnail boots. You spot a blob of melted gold—a wedding ring, meant to rest with its owner for eternity.
- Only the chimney remains of a home otherwise reduced to a pile of brick. The clawed hand of an elderly man juts from the heap. A crow comes to a landing nearby, ready to peck at its meat.
- Unearthly yellow-blue flame envelops an overturned troop transport truck. Its fire sings to you, urging you to embrace it, freeing yourselves of this world and all its miseries.
- Clouds of brown and green mix together overhead, forming a camouflage-colored

sky. A flat plain extends before you like a hunger.

- A rifle juts from the chalky ground, jammed in muzzle first. A helmet sits on its butt, dog tags dangling from it. A pair of well-worn boots sits before the rifle. Of its former owner, no other sign can be seen.
- A naked tree stands alone in a dismal field, a branch yearning up to the sky like a reaching arm. On its central trunk a gnarl twists into the image of a tormented human face.
- Clumps of dirty snow cling to the brown stalks of dead weeds strangling an untilled field. Plumes of smoke billow across it. Somewhere in the distance, artillery booms.
- On the horizon, a country church stands between two pillars of black smoke. The twin fires converge slowly toward it.
- Birdsong rings from a verdant stand of trees, inexplicably spared by the bombardment that has laid waste to the everything around it. A shaft of sunlight, breaking between dark clouds, wreathes it in a halo of light. From a mighty branch dangle a trio of hanged farmers.
- An old stone pier, blasted in half by a bombing raid, stretches out into a dark lake. A parachute, carried by gentle waves, bumps up against it, like a giant jellyfish.
- Bodies of partially skeletonized horses choke a creek. Its dammed-up waters turn a

field into a shallow pond. A petroleum rainbow pulses across its stagnant surface.

- The disembodied cannon of an otherwise absent tank pierces a stone wall. Brown-red bloodstains coat the wall.
- Grubby children kick a football across a rubble-strewn street. For a moment, your bleary eyes tell you that their ball is a battered human head. You blink, and the terrible apparition is no more. All the same, something in their mirthless laughter chills your soul.
- Peasants pull a cart laden with empty footwear down a twisting laneway. Though it might be a mistake to look too closely, a first glance warns that some of the shoes still have feet in them.
- A dozen shovels, stuck into upturned earth, stand like sentinels over row after row of fresh-dug graves. Beside them white wooden crosses lie in a heap. You see no sign of gravediggers, or of the graves' intended occupants.
- A dune of stone rubble rises alongside the walls of an abandoned factory. A tin can, caught by the wind, clatters across the ground, as if fleeing your approach.
- White cobblestones cover the surface of the town square. Above hangs a pure blue sky. A din of mustering vehicles rises as a French infantry unit redeploys. The soldiers

sing a merry song, cursing the enemy and promising him swift and bloody death.

- A bright red ridge heaves into view. The jagged line it forms on the horizon is not a feature of the natural landscape, but a row of blazing walkers.
- The sky turns pink as the sun drops prematurely behind the mountains. Swirls of snow thicken in the air and pelt toward you. Within minutes the ground becomes a blanket of white.
- Fog rises from the damp fields, reaching toward you with ghostly fingers. It surrounds you, breathing chill into your bones. Soon you can barely see your comrades.
- Rain has turned the exposed clay soil into a thick, sucking mud. A lamb, its wool soaked flat, screams in dismay, its legs held fast.
- A dogfight breaks out in the sky to the west. Two dragonflies buck and roll, machine guns blasting at one another. One becomes a fireball. The other veers away, in search of its next victim.
- Flotsam from a sunken merchant ship bashes against a rocky shore. Amid the angry waves you see hairbrushes, tubes of toothpaste, and the naked forms of plastic children's dolls.
- A curving trench cuts across a former pasture, filled with storm water. Ragged, half-

toppled fence posts punctuate its boundaries. A wooden bucket floats down the trench, bouncing against its edges.

- Carbines bristle from a haystack like pins from a pin cushion. Their owners have abandoned them to chase a chicken across a stubbled field. They call out to each other like kids shrieking across a schoolyard. They haven't noticed the enemy bomber groaning overhead.
- A medieval stone tower has toppled over on its side, crushing shops and a tavern. The newer structures have been pulverized, but aside from its new orientation, the tower remains oddly intact.
- *(if the squad has a vehicle)* Exposed stone juts from a rollercoaster of a roadway. It used to be flat, but bombs have made it barely navigable. The only way to drive it without getting stuck is to jam the accelerator to the floor and ride it like a wave.
- Weeping mines gather on a nearby ridgeline. They click and clack and seem to be communicating with one another. You think one of them has started trilling a song, but surely there's a logical explanation for that.
- Someone has dragged a pair of heavy wooden benches from a town square and left them in the middle of the road. Piles of rocks surround the road on either side, with weeds

poking out between them.

- Soldiers lie in a trench, baking in the sun. At first you think they're dead. Then you hear them snoring. As you grow closer still, you see that none of them have facial features, just white masks of undifferentiated flesh.
- Shattered planks of a destroyed shed litter a muddy depression.
- Melting snow forms a series of ponds in a shattered field. A stiff wind comes up to send a rush of ripples across their surfaces.
- A duckboard bridge creates a narrow pathway across a marsh. Bullrushes, stirred by a slight breeze, wave at you like a parade platform full of bored monarchs.
- A godawful clattering emanates from the poplars flanking a country road. As you grow closer, you see that someone has tied empty mess tins, hundreds of them, to the trees' branches.
- Bombs have turned a railroad into a twisted fence, broken in pieces and strewn across an expanse of steaming muck. A locomotive's smokestack sticks out of the ground like a sign post.
- A smoking black dome as big as a truck lies amid the dry stalks of an unharvested cornfield. It's the auto-bomber mechanism of a spider, shorn as it was shot down from the rest of the aircraft. It didn't

blow up on impact as this part of the craft usually does. But the stalks are catching fire, so maybe you'd better run. (See "Aircraft," p. 42.)

- The surviving brick-and-stucco walls of a bombarded town loom precariously over a town square heaped with rubble. Held fast by debris, a red knitted scarf convulses in the wind.
- By the side of the road, dogs fight over a chicken carcass. A scarecrow, crucified on a pole, grins down at them. Someone has left a tank sergeant's helmet on its grinning stuffed burlap head.
- A greasy black scorch mark covers the roadway, a crater at its center. The hips and legs of a Loyalist soldier lie over the lip of the hole in the road. It looks like he was disarming a mine or booby trap and paid the price for failure.
- Behind an earthen wall, naked trees stretch to the sky like waking men. Traces of stink grenade, enough to wrinkle the nose but not send you retching and fleeing, linger in the air.
- A skiff of snow dusts the rooftops of a town and clings to its church steeple. In the street lies a tangle of executed men. A sheet, held down with broken bricks, halfway covers them. TRAITORS, it says, in a wild charcoal scrawl.
- A cannon, likely dating from the Franco-Prussian war, points

its nose from the second floor of a barn. The barn's roof has been torn away, leaving the antique artillery piece exposed to the elements.

- Loyalist troops march down the road, singing. One takes a swig from a wine bottle and tosses it into a ditch. An enraged sergeant shouts obscenities from the back of the column, promising to exact vivid punishment on the wrongdoer. His mates try to sober him up, but he looks too far gone.
- Buzzards drift nonchalantly overhead. Behind them, clouds briefly form a death's head, then dispersing into white vapor.
- Soldiers move like automatons to form two lines in a farmer's field, facing each other. With dazed expressions, one half of the Loyalist battalion raises rifles to point at the other. Before they fire, and before you can cry out,

they lower their guns. They look about, as if wondering what on earth possessed them. Across the way, their comrades remain stock-still.

- Infantrymen swarm across a barley field, stamping it flat. The tents heaped on trucks by a nearby road tell you that they've been ordered to set up camp here. A furious farmer dashes from his barn, waving a pitchfork. The soldiers laugh and pull their sidearms.
 - A bright yellow sunset settles in behind the remnants of a medieval fortress. There's a problem, though: it's three o'clock in the afternoon.
 - Something ripples across the surface of an abandoned tavern. Drawing closer, you see that snails—thousands upon thousands of them—work their way up its walls. They exude the high, throat-closing smell of moldering corpses.
-



ENEMY AGRI-INSTALLATION

FOES

Supernatural creatures encountered in *The Wars* break into several types.

Carcosans originate on Carcosa. They fight to assist one of the competing sides of the conflict, at the behest of the King in Yellow or one of his daughters. Individual beings might have been born on Carcosa or here, through various methods of reproduction. As a species they all originate in that alien world.

Warspawn exist only in our world. They result from the interaction of horrific battlefield conditions and the eerie energies of Carcosa. They may gain substance from inanimate materials, or magically mutate from Earth organisms, living or dead. Many first manifested as animated corpses of the war dead, soldier and civilian alike. Some Warspawn can reproduce by breeding. So a particular individual might look like a disfigured version of a specific, recently slain comrade, or could be the unrecognizable offspring of two others.

The earthly notion of species doesn't apply to Carcosan beings. They possess a genetic variability allowing them to mate

across radically different body morphologies.

The offspring of two Carcosans is considered a Carcosan; the offspring of two unlike Warspawn or a Carcosan and a Warspawn is treated as a Warspawn.

These categories interact with certain game effects. They might also become the subject of mad babblings by those whose conceptions of natural history have been shattered by encounters with these entities.

Earthly foes get flagged as **Mundane**.

A second new profile entry, the Encounter Style, indicates the role they play in scenarios. A **Primary** enemy takes a major role in the episode's central mystery. They're smart, autonomous, and act toward a broader purpose in pursuit of some goal, perhaps related to the progress of the war. A **Secondary** enemy crops up as another symptom of wartime chaos. It serves the same story purpose as an impersonal battlefield hazard and/or Antagonist Reaction. In order to get from point A to B, the unit has to deal with a number of dangers, one or more of which might be one-off run-ins

with creatures unconnected to the main storyline. Most exhibit limited or animalistic intelligence, pursuing modest or opportunistic goals—like feeding or looting.

You might find fun ways to mix this up by:

- employing a relatively minor threat like a redmedic as the main monstrous antagonist of an episode
- introducing a Primary baddie into the action as if it's just another arbitrary foe first encountered on the way to the front



Foe	Relative Challenge	Minor	Major
Duchess of Death	Escape 4, Other 6, Kill 6	Sliced and Diced	Skinned Alive
Enemy Skirmishers, Hapless	Escape 2, Other 2, Kill 2	Knife Wound	Bayonet Wound
Enemy Skirmishers, Outnumbered but Determined	Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3	Barely a Scratch	Bullet Wound
Enemy Skirmishers, Equally Capable	Escape 3, Other 5, Kill 4	Barely a Scratch	Bullet Wound
Enemy Skirmishers, Elite	Escape 4, Other 5, Kill 4	Gash	Bullet Wound
Extrusion	N/A	Hellish Reptile-Crab	Reality Drift
Gravegrinder, Adult	Escape 2, Other 2, Kill 2	Beak Jab	Beak Stab
Gravegrinder, Larva	Escape 3, Other 5, Kill 4	Jabbed	Impaled and Partially Exsanguinated

Foe	Relative Challenge	Minor	Major
Hedgehog	Escape 4, Other 5, Kill 4	Nearly Stomped	Steel Beam Stomp
Peasant Who Seems Lovely...	Escape 4, Other 7, Kill 7*	Seeing Double	Skull Fracture
Phantasms	Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3	Ghost Sighting	The Mourned Dead
Redmedic	Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3	Punched	Parasitic Link
Soul Butcher (Large Scale)	N/A	Faulty Perceptions	Distorted Perceptions
Soul Butcher (Subtly Distressing)	N/A	Did Anyone Else See That?	You Saw It, So It Must Be Real
Stalker, Light (Flamethrower)	Escape 2, Other 6, Kill 8	Superficial Burns	Deep Burns
Stalker, Heavy (Flamethrower)	Escape 2, Other 7, Kill 9	Superficial Burns	Deep Burns
Stalker, Ultra-Heavy (Flamethrower)	Escape 2, Other 9, Kill 10	Superficial Burns	Deep Burns
Stalker, Light (Other)	Escape 2, Other 6, Kill 8	Bruised While Taking Cover	Sprayed
Stalker, Heavy (Other)	Escape 2, Other 7, Kill 9	Bruised While Taking Cover	Sprayed
Stalker, Ultra- Heavy (Other)	Escape 2, Other 9, Kill 10	Bruised While Taking Cover	Sprayed
Swarm	Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3	Microscopic Wounds	Cell Damage
Warhorse	Escape 3, Other 5, Kill 4	Hoof Strike	Warhorse Bite
Weeping Mine	Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3	Blown Back	“Am I Still in One Piece?”
Whatsisname	Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3	Why Can't I Just Shoot Him?	Probably I Should Shoot Him

* or simple Fighting test, Difficulty 3, if not attacking with complete surprise

Duchess of Death

Inspired by Cassilda and Camilla, high-ranking women of the Carcosan court have abandoned their duties to roam the earthly battlefield, slaying for sport. Some roam the war zone in tattered noble raiment; others adopt the uniforms of slain officers. Wreathed in occult power, they fight unarmed, shrugging off bullets and bending the blades of bayonets. Some death duchesses carve out territory for themselves, defending these fiefdoms aided by terrified villagers and shanghaied deserters. They might aid one army or the other in exchange for weapons or supplies to keep their duchies going.

Each is vulnerable to bladed weapons doused in a particular herb or resin—a curb placed on them by the King in Yellow before he allowed them to come here. If any of them threaten his scheme, he can whisper the name of the substance into the ears of a helpful dupe or henchman.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Vastly Superior
(Escape 4, Other 6, Kill 6)

Difficulty Adjustments: +2 if your weapons have been treated with the correct herbal oil

Toll: 2

Tags: Carcosan

Encounter Style: Primary

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Sliced and Diced/Skinned Alive

Enemy Skirmishers

For small-scale engagements where the individual skills of combatants determine whether the battlin' heroes live or die, use these foe profiles.

When the PCs take part in a broader engagement whose outcome they cannot by themselves sway, subject them to war hazards, which they resist with Battlefield tests.

Hapless

Numbers: Less than party

Difficulty: Weak (Escape 2, Other 2, Kill 2)

Difficulty Adjustments: -1 if surprised; +1 if attacking with surprise

Toll: 0

Tags: Mundane

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major: Knife Wound/Bayonet Wound

Outnumbered but Determined

Numbers: Less than party

Difficulty: Tough but Outmatched
(Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3)

Difficulty Adjustments: -1 if surprised; +1 if attacking with surprise

Toll: 0

Tags: Mundane

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major:
Barely a Scratch/Bullet Wound



Equally Capable

Numbers: Same as party

Difficulty: Evenly Matched
(Escape 3, Other 5, Kill 4)

Difficulty Adjustments: -1 if surprised; +1 if attacking with surprise

Toll: 1

Tags: Mundane

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Barely a Scratch/Bullet Wound

Elite

Numbers: Party + 50% (round up)

Difficulty: Superior (Escape 4, Other 5, Kill 4)

Difficulty Adjustments: -1 if surprised; +1 if attacking with surprise

Toll: 2/4

Tags: Mundane

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Gash/Bullet Wound

Extrusion

Where the boundaries between our reality and Carcosa thin, strange beasts spontaneously appear. These reality extrusions exhibit an indistinct, contradictory anatomy combining elements of reptile, crab, and sea urchin. Ranging in size from a hermit crab to an iguana, they cling readily to any human foolish enough to pick them up and carry them around as a pet or curiosity. Extrusions perceive their environment with senses other than sight, including smell and the ability to read the minute energy fields

given off by living organisms.

Extrusions do not require conventional nourishment; if they feed at all, it is on the ambient energy of Carcosa. Though they offer no physical threat, many observers find the sight of them psychologically destabilizing.

Add them to scenarios as harbingers of an imminent reality break.

Seeing one or more of them up close triggers a Difficulty 4 Composure test to avoid **Shocks, Major and Minor:** Hellish Reptile-Crab/Reality Drift.

Gravegrinder

This Carcosan animal undergoes a two-stage life cycle, with a humanoid larval form that matures into a winged adult.

Looking like an unholy amalgam of bat and vulture, the adult does not eat and lives only briefly. About the size of an albatross, it glides across the sky searching for human carrion. Males and females bond for their short existence, protecting one another from predators and the attacks of other adult gravegrinders. These occur when multiple pairs spot a corpse at roughly the same time and squabble over it.

After any such fights are resolved and the losers driven off, squawking in protest, the winning couple mates. The male thrusts a barbed appendage into the female's egg sac, fertilizing the eggs, and promptly expires.

The female uses her beak to puncture the body cavity of her chosen corpse, into which she deposits an egg. If any other corpses lie nearby, as often happens on a battlefield, she continues along until she too collapses and dies of exhaustion.

The egg develops inside the corpse for 24 to 48 hours. As it grows it latches onto the corpse's skeleton. It then emerges as a grimacing humanoid armored by a carapace of osseous material. One of its arms (left if it fed on a corpse with XX chromosomes; right in the case of an XY pair) terminates in a jagged spearpoint of sharpened bone organized around a central tube.

The larval gravegrinder then rampages about in search of blood. It prefers that of humans, but any large mammal will suffice. It stabs its prey, exsanguinating them with the feeding tube. After consuming around 20 liters of blood (approximately four persons' worth), the larval gravegrinder climbs up a tree or cliff-face, spins a fleshy chrysalis around itself, and enters a pupal state. Over a period of 32 to 40 days, the gravegrinder metamorphoses, finally shucking off the chrysalis to fly in search of a mate. Larvae prefer to cluster together, increasing the odds of finding a mate.

According to the accounts of desperate and otherwise starving soldiers, the pseudo-mammalian flesh of this creature in either of its

stages is perfectly edible. Contrary to the expected joke, it tastes more like pork than chicken.

Adult gravegrinders only attack humans when they stand between it and a corpse.

Larva

Numbers: 1 or 3

Difficulty: Evenly Matched (Escape 3, Other 5, Kill 4) (solitary); Superior (Escape 4, Other 5, Kill 4) (group)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1 if characters just saw it emerge from a corpse

Toll: 1

Tags: Carcosan

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Jabbed/Impaled and Partially Exsanguinated

Adult

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Weak (Escape 2, Other 2, Kill 2)

Difficulty Adjustments: None

Toll: 0

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major: Beak

Jab/Beak Stab

Hedgehog

Soldiers of the Continental War refer to barriers constructed from intersecting iron beams as hedgehogs. The typical example consists of three beams, each around 2 m long and weighing a combined 375 kg, bolted or welded together.

(In our timeline they were known as Czech hedgehogs,

distinguishing them from a British anti-submarine artillery piece. Thanks to iconic photography of the Normandy invasion, the mental image you're probably entertaining is of their use on beaches, as an obstacle to delay amphibious assault. However, both in the real world and this one, they are also used inland as a barrier that stops tanks from advancing. In an urban fight a single hedgehog can block a street, stopping enemy vehicles from proceeding. When hit by an explosion, the force simply rolls a hedgehog in inanimate mode over onto another side, where it continues to act as a barrier.)

On frontiers permeated with Carcosan energy, the hedgehogs have gained the power of locomotion. The squad may hear a Breton GMC who has heard the rumors of their night time perambulations equate them with old legends of menhirs that on occasion walked down to the nearest river to drink.

Animate hedgehogs become receptacles for spirits of the vengeful dead. They leave their posts in darkness to attack and feast on human foes, making no distinction between Loyalists and the enemy. Seen up close while moving, they display such biological features as scales, tufts of hair, and even cruel, unblinking eyes. Hedgehogs attack by pummeling their victims to a pulp. They then drink their victims' blood and

other bodily fluids, sustaining and strengthening themselves. Powerful Carcosan nobles may be able to exert control over them, using them as servitors.

Aware of their vulnerability when they become inanimate again at dawn, the hedgehogs strive to return to their original posts before the light comes. Those caught out freeze in place wherever they are, leading observers to wonder just who moved them in the night, and why no one heard the sound of the trucks needed for that task.

Destroying an inanimate hedgehog requires a Difficulty 5 Traps and Bombs test. To get rid of an animate one, the squad must Kill it in combat.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Superior (Escape 4, Other 5, Kill 4)

Difficulty Adjustments: None

Toll: 1

Tags: Warspawn

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Nearly Stomped/Steel Beam Stomp

Peasant Who Seems Lovely Until You Turn Your Back

This is for your classic little old lady or man who appears kindly and helpful until the time comes to get out the hammer.

Use this foe profile only when the civilian intends to knock a character unconscious for the purposes of capture, and only against a soldier who has been separated from the

rest of the squad.

First present the player with the “When You Regain Consciousness...” Injury card, offering the choice to take this card in lieu of combat. Explain that use of the Fighting rules gives some chance of winning flat-out, but also risks worse Injury cards in the case of loss. Also, remind the player that in an investigative game waking up in an antagonist’s clutches always provides the opportunity to gain information.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: *(when suddenly attacking an unsuspecting PC)* Overwhelming (Escape 4, Other 7, Kill 7)

(otherwise) achieve any combat Goal on a Difficulty 3 simple Fighting test

Adjust to Other Sequences:

Drop Escape by 1, drop Toll to 0

Toll: 0

Tags: Mundane

Encounter Style: Either

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Seeing Double/Skull Fracture

Phantasms

The noncorporeal devourers known as phantasms impersonate the dead, hunting the grief-stricken victims who mourn them. Scanning the minds of their prey, they instantly learn how to project a multi-sensory image of the recently deceased. Initially appearing benevolent and forgiving, they draw their victims close, then undergo an awful transformation. Their faces contorting to masks of

vengeful torment, they step into the space occupied by their targets, inflicting psychic injuries that kill as surely as bullets.

In a struggle with phantasms, the heroes use Composure in place of Fighting. They might think they’re battling physically, when the action actually takes place in their minds.

On a Difficulty 4 Sense Trouble success, a character watching from afar as someone fends off phantasms sees only the victim’s flailing and grunting, as if hallucinating the presence of an enemy. On a failure, the character sees the phantasms, mistaking them for ghosts.

Phantasms are independent entities themselves, but thoughtforms generated by ebon toads, malign intelligent animals native to Carcosa. They feed from the emotional distress their manifestations cause. When victims successfully dissipate a phantasm, the psychic backlash strikes and wounds the toad. A fatal backlash causes the toad to explode, showering the surrounding area with ichor. Though about the size of a horse, the toad on its own offers no defense against an armed person and is easily dispatched. A ranged attack lets the shooter or grenadier avoid the ichor shower’s splash zone.

Numbers: 1 per squad member, at least 1 of which resembles a mourned comrade

Difficulty: Weak (Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3)

Difficulty Adjustments: +2 if someone knows about ebon toads

Toll: 0

Tags: Carcosan

Encounter Style: Secondary

Shocks, Minor and Major:

Ghost Sighting/The Mourned Dead

Redmedic

A supernatural illusion cloaks a redmedic in the guise of an otherwise nondescript allied soldier bearing a medic's insignia.

When a redmedic shows up, the players may choose one character to make a Difficulty 5 Sense Trouble test.

Failure: The squad accepts the creature as a perfectly reliable, normal medic.

Success, margin of 1 or less: The redmedic provokes vague suspicion, but no one in the group can see through the illusion.

Success, margin of 1 or less: The PC, and any other squad member close enough to receive a verbal warning, sees the redmedic for what it is.

In its undisguised form, the redmedic is a humanoid with a blood-red, pulsing, jellied head. Multiple tendrils dangle from its jawline. It can withdraw these into its alien head or grow more as needed. A row of black dots across the face serve as its visual organs. When it needs to see better, it grows more of them, which it can later reabsorb.

Redmedics feed parasitically on humans, establishing an initial contact that allows them to absorb

psychic and caloric energy from a distance of several miles or more.

They make contact by offering to heal the wounds of the injured. Their treatment does work, to an extent: the wounded character trades an Injury card for the redmedic's Major Injury card, "Parasitic Link." When the character has multiple Injury cards, the player chooses which one to trade.

Assuming that no one has seen through the illusion, the redmedic appears to be administering mundane medical treatment. Depending on the severity of injury, the patch-up may seem remarkably effective. No ordinary medic can fix a broken leg in an instant, for example. In this case the group may again select a player to undertake another Sense Trouble test to see through the illusion, this time at Difficulty 4.

Observers immune to the illusion see the redmedic bend over the subject, inserting its jaw tendrils into the injured area.

Redmedics prefer to gain the cooperation of their targets but can establish connections by force. Only when ravenously hungry will they risk attacking a member of a group.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Tough but Outmatched (Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1 if no one has encountered a redmedic before

Toll: 0

Tags: Warspawn

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Punched/Parasitic Link

Soul Butcher

The soul butcher is an insubstantial Carcosan spirit that migrates to our world to bend soldiers' minds until they commit atrocities. Carcosan legends contradict themselves on these entities' origins and fundamental natures. Some say they're ghosts of sadistic and manipulative individuals whose great malice allows them a continued existence after death. Others describe them as intelligent but utterly cruel emanations of the baleful black stars.

The soul butcher preys on front-line soldiers and rear echelon commanders alike. It impels them to commit war crimes by altering their perceptions. Those quiescent prisoners of war look like they're escaping. Bedraggled civilians take on the appearance of enemy troops, or terrifying monsters. Enemy forces hunkered down in exhaustion look like they're torturing helpless victims.

Soul butchers haunt groups of soldiers, slowly chipping away at their sense of reality, pushing them toward ever more terrible acts. The first few rounds of illusions may merely lead their targets to question their grip on reality. These soften them up for the big illusions later.

These perceptual distortions

originate in victims' minds. Those who resist see nothing at all. A victim might be able to sketch what he's seeing but no one can photograph it.

Illusion resistance works like a mental hazard, but with Sense Trouble substituting for Composure.

A soul butcher generally tests a prospective victim with a subtle distortion before going for the full conscience-shattering illusion. Failing the first exacts a -1 penalty on the second.

Subtly Distressing Illusion:

Difficulty 4 Sense Trouble to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major:** Did Anyone Else See That/You Saw It, So It Must Be Real.

Large-Scale Perceptual

Distortion: Difficulty 5 Sense Trouble to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major:** Faulty Perceptions/ Distorted Perceptions.

Soul butchers can't be fought physically. To anchor themselves in our reality, they must forge a link to an object associated with a grim or frightening local legend. This might be the skull of a reputed sorcerer, the rope a jilted bride used to hang herself, or the tub in which a mad noblewoman bathed in the blood of peasants. To permanently banish a soul butcher back to Carcosa, an investigator must identify, find, and destroy this anchor object.

Stalker

In most cases, you'll want to treat a stalker (p. 41) as a war hazard—a source of incoming fire,

prompting PCs to run for cover.

In a few instances, it makes better sense to treat a stalker and its crew as a foe to be overcome through Fighting:

- when the stalker crew is specifically trying to hunt down the PCs in particular
- when the PCs are trying to block, get past, disable, or destroy a particular stalker

Light

Difficulty: Vastly Superior
(Escape 2, Other 6, Kill 8)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1 for all PCs, if an investigator scores a Difficulty 5 Mechanics success immediately prior to the fight (represents sabotage); +1 for characters who have driven a stalker during the current scenario; +1 for characters with Driving pools greater than 3

Adjust to Other Sequences:
Escape = 2, increase Kill by 2

Toll: 2

Tags: Mundane

Encounter Style: Secondary

Heavy

Difficulty: Overwhelming
(Escape 2, Other 7, Kill 9)

Adjust to Other Sequences:
Escape = 2, increase Kill by 2

Difficulty Adjustments: As above

Toll: 2

Tags: Mundane

Encounter Style: Secondary

Ultra-Heavy

Difficulty: Too Awful to Contemplate (Escape 2, Other 9, Kill 10)

Adjust to Other Sequences:

Escape = 2, increase Kill by 2

Difficulty Adjustments: As above

Toll: 4/5

Tags: Mundane

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injury Cards for all Stalkers

Stalker equipped with flamethrower: Superficial Burns/Deep Burns

Stalker without flamethrower: Bruised While Taking Cover/Sprayed

Swarm

On the warped battlefields of the Continental War, even the smallest of creatures can transform into Warspawn. When countless vermin animals die together, they form a swarm, a rolling carpet of distorted, quasi-substantial fur, claws, and teeth. Or, when aerial creatures form a swarm, a cloud of beaks, talons, and feathers. Animals that can become swarms include rats, snakes, weasels, dogs, centipedes, birds, and bats. They mindlessly attack any fully living beings they come across, damaging bone and muscle on the molecular level. Wounds dished out by a swarm can't be seen with the naked eye, but show up when tissue samples are examined under a microscope.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Tough but Outmatched
(Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1 if anyone dismissed the possibility of a few tiny creatures doing any

real harm

Toll: 0

Tags: Warspawn

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Microscopic Wounds/Cell Damage

Warhorse

From a distance, the warhorse looks like a stray mount lost in the chaos of war. Closer up, it can be identified as a reptilian beast with an equine body shape. Its predatory nature becomes apparent when it springs, exposing its razor teeth.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Evenly Matched
(Escape 3, Other 5, Kill 4)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1 if you have encountered a warhorse before

Toll: 1

Tags: Carcosan

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major: Hoof Strike/Warhorse Bite

Weeping Mine

In areas heavily touched by Carcosan influence, land mines spontaneously alter themselves. They sprout foot-long metallic legs, resembling those of a stalker, in sets of four or five. The mines creep away, roaming the forests and villages of the war zone. Sometimes they gather on hillsides and howl sadly to one another. Though the sound may initially be mistaken for wolf cries, its hollow ring, once understood, cannot easily be forgotten.

Encountered close up, they may weep or moan, as if mourning for the dead. Whether they weep for humanity, or for the exploded land mines, is a question best not considered. For reasons as yet unfathomable, weeping mines sometimes gather in particular spots, guarding them from human intrusion. Sudden movements set them off, causing them to lunge at observers, who then discover that despite their profound alterations, they still explode.

Since their first appearance on the battlefield, weeping mines have undergone an evolution—one the squad may be the first to discover or confirm. When a mine explodes, killing a sapient being, the shrapnel, nourished on the blood of victims, transforms into a cloud of airborne seeds, enveloped by a sac recalling the body of a jellyfish. After drifting for a while, the seeds land, anchoring themselves into the soil. As with ordinary plants, many seeds fail to germinate. For those that do, the sac grows up around the metallic bomb inside. When the bomb reaches full size, the weeping mine takes flight once more, borne by the jelly-like parachute, until it finds a final place to plant itself, ready to kill again and repeat the cycle.

Thus the squad can encounter weeping mines either on the ground, or as a gentle rain of descending explosives borne on a summer breeze.

Numbers: 3 × the group



Difficulty: Tough but Outmatched (Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1 if surprised (yes, that's a plus, not a minus: they really don't like surprises)

Toll: 0

Tags: Warspawn

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major: Blown Back/"Am I Still in One Piece?"

Whatsisname

This Warspawn slips in among a unit of soldiers, using limited mind control to make them confuse him for a member of their unit. When first encountering a whasisname, characters make Difficulty 4 Sense Trouble tests.

On a failure, the character identifies the whasisname as a comrade rejoining the unit, accepting the creature's cover story, including the name it proffers. Detailed, vivid memories of their past struggles together flood the victim's mind.

On a success with a margin of 2 or less, the character sees the whasisname's true form, of a pallid humanoid with a featureless face, but accepts its presence as normal and acceptable. The character must make a Difficulty 4 Composure test to avoid a **Shock**: "Why Can't I Just Shoot Him?"

With a greater success margin, the character sees through the illusion, understands that something terribly wrong is happening, and can act against it with unimpeded choice.

The whasisname compulsively steals from the packs of soldiers. When allowed to accompany a squad, everyone takes -2 to Preparedness.

Although its understanding of Carcosa is limited to its experience in this world, a whasisname may have useful or interesting information to convey, if properly coaxed.

When attacked it fights to Escape. If the group has an important item it needs to solve its current problem, it will try to Escape with it. It fights with weapons it has stolen from other soldiers, most typically a sidearm.

Characters who accept a whasisname as a real comrade recognize their memories of him as false only when it has been killed, at which point its real form is horribly revealed. Difficulty 4 Composure test to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major**: No, It Can't Be!/I Remember Him Like He Was Real. (When appearing in another sequence, substitute Unease and Dread.)

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Tough but Outmatched (Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3)

Difficulty Adjustments: +2 vs. characters who failed the Sense Trouble test; +1 vs characters with the "Why Can't I Just Shoot Him?" Shock card

Toll: 0

Tags: Warspawn

Encounter Style: Secondary

Injuries, Minor and Major: Cortisol Spike/Bullet Wound

PEOPLE

In *The Wars*, the squad probably moves to a new location at the beginning of each scenario. There they deal with a fresh military mission and another supernatural threat.

That means that very few GM characters will continue from one episode to the next. Those that do take on a special importance over the course of the series. Mostly you'll be creating one-off characters who appear once and are never seen again—often because they horribly died before the episode concluded.

(If for some reason you want to turn this on its head, you could conceivably station the squad in a barracks outside a city for an ongoing urban series with a continuing cast of supporting characters. That would make this sequence more like the others, but if you're considering doing that you must have a good reason for it.)

Rather than lay out a network of disparate, specific characters the way *Paris* does, this chapter gives you notes you can use to customize the characters you need, when you need them.

Here we assume that you've opted to depict the world as

having female combatants. Swap in male given names if you went the other way on that.

Commanding Officer

The Lieutenant PC receives orders from one step up in the chain of command, in the form of the Capitaine. This Commanding Officer character, in a briefing with the Lieutenant, sends the group out into the military danger of the week, acting on instructions from superiors. The Commanding Officer need not appear in person but may convey orders through the *boîtenoire*. The giving of orders may take place in a scenario's antecedent action, so that the new session opens with the team already in the field, acting on instructions they received back at base.

The Commanding Officer may show up in person mostly when the Lieutenant returns to base to seek further guidance in a sticky situation.

The first time this stock figure appears in your game, he embodies all of the attitudes of the French officer class (p. 30) in every regard:

Capitaine Noeul Villiers is

in his early forties, tall, slim, balding, and carries himself at an ease that belies his perfect posture. He speaks with disarming frankness, openly proclaiming his belief that nothing whatsoever matters more the honor of the French military. With the confidence of a man who expects to be obeyed, he keeps his demeanor cool and formal. He never questions an order from above, no matter how cynical it may seem, and urges the Lieutenant to learn the same discipline of thought.

Over the course of your series you might decide that one Capitaine has been replaced by another. If the players regard their CO as a touchstone of stability in their world, swapping him out increases their unease. Or you might decide that the relationship between the CO and Lieutenant characters perks up the action whenever it comes into play and decide not to mess with that.

Later COs might bring different perspectives to the job, or substitute one quirk for another while still always acting like quintessential mid-level officers:

Capitaine Denise Lepage takes snuff, wears a monocle, and over-enunciates.

Capitaine Bernard Simon wears a hangdog expression, wants to talk to the Lieutenant about literature, and hides a scarred hand by never taking off his black leather gloves.

Capitaine Germaine Viens

battles a perpetual facial twitch and seems always on the verge of exploding into rage.

Capitaine Martine Query

always offers the Lieutenant a brandy, whatever the time of day, and hangs a bullet-riddled portrait of a woman over her desk.

Though nothing about her invites this intimacy, the Lieutenant has doubtless heard from others that this is the Capitaine's ex-wife.

Capitaine Jean Autant hides his deteriorating vision, caused by a hereditary degenerative condition. He doesn't want to be declared medically unfit to serve and has convinced himself he can perform his duties with no decrease in safety to himself or those under his command. A character with Medicine can spot the symptoms.

A devout arch-Catholic, **Capitaine Monique Presle** is either losing her grip on reality or seeing the influence of Carcosa too acutely. God, she believes, has sent Hell to scourge the Earth, in punishment for the sins of mankind. Also womankind, but mostly mankind. Presle may cary on in her duties as before, or subtly steer the sinful toward horrific punishment on the battlefield.

Capitaine André Philippe

cares more about his dignity and reputation than anything else. He takes pride in his fine handwriting, which the Lieutenant may catch him practicing when entering his office. He looks

down his aquiline nose at any proposed action that could blot his impeccable, yet also bland and event-free, service record.

Comrades

Fellow soldiers meet many gruesome fates in *The Wars*, so you'll need an ongoing supply of them. Assign them the enlisted rank that fits your story. They'll mostly be known by their surnames; given names appear in case a character asks.

Nicholas Tachel always talks about the trouble he'll get into the next time he gets to go to town on leave and knits socks for his nieces and nephews.

Dominique Gilbert's tongue and lips are stained black from the licorice pastilles he constantly sucks. He grows restless when there's no one to shoot at him.

Renée Devoe plays the accordion and worries that his girlfriend will cheat on him.

Avril Hervé practices with her throwing knife and threatens to bite people who piss her off.

Georges Carteau keeps a diary of his exploits and pesters other squad members to help him remember details of things that happened a few days ago.

Sylvie Lespérance calls her rifle Père Noël and her pistol Saint Nick. The Lieutenant has been unable to break her of her habit of wandering off on her own.

Erik Pirouet wants to know when it will be time to eat again.

If anyone in the squad has a cooked chicken leg in his back pocket, it's him.

Melisande Gauthier insists on telling you her boring dream and won't stop playing with her lighter.

Cats come out of nowhere to rub up against **Jeannine Trottier**, who hates them and kicks them away.

Faustine Sciverit, a coffin maker in civilian life, always describes people as a small, medium, or large. She says she'll give anyone who survives the war a good discount on a casket.

Orson Quessy bears a perpetual look of shocked horror. His eyes water when combat is imminent.

Napoléon Chenard, a seminary student, urges everyone in the squad to get right with the Lord.

Albertine Labbé can't stop grimly laughing. The worse the situation, the more insistently she giggles.

Michel Batelier claims that he was inducted by mistake, and that it is his cousin, also named Michel Batelier, who ought to be fighting in his place. He pesters the Lieutenant about this at regular intervals.

Giselle Covillon keeps losing her pistol and has a terrible sense of direction.

Benoît Proulx writes nightly letters to his wife. Someone in the squad heard that she died of tuberculosis three years ago.

When the chips are down, **Lea Bonneville** becomes annoyingly upbeat and optimistic.

Yseult Neuilly, a philologist, gets excited when the squad

enters a village. She runs around asking townsfolk to pronounce particular words and makes notes on any interesting regional variations she finds.

Seymour Drouin, a fisherman, can't understand why he isn't in the navy, and won't stop talking about it.

Jacques Plourde likes digging holes and would sooner fight with a shovel than a gun.

Denise Dunan appears perfectly sober when standing still. When she starts to move, her state of extreme drunkenness becomes all too staggeringly apparent. No matter where she is, or how deprived the conditions, she always manages to stumble into a cache of wine or vodka.

Jean Graetz loves to practice his shooting. Although a crack shot, he may cause trouble for the squad by firing his weapon at the exact wrong time. He's also not so choosy about who might be standing on the other side of his targets.

Michel Cloërec wears strong cologne and will offer to fatally stab anyone who offers up a wisecrack about it. Several notches adorn the hilt of Michel's serrated hunting knife; he declines to elaborate on exactly what they might represent.

Snobbish **Richard Douy** can't restrain himself from complaining about the pitifully unevolved state of the local peasantry, even when they're within earshot.

A sommelier in civilian life, **Madeleine Fortuna** has a lot to

say about the terrible impact of the war on French vineyards. "How many decades it will take to rebuild—incalculable!"

The soldier known as **Hubert Lippens** took on this false identity to get out of an embezzling charge in Lyon before the war. Always on the lookout for a new way to enrich himself, he may be caught stealing from French civilians.

Horse-faced **Lucien Archambault** speaks very quickly and excitedly and isn't sure what's going on and needs constant reassurance and doesn't know why this is happening to him why do things always happen to him don't you think they should happen to someone else for a change?

Sickly **Roger Perron** has come down with a fever but doesn't want the squad to worry about him even though his teeth are clacking violently together.

Yvonne Lefèvre likes to play with matches. Since the war shattered her mind, she has taken to doing it unawares, and may be about to set a fire, completely oblivious to the danger, when an investigator comes to talk with her.

Claude Sivel says that the way he gets through each day is to imagine that he is having a terrible nightmare, and will at any moment awaken in his clean, warm Paris apartment. His wife will have a pot of hot chocolate ready for him, there will be brioche, and he will tell her about the strange nightmare war where

metal behemoths clank through the forest and the aircraft look like buzzing insects.

Ever the optimist, weedy, near-sighted **Ghislaine Paillais** says that the war won't last much longer. The enemy looks strong but is about to crack and come to the bargaining table. A year from now, no one will even remember that it happened.

Nadine Gaillard covers her fears of death with a booming laugh and bawdy sense of humor. She tries to shrink down inside her broad-shouldered frame, color draining from her face and her voice catching in her throat, whenever the bullets fly.

Hard-bitten **Sami Griffe** always has a bent cigarette in his mouth, lit or unlit depending on circumstances. According to him, the secret to survival is not caring if you live or die. The squad may look on in wonder when he emerges unscathed from a fusillade or bombardment that cuts everyone else around him to ribbons.

Edwige Misrach has a terrible-tasting folk remedy on hand for any malady her fellow soldiers might be suffering from. This nursing school dropout has the unfortunate habit of diagnosing her comrades with alarming diseases they aren't in fact suffering from.

Towering tall and bristling with muscle, **Bernard Rey** says little but carries a noose, tightly tied and ready to go, in his pack. "You never know when you're going to

need one," he intones, if asked to explain.

Gaëtan Casadesus just stole a motorbike and will stop riding it only when ordered to by his superior. He resists any effort to return it. Should you need a spot of trouble, the local bruisers who stole it from someone else arrive to demand it back, plus compensation.

No matter how desperate the situation, **Colette Lacombe** takes the time to care for her lustrous blond hair. At first glance this may seem like vanity but in Colette's mind it is a sacred responsibility to the memory of her mother, who died giving birth to her and was famed throughout the region for her golden tresses.

Maurice Véry always thinks it's too risky to move from the unit's current position and invariably finds a rationale to argue for staying put.

Willowy, Celtic-looking **Mercédès d'Yd** says she can tell fortunes with an ordinary deck of cards. When she looks at the future of other GMCs, she cold-reads them, supplying the positive predictions they most want to hear. But if the squad members seek a divination, she can't help but see disaster, all of it emblazoned with a white mask or the Yellow Sign.

Odette Gélín talks in a quavering, barely audible voice that grows even more quiet when you demand that she speak up. If shouted at, she trembles uncontrollably.

Compulsive liar and teller of tall tales **Marcel Nat** regales his fellow soldiers with tales of former glories, impossible adventures, and fortunes won and lost. If asked to do anything, he claims to be an expert in it, with a self-aggrandizing anecdote to explain why.

If the morphine supplies are getting low, it might be due to **Margo Amiot**'s secret addiction. She was hooked on the stuff in her days as a singer in Montmartre. Without thinking the question through, she thought a soldier's life would keep her far away from her substance of choice—when of course it's waiting for her in every med kit.

Irrepressible goofball **Philippe Hainia** tries to alleviate his comrades' terror with a constant stream of wisecracks, pranks, and clowning. They don't find him as funny as he thinks he is. And every moment they spend paying attention to him is one in which they must be carelessly popping into the crosshairs of enemy snipers.

Frizzy-haired, hollow-cheeked **Jane Lemontier** used to be a philosopher but now declares that the war means "the end of all philosophy, the end of all meaning." Her fellow soldiers find her theorizing either disheartening or incomprehensible. At least they can agree with her thesis that the greatest pleasure in life is the first drag on a freshly lit cigarette.

Blue-eyed, dark haired young **Georges Bever** is so perfectly

and eerily beautiful that onlookers of all orientations stare at him in disbelief. Born dirt poor and desperate to impress, his looks are all he has going for him. He attempts to affix himself to the Blueblood character in hopes of advancing his social position after the war.

Sharp-chinned and hawk-nosed, **Charles Frouhins** grins like he knows something no one else does. When in combat he attacks with animalistic ferocity until his enemy is not just dead but a bloody, mutilated splatter. He is not only unable to explain his rage, he even denies it exists or anything crazy just happened.

A pixie-ish gamine with a breathy voice, **Marcelle Maguenat** attracts the protective attention of all the men in her unit. She finds this annoying and unjust but can't see how to stop them: her six older brothers were all the same way. Marcelle tries to stay out of trouble, so that no one will get hurt looking after her when they should be taking care of themselves.

Former pastry chef **Boris Maffre** bears the nickname of "Custard," which seems odd given his surly, insulting demeanor. He says that if he stabs two more enemy soldiers he will officially have knifed more men in the war than he has in civilian life. All of his victims were fellow kitchen workers.

Dockworker and labor organizer **Marcella Herrand** calls war a game of kings, in which the

common man acts merely as a playing piece. She plans to use the skills picked up in war to bring about anarchist revolution in France afterwards. Herrand might attempt to sound out the Salt of the Earth character in search of converts to the cause.

The General

A character with some connection to a prominent ally or adversary the characters encountered in the *Paris* sequence serves as General—perhaps *the* general of the army.

In the same way that PCs in this sequence echo those of *Paris* in various ways, the General might be a descendant or dead ringer for the original. Or in the case of supernaturally long lifespans, it might literally be the same character. If the group met Addhema the vampire, she's back, and now she's a general. The General could be Cassilda or Camilla, though the King himself might better cast as a shadowy figure directing events in the headquarters of the enemy.

The General wants to win, marshaling Carcosan power. She might take a shine to the squad, or at least consider them useful, if she realizes that they've become aware of the eerie war behind the war.

In my game, Cassilda gave one of the *Paris* art students, Ida Phillipson, a baby to raise. (Well, sacrifice, but that was negotiated

down to “raise.” Long story.) The group named him Isaac, at about which point we moved on to *The Wars*. The name of the army's top general was soon revealed: Isaac Phillipson.

Should you need or prefer a mundane general, pick one of these:

Corpulent and cranky, **General Henri-Georges Ricard** growls irascibly at anyone who wastes a second of his time.

General Jeanne Bussière fancies herself an erudite wit and cares more about family connections than military rank.

General Louis Bolduc smiles tightly when angered and never forgets a slight.

A fussy, platitude-spewing Polonius in epaulettes, **General Charlotte Aupry** lectures inferiors on the virtues of life, the most important of which is patience.

French Hero

Generally speaking you'll only want to depict GMCs engaged in extraordinary acts of valor if:

- They then meet their dooms or are at least sidelined, leaving room for the player characters to take the reins and drive the story.
- They later stand in the way of the player characters. For example, the hero insists that they aid his mission instead of pursuing superstitions. The squad can't attack a war hero on their own side, and so must overcome

them in a subtler manner.

When you need a French war hero, you might introduce someone who echoes a similarly stalwart GMC from *Paris*. As with the player characters, this could be a descendant, a replica, or the same person, in an ageless condition the hero may or may not be able to explain.

Or use one of these:

Lieutenant Robert Desnos, a real estate agent and poet in his civilian life, undertakes commando missions with unwavering determination. He gazes at the squad with eyes the color of oysters. Even though he wears the same uniform as any other officer of his rank, he somehow presents the impression of high style and poise. His working-class accent in no way impedes his greatest weapon, his sonorous voice, which fills subordinates with surety and resolve. In an offhand moment it might come up that Desnos never dreams. *He is this timeline's version of the famed surrealist poet and hero of the Resistance, who died in a Czech concentration camp in 1945. If they played our Trail of Cthulhu campaign Dreamhounds of Paris, your players might get a kick out of encountering him here, in a world where Carcosan influence preempted the Surrealist movement.*

Sergeant Arlette Dubois, daughter of Burgundy wine makers, enlisted in the army after enemy saboteurs burned

down her family's vineyards. She describes the present conflict as a battle to preserve the gentle pleasures of everyday life, a goal for which she is furiously ready to slit the throats of any number of enemy soldiers.

Lieutenant Raymond de Funés conceals the fact that he is the son of the Duke of Septimania, but that won't fool the character with the Blueblood ability. He wishes to be treated like any other soldier, but few exhibit his hunger for acts of near-fatal glory. Raymond is also an avid sexual adventurer, with an appetite that encompasses all genders, and, if given the opportunity, the occasional alien humanoid.

Foreign War Hero

Use these characters when you need a one-person killing machine from a foreign force. Depending on how you've divided up Shattered Europe, a character fighting for a particular country might serve as ally or enemy.

Britain: **Lieutenant Cyril Baskeyfield**, from Leeds, bears the scars of three separate injuries that ought to have killed him. He has been offered and refused countless opportunities to return to the home front. A quiet man when not issuing orders, his philosophy might be summed up as, "Let's just get on with it, shall we?"

Russia: Expert sniper **Sergeant Alina Borodyuk** grew up in an

orphanage in Kazakhstan and joined the Russian army along with several of her girlfriends, where she excelled at long-distance shooting. She no longer forms attachments with fellow soldiers, having seen dozens of her comrades blown to smithereens.

Germany: Despite his lofty rank **Lieutenant Colonel Otto Skorzeny** often designs commando raids in which he takes point position. An Austrian from a middle-class family, he lives an austere life, sneering at those who crave comfort. A long, deep dueling scar underlines his left cheek. Even if they deal with him as a fellow Loyalist, the characters may detect something feral and unwholesome about him—a sign of his murderous allegiance to Carcosa.

Black Marketeers

War profiteers face the death penalty if caught but somehow manage to prosper between the cracks. The patrons protecting them might be corrupt officers, or the nobility of Carcosa.

If encountered anywhere he can eat, the cadaverous **Roger Prepon** munches continually on bread, cheese, and nuts. An urbane fellow unacquainted with feelings of shame, he explains that without crime, every soldier would go hungry.

Gruff **Isabelle Havard** shakes her tangled mane of gray hair at anyone who attempts to outmaneuver her. She would sell out

her own mother to protect herself. She isn't shy about saying that, either, pointing a knife at her nearby, elderly mother, Sylvette. Old Madame Havard nods, as if this would be only right and proper.

Despite her dirty business, a glow of youth and glamour surrounds the ageless **Chantal Allaupe**. She specializes in selling forbidden luxury goods to the French upper echelon. If caught on the wrong side of the investigators, she offers them a spectacularly valuable item she happens to have in her purse—a single, fresh white truffle.

Samuel Plummer specializes in the movement of black market medicines across borders and battle lines. A hunched American in late middle age with a furtive expression etched permanently in his haunted features, he has a habit of showing up near massacre sites. The squad may find him conducting an examination with unfamiliar instruments, or perhaps even helping himself to an abandoned organ or two. Though they might be tempted to immediately dispatch him, his preternatural ability to secure medical supplies—coincidentally exactly the rare drugs they need to save a precious life—may prompt them to spare him. Should they earn what passes for trust from him, they may learn that he once had another name and another life. As famed and controversial surgeon

Sidney Pockman, he cracked the secret of nympholic implantation, allowing him to reanimate the dead. For two decades he's been on the run from the dread consequences of this discovery. What better place to flee, and continue his weird research, than the most dangerous war zone on the planet?

Brothel Keeper

Officially frowned upon but unofficially deemed essential to soldier morale, houses of ill repute spring up wherever soldiers are stationed. Madams have to know what's going on behind their walls in order to survive and maintain the connections that keep them in business. They make wary but well-informed witnesses.

Be aware of your group's comfort levels (and prepare for the possible appearance of X-Cards) before heavily foregrounding this staple element of wars both real and fictional.

Madam Fleurette rarely takes her hands from her hips and, until persuaded to assist, treats all questioners as annoying nuisances.

Aloof as an ancient Roman, **Madame Marine** keeps an enigmatic smile on her face and would rather allude to the truth than come out and say anything definitively.

Madame Hélène adopts a maternal persona, showing a

warm concern for the squad members that may conceal a lack of interest in cooperation.

Villagers

Villagers may be farmers who live alongside other people and go out to work their fields when they need to till, weed, or harvest. More likely, they provide services to farmers: coopers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, cart makers, store proprietors, tavern keepers, and the like. Assign them whatever jobs suit your story.

They will most often appear as witnesses who supply tidbits of information. When a character appears only to dole out clues, a name and occupation may be all the players want. Don't feel you always need to stop the action to introduce a character's memorable quirk if there's no real reason to remember that person.

Men found as civilians in a war zone are all too young or too old to fight, or have something else obviously wrong with them that explains why they haven't been slapped in uniform and shipped to the front. Able-bodied men are hiding from conscription and won't readily reveal themselves to soldiers.

Most people in any given village will be related to one another, with a few surnames in common between them. Sample sets of family names: Deniaud, Lestan, Gervais; Tremblay, Chrétien, Gagnon; Côté, Morin,

Pelletier; Fortin, Lavoie, Leblanc; Caron, Ouellet, Fournier; Boucher, Dubé, Simard.

Armand warns the squad not to upset him, as another heart attack could kill him at any moment. You may decide that he's as healthy as anyone in France and is merely repeating the useful lie he told the enlistment officers. Or he could indeed drop dead during the episode, ideally when the characters do something that causes upset.

Jolly **Babette** surrounds herself with big, rowdy dogs. She emphasizes points she wishes to make with careless sweeps of her thick, gnarled walking stick.

Young **Elodie** won't talk about the deep scar that slashes down her forehead and into her left eyebrow.

Eva was blinded by shrapnel from an air strike but tries to keep her spirits up.

Françoise offers the group some of her famous boudin noir, a sausage made from groats and pig's blood. "In better times there would be pork in it as well," she says, sadly.

Gérard escaped conscription by becoming too fat to move. Other villagers darkly grumble about his ability to keep the weight on when everyone else is starving. An envious neighbor might try to convince a soldier that the war effort would be better off without Gérard around.

Guy and his twin brother

Gaston never leave each other's company. They finish each other's sentences and may leave the group wondering whether they're sly foxes or half-wits.

Lucian carefully shades himself from the sun and warns the soldiers to do the same.

Marielle warns the soldiers that she's a terrible liar. "Again and again I have tried to break the habit, but alas, it has proven quite impossible."

Terrible scars remain where **Marguerite's** ears once were. She says boys from a nearby village did it, when she was twelve. The war is a gift from god and an answer to her prayers, she says, because as soon as it started a bomb hit their house and killed every one of them.

Marie-Claude knits a black scarf with a skull emblem. She offers one of her finished versions to the squad, as a reminder of death's triumph over all.

Constantly working her rosary, **Marthe** can think of little else but the fate of her four sons, all serving in the French infantry.

Maurice asks the squad for money, no matter how trivial the favor they seek from him.

Max takes offense at something innocuous one of the characters says and threatens to slap him. Max is ninety-three years old and can barely stand up.

Micheline offers to take the soldiers to a sacred grotto where one can gain the blessings of St. Martin of Tours. The Humanities



ability reveals that this 4th century bishop is considered the patron saint of soldiers.

Paul falls asleep when the group is talking to him. He says he hasn't gotten a decent night's sleep since the war began.

Richard wonders aloud what reward might be paid for captured enemy soldiers, if he happened to have any tied up in a nearby cavern. Purely hypothetically, one must understand.

Robert claims to have killed enemy commandos by sneaking into their camp while they were sleeping and pouring boiling lead into their ears. When pressed on the details, he changes to another story that has him stealthily slaying multiple enemies. He may be hoping for compensation, or delusional.

Sacha tearfully tells the squad how beautiful his village used to be, before the war started.

Suzanne has accumulated a hoard of buried gasoline canisters. If the soldiers seem trustworthy, she'll try to arrange a trade for nonperishable food.

Peasants

Farm folk tend to introduce themselves by first name only. When more than one person with the same name lives in the area, a prefatory nickname like "Old" or "Young" or "Fat" still wins out over a surname. If the characters insist on learning a family name, they'll find that three or four of them keep recurring—as you'd

expect in a place populated by a few interlocking families.

As with the villagers, above, healthy men of fighting age won't be found in the French countryside. And again, there's no shame in skipping over the characters' distinctive quirks until it becomes clear that they'll be taking a big part in a story.

Old Louis moves very slowly and seems to think that the Franco-Prussian war is still on. He's afraid the squad will try to conscript him, as if he doesn't realize that he's somewhere in his nineties.

Young Bernard has one eye that wanders independently of the other and sizes up the squad's gear like he's thinking of stealing some of it later.

Suzy, willowy, fair, and harried, fears male soldiers but may open up to women.

Pierre says "believe me" at the end of any factual declaration, making even the blandest statement sound deceptive.

Jehanne wrinkles her nose at the squad as if they stink, regardless of whether they actually do.

Stooped and weary **Claudine** falls asleep if the squad talks to her for too long.

René tries to get the soldiers to pay him a hundred francs for a treasure map. He has conveniently placed the X behind enemy lines.

Gilberte threatens to have her husband thrash the investigators

if they offend her sense of propriety. She's sixty; he's north of seventy.

André, mute and illiterate, communicates by drawing crude figures in the sand with a stick.

Annette offers to cook for the squad if they supply the ingredients. Should they take her up on it, they find the results movingly delicious.

Twelve-year-old **Joëlle** cheerfully hops around on an ill-made crutch, having lost her foot to a land mine. "At least I still have one foot!" she chirps.

Dora works her rosary beads while assuring the squad that the devil has taken up residence in this neck of the woods. She presses homemade crucifixes made of twine into the characters' palms.

Despite the nickname, **Young Louis** is sixty years old and milky-eyed. He still has keen hearing, which he likes to brag about.

Old Bernard carries a flute, which he plays at the merest hint of an invitation. He says that the faeries will come back to the woods when the war has ended.

"Red" has white hair now, and says he fought in the German-American war on the Yankee side. He offers to teach the squad all the best American swear words.

Drunk René's stagger shows that he comes by his nickname honestly. He offers to share his jug of wine, but the foamy spittle on its mouth may give fastidious squad members pause.

"Judge" André solves village

disputes whether the parties want to hear from him or not. He has a long list of points to make about the disrespect soldiers show to civilians.

Jeanine had a bomb fall on her potato crop last season and expects the squad to arrange payment of reparations for it.

Claire wears dried herbs around her neck. She's the village healer and midwife, an unofficial post lending her a gruff authority.

"Belle" Claire is her pretty daughter, who knows a more exciting life awaits her if only she can get away to a city. She asks the squad for tips on how to achieve this in the middle of a war zone.





Not Everything Has to Have Hitler In It

This setting allows play groups to interact with motifs and themes of the war story by refracting them through the fun, outlandish horrors of the weird horror genre. That keeps the genuinely unspeakable horror of real-world warfare at a remove.

That distancing device weakens if you foreground the contrast between the fictional Continental War and our World War II. Like most genre efforts it breaks down when asked to support the moral weight of historical genocide.

Moments that spur the players to ask, “Hey, isn’t this world better than our history?” may derail your game into a philosophical rabbit hole.

For this reason I recommend skipping the superficially tempting choice to bring alternate-world versions of Hitler or other key engineers of the Holocaust directly on stage.

This reality’s 1920s didn’t lay the groundwork for the rise of fascism. The American-German war of the teens didn’t conclude in the same harsh surrender terms as our WWI. Those people who yearned to surrender themselves to cruel authority bowed down to the King in Yellow or one of his daughters instead of Hitler or Mussolini.

Still, you know your group better than I do. If you do decide to go there, your alternate world version of a high-level Nazi might be:

- an obscure nobody, still twisted by hatred and anti-Semitism but unable to leverage those impulses into power
- a devoted henchman of Carcosa
- an embittered ghost who senses that their life and death should have gone differently
- an ordinary person, haunted by terrible dreams in which they commit acts of unprecedented savagery

Those keen to explore the alternate-versions-of-historical-monsters trope might consider the less loaded option of having the squad meet up with the Stalin, Beria, or Molotov of the Continental War. For western audiences, mention of their bloody legacy doesn’t shut down all other narrative considerations. (Although maybe it should.)



RUNNING *THE WARS*

This chapter provides GM advice specific to *The Wars*.

These augment the general tips on running GUMSHOE from *Paris* and “GM Masterclass” in *This Is Normal Now*.

Scenarios

A baseline *Wars* scenario includes the following elements.

The Mission: The military objective the squad is assigned to tackle, written as a brief premise.

(alternately, in a Report for Execution game) **The Haven:** If the squad has been detached from the command structure to instead wander around not reporting for execution, they typically encounter a situation that offers a reason to stop somewhere and do something. Generally, this involves an apparent opportunity for protection and rest.

The Mystery: Describes how the eerie forces of Carcosa give the group a question they must answer through investigation.

In a Military Police series, Mission leads to Mystery: the squad gets an assignment to solve a problem involving possible offenses against discipline. As

they investigate, they find the Mystery behind the apparently mundane disciplinary matter.

Hazards: Military threats to the lives and limbs of squad members, many of them mundane dangers of warfare.

The Alien Truth: Lays out the solution to the Mystery and the decisions the squad must make after uncovering it.

Scenes: The meat of the scenario, which you write up in whatever level of detail works for you.

Antagonist Reactions: Responses adversaries might make to actions taken by the squad.

As always, the actual manifestation of your scenario might be a loose set of ideas in your head, a fully written text like the one at the end of this book, or a midway point on the continuum between those two things.

Shadow Squadron

This series premise takes its inspiration from a WWII American army unit, the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops. For more on the historical model, hunt down the beautifully produced book *The Ghost Army of World War II*, Rick Beyer and Elizabeth Sayles,

Princeton Architectural Press, 2015.

The unit performs military deception operations designed to confuse the enemy with tricks causing them to identify nonexistent troops and equipment as real.

Missions might include:

- Placing inflatable tanks, trucks, and/or artillery units in a given position.
- Concealing speakers to play recordings indicating the nearby presence of a Loyalist unit.
- Posing as members of genuine Loyalist military units and entering towns, as if on leave, where enemy spies operate. This makes it seem as if the unit is in location A when it is really far away, in location B.
- Assisting actual units with camouflage, so that their positions appear unoccupied, leading enemy troops into ambush.
- Reconnoitering areas to assess their suitability for a false troop deception.
- Clearing positions of enemy forces who would otherwise see through a planned deception operation.

Here the squad's Lieutenant commands the 112th Troupe de logistique d'opérations, self-nicknamed the Shadow Squadron. To preserve the vagueness of the official name, the unit never refers to itself as that to outsiders.

This conceit allows you to

send the 112th all over the theater of war, tackling a variety of thematically related Missions.

Because war often turns into an exercise in desperate improvisation, the 112th may from time to time find themselves pressed into service unrelated to their expertise. They're near a hole that needs plugging and get unexpectedly sent to plug it.

Alternately, you could invent another highly specialized purpose for the unit that creates a demand for its services across the war.

This is the premise I used for my own in-house game.

Mission vs. Mystery

Conceive the Mission so that it either complicates or dovetails with the Mystery, rather than conflicting with it.

Examples of complications to the Mission:

- That old church you're sent to occupy turns out to be haunted.
- The town where you'll find the spies you want to fool has been stricken by a creeping Carcosan plague.
- Something has overwritten your acetate recordings of walker movements with a recitation from *The King in Yellow*.

When you dovetail Mission and Mystery, solving the Mystery enables you to then complete the Mission:

- The enemy unit you're sent to drive off has been empowered

by a force beyond this world. By finding and destroying the source of their weird abilities, you cause them to flee.

Avoid structures where the group must choose between succeeding at the Mission and solving the Mystery. When players incorrectly assume that you've put the two in conflict, remind them of the promise in the introductory handout: the story will always give them a way of doing both. Where needed, ask them how their Drives motivate them to dive deeper into the Mystery.

Report for Execution

Perhaps after a few prefatory scenarios in which the squad performs basic commando missions, encountering a mystery each time, the Commanding Officer calls the Lieutenant into his tent or office. With a regretful expression, the CO says something like this:

"An unfortunate bit of news, I'm afraid. You and several of your soldiers have been selected to report for execution. This of course is no reflection on the quality of your service to the French people, but simply a regrettable necessity of the Amiens Convention. I see that I have been granted discretion as to which Reciprocity Depot you must report to, and I'm sure you'd all enjoy some extra time, so I'll make it the furthest depot."

The CO glances at a map and

specifies a faraway city within Loyalist territory.

Paraphrase the dialogue to make it sound natural.

The players will likely have questions about this. Make the players drag out the key details from you as given here.

Wait. What? The Amiens Convention?

This amended the Geneva Convention in several apparently innocuous ways. Unusually, these terms were agreed to between disputing parties in an ongoing war. The Loyalists and the enemy agreed to them two and a half years ago.

But wait, that means we have to report for execution?

You hadn't heard of this provision before, but if you go off and check obscure sub-clauses in the Amiens Convention text, it allows both sides to recover equipment and even certain territories by declaring that a reciprocity condition has been met.

But we were asking about the execution part.

Yes, yes, each side can gain concessions from the other by sending certain numbers of soldiers to Reciprocity Depots, where they are executed.

And how we to be executed exactly?

It involves a complicated machine of some kind. Highly classified, you know. Quite painless, presumably.

How were we chosen?

It is a difficult process, hard

to describe. A modified lottery system. Be assured, it is no reflection on you. The generals are not allowed to send only our inadequate soldiers. It's an honor, really. Think of it as an honor.

And we must report immediately?

Well, within a reasonable time. People are known to dawdle. You can take a circuitous route. Just remember that your honor as an officer is at stake here.

What if we flee?

You will be treated like any other deserters—hunted down and shot. The military police take this with the utmost seriousness, as I am sure you understand. Otherwise the entire system would break down.

As you have already guessed, Carcosa has added a macabre element to their game of war. They negotiated the Amiens Convention and had their pet leaders sign it. If the squad investigates the process, they might discover that it is:

- A sick joke between competing Carcosan royals, reveling in their ability to warp human society in any direction they choose.

- A way of gaining human sacrifices. In this case the Carcosan nobles are either unaware of the way mid-ranking officers slow-walk the execution process or have only now discovered it and will soon start acting to take closer control.
- A tradition of Carcosan warfare long predating the current dynasty. It makes sense to them as an intrinsic part of war and politics, and they accept it without question.

This premise gives your squad the freedom to wander around a war zone, in uniform, with some military authority, without having to constantly follow orders from above. As they peregrinate slowly toward the Reciprocity Depot, they encounter the various mysteries of the week your episodes revolve around. They might even discover that by banishing the forces of Carcosa from the world, they might undo the Amiens Convention and save not only their own lives but those of many other brave soldiers.

Along the way other Commanding Officers might now and then temporarily commandeer their services, pressing them into emergency missions.

Share the above with the players, telling them that the premise assumes they'll keep encountering weird mysteries along the way, without ever actually reporting for execution.



In the unlikely event that the players still have their characters determinedly head to the Reciprocity Depot, they can either:

- Discover that their paperwork is not in proper order, requiring them to travel to a different, now quite distant, depot.
- Unwind the final mystery of the execution chambers, ending the convention. This might mark the triumphant end of your *Wars* sequence, or a shift to a new premise.

A Shadow Squadron series can shift midway through to AWOL. You might choose to do this if you want to keep running this setting but have run out of inspiration for deception-related missions.

Military Police

In this version of your *Wars* sequence, the players belong to a small unit investigating crimes committed by soldiers. These investigations lead to supernatural Mysteries behind, around, or adjacent to the infractions against discipline.

- A soldier kills another in an insensate fury. When he's locked up, it happens again, to another soldier. What force lies behind this?
- The squad tracks deserters to a haunted town. The entities that drew them there now have more potential victims they didn't even have to work for.
- An officer disappears, leaving behind all of his effects,

including his clothing.

- A glassy-eyed civilian takes a top command officer hostage. Once apprehended, he wakes up as if from a trance, demanding to know who brought him here, so far from his home. Again, this premise allows the squad to move around from one situation to another in a way denied to the common infantryman.

When you need a Mission, you can always consult the episode guide for the TV series *JAG*, find a premise, and then warp it to fit both the Continental War and the supernatural. This method in no way depends on any additional knowledge of *JAG*, and there's ten seasons of it, so you'll never run out. And if you do, there's *NCIS* and *NCIS: Los Angeles*, both long-running and still on the air as of this writing.

In between the episodes that occur on screen the squad presumably spends most of its time on mundane and easily solved cases of assault, murder, and most of all, desertion.

Hazard Scenes

Moments of attrition add a new scene type to the structure described in *Paris*: the Hazard scene. A Hazard scene consists of one or more physical or mental obstacles the squad must overcome in order to move between scenes. Like Antagonist Reactions, they wear the group down without giving

them information-gathering opportunities. Unlike those sequences, they don't feature the main threat acting against the heroes, but simply reflect the cost and danger of moving about in a war zone.

In *Paris*, the characters might talk to one witness, head over to another neighborhood of the city to talk to someone else, then circle back to the original witness again. In *The Wars*, they may learn to ask all of their questions in one place before moving on to the next, as each physical journey may expose them to enemy fire, and perhaps even a randomly ravaging creature or two.

The Wars is the setting where you really hammer the players' General ability pools. Any movement from one place to the next, or any pause to Hunker Down, can introduce a brutal assault on Composure, Health, Fighting, and/or Athletics.

In a war zone, Hazards both physical or mental can come out of nowhere, unrelated to the Mystery. That makes them easier to throw in at any time, without bending your plot out of shape. In early episodes, before the characters (if not the players) realize that supernatural events underpin the entire conflict, lean on war's well-known, non-eerie horrors. As the series progresses you can dial up the weirdness. When you do this look for ways to help players distinguish background manifestations from

the main mystery. If they conclude that one of them is central to the case, improvise a way to connect their inquiries into it back into the primary mystery.

Generally speaking the best way to achieve this is by throwing more tests at them. Sticking to the same number of tests, but with higher Difficulties, doesn't deplete them as effectively. Players notice that they're facing more tests but can't tell that you've jacked up the Difficulties.

The introduction of the Morale ability lets players recover much-needed Composure. Scrounging likewise refills Battlefield pools.

Now and then you'll want to loosen the pressure. Letting the players breathe for a bit gives them the emotional oxygen they need to ramp back up into terror later. But by and large, this sequence is called *The Wars*, not *The Picnics*.

Chain of Command

Gaming groups tend to work by consensus, with everyone throwing in ideas until a plan of action emerges.

Military units don't work that way at all.

To square this circle and ensure a fun experience in which all get their say, maintain a separation between the clear lines of authority the characters observe and the back-and-forth between players.

The players hash out a plan of action. Then, in character, they play out the process by which



the Lieutenant, consulting the Sergeant, decides what to do and issues orders accordingly.

Intervene in communications between players only when a problem crops up. Many groups will fall into this pattern instinctively without your having to enforce or signpost it.

Often a dynamic emerges where players enjoy making the odd quip about a lack of respect for superiors, without puncturing the conceit of a squadron obeying the full French formalities of military discipline.

If the authority of the Lieutenant or Sergeant roles go to a player's head, recap the principles of the player/character split. Where necessary act as mediator to ensure that nobody spoils the fun by forcing characters to take actions the players hate.

Sequence Arc

Give your *Wars* game a sense of sweep by designing scenarios to fit the following pattern.

Baseline Madness: The squad investigates a number of standalone Mysteries. Through these they come to see that supernatural manifestations are real and, if their experiences are anything to go by, pervasive throughout the war zone.

Glimmers of Carcosa: As their confrontations with weirdness continue, the squad learns about Carcosa and the Yellow Sign. They meet one or more running characters and glimpse their first

hints of the Yellow King's grand design in the war. The relevance of their connections to the 1895 characters becomes more evident.

The Game Revealed: Plot elements established in the prior phase come to a head, as the stakes increase, the war grows in intensity, and the group learns why Carcosa fights. In a climactic scenario the group gets the chance to strike a major, if not conclusive, blow against their main antagonist. They might earn a key victory, ending the carnage of the war, or fail, whetting their appetite for final success.

The action then shifts to *Aftermath*.

The same setup works just as well when you're playing *The Wars* as its own, self-contained campaign. Recurring characters showing up in "Glimmers of Carcosa" will of course be appearing for the first time. As part of a bigger sequence, failure at the end can be as much or more satisfying than success. That won't be the case in a *Wars*-only game, so you'll likely want to design its conclusion to give players a reasonable chance of final triumph.

The Big Objective

If the logic of horror adventure tells us anything, it is this: a war fueled by supernatural forces will be won by supernatural means.

As you begin your arc, select a possible end point for the war. Tentatively answer two questions:

1. How does the supernatural entity secretly directing the actions of the enemy plan to win?

2. What could the squad do to stop this?

Possible endgames include:

Occupation of Paris: Treating Paris as the ultimate prize in the war fits the prominence it takes in the Yellow King mythology and in the 1895 sequence. If the Loyalists repulse a final attack on the city, the enemy's aggression falters. It begins to pull back and, after further defeats, sues for peace. A triumphant final episode might end with the enemy defeat at Paris, allowing you to sum up the slow deflating weeks before the admission of defeat in a quick bit of explanatory narration. To gain the ability to repulse the invaders, perhaps the squad must solve a Mystery that leaves them in possession of potent Carcosan magic. This might be:

- the original physical manifestation of the Yellow Sign
- the text of *The King in Yellow*, in the original Carcosan
- a magical infant born from a mystical union of opposites
- the mask-like face of a previous Yellow King, preserved in mummified form

Big Bomb: The enemy seeks to destroy Paris by air. The squad must prevent them from dropping their newly completed supernatural super-bomb. Design the scenario so that one possible ending has the group sacrificing themselves to ensure

its harmless detonation before it falls on the Champs-Élysées.

Backstage Kill: The squad identifies the big bad and gains information giving them at least a chance of defeating them in physical combat. When the big bad is the King or one of his daughters, you could set this up so an apparent kill only banishes the enemy back to Carcosa. But it's a monarchy, the primary villain of subsequent sequences could then become the newly ascended Queen in Yellow, or some other heir to the throne.

Banishing: Alternately the squad could be trying to send the big bad back to Carcosa, after gaining information showing them how to conduct the necessary ritual.

As your plans make contact with the players, you might decide to switch to another option that better reflects the parts of the story they respond to most enthusiastically. It might be one of the above, or an idea that comes to you through play. Just make sure that you can square the fictional facts you've given them with this midstream change of plans.

My own *Wars* sequence ended with the squad in the midst of a massive battle for Marseilles and concluded with their realization that they'd been used to bring Camilla and Cassilda together for one sister's assassination of the other. One massive explosion later, it was time for *Aftermath*.

A FEAST FOR WOLVES

In this introductory scenario for *The Wars*, the squad performs an assignment near the village of Gévaudan in the shadows of the Margeride Mountains.

The Hook

The squad travels to the site (*The Trek*). Near their destination, they witness a devastating accident (*Dragonflies Down*) that leaves many French soldiers dead. They complete their task and when they return, they find the bodies missing (*Missing Bodies*).

The Development

This causes them to connect *The Village* of Gévaudan to its past history, as the location of a rampage by a legendary man-eating wolf. Or was it a lycanthrope?

They might investigate its *Well-Fed Peasants*, find information at The Church, or encounter a hunter met along the way (*Chastel Again*).

Clues to the body disappearances appear in *The Uniforms*. Possible cooperation comes from *The Reader* and a *Worried Mother*.

The Cast

During these scenes the squad encounters such residents of Gévaudan as:

Madame Mareuil, a tough old lady who acts as unofficial village leader as well as its supplier of cured meat.

Erik Mareuil, her protective eldest adult son.

Sylvain Mareuil, his younger brother, a grinning beanpole who has embraced the village's new ways with sadistic enthusiasm.

Père Johanneau, the recently arrived young priest who wants to help the squad but lives in terror of his parishioners.

Paul Chastel, a burly, outwardly affable hunter, and descendant of the famed animal expert who supposedly slew the beast in 1767.

Arielle Chavanal, a 16-year-old girl who lives in a world of books and might befriend a member of the squad.

Valérie Chavanal, her worried mother.

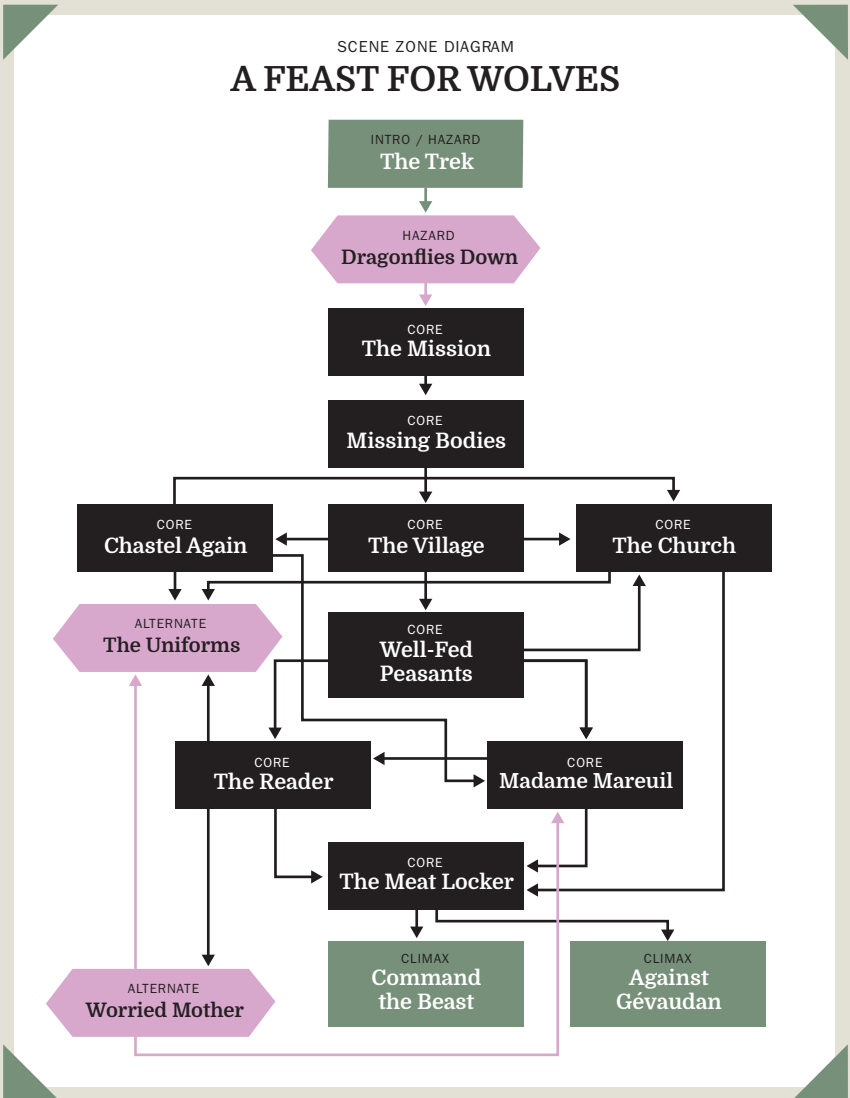
The Alien Truth

Touched by the madness of the Yellow Sign, Gévaudan's villagers have turned to cannibalism. The influence of Carcosa has reached

into their collective beliefs to alter reality, bringing into being an incarnation of the beast that protects and aids them—provided they continue to consume human flesh. The squad discovers this in scenes *Madame Mareuil* and *The Meat Locker*.

Possible Climaxes

Does the squad arrange for the destruction of the village and hunt down the wolf creature, as imagined in *Against Gévaudan*? Or do they Command the Beast, succumbing to the temptation to use it as a weapon?



Scenes

The Trek

Scene Type:

Introduction/Hazard

Lead-Out: Dragonflies Down

The scenario begins with the squad already on the march, traveling along the shore of an ash-choked river. Describe a formerly verdant region devastated by battle:

- bare, flame-blackened trees
- carrion birds feasting on gobbets of flesh that might have been a deer or a lost cow
- shattered remnants of downed aircraft

Something crunches underfoot.

Oh, look, it's the top of

someone's skull! Choose the character with the lowest **Sense**

Trouble to be the one who actually steps on the skull. In the event of a tie, choose arbitrarily or pick the player you think will give you the best reaction. Difficulty 3 **Composure** tests (4 for the unfortunate stepper) to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major: Revulsion/Nightmare Fuel**.

The Lieutenant has a mission packet, to be opened when the squad reaches a particular set of coordinates.

The group travels on foot.

In a Report for Execution series, each carries select components for an anti-aircraft battery. The rest will be airlifted to the site by dragonfly.

In Shadow Squadron, the same applies, except that the anti-aircraft battery isn't real.

In Military Police, they have just the mission packet.

The New Guy

The PCs aren't the only soldiers making the trek. They're accompanied by four to five others. In Report for Execution or Shadow Squadron, they're fellow members of the mission group. In Military Police, they're reinforcements to a patrol group, with a rendezvous near the site.

Among the additional soldiers is fresh-faced Private Luc Pascal. The son of an impoverished Paris laborer, he attempts to befriend the friendliest-seeming of the PCs, seeking reassurance. His father tells him he'll be lucky to survive a month, but surely there are ways to protect yourself, no?

Pascal might also hint that he has heard strange rumors about odd phenomena seen on the battlefield. He could report a strange dream relating to the PC's Damned Peculiar Thing.

Your objective: to get the players to care about him, and possibly to feel his fear.

Land Mine

The group encounters a jumble of unexploded land mines. Difficulty 4 **Battlefield** to avoid **Injuries, Minor and Major: Shrapnel**/"Am I Still in One Piece?"

Give the player who most engaged with Pascal the chance

to save him from harm, which increases the difficulty of the **Battlefield** test by 2.

If no one does this, or the squad member trying fails the test, Pascal suffers shrapnel wounds. A Difficulty 4 **First Aid** success patches him up.

Military Science reveals that these mines were planted elsewhere but must have been washed down the river.

Terrain: That must have been years ago, before debris clogged the river. Nothing would move down it that quickly today.

Dragonflies Down

Scene Type: Hazard

Lead-In: The Trek

Lead-Out: The Assignment

A few uneventful hours of travel pass as the group moves inland to a less devastated area. Green returns to the trees. Bomb craters grow less frequent.

The clearing around the riverbed opens up as they near the coordinates where their Lieutenant is to unseal the envelope containing their orders.

There they find a couple of squads of French infantry, wearily resting where the clearing meets the trees.

Sprawled under blankets, at a discreet distance from the living, lie the bodies of several soldiers.

No officers are present.

Military Science: That likely means that one of the dead is the lieutenant.

A sergeant keeps a watchful eye on his men. The Sergeant PC might approach him, or an enlisted character might speak to one of the grunts.

The sergeant's name is Lemieux; he surveys them with a wary squint. Surnames on the others' uniforms include Villefort, Guimard, Borne, and Laubert.

By asking the soldiers questions the group can learn that:

- They await the arrival of a new lieutenant, plus reinforcements.
- The previous lieutenant was killed in a skirmish with enemy paratroopers.
- The enemy has been hitting the area with bombers and strafing attacks from dragonflies.
- They must be softening up the area for a big push inland.

When the conversation wanes, the distinctive chopping of dragonflies can be heard in the distance.

Give the player with **Military Science** the option of making a Push. If made, the character can tell from the whirring of the rotors that these are French craft coming in.

Otherwise, squad members must make Difficulty 4

Composure tests to avoid instinctively hitting the dirt. When the French markings on the dragonflies become visible, the waiting infantry squad enjoys a humiliating laugh at their

expense. **Minor Shock:** Lily-Livered; **Major:** Yellow-Bellied.

Give the player with **Military Logistics** the chance to make a Push. If made, the character sees that the pilot of the second dragonfly is too close to the first and can shout a warning to the others. This gives a +2 bonus on the upcoming **Battlefield** test.

The two 'thopters collide. A fireball fills the sky, sending shrapnel flying across the landscape. The dragonflies plow into the other squadron, obliterating them.

Difficulty 4 **Battlefield** to avoid **Injuries, Minor and Major:** A Hard Leap/Flaming Debris.

Then they must cope with the sight of the horrific accident. Difficulty 4 **Composure** to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major:** Witness to Carnage/Existence is a Meat-Grinder.

Military Logistics: The correct protocol now would be to collect the body parts, sorting them as effectively as possible into individual casualties, and then use the boîtenoire to contact base to send a mortuary detail out to collect them.

The squad finds one survivor: Private Pascal, with his left leg sheared off and his right in need of amputation below the knee. He can be stabilized with a 2-point **First Aid** spend, made by one or two players.

Military Logistics: They'll have to try to get him back to base safely after completing their

Mission. In the meantime, the best they can do is make him comfortable.

If left untreated, he dies. Difficulty 5 **Composure** to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major:** Callous/Pit of Remorse.

Even when stabilized, he's in no shape to be dragged up the mountainside and back.

Terrain: The character spots the perfect hidden spot in a copse of trees to stash him.

The Mission

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Dragonflies Down

Lead-Out: Missing Bodies

Opening the mission envelope, the Lieutenant sees that the orders take them up onto a forested ridge, where they are to:

- (Shadow Squadron) Set up a fake anti-aircraft battery.
- (Report for Execution) Set up a real anti-aircraft battery.
- (Military Police) Find and retrieve a buried canister containing classified documents stolen and hidden by a deserter. The orders do not reveal who the deserter was. **Interrogation:** A pretty good guess would have it that the would-be spy has been caught, gave up the location, and has either already been shot or will be, once military

intelligence has squeezed everything they can out of him.

Military Science: It is to be expected that the orders reveal as little of the story as possible.

Hunkering

If players have significantly depleted their **Battlefield** points, introduce the Hunkering Down rules (p. 24) and let them choose whether to take this moment to use them.

The Body

On the way up the ridge, the squad encounters a gruesome sight: a dead enemy paratrooper hangs from a tree. His body is missing from the waist down. His jaw gapes open, his face the proverbial rictus of horror.

Medicine: He sustained these injuries pre-mortem and bled out.

Farming: It looks like he was mauled by an animal. But what kind of animal would do that?

Science: The bite marks match those of a wolf—but that's impossible! If this was an animal, it was twice the size of a gray wolf. And no such animal exists anywhere in the world. This would be even larger than the prehistoric dire wolf. (That beastie had more powerful jaws than extant wolves but was not so much larger than its biggest surviving relatives.)

The sight of the dead man occasions a Difficulty 3 **Composure** test to avoid

Shocks, Minor and Major: The Shudders/Shaken.

First Sign of Hunters

As the squad continues to its destination atop the ridge, **Hunting** reveals a recent rabbit snare, suggesting that there are trappers actively working the woods here.

The Assignment

(Shadow Squadron) Erecting the fake artillery battery well enough to fool enemy aerial recon requires a Difficulty 5 **Mechanics** test, on which any character (not just the one making the main test) can contribute up to 1 point of **Scrounging**. This represents the location of vegetation elements that can assist the camouflage effort. If your group likes to solve logistical problems creatively, let them come up with this on their own. Suggest it if they're less interested in that level of detail.

(Report for Execution) A real battery takes a Difficulty 4 **Artillery** test.

(Military Police) The canister can be found with **Terrain** or **Hunting**.

Meet the Hunters

During the hump back down the slope, **Hunting** points out the location of a hunter's blind, and notes movement behind it. On a **Hunting** spend, or a Difficulty 4 **Sneaking** success, the squad can circle around and come upon

the men behind it without alerting them to their presence.

Or they can simply hail the hunters, who emerge from behind the blind if called with the sort of friendly wave one uses when greeting armed infantry of one's own nation.

The one the others clearly defer to introduces himself as Paul Chastel. He's a grizzled, somewhat portly peasant in his mid-50s.

Another three men hunt alongside him.

Chastel does not require coaxing to answer questions from the squad. He presents himself as a perfectly ordinary, forthright civilian. He supplies the following, in response to relevant questions:

- He and his party live in the nearby village of Gévaudan.
- Giant wolves? No, he has never heard of such a thing! But many strange sights have been seen since the war began.
- With ash raining from the skies, and soldiers tramping through the fields or running off with your chickens, farming is nigh impossible these days. And it is barely possible at the best of times. So he must supplement his table with game—also in short supply.
- He has heard rumors of enemy paratroopers but luckily has not tangled with them. He taps the butt of his rifle. "We might have a surprise or two in store for them."
- **Assess Honesty:** His response

to the wolves question registers as deceptive.

- **Farming:** They are better fed than most peasants hereabouts. Look at Chastel's gut!
- **Medicine:** Chastel and friends do not show the usual signs of malnutrition found in civilians near the front.
- **Humanities:** The place name Gévaudan rings peculiar bells:
- That used to be the name of a county hereabouts, but went out of use when counties were reorganized into the department system in 1790. (This is now the department of Lozère.)
- In the medieval period people in this region spoke Occitan, a language similar to Catalan.
- The religious wars that wreaked incredible havoc in France in the 16th century hit the region heavily, destroying its wealth.
- But speaking of wolves, this place is best remembered for the Beast of Gévaudan, a wild animal that killed over a hundred people between 1764 and 1767.
- It tore out the throats of its victims, proceeding to partially eat them.
- It non-fatally mauled another hundred or so people.
- The king, Louis XIV, launched several campaigns to wipe it out. Their failure embarrassed him politically.
- Legend has it that a hunter finally felled the beast with a self-made silver bullet.

- The name of this hunter?
Jean Chastel.
- Historians have theorized that the beast was really one or more large wolves, a pack of dog-wolf hybrids, an imported hyena, or a red mastiff.
- Some accounts accuse Chastel of owning the rampaging animal, or of killing a hyena he owned and palming it off as the beast.
- Historians also question the silver bullet story, probably a later addition.
- (on a Push) The silver bullet story was absolutely, definitely, added later, and can be safely disregarded.

As usual when one ability provides many informational tidbits at once, give the player time to ask questions that lead to answers, rather than spitting out the above bullet points in a single, non-interactive barrage.

For more on the beast, fire up its Wikipedia page, or listen ahead of time to Episode 206 of the Ken and Robin Talk About Stuff podcast.

If asked about Jean Chastel, Paul is flattered to know that someone remembers his ancestor. He believes the silver bullet story and feigns offense if anyone implies that the beast might have survived. Jean felled it nearly two hundred years ago! (**Assess Honesty:** He maybe believes some of what he's saying, but at the same time is putting on an act.)

(core, *Missing Bodies*) **Military**

Logistics: But with the Mission taken care of, their next priority must be to get Private Pascal back to base.

Missing Bodies

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: The Mission

Lead-Out: The Village

Strafing Hazard: As the squad heads down the mountain, it hears an enemy plane overhead. Difficulty 4 **Sneaking** tests (which can be piggybacked) allow them to hide in the trees. Without them they are strafed by machine gun fire from a dragonfly. Difficulty 3 **Battlefield** to avoid **Injuries, Minor and Major:** Your Lucky Charm Caught a Bullet/Perforated.

Without further incident the squad reaches the site of the previous dragonfly crash, where they stashed Pascal.

They find both him and all of the other bodies missing.

(core) **Hunting:** Though someone has taken care to cover their tracks, a skilled eye can still see that they were dragged to the northeast. It wasn't an animal who did this. It was people.

Terrain: (if the squad watched Chastel and his buddies depart after the meeting in the woods) Gévaudan, if that's where they were going, also lies to the northeast.

The Village

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Missing Bodies

Lead-Outs: Chastel Again, The Church, Well-Fed Peasants

Terrain leads the group into the woods, along a creek bed, and to a village nestled in the foothills of one of the area's verdant mountains.

The village consists of a collection of stone houses with wooden shingles arranged around an unpaved, curving road.

(core, **The Church**) Slightly apart from the other buildings stands a stone church in an old Gothic style.

(core, **Well-Fed Peasants**) On seeing the squad, the villagers move swiftly but calmly into their homes, slamming doors and shutters closed.

Salt of the Earth: It would be odd if they reacted in any other way to arriving soldiers. Like any village dwellers, they probably think that the PCs are there to raid their stores of food or drag away conscripts—or both. You know who you can't trust? Friendly, welcoming villagers. They're the ones with the sharpened pitchforks hidden behind the nearest hay-mound.

Farming: Typically in a village like this, the farmers live close together and then go out each day to tend their own separate fields. That would suggest that they grow crops and do not much go in for

livestock. However, it's hard to imagine what fields people would go to in this hilly, uncleared region.

Hunting: People might be subsisting on hunting alone, but that would be quite a feat.

Medicine: The folks seen disappearing into their homes seem unusually well-nourished for peasants in wartime.

Most of the homes are unmarked. The largest of them, however, has a coat of arms crudely painted on a piece of wood above its front door. A knight's helmet surmounts a banner featuring a red cross over a yellow field.

Blueblood: This would be the heraldic mark of the noble Chastel family. To think that a sign hung over a farmer's hovel signals any true connection to that lineage is absurd! The aristocratic family of that name hails from the north of France, not the south. One can sport the last name of Chastel without being descended from the Chastels.

Humanities: (if the group made the connection between the name Chastel and the Beast of Gévaudan) History recalls no relation between the noble Chastels and the hunter Jean Chastel, who allegedly brought down the beast.

(core, *Chastel Again*) Leaving aside the issue of whether Paul Chastel has the right to adorn his home with the Chastel crest, that does certainly indicate that he lives there.

Well-Fed Peasants

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: The Village

Lead-Outs: Madame Mareuil,
The Reader, The Church

Knocking on the doors of random peasants reinforces the fact that peasants see no reason to welcome soldiers.

Choosing a door at random never leads directly to Madame Mareuil, but rather to another village resident.

At any door other than Chastel's, the people inside go quiet and refuse to come to the door. They pretend to be absent even when it's perfectly clear to both parties that the squad members saw them just moments ago.

The investigators gain entry on a cold approach in one of two ways:

1. **A Salt of the Earth** or **Reassurance** Push.
2. Busting their way in. This later triggers the Antagonist Reaction "Peasant Reprisals," p. 127. Only if the squad does something exceptional to defuse local anger over this incident can they avoid the reprisal. Angry villagers act against the squad whether or not it suits Madame Mareuil or the Chastels.

Peasant names and personalities:

- Agnès Fermier, a frail octogenarian with trembling hands and a low opinion of soldiers.

- Philippe Galet, a stubble-faced old man who waxes nostalgic about the food he ate on his one trip to Marseilles in 1923.
- Marie-Thérèse Boucher, who complains of terrible headaches, which get worse whenever planes fly overhead. You'll likely need only one of these. (core, *The Church*) If threatened or intimidated, random peasants try to steer the squad's suspicions toward Père Johanneau, the relatively new parish priest. They affirm whatever suspicions the investigators' questions imply. So if a character asks if anyone has any knowledge of the supernatural, they say that the young father sometimes adds odd references into his sermons—for example, mentioning the Lord's "mighty yellow sign." If instead the players ask about possible contact with the enemy, they say they saw him out in the woods laying down what might have been a flag to aid the passage of enemy paratroopers. Asked about wolves or lycanthropes, they say he always goes missing around the full moon, and once was seen stumbling back with his clothing torn and bloodied.

(core, *The Reader*) **Has the squad already been to the church but not yet met Arielle?** The peasants instead similarly direct their suspicions to her.

(core, *Madame Mareuil*) On the other hand, if the squad ingratiates itself to the peasants,

they steer them to Madame Mareuil as the true person the village looks to for direction.

As seems fitting, they might also supply clues the team missed in already completed scenes.

The Church

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: The Village, Chastel
Again, Well-Fed Peasants

Lead-Outs: The Meat Locker,
The Uniforms

Since his tenure as parish priest in Gévaudan began six months ago, the young priest Laurent Johanneau has learned to live in terror of his flock. When the squad meets him, he's torn between a desire to speak to sympathetic outsiders, and his fear of attack by village residents.

Medicine: Unlike the villagers, his already gaunt frame bears the clear marks of wartime hunger. Johanneau looks like he's in his late 30s but is actually a decade younger than that.

He offers the squad a share of his meager lentil soup. He offers to pray with those who seek solace and to hear confessions, if any wish to give them.

Winning his full trust requires either a **Reassurance** or **Inspiration** Push, or a Push by a character who has either already been established as a devout Catholic, or whose player decides on the spot to play the PC that way.

No fool, he can spot a false profession of faith.

When the group does not establish a bond of trust with him, he disassembles, trying to direct the squad away from Gévaudan as quickly and decisively as possible.

In deceptive mode (which registers as such to Assess Honesty), his answers to questions go something like this:

- The people of Gévaudan are good, honest folk, simple yet true in their Christian faith.
- If they seem hard, it is because the war has been tough on them.
- Fortunately, their skill at hunting has kept them acceptably fed when other villages more reliant on agriculture alone teeter on starvation's brink.
- Stolen bodies? Surely the work of enemy paratroopers!
- Enemy infiltrators spread rumors of lycanthropy, taking advantage of old werewolf legends.
- (At this point, he can fill in any part of the Gévaudan legend the squad didn't put together for itself, portraying it as enemy psy-ops.)
- The psy-ops force may be abetted by local bandits, deserters, and criminals.
- Presumably they headquarter somewhere in the woods, perhaps in a mountain cave.
- Their disinformation campaign has taken a terrible toll on superstitious, uneducated locals.
- They also spread rumors of the

Yellow Sign, an occult symbol of mind-bending power that first appeared two generations ago and was suppressed in France.

- The impious foreigners have brought it back—or stories about it, at least, which have nearly the same effect on vulnerable souls.

If the group has won his trust, he tells an even crazier story:

- The leading villagers of Gévaudan are werewolves!
- They can turn into ravening beasts at will—no full moon required. They can do it during the day, even!
- In wolf form, they kill stray soldiers, and also drag home the dead to be devoured.
- Johanneau has seen Madame Mareuil in her giant wolf form, clear intelligence burning in her eyes.
- She spared his life—perhaps because she knows he’s too frightened to talk. If she ate him, the diocese would send another priest, “who might not be so cowardly as I.”

(Johanneau saw the beast and wrongly assumed it was Mareuil. This scenario includes a wolf-monster and human cannibals, but no actual lycanthropes.)

- His predecessor, Père Martin, completely disappeared one day. He must have run afoul of the beasts.
- Jean Chastel must have only pretended to bag the Beast of Gévaudan, the

original loup garou.

- Johanneau reckons that the werewolves spent several centuries hunting cautiously.
- Now the war has brought a cornucopia of carrion for them to feed on.
- (core, *The Uniforms*) There’s a spot near the source of a nearby creek where they go with shovels. This must be where they bury the indigestible bones of their victims.
- (core, *The Meat Locker*) The squad won’t find evidence against Madame Mareuil in her home. But just outside the village she keeps a cool room, built into the side of a hill. That’s where she makes the sausages the villagers love so—and where proof of her lycanthropic activities will be found.

Johanneau refuses to leave the village now that he has spilled the beans. His departure would merely endanger the next priest to come along.

Does the squad make an effort to conceal their talk with the priest from the rest of the village? A Difficulty 5 **Sneaking** success avoids the Antagonist Reaction “Dead Priest,” p. 128.

A physical inspection of the church yields the following:

Humanities: Although on first glance the church looks like it was built in the late medieval period, minor details, such as the tools used to cut and plane its

wooden beams, betray a much more recent origin.

The church's cornerstone bears a date of 1095, which must be fake. Examined closely, it shows signs of later tampering, having been changed from an original date of 1895.

Chiseled in next to the date is a curious symbol unknown in Christian iconography: a Yellow Sign.

Science: It appears to have been carved at about the same time the date was altered.

Chastel Again

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: The Village, The Church, Well-Fed Peasants

Lead-Outs: The Uniforms, The Church, Madame Mareuil

Do they seek out Paul Chastel before gaining any more information about possible strangeness in the village? He has little more to offer them.

Should they ask him about sinister doings afoot, he misdirects them to the priest. He gives the following answers:

- (core, *The Church*) Come to think of it, things have been a little strange since the old priest disappeared and the new one arrived.
- Johanneau claimed to have been sent by the diocese. But of course as honest country folk no one in Gévaudan likely

challenged him on this.

- It is possible that he slew the priest, and is an enemy spy.
- Disappearing bodies, you say? Very strange. It probably means nothing—of course it must mean nothing—but Père Johanneau is strangely obsessed with the old werewolf legends of France. Could he be a Satanist, stealing the remains of the honorable dead to perform occult rituals? No, surely not. That would be outlandish, and nothing outlandish ever happens in Gévaudan.

Assess Honesty: He's lying.

He does however honestly believe himself to be entitled to display the Chastel family crest, if asked about that. Chastel can't prove it, because he is not a lettered man, but is sure that his forefather, the man who shot the giant killer wolf, belonged to that noble house.

Does the squad wait to know more before bracing him again?

Chastel tries to get them out of the village and into a convenient spot to be murdered. He baits the trap with a partial truth.

He says that Madame Mareuil has been turning fallen soldiers into sausages, keeping the village alive. He and his hunters do their best to bring in game, so that people do not have to resort to cannibalism. But sometimes it is not possible.

(core, *The Uniforms*) The squad can find proof of Mareuil's

activities by going to the spot where she buries the uniforms of the dead men, at the source of a nearby creek. Chastel supplies directions which the characters with **Hunting** or **Terrain** can follow. “I dare not go myself. Mareuil is a witch, and if you fail and lead her to me, she will curse me, and all the Chastels for generations to come.”

Finding out about The Uniforms this way triggers a version of the Antagonist Reaction “Peasant Reprisals,” p. 127, in which Chastel and his hunters ambush them at the site.

Has that Reaction already occurred? He instead alerts Mareuil, who then uses her link to the beast to summon him. In that case, the triggered Antagonist Reaction is “The Beast,” p. 128.

(core, *Madame Mareuil*) A character with **Sneaking** can use it as an Investigative ability to follow Chastel along his circuitous route unseen.

The Uniforms

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: Chastel Again, The Reader, The Church

Once at the spot they’ve received directions to in the Lead-In, Terrain allows one of the PCs to find a carefully reburied cache of uniforms.

Included are the freshly interred uniforms of the dragonfly crash victims. Among them are Private Pascal’s cap, jacket, and hobnail boots, but not his trousers or undergarments.

Military Logistics: Buried in layers, the uniforms bear the insignia of several different French infantry units, and at least one enemy paratrooper squad.

The cache includes items from soldier’s packs, ranging from compasses to boot polish to mess tins and a *boîtenoire*. No weapons, though.

Science: Patterns of both dry and fresh dirt on the uniforms suggests that some of the older ones have been buried, unearthed, and reburied.

If anyone asks why the villagers don’t just burn the uniforms:

Military Science: It makes sense to bury items, like the mess tins and *boîtenoire*, that can’t easily be burned. But if you’re preserving the uniforms, that’s probably because you think they might come in handy. As a means of ambushing unsuspecting French or allied troops, for example.

The investigation of this site might be interrupted by one of the following Antagonist Reactions: “Peasant Reprisals” (p. 127) or “The Beast” (p. 128).

This scene doesn’t directly lead out to any other but gives leverage the squad might use when dealing with Mareuil or Chastel. With this evidence, they

can gain information from either of them that would otherwise require a Push of another ability with **Intimidation**, no Push required.

Mention of the uniforms also substitutes for a **Reassurance** Push in The Reader.

The Reader

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: Well-Fed Peasants, Madame Mareuil (or drop in as needed when the squad is wandering around the village wondering what to do next)

Lead-Outs: The Uniforms, The Meat Locker, Worried Mother

The group finds 16-year old Arielle Chavanal, curly red locks cascading from a moth-eaten beret, perched on a rock, engrossed in a book.

If it is credible that a character from your *Paris* sequence, for example the Belle-Lettrist, wrote a book, she is reading that. Otherwise, she reads *The Devil in the Flesh*, a 1923 novel by Raymond Radiguet. Should the squad ask about it, she blushes and looks furtively around.

Humanities: It's quite the racy book, one others in the village would likely disapprove of if they knew what was in it. It concerns an affair between a married woman and a 16-year-old boy, which takes place under the nose of her inattentive husband, a

military officer. (In our timeline, the husband is off fighting in WWI, but of course in this reality there was no first world war for Radiguet to have written about.) The novel provoked a scandal when it was published, a few months before the author died of typhoid at the age of 20.

A look at the frontispiece shows that a dedication in the book has been mostly erased. On a **Humanities** spend, a character can get Arielle to lend the book long enough to make it out. It reads:

Dearest Ernest – Something to stir you in the trenches, mon cher! Rest assured, I am no Marthe, and will turn away all handsome boys so long as you promise to return!

Change the dedication if she's instead reading a book by a *Paris* character, matching its content.

From this, players may deduce that the book formerly belonged to a soldier.

(alternate, *Worried Mother*) She says that her mother gave it to her. Arielle pleads with the group not to talk to her about it, though, as she has no idea what it contains and would likely confiscate it if she did.

Beside the boulder she sits on is a sack containing mushrooms she foraged in the forest. If asked about them, she mentions that she is a vegetarian, though the hunger of war makes this more of a trial than she bargained for when she first swore never to eat another member of the animal kingdom.

Medicine: She does indeed look more malnourished than most of the villagers.

Arielle knows that something is terribly amiss in the village she so fervently wishes to escape. At the same time, her mother has instilled in her a not-unjustified distrust of soldiers.

A character with the Writer kit can bond with her over a discussion of art and literature. Use of **Humanities** or **Salt of the Earth** accomplishes the same thing.

In that case, in response to specific questions, she can supply the following answers:

- Something bad happens in secret here. Something involving meat.
- (alternate, *The Uniforms*) The Chastels, and Mareuil's sons, sometimes go out into the forest and later bury scavenged items at the head of a nearby creek. She can give them directions.
- (core, *The Meat Locker*) Madame Mareuil does not make her sausages in her home, but in a naturally cool cave in the side of a hill not far from the village.
- Her family widened the cave and built a door into it.
- You have to accept Mareuil's rule over the village to eat her cured meats.
- About of a third of the village, like Arielle and her mother, decline to partake.
- Madame Mareuil's nasty son, Sylvain, wants to

marry her. Thankfully, his mother disapproves of her. [Arielle shudders at the mention of him.]

- Everyone says the village is very old but Arielle suspects it sprang up only a few generations ago.

Worried Mother

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: The Reader

Lead-Outs: The Uniforms, The Meat Locker

Should they ignore Arielle's entreaties and seek out her mother, Valérie Chavanel reacts with obvious alarm to any questions about the book, or anything that touches on the activities of the village's cannibal population.

Worn by toil and traumatized by the encroaching battlefield, Valérie looks stooped and weather-beaten beyond her years. She wants only to get Arielle out of here, to somewhere safe. Sadly, she has no idea how to do that.

She assumes that soldiers mean only trouble for a girl like Arielle and tries to divert their interest in her.

Medicine: Valérie is mildly malnourished. (If the players ask for a comparison, she is not so evidently gaunt as her daughter or the priest.)

If asked, she claims to be a

vegetarian, but admits that she occasionally slips. (She doesn't admit it directly but has now and again resorted to Madame Mareuil's sausages.)

Asked about the book she gave Arielle, Valérie admits that she is not much of a reader and doesn't know what's in it. A passing soldier, who said he had finished with it, gave it to her in exchange for some eggs, and she passed it along to her daughter. (**Assess Honesty:** She's hiding a guilty secret.)

(core, *Madame Mareuil*)

Intimidation: The people of the village sometimes scavenge from the corpses of the dead. Sylvain Mareuil, who has designs on Arielle, gave Valérie a book he found on a dead soldier. She passed it along without crediting him, as he is a malicious cretin she doesn't want anywhere near her daughter.

(core) Should the squad put her in the position of choosing between her daughter's safety and her fear of Mareuil, she points them toward *The Uniforms* (if they haven't already found them) or *The Meat Locker*.

She might also do this if the squad makes the effort to devise a credible plan to get the Chavanals out of the village and to a safer part of the country.

(Promising and then failing to deliver this help results in a terrible fate for the Chavanals, which you reveal later. Choose the exact details of this demise based on events of the scenario so far.

When the squad learns of the consequences of their negligence, they must make Difficulty 4

Composure tests to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major:** Hollow Promise/Resounding Failure.)

If promised this help, she reveals more:

- The people of Gévaudan do more than scavenge corpses—they eat them, after Madame Mareuil turns them into charcuterie.
- The eating of the dead dates back to before the war, but now there are many more opportunities to procure human flesh. Before it was eaten as part of a strange and shameful ritual. Now they consume it to survive.
- It started half a century ago, when the Chastels arrived and recruited the Mareuil family to aid them.
- Together they built a village where previously there had been people living on scattered farms.
- They designed the church to look old and carved a weird symbol into its cornerstone.
- Chastel's grandfather had read a strange book in the city of Paris, which described the symbol and its effects.
- That's when they made contact with the beast.
- By eating human flesh, the leaders of the cult gain a telepathic connection with it.
- It protects the village, and they protect it.

- They do not insist that everyone join the cult, merely that they avoid interfering with it. Arielle, like about a third of the occupants, has never partaken.
- Before the war, Valérie could have said the same. But hunger, it is a terrible master...

Madame Mareuil

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: Worried Mother, Well-Fed Peasants, Chastel Again

Lead-Outs: The Meat Locker, The Reader, Command the Beast

If the group seeks out Madame Mareuil at her home in the village, they interact with her as given in this scene.

They might head to *The Meat Locker* first. Unless they take measures to ensure that she is absent when they explore that location, they encounter her there. A dialogue with her, in which she reveals information given below, could also occur at the locker.

Mareuil, a sun-bronzed, white-haired woman, wears a blood-red kerchief. A bright yellow apron covers her plain peasant clothing. She looks at the squad as if appraising cattle, and squints one of her eyes shut when annoyed or surprised.

She doesn't want trouble of any kind. But at the same time, she

realizes that if the war comes any closer, Gévaudan will face scrutiny it isn't prepared for. The beast has foretold the coming of possible helpers who will shield the village from harm. When she meets the squad, she wonders if they might be the new recruits she's looking for.

As they talk to her, she tries as subtly as possible to test them for openness to this idea. Mareuil asks about one or more PCs' Damn Peculiar Thing. What she says exactly depends on the character(s), but might go something like this:

- "You look like the sort of fellow who hears strange voices calling his name."
- "This is a strange question to ask, but have you ever seen the sky turn white?"
- "I sense a question hanging over you. A question involving a portrait from an old book."
(core, *Command the Beast*)

She eases up immediately at any sign of resistance. But given an intrigued response she tries to slowly maneuver the characters to the point where one or more of them willingly eat her human-infused salami slices.

Should the PCs resist at first but then try to rekindle the possibility of a weird connection, you might decide that an **Occultism** spend, including a claim of past magical initiation, inspires her to relax her guard again.

Do they completely refuse to become her cat's-paws? She



attempts to misdirect them. Depending on what they seem to be accusing her of, her denials might include some (but not all) of the following. All of these points read as deceitful to **Assess Honesty**. She tells only one consistent story, picking the one that suits the questions the squad asks her.

- It's true, Chastel does scavenge from the dead.
- Perhaps on occasion he drags the bodies from where he finds them, for fear of discovery. Naturally he then burns the corpses, to prevent the spread of disease. It is regrettable, but during war even peasants must be permitted to survive.
- "The priest is a drunk. He read a forbidden book which has given him many delusions." "I am an honest farmer who does not read pornographic plays published in Paris but it has the color yellow as part of the title." "If anyone here enacts strange rites in the forest at night, it would be him."
- Enemy paratroopers have been carving an odd symbol on tree trunks in the forest. (if then asked about the symbol on the church cornerstone) "Yes, it is that symbol. How peculiar that I have seen the church every day of my life, yet not noticed this."
- (core, *The Reader*) That accursed Arielle Chavanel could be the cause of the disappeared bodies, and worse. Who knows what occult secrets lurk in those

books she reads? Reading the wrong book can turn you insane, or worse. You can tell from her red hair she's a witch. "She's ensorcelled my poor naïve son Sylvain. It's all I can do to keep him out of her clutches!"

The Meat Locker

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: The Reader, The Church, Madame Mareuil

Lead-Outs: Command the Beast, Against Gévaudan

Madame Mareuil's meat locker consists of a natural cavern in the side of a hill about half an hour's walk from the village. From the outside it looks like a mossy hill with a wooden door built into it.

Saucissons and other cured sausages hang from a network of beams installed on the ceiling. Characters taller than the diminutive Madame Mareuil must duck down to avoid bumping into a salami or three. Inside the characters see a butcher's table, bins of salt, and a cot.

On the cot rests a Private Pascal, delirious and barely clinging to consciousness. In accordance with the family geas, agreed to by her delusional forebears when they hallucinated the beast into reality, she never kills people to turn them into meat. But if they're mortally injured, she can certainly keep watch on them until they die, which

is what she's doing with Pascal.

(The squad can learn these details if she thinks they're joining her cult, or later from Pascal.)

A period print depicting the Beast of Gévaudan attacking a peasant woman hangs on the back of the wooden door.

This scene comes into play under several possible conditions:

1. Mareuil brings one or more PCs here, thinking they plan to join her cult; see the "Joining the Cult" subhead, immediately below
2. they come here without ensuring that she's elsewhere; jump to the "Unwelcome Guests" subhead, p. 124
3. they come here knowing she's not in; jump to the "She's Not In" subhead, p. 124

Joining the Cult

Use this version of events if the group pretends they're interested in swearing allegiance to Mareuil's cannibal cult.

Play her as bullying Pascal, demanding that he hurry up and die. PCs wondering about this behavior might ask questions, leading her to explain the geas.

To carry on like potential cannibals indifferent to Pascal's torment requires a Difficulty 5 **Composure** test. Any character failing the test must immediately act to protect him and/or lash out at the Mareuils.

If that happens, the scene plays out basically as it would in "Unwelcome Guests." Jump to

the next subhead.

Otherwise, it continues with Mareuil assuring them that Pascal will become food for the village only if he dies.

Medicine: Unless taken back to base for treatment, he is definitely going to die. Left here, he'll be gone in 48 hours, tops.

A Difficulty 4 **First Aid** test extends his estimated time of death by one day, plus an additional day for each point of margin. But the character administering the aid will have to do it covertly, or trigger the wrath of the Mareuils. This too shifts the scene to "Unwelcome Guests."

Projecting seeming indifference to Pascal's plight cements Mareuil's trust in the squad. She answers any questions they pose. Then she offers a volunteer from the group the opportunity to take part in the rite that connects them psychically to the beast. That moves the scenario from the investigative phase to its climactic problem-solving sequences, as discussed in "Command the Beast," p. 126.

Or the group might instead decide that the time has come to take out the Mareuils, in which case the rest of the scene plays out pretty much as it would in "Unwelcome Guests," immediately below.

Unwelcome Guests

Did a squad member come alone to knock on Madame Mareuil's door? (A player in my game helpfully created a fun fail-forward situation by doing just that.) She is present but her sons are not. Use the Peasant Who Seems Lovely Until You Turn Your Back foe profile from p. 71. If the player takes the “When You Regain Consciousness...” card, the character wakes up trussed beside Pascal's pallet. The remaining squad members can stage a rescue, taking out Madame and her sons (if you can credibly have them arrive in the interim). This leads to *Against Gévaudan*, p. 127. Or the captured squad member might convincingly bid for Mareuil's trust, taking you to *Command the Beast*, p. 126.

Are they arriving in a group?

Mareuil and her sons are present, armed with high-powered rifles scavenged from dead soldiers.

Numbers: 3

Difficulty: Tough but Outmatched (Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3)

Toll: 1/2

Tags: Human

Encounter Style: Primary

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Grazed/Shot

Assuming the squad disposes of, or captures, the Mareuils, they can then explore the meat locker, gaining the clues described in the next section.

She's Not In

The door to the cavern has no lock and opens after a firm tug.

Inside the group immediately sees a half-conscious Private Pascal. Much of his time since his capture has been spent in a delirium. He believes the Mareuils to be literal werewolves. Pascal can provide, from that confused perspective, any remaining information the group needs.

An inspection of the butcher's block, knives, and stray bits of meat, plus **Farming** or **Medicine**, shows that the main ingredient in the sausages is definitely not an animal.

Intuition gets a heady sense of wrongness from the hanging saucissons. If a character with the ability touches the cured meat, a vision flashes to mind, of the world seen from the viewpoint of a fast-losing quadruped. The investigator sees the region's burned forests and jagged hills flash by in a blur of blues and yellows.

- **Science:** Wolves, like other canines, lack the color receptor that allows them to see reds.

(You might drop this detail if you've decided that the wolf is an alien creature instead of an earthly animal turned sapient Warspawn, instead substituting an even stranger sensory difference.)

The character experiencing the vision must make an **Intuition** spend or a Difficulty 4 **Composure** test to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major:**

Hungry Like the.../Lycanthropy.

Without instructions from Madame Mareuil, this flash is as close as the group can get to establishing a psychic link to the beast. But now it knows who they are and might decide to come after them—perhaps as they take Pascal back to base.



Origin Story

At some point, the squad might ask Mareuil about the church and how the village came to league itself with the beast.

She shares this information if she either absolutely trusts them, or has good reason to think no harm will come of it. For example, they might be tied to trees, waiting for the beast to come and devour them.

The story goes like this: in 1895, the region's misfits and outlaws collectively dreamed of a royal patron, a protecting king who dwelled beneath a pulsing white sky. Following his commands, the dreamers converged on this uninhabited spot and built a village together. They called it Gévaudan, a name used during the prerevolutionary period to refer to the entire area. After they consecrated their fake-medieval church with the Yellow Sign, the beast strolled into the town. It whispered into their minds, establishing the pact between village and beast, which hereafter would be maintained through the consumption of human flesh.

Mareuil's grandparents became the first intercessors between the people and the wolf. They figured out how to make the beast's flesh rite bearable, by turning human carrion into saucissons.

Chastel could also share this story, under conditions similar to those above. He might admit that his grandparents adopted the name Chastel to claim kinship with the original beast legend. Until then they went by the family name Duret.

Command the Beast

Scene Type: Climax

Lead-In: Command the Beast

Mareuil supervises a simple rite in which the initiate is invited to meditate on two images: one, an old print of the beast attacking a victim, and two, the Yellow Sign. The initiate then eats a slice from one of her special saucissons.

(Eating the sausage, under any circumstances, knowing that it contains human flesh, necessitates a Difficulty 5

Composure test to avoid **Shocks**, **Minor and Major:** Tastes Like Chicken/A Crossed Line.)

But on with the ceremony...

Immediately initiate feels a piercing mental contact with the beast, hearing its low, predatory voice in their head. The beast asks what the initiate wants of it. It does not at this early point volunteer any counter-demands. If pressed, it might indicate that it wants food and protection, with details to be worked out later.

Regardless of what is said in the telepathic conversation the initiate senses the following about the beast:

- it is very intelligent, at least as smart as the smartest member of the squad
- it won't be easily led into a trap
- during a link, it can probe into the initiate's thoughts and memories
- if the group has discussed

leading it into a trap, the beast is already aware of this in full detail

This last item implies that they can only trick it into its own destruction by keeping the initiate completely outside of any deliberations. And even then, it is likely to correctly think its way around obvious schemes to kill it.

After the ceremony, Mareuil reveals that all the initiate need do in the future to reestablish connection with the beast is to eat another morsel of human flesh—such as, but not restricted to, her charcuterie.

Favors the beast might perform for them include:

- the capture of a prominent enemy officer operating nearby
- reconnaissance of an area behind enemy lines
- killing another supernatural monster

What it can do remains limited by its form as a giant wolf. It can't open doors, shoot guns, take photographs, or do anything that strikes you as obviously ridiculous.

Its first favor is free. After that, it demands at least one living human victim as payment for each favor, due in advance. It refuses obviously suicidal missions and may increase the number of victims required for particularly challenging assignments.

After it performs its first favor for the group, and they subsequently learn of innocent people being killed by the beast, or they arrange for it to devour any

victims, innocent or otherwise, squad members make Difficulty 6 **Composure** tests to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major**: Aide to the Beast/Cultist of Gévaudan.

Characters with either of these Shock cards in hand needn't make subsequent tests.

Let player choices take this scenario to its conclusion. After contacting the beast they will either turn on it and the village (see next header) or decide to protect them in order to preserve its value to the war effort. In that case, the beast becomes an ongoing plot element over the course of the sequence, occasionally showing up to stoke moral dilemmas and push the initiate(s) toward irrevocable mental breakdown. Until they kill it, that is.

Against Gévaudan

Scene Type: Climax

React to player choices as they create and execute a plan to deal with the village of cannibals and its monstrous protector. Deploy Antagonist Reactions as needed or create other suitable obstacles to keep the scenario's final sequences challenging and dangerous.

They might return to base or use the boîtenoire to call in an air strike or artillery barrage against Gévaudan. That raises

the question of the one third of villagers who are not cannibals but remain there out of fear of Madame Mareuil and the beast.

Separating the guilty from the innocent is difficult, and may require them to cold-bloodedly execute the former. Difficulty 5 **Composure** to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major**: No Blood More Cold/Atrocity.

An overly easy or placid resolution to the problem could be interrupted with a late-breaking threat to the sympathetic Arielle and/or the quasi-sympathetic Père Johanneau.

Denouement

If your series premise is Report for Execution, the squad might learn that they've been designated to die as part of their Commanding Officer's debriefing. Assuming they did well installing the artillery battery, the CO expresses great regret, ruefully commenting on the surpassing unfairness of war. Or wait until you've run a few more standard scenarios before lowering the hammer.

For other series frames, try to end on a dramatic note in or around Gévaudan or involving the beast.

Antagonist Reactions

The following occur when your scenario could use an energy infusion, or in response to triggers listed in scenes above.

Peasant Reprisals

In this scene of retaliation,

the peasants of Gévaudan fire on the squad from the cover of the surrounding wilderness. As seasoned hunters, they know how to fire a rifle, and they have plenty of carbines and ammo on hand from deceased soldiers.

Avoiding the volley of sniper fire calls for a Difficulty 5 **Battlefield** test to avoid **Injuries, Minor and Major**: Bruised While Taking Cover/Rifle Hit.

They head for the hills after firing. Catching up with them requires a **Hunting** spend or a Difficulty 5 **Sneaking** test.

If the squad then initiates a fight, the peasants are Tough but Outmatched: **Difficulty** (Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 3); **Toll** (o).

Injuries: (if squad shoots at them) Grazed/Shot

(if squad closes to fight hand-to-hand) Stab Wound/Slashed Throat

Dead Priest

If they've triggered this reaction, the squad, when you reach a point in your pacing that calls out for a dramatic moment, hears a shot ring out from the church.

When they get there, they find Père Johanneau dead in the confessional, a pistol dangling from his hand. **Military Science** or **Medicine** suggests that the angle of the single shot to the head that killed him is inconsistent with suicide.

On a Difficulty 6 **Sense Trouble** test, a character can spot a villager (Erik or Sylvain Mareuil, unless both are already dead)

fleeing into the woods. Difficulty 4 **Athletics** successes allow squad members to catch up with him. (Must be individual tests; no piggybacking.) He denies having killed the priest, even though his shirt is spotted with fresh blood. On an **Interrogation** Push, he admits it, accusing Johanneau of being a member of a werewolf cult. **Assess Honesty** shows that he's still lying about his reasons.

Discovering that their investigation has led to Johanneau's death requires Difficulty 4 **Composure** tests to avoid **Shocks, Minor and Major**: Rueful/Self-Reproachful.

Endangered Chavanals

If the squad gains the cooperation of either Arielle Chavanal or her mother but aren't careful about doing it away from prying eyes, either or both of them could disappear.

After a search, they find either or both Chavanals tied to a tree in the forest. Cannibal villagers have set them out as food for the beast. You might want to play this as a simple rescue, or have the creature actually show up to try to eat the sympathetic witnesses.

The Beast

Use these game statistics when it comes time to meet the beast face to face.

The scenario leaves open the exact nature of the creature. When you have to pin it down,

choose one of the following concepts, as determined by a) your explanation for Carcosa's involvement in the war and b) what you think your players will think is coolest.

In your story, the beast might be:

- a mundane but especially large and ferocious wolf transformed into intelligent Warspawn by stray Carcosan energy
- the same, but created by the King, one of his daughters, or another Carcosan worthy
- an out-of-place hyena, transformed as above
- a roughly wolf-shaped Carcosan predator newly arrived on Earth (in which case it counts as a supernatural creature)

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Vastly Superior
(Escape 4, Other 6, Kill 6)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1 for characters who have telepathically linked with it (it learned their fighting styles)

Toll: 2

Injuries, Minor and Major: A
Mere Nip/Torn Throat

CARDS

Shock cards

DULLED THINKING

Shock

Non-lethal. -1 to Focus tests.
Discard on a Focus failure.

THROBBING MIGRAINE

Shock

Non-lethal. -1 to Focus tests.
On a Focus failure, spend
2 Health to discard.

DISBELIEF

Shock

-1 to Focus tests.
Discard on any Focus success.

WEIRD WEAPON TRAUMA

Shock

-1 to Composure tests involving
unearthly weapons.
Discard when you disassemble
a captured weird weapon.

BEREFT**Shock**

Before spending Morale to refresh another PC's Composure, you must roll a die, getting an even result.

Discard as recipient of a 3-point Morale spend.

Use in: W, A

RUDDERLESS**Shock**

PCs can spend Morale only after rolling a die and getting an even result.

Discard as recipient of a Leadership spend.

Use in: W, A

WHATTH—?**Shock**

-1 to your next Presence test.

Discard when a PC (yourself included) discards an Injury card taken in a fight in which your side was targeted by a weird weapon.

WORLD GONE MAD**Shock**

-1 to Presence tests.

Discard when a PC (yourself included) discards an Injury card taken in a fight in which your side was targeted by a weird weapon.

HAUNTED**Shock**

Tests take a penalty equal to the number of Shock cards you have in hand.

Discard on a successful test that aids the group against supernatural horror.

PROFANED MEMORIES**Shock**

When you mention or talk about your fallen comrade for the first time in any scene, make a Difficulty 4 Composure test. On a failure, this becomes a Continuity card.

HOLLOW PROMISE

Shock; Continuity

Your Morale pool drops to 0.
You can't refresh Morale in mid-scenario or make Reassurance spends.

Discard by successfully protecting a civilian.

Use in: W, A

RESOUNDING FAILURE

Shock; Continuity

Your Morale pool drops to 0.
Morale spends by other players do not refresh your Composure. You can't make Reassurance spends.

When you successfully protect a civilian, roll a die. On an even result, discard.

Use in: W, A

TENUOUS REALITY

Shock

-1 to Focus tests.

When the discard condition of another Shock card occurs, you may discard this card instead.

LIFE'S VALUE EBBS

Shock

-2 to Composure tests. You may choose to take a +1 Fighting bonus when using a weird weapon, but that makes this a Continuity card.

REVULSION

Shock

Lose 2 Morale.
Discard after three hours of world time, or when you gain another Shock card.

Use in: W, A

NIGHTMARE FUEL

Shock

You can't spend Morale points.
After six hours sleep (world time) in a safe location, roll a die. Discard on an even result.
Becomes a Continuity card if still held at end of scenario.

Use in: W, A

LILY-LIVERED**Shock**

Lose 2 Morale.
Discard on a salient Battlefield or
Fighting success, refreshing 2 Morale.

Use in: W, A

YELLOW-BELLIED**Shock**

Roll a die; lose that number
of Morale points, or 2 Morale,
whichever is higher.
Discard on a Fighting success
with a margin greater than 1.

Use in: W, A

**FLIRTATION WITH
CARCOSA****Shock**

-1 to Composure tests.
Discard when a success saves
you from taking a Shock card.

EMBRACING CARCOSA**Shock**

Composure tests take a
penalty equal to the number
of Shock cards you hold.

SINKING FEELING**Shock**

Lose 1 Morale.
Discard by getting off the boat.

Use in: W, A

PANIC**Shock**

Other PCs can't spend Morale
to refresh your Composure or
Scrounging to refresh your Battlefield.
When the danger has passed,
roll a die. Even: discard. Odd:
trade for "Rattled."

Use in: W, A

THOSE TELLTALE FINS

Shock

-1 to Focus tests.

When you get to shore, roll a die. Even: discard. Odd: discard after two salient Focus failures.



GHOST TOUCH

Shock

Lose 1 Composure each time one or more players breaks from the action to reference or discuss pop culture.

Discard as recipient of a Difficulty 4 Morale test.

Use in: W, A

THE VENGEFUL DEAD

Shock

Lose 1 point from your lowest pool each time one or more players breaks from the action to reference or discuss pop culture. Discard after a ghost encounter that does not leave you with a Shock or Injury card.

TASTES LIKE CHICKEN

Shock

-2 to Composure tests.

At end of scenario, if your Composure is higher than 3, discard. Otherwise, trade for “A Crossed Line.”

A CROSSED LINE

Shock; Continuity

CALLOUS**Shock**

When you become the recipient of a Morale spend, lose 1 Composure.

Discard by taking a risk to help a GMC Loyalist soldier.

Use in: W, A

PIT OF REMORSE**Shock; Continuity**

When presented with an opportunity to save a wounded GMC Loyalist soldier from death or further harm, you must make a Difficulty 6 Composure test to avoid doing so. When you do act and clearly save the character's life, roll a die. Discard on an even result.

Use in: W, A

**RAT IN A CAN****Shock**

Lose 1 Composure and 1 Morale every 15 minutes (game time).

When the danger has passed, discard as recipient of a 1-point Scrounging spend.

Use in: W, A

**TENTACLED DOOM****Shock; Continuity**

-1 to Presence tests while in sight of the ocean, -2 to Presence tests while underwater.

Does not count as a Shock card at the beginning of a scenario. Becomes a Shock card if you see the ocean or go underwater.

NO BLOOD MORE COLD

Shock; Continuity

-2 to Composure tests.

During any scenario after the one where you gained this card, discard by spending 6 Composure.

ATROCITY

Shock; Continuity

-2 to Composure tests.

At beginning of any scenario, spend 3 Composure and roll a die. On an even result, trade for “No Blood More Cold.”

OVERWHELMED

Shock

Before any test, roll a die. Odd: lose 1 point from the ability being tested. Discard when you use an Investigative ability to get a core clue.

PERVASIVE DISTRUST

Shock

Lose 3 Composure each time another investigator makes an Interpersonal Push. Discard by throwing a punch at a GMC who seems to be up to something.

BESIDE YOURSELF

Shock

-1 to tests.

Discard on the next test you miss by 1.

RATTLED

Shock

Your next test takes a -1 penalty. Then discard.

SHELL-SHOCKED**Shock**

-1 to Presence and Focus tests.
After your next failed Presence
or Focus test, you may discard as
recipient of Difficulty 4 Morale test.

Use in: W, A

**HELLISH
REPTILE-CRAB****Shock**

You and all PCs who have seen the
creature up close take -1 to Focus
tests. Penalties from multiple “Hellish
Reptile-Crab” cards do not stack.
On any failed Composure test, roll
a die. Even: all “Hellish Reptile-
Crab” cards in play are discarded.

REALITY DRIFT**Shock**

When you score a success with
a margin of 2, it instead becomes
a failure with a margin of 2.
On a failure with a margin
of 2, trade for “Unease.”

GHOST SIGHTING**Shock**

-1 to Presence tests.
Discard by spending a Push.

THE MOURNED DEAD**Shock**

-1 to Fighting and Composure tests.

DID ANYONE ELSE SEE THAT?

Shock

-1 to Sense Trouble tests.
Discard as recipient of
Difficulty 4 Morale success.

Use in: W, A

YOU SAW IT, SO IT MUST BE REAL

Shock

-2 to Sense Trouble tests,
-1 to Composure tests.
Discard by spending 2 Sense
Trouble and 1 Composure.

FAULTY PERCEPTIONS

Shock

-2 to Presence tests. You must
behave as if the thing you're
seeing is absolutely, literally real.
Discard by spending 2 Sense
Trouble and 2 Composure, or on
the conclusive defeat of the force
that has confused your senses.

DISTORTED PERCEPTIONS

Shock

-2 to Presence tests. You must
behave as if the thing you're seeing
is absolutely, literally real.
Discard on the conclusive defeat of the
force that has confused your senses.

NO, IT CAN'T BE!

Shock

+1 to Sense Trouble tests.
When you fail a Sense Trouble
test in the presence of one or more
innocent GMCs, make a Difficulty 4
Composure test. Failure: you attack
and seriously wound a GMC chosen
by the GM, then discard this card.

I REMEMBER HIM LIKE HE WAS REAL

Shock

You continue to behave as if the dead,
impersonated comrade is alive, in
your presence, and talking to you.
Other PCs take -1 to Composure.
Discard when you pay a
price for this behavior.

CORTISOL SPIKE

Shock

-1 to Composure tests.
Discard at end of session.



WHY CAN'T I JUST SHOOT HIM?

Shock

You recognize this false comrade as an alien being but can't break its mental hold on you in order to act against it.
Discard when a comrade attacks it, or when it departs.

Use in: W

PROBABLY I SHOULD SHOOT HIM

Shock

Whenever you meet a Loyalist soldier for the first time, make a Difficulty 4 Composure test.
Failure: -1 on all Focus and Presence tests until next interval.
Discard when you get a margin of 3 or more on that test.

Use in: W

HUNGRY LIKE THE...

Shock

-1 on your next Focus test.
Discard by killing and eating a game animal, raw.

LYCANTHROPY

Shock

-1 to Focus tests.
You believe that you will turn into a werewolf at the next full moon (three days from now unless the GM has already established a different date) and behave accordingly.
The morning after the next full moon, roll a die. Even: discard. Odd: trade for "Hungry Like the..."

AIDE TO THE BEAST

Shock; Continuity

You gain a new game statistic, Beast, which starts at 1.

Add 1 to Beast each time you learn of the beast killing someone, and 2 each time you arrange for the beast to kill someone. Subtract 1 from Beast when it performs a significant service for the Loyalists.

Take a penalty to Composure tests equal to your Beast rating. Discard when the beast is destroyed.

Use in: W

CULTIST OF GÉVAUDAN

Shock; Continuity

You gain a new game statistic, Beast, which starts at 1.

Add 1 to Beast each time you learn of the beast killing someone, and 2 each time you arrange for the beast to kill someone.

Subtract 1 from Beast when it performs a significant service for the Loyalists.

While the beast is alive, take a penalty to Composure tests equal to your Beast rating.

Use in: W

THE SHUDDERS

Shock

Roll a die; lose that number of Composure points, noting the number lost. If your Composure is already 0, trade for “An Image Seared in the Mind.”

Discard after a night's sleep. When you discard, roll a die. Even: regain those lost Composure points.

SHAKEN

Shock

-1 to Composure tests.

RUEFUL

Shock

If the murderer is still at large or unidentified at the end of a session, lose 2 Composure. Trade for “Self-Reproachful” if you have 0 Composure in your pool at end of scenario.

SELF-REPROACHFUL

Shock; Continuity

You can't refresh Composure in mid-scenario.

If the murderer is found to be human, discard this card by bringing the murderer to justice.

If the murderer is inhuman, discard by killing the murderer.

WITNESS TO CARNAGE

Shock

-1 to all tests.

Discard as recipient of a Push. Explain why that Push would help with this.

EXISTENCE IS A MEAT-GRINDER

Shock; Continuity

Tests take a penalty equal to the number of Shock cards you have in hand.

Discard after participating in an event that restores your faith in humanity.

UNEARTHLY SOUNDS

Shock

-1 to Focus tests.

When you correctly identify the origin of the sounds, roll a die. Even: discard.

MELTED PERCEPTIONSV

Shock

Roll a die when you receive this card. Odd: -1 to Focus tests.

Even: -1 to Presence tests.

Discard as recipient of Difficulty 4 First Aid success.

Injury cards



PINNED BY DEBRIS

Injury

As immediate recipient of a Difficulty 5 Athletics test, trade for “Beside Yourself.” Otherwise your Health pool drops to 0 and -1 to Physical tests.
Discard at end of session.

YOUR LUCKY CHARM CAUGHT A BULLET

Injury

At end of interval, discard and make Difficulty 4 Composure test. Failure: take the Shock card “Cortisol Spike.”
Success: refresh Composure.

PERFORATED

Injury

-1 to Physical tests.
As recipient of Difficulty 5 First Aid success, roll a die. Odd: trade for “Patched Up.” Even: discard.

CAKED IN ASH

Injury

Make a Difficulty 4 Composure test, or also gain “Shell-Shocked.”
If your Health pool is greater than 3, discard at end of interval.
Otherwise, discard as recipient of Difficulty 3 First Aid test.

THREE INCHES TO THE LEFT AND YOU’D BE DUST

Injury

-1 to tests. Also gain “Shell-Shocked.”
After one or more intervals, discard as recipient of Difficulty 4 First Aid success.

FLYING LEAP**Injury**

-1 on your next Physical test.
Any time after taking that penalty,
pay 1 Athletics to discard.

FLAMING DEBRIS**Injury**

-1 to Composure, Fighting,
and Battlefield tests.
Any time after failing a test of any
of those abilities, discard as recipient
of a Difficulty 5 First Aid test.

MUSCLE CRAMPS**Injury**

-1 to tests.
After any failure, you may roll
a die, paying Health equal to
the result to discard. If the result
exceeds your available Health,
trade for "Rapid Dehydration."

RAPID DEHYDRATION**Injury**

Your Health drops to 0.
Trade for "Dazed" as recipient of
Difficulty 4 First Aid success.
If still held at end of scenario, you die.

HUNGER**Injury**

-1 to Physical and Focus tests.
Discard by eating a meal.

**RESPIRATORY
FAILURE****Injury**

-2 to Physical tests.
After eating a meal, make a
Difficulty 6 Health test. On a success,
trade for "Hunger." On a failure,
trade for "Permanent Injury."

UNWELL

Injury

Lose 1 Health. At the end of each interval, roll a die. Odd: lose 1 Health.

Discard as recipient of Difficulty 3 First Aid success.

DYSENTERY

Injury

Lose 2 Health and 1 point from every other Physical pool.

As recipient of a Difficulty 4 First Aid success, roll a die. Even: discard. Odd: trade for “Unwell.”

CONFUSION

Injury

-1 to Focus tests.

Trade for “Gangrene” if not removed from exposing conditions within 10 minutes (world time).

GANGRENE

Injury

Counts as 2 Injury cards.

Trade for “Permanent Injury” as recipient of Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

SORE THROAT

Injury

Non-lethal. Lose 1 Health.

At end of each interval, roll a die. On a 1, trade for “Influenza.”

On a 5 or higher, discard.

INFLUENZA

Injury

-2 to Physical tests, -1 to other tests.

At end of any interval, you may pay 1 Health and roll a die. On a 5 or 6, trade for “Sore Throat.”

If you ever get a result of 1 on this roll, and still have this card at end of scenario, you die.

SHREDDED FLESH**Injury**

To spend points on any Athletics, Fighting, or Battlefield test, you must also spend 1 Health point. Discard as recipient of Difficulty 4 First Aid success.

“AM I STILL IN ONE PIECE?”**Injury**

You can't make Physical tests. -1 to Focus tests. You can't walk. Trade for “Shrapnel” as recipient of a Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

**SPRAYED****Injury**

-2 to Physical tests. As recipient of Difficulty 7 First Aid success, roll a die. Even: trade for “Patched Up.” Odd: trade for “Shot Up Good.” If still held at end of scenario, you succumb to your injuries and die.

WINDED**Injury**

Non-lethal. -1 to Physical tests. Discard after an hour's rest (world time).

EXHAUSTED**Injury**

-2 to Physical tests. Discard when the squad Hunkers Down, or trade for “Winded” as recipient of a Difficulty 4 Scrounging success. Scrounger must describe the scrounged item that revives you.

Use in: W

RINGING EARS

Injury

-1 to Focus tests.

After one interval, make a Difficulty 4 Health test to discard. If you fail, you can retry as needed at the end of any interval.

HURLED AND SCORCHED

Injury

Roll a die. Even: lose 2 Health and 1 Athletics. Odd: lose 1 Health and 2 Athletics. Discard as recipient of a Difficulty 4 First Aid success, or after two intervals.

LIGHT-HEADED

Injury

-1 to Physical and Focus tests. At end of interval, make a Difficulty 5 Health success to discard. You may attempt again at each subsequent interval, with Difficulty dropping by 1 each time.

LUNG DAMAGE

Injury

-2 to Physical tests, -1 to Focus tests. At end of scenario, make a Difficulty 5 Health test. Success: discard. Failure: this becomes a Continuity card.

SHARK BITE

Injury

Roll a die: add the result to the margin of the test to avoid this hazard. Lose that number of Health points. Trade for "Patched Up" as recipient of Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

BLEARY

Injury

-1 to tests.
Discard by getting ten hours sleep (world time).

DEAD ON YOUR FEET**Injury**

-2 to tests.

At the end of each interval, make a Difficulty 5 Health check.

Failure: you lose consciousness, regaining it only after three hours or if forcefully awakened.

Trade for "Bleary" by getting six hours sleep (world time).

BRUISED WHILE TAKING COVER**Injury**

Discard by spending 1 point of Health, Fighting, or Battlefield, or as recipient of 1-point First Aid spend.

THROUGH AND THROUGH**Injury**

-1 to next Physical test, after which roll a die. Even: discard. Odd: trade for "Impediment."

SUB-SONIC THRUM**Injury**

-1 to Composure and Battlefield tests. Discard on a salient Composure or Battlefield failure, or after one hour (world time).

SUB-SONIC DISRUPTION**Injury**

-2 to Composure and Battlefield tests. After one hour of world time, discard on a Difficulty 4 Health success. You may retry the test once per interval.





RAPID HEARTBEAT

Injury

-2 to Physical tests.

On a Difficulty 4 First Aid success, roll a die. Even: trade for "Light-Headed." Odd: trade for "Recovering."

TETANIC FEVER

Injury

-1 to Physical tests.

At end of any interval, you may pay 2 Health and roll a die. Even: discard. Odd: trade for "Lockjaw."

LOCKJAW

Injury

-2 to Physical tests.

At end of any interval, you may pay 3 Health and roll a die. On a result higher than 1, discard. On a result of 1, you die.

AGONY OF THIRST

Injury

-1 to Physical tests.

Discard by slowly drinking a full serving of any non-dehydrating beverage.

KIDNEY FAILURE

Injury

Counts as 2 Injury cards.

After taking the opportunity to slowly drink any non-dehydrating beverage, roll a die. Odd: trade for "Permanent Injury." Even: trade for "Recovery."

NECROTIC TISSUE**Injury**

Lose 1 Health each time you walk for more than half a mile.

Discard on a Difficulty 3 First

Aid success and a 1-point Health spend. You may make the test yourself or receive it.

LOCKJAW**Injury**

-2 to Physical tests.

At end of any interval, you may pay 3 Health and roll a die. On a result higher than 1, discard.

On a result of 1, you die.

SCUFFED UP**Injury**

Your next Physical test takes a penalty of 1.

Discard after that test.

TORN LIGAMENT**Injury**

-2 to Physical tests.

Trade for "Impediment" when you fail a Physical test.

DISCOURAGER GRAZE**Injury**

-1 to Fighting, Battlefield, and Composure tests while behind enemy lines.

If behind allied lines, spend 1 Composure to discard.

Use in: W

DISCOURAGER HIT**Injury**

-2 to Fighting, Battlefield, and Composure tests while behind enemy lines.

If behind allied lines, trade for "Patched Up" as recipient of Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

If still held at end of scenario, you go into cardiac arrest and die.

Use in: W

QUISLING GRAZE

Injury

-1 to Fighting, Battlefield, and Composure tests.

Discard by using force against a superior. If superior expects the attack, roll a die after completing it. Odd: do not discard.

QUISLING HIT

Injury

-2 to Fighting, Battlefield, and Composure tests.

Trade for “Patched Up” as recipient of Difficulty 5 First Aid success, after using force against a superior who has not assented to the attack. If still held at end of scenario, you have a brain aneurysm and die.

SUPPURATOR GRAZE

Injury

You can't discard Injury cards. At end of each interval, any PC who can see you loses 1 Composure. Discard as recipient of Difficulty 3 First Aid success.

SUPPURATOR HIT

Injury

You can't discard Injury cards. At end of each interval, any PC who can see you loses 1 Composure. Discard as recipient of Difficulty 4 First Aid success. At start of following interval, you gain “Suppurator Graze.” If still held at end of scenario, you die.

WHITE-SKY GRAZE

Injury

-2 Fighting vs. Carcosans.
-1 Fighting vs. Warspawn.
Discard as recipient of Difficulty 7 First Aid success. Difficulty drops to 3 after fighting a Carcosan or Warspawn.

Use in: W, A

WHITE-SKY HIT

Injury

-2 Fighting vs. Carcosans and Warspawn.
As recipient of Difficulty 6 First Aid success, discard (if you fought a Carcosan or Warspawn after taking this Injury) or trade for “White-Sky Graze” (if you didn't).

Use in: W, A

HIT BAD**Injury**

-2 to Physical tests.
Spend 2 Health to trade for
“Shell-Shocked” and “Patched
Up.” Spend 4 Health to trade
for your choice of either.

**TENTACLE LASH****Injury**

Lose Health equal to your margin
on the Battlefield test +1.
Discard after two intervals on shore.

SQUID BITE**Injury**

Roll a die; add the result to the margin
of the test to avoid this bite. Lose
that number of Battlefield points.
Trade for “Cough, Choke, Splutter”
on a Difficulty 4 First Aid success,
received during the current interval. If
received later, trade for “Recovering.”

Use in: W, A

SPLINTER**Injury**

Non-lethal. -1 to Physical tests.
After a Physical failure,
spend 1 Health to discard.

**STRUCK BY
WOOD DEBRIS****Injury**

-2 to Physical tests.
As recipient of a Difficulty 5
First Aid success, roll a die.
Even: trade for “Splinter.” Odd:
trade for “Patched Up.”

BLURRED VISION

Injury

-1 to tests.

Discard as recipient of Difficulty 5 First Aid success, conducted by a character with access to the antidote.

CIRCULATORY DAMAGE

Injury; Continuity

-1 to Physical tests.

For the first three hours (world time) after getting this card, gain “Blurred Vision” on any Physical failure.

SHRAPNEL’S SHARP, WATER’S HARD

Injury

-1 to Focus tests.

Discard as recipient of Difficulty 4 Scrounging success. Scrounger must describe the found item that restores you.

Use in: W

INTO THE DRINK

Injury

At end of scene, if you have less than 3 Battlefield points, trade for “Cough, Choke, Sputter.” Otherwise, discard.

Use in: W

CONVULSIONS

Injury

-2 to Physical tests, -1 to other tests. You can’t make Pushes. Discard by spending 3 Health or as recipient of Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

INTERNAL BLEEDING

Injury

-2 to Physical tests.

After one hour of world time, you must become recipient of a Difficulty 6 First Aid success. If so, trade for “Convulsions.” If not, you die.



RIFLE HIT

Injury

-2 to Physical tests.

Trade for the card “Patched Up” as recipient of Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

If still held at end of scenario, you succumb to your injuries and die.

BURNED

Injury

-2 to tests (except Preparedness).

Trade for “Badly Hurt” after you fail a test and then receive a Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

ROASTED

Injury

-2 to tests.

As recipient of Difficulty 6 First Aid success, trade for “Burned.”

SLAMMED AGAINST THE HULL

Injury

-1 to Physical tests.

Discard after two salient Physical failures.

INTO THE DEPTHS

Injury

Battlefield drops to 0.

Once on shore, as recipient of Difficulty 4 Scrounging test, roll a die. 1-2: trade for “Slammed Against the Hull.” 3-4: trade for “Cough, Choke, Splutter.” 5-6: refresh Battlefield and discard.

Use in: W

SOUL DECAY

Injury

Lose 1 Composure. At the end of each interval, roll a die.

Odd: lose 1 Composure.

Discard on a success that aids you against a supernatural entity.

BLACK BLOOD

Injury

Roll a die. Lose Health points equal to the result. If you are then at 0 Health, this becomes a Continuity card.

On a success that aids you against a supernatural entity, roll a die.
Even: discard at end of session.

SUSCEPTIBLE

Injury

-1 to tests when in the presence of Warspawn or Carcosans.

Discard as recipient of an Occultism Push or Difficulty 6 Morale success.

Use in: W, A

BLACK TEARS

Injury

All PCs take -1 to tests.

Effects of multiple “Black Tears” cards do not stack.

Discard by contributing to the defeat of a Warspawn or Carcosan.

WORSE THAN IT LOOKS

Injury

On the next Physical test you fail by 1, discard this card, and succeed at the test with a margin of 0.

THOROUGHLY PERFORATED

Injury

-2 to tests.

As recipient of Difficulty 5 First Aid success, roll a die. Even: trade for “Worse Than It Looks.” Odd: trade for “Shot Up Good.”

STINK GRENADE**Injury**

-3 to tests.

Discard by leaving the area of effect.

Regain this Injury if you re-enter.

DRENCHED IN STINK**Injury**

-3 to tests within area of effect.

-1 to tests otherwise.

Discard after a three-hour bath in anti-stink solution (world time).

LIGHT SHRAPNEL**Injury**

-1 to Physical tests.

Discard at next interval.

GRENADE**Injury**

The margin of your failed Physical tests increases by 1. When you fail a Physical test, all Focus tests take -1 penalty until end of interval. Discard as recipient of Difficulty 6 First Aid success.

STRUCK BY DEBRIS**Injury**

-1 to tests.

Discard on a successful test.

CANNON FODDER**Injury**

Counts as 2 Injury cards. -4 to all tests.

After 24 hours of world time, trade for "Patched Up."

IMPEDIMENT

Injury

-1 to Physical tests.

After 24 hours of world time, discard as recipient of a 1-point First Aid spend. After 48 hours of world time, discard.

PATCHED UP

Injury

-1 to tests.

Trade for “Recovering” on a salient Physical success.

PERMANENT INJURY

Injury; Continuity

DAZED

Injury

-1 to all tests.

Discard at end of session.

RECOVERING

Injury

Trade for “Patched Up” when you take another Injury card.
Discard at end of session.

SHOT UP GOOD

Injury

-1 to all tests. First Aid tests in which you are the recipient take a -1 penalty.
Trade for “Patched Up” as recipient of Difficulty 4 First Aid success.

STILL CRISPY**Injury**

First Aid tests in which you are the recipient take a -2 penalty. Trade for "Recovering" after 24 hours of world time.

COUGH, CHOKE, SPLUTTER**Injury**

-1 to non-Focus tests.
Discard at next interval.

SLICED AND DICED**Injury**

-1 to Physical tests.
After failing a salient Physical test, roll a die. If the foe who dealt you this Injury (or "Skinned Alive") is dead, discard on an even result. If not, discard on a 6.

SKINNED ALIVE**Injury**

You can't perform Physical tests.
-2 to Focus and Presence tests.
After one day of world time and as recipient of a Difficulty 6 First Aid success, trade for "Sliced and Diced."
If still held at end of scenario, you die.

KNIFE WOUND**Injury**

Roll a die. Odd: -2 to your next test. Even: -1 to your next test.
Discard after next test.

BAYONET WOUND**Injury**

-2 to Physical tests. -2 to First Aid tests performed on you.
Trade for "Patched Up" as recipient of Difficulty 4 First Aid success.
If still held at end of scenario, you succumb to your injuries and die.

BARELY A SCRATCH

Injury

-2 on your next test. If you succeed at the test, you may discard a non-Continuity Shock card. After your next test, discard as recipient of Difficulty 4 First Aid success.

BULLET WOUND

Injury

-2 to Physical tests. Counts as 2 Injury cards. Trade for “Patched Up” as recipient of Difficulty 6 First Aid success. If still held at end of scenario, you succumb to your injuries and die.

GASH

Injury

Before your next test, roll a die and discard this card. Odd: -2 on test.

DAZED

Injury

-1 to all tests.
Discard at end of session.

JABBED

Injury

Discard by spending 2 Health, or as recipient of 1-point First Aid spend from another player.

IMPALED AND PARTIALLY EXSANGUINATED

Injury

-3 on next Physical test, -2 on next test of any kind after that; then you may spend 2 Health to trade for “Recovering” or 4 Health to trade for “Dazed.”

BEAK JAB**Injury**

Roll a die. Even: discard immediately.
 Odd: lose Health equal to
 your die roll. Discard after
 an hour (world time).

BEAK STAB**Injury**

Roll a die: lose that number of points
 from Health, Athletics, and Fighting
 in a distribution of your choice.
 Discard after an hour (world time).

NEARLY STOMPED**Injury**

Lose 2 Athletics.
 Discard after 10 minutes (world time).

STEEL BEAM STOMP**Injury**

-2 to tests. Counts as 2 Injury cards.
 As recipient of Difficulty 6 First
 Aid success, roll a die. Even: trade
 for "Patched Up." Odd: trade
 for "Precarious Recovery."

**WHEN YOU REGAIN
CONSCIOUSNESS...****Injury**

You are knocked out and will
 wake up in the foe's clutches.
 Discard when you gain a core clue
 while in custody, or when you escape.



SEEING DOUBLE

Injury

You are knocked out and wake up in the foe's clutches. -1 to Presence tests.

Discard on your first Presence test following your escape or rescue.

SKULL FRACTURE

Injury

You are knocked out and wake up in the foe's clutches. -2 to tests.

After you escape or are rescued, trade for "Patched Up" as recipient of 2-point First Aid spend or "Dazed" on a 4-point spend.

PUNCHED

Injury

Discard after your next test.

If that test is a Focus test, it takes a -2 penalty. Otherwise, the test takes a -1 penalty.

PARASITIC LINK

Injury

-1 to any test you spend points on.

Discard by killing the redmedic who healed you.

SUPERFICIAL BURNS

Injury

-1 to Physical tests.

Discard by spending 2 First Aid on yourself, or having 1 First Aid spent on you.

DEEP BURNS

Injury

-2 to Physical tests.

After any successful Physical test, spend 1 Health to trade for "Superficial Burns."

MICROSCOPIC WOUNDS

Injury

-1 to First Aid tests performed on you by other characters.
Discard when you are the would-be recipient of a failed First Aid test.

CELL DAMAGE

Injury

-1 to First Aid tests performed on you by other characters.
When a first First Aid test works on you, roll a die. Even: trade for "Microscopic Wounds."

HOOF STRIKE

Injury

Any time after the current interval, you may spend 1 Health or have 2 First Aid spent on you to discard.

WARHORSE BITE

Injury

-1 to Physical tests.
At end of interval, roll a die.
Even result: discard. Odd result: trade for "Patched Up."

BLOWN BACK

Injury

Lose 1 Composure and 1 Health.
After any success with a margin of 0 or 1, you may pay 1 Composure to discard.
After any success with a margin of 2 or more, discard.



A MERENIP

Injury

Your next test takes a penalty:
-2 for a Physical test, -1 for any
other test. Then discard.

TORN THROAT

Injury

-2 to Physical tests. Trade for “Patched
Up” and “Shaken” as recipient of a
successful Difficulty 6 First Aid test.

WOOZY

Injury

Non-lethal. You can't make Pushes.
Discard when you leave the boat.

RUCTIOUS INNARDS

Injury

Nonlethal. You must remain
within proximity of a water
closet. You can't make tests.
After six hours of world time, you
may make a Difficulty 4 Health
test at the beginning of any interval,
discarding this card on a success,
and losing 3 Health on a failure.

APPENDICES

THE WARS

Character Sheet

Name
Player
Connection
Drive

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

PUSHES [2]: ☐ ☐

GENERAL ABILITIES

Artillery (Physical) _____
Athletics (Physical) _____
Battlefield (Physical) _____
Composure (Presence) _____
Driving (Physical) _____
Fighting (Physical) _____
First Aid (Focus) _____
Health (Physical) _____

Mechanics (Focus) _____
Morale (Presence) _____
Preparedness (Presence) _____
Riding (Physical) _____
Scrounging (Presence) _____
Sense Trouble (Presence) _____
Sneaking (Focus) _____
Traps and Bombs (Focus) _____

Civilian Occupation

That Damn Peculiar Thing

Consider spending 6-8 points on survival abilities: Battlefield, Composure, and Fighting. Pay Tolls from Athletics, Fighting, and Health.

YOU'RE IN THE WARS NOW

In *The Wars* you play a squad of French soldiers enmeshed in the Continental War. Your missions lead you to occult mysteries. Your investigations allow you to confront and destroy the enemy forces and alien beings marauding their way across Europe.

Your game begins several years into the war, in 1947. The enemy presses hard on France and the other nations of the Loyalist alliance.

Bone-weary and shell-shocked, you don't think much about the broader causes behind the war. The great game between nations matters little when you're shivering in a ditch, hoping the things dropping from the sky are allied paratroopers and not jelly-encased weeping mines.

The indifference you feel toward the greater scheme of the conflict goes beyond your focus on the here-and-now of daily survival. In those rare moments when you do try to contemplate the events leading up to the war, your head begins to throb and thud. The harder you try to pierce through the mental fog, the duller your perceptions become. If you didn't know better, you'd conclude that some vast, malign intelligence plays humankind for puppets, taking delight as great nations destroy themselves in a meaningless war, conducted for alien amusement.

Pah! How absurd. You must be hungry. Are there uneaten rations still in your pack?

Your GM will tell you which nations belong to the Loyalist alliance. You will also learn which nations make up the enemy side, and what they call themselves. If you already played *YKRPG's Paris* sequence, you may spot some connections between the previous characters' choices and the configuration of the current struggle.

Character Creation

As your GM guides you through the steps of character creation, keep the following in mind:

The General abilities Fighting and Composure remain key to survival. Here they are joined by Battlefield, the ability you'll be testing when evading the many impersonal hazards of war, from bombardments to grenades to aircraft falling out of the sky right where you happen to be standing. Consider taking 6-8 points in each.

Other new abilities, Morale and Scrounging, allow (among other things) one character to refresh the Composure and Battlefield abilities, respectively, of other players. Your characters will last longer if a couple of players invest points in these.

Embracing the Premise

In a typical scenario, a superior officer played by the GM assigns

the squad a military mission, communicating orders to your Lieutenant. As you head off to fulfill that objective, you also discover a supernatural mystery. Solving that mystery may be necessary to complete the mission. Or you might deem an investigation essential for other reasons. Either way, the story never punishes you for dealing with occult events as you encounter them. Somehow, you will also always be able to complete your putative mission—or at least, face no ill consequences when forces outside your control lead to its failure.

You may be tempted, especially if playing the Lieutenant, to take the role of the skeptical no-nonsense soldier who brooks no interference with orders as they are given, foolish superstitions be damned. Though this can be fun to play up to a point, your task as player is to make sure your character moments don't stop the group from getting to the fun part, the weird mystery you're investigating. Sure, have fun huffing and puffing and blustering, but always grudgingly relent and allow the story to progress. Balance what your *character* would do in the abstract against what you, the *player*, know has to happen for everyone to follow the premise and enjoy the session.

Weird War

This is not a mid-century martial conflagration from history as you know it. The strange ships, aircraft, and armored vehicles of

the Continental War range across Europe as if loosed from a Jules Verne nightmare. Physics as we know it? Let's say that someone in the background, wearing a mask possibly, has been messing with the fundamental math of the universe.

Ornate art-nouveau decorations cover your rifles and sidearms. You might think the weapons would work better if all of these flanges and filigrees were broken off. For some inexplicable reason any such field modifications leave them worse than before.

Instead of treaded tanks, the terrifying armored vehicles of ground warfare are the **stalkers**, metal-clad, bulbous pillboxes mounted on either four or five articulated legs. Equipped with cannons, flamethrowers, and machine guns, their arrival spells terror or jubilation, depending on whether they belong to the enemy or are on your side and thundering to your last-minute rescue.

Overhead you hear the buzzing of a **dragonfly**. This helicopter equivalent consists of a glassed-in cockpit divided into twin bubbles recalling the eyes of its eponymous insect. A segmented body section houses up to eight soldiers. Combat dragonflies strafe the ground with fore and aft machine guns. The dragonfly's four wings flap up and down, granting it flight in either vertical or horizontal mode. Each wing consists of a wrought iron frame into which dozens of stained glass panels are fitted. These panels are made from levitation glass, a Carcosan technology.

Fixed-wing fighter planes are known as **vampires**, as the scollops on their wings remind one of bats. Most feared models include the Addhema (France), Varney (England), Nosferatu (Germany), Vourdalak (Russia), and Laiotă (Turkey).

Naval ship classes match those of history as you know it—except for the rumored dreadnought, an aircraft carrier with legs said to be able to scale mountain ranges. Everyone hopes the French version will get off the drawing board before the enemy perfects its own model. Ships carry a variety of weird weapons, from the **cackler** to the **Hali cluster**.

The weird equipment that most defines your existence as a foot

soldier is not a weapon but a piece of communications gear, the *boîtenoire*. In a reality where radio and television have yet to be discovered, this typewriter-like device provides wireless, two-way, near real-time contact between soldiers and their distant commanders. To send a message, the operator types on its Dvorak keyboard, hitting the red send button on the side of the unit when finished. A buzzer inside the unit sounds when it receives an incoming message. The operator then places a sheet of paper in the roller and hits the button. The unit prints out the message using keys striking a ribbon, as per a normal typewriter.

French Infantry Ranks

Enlisted Ranks:

- Private (Soldat de deuxième classe, Soldat de première classe)
- Corporal (Caporal, Caporal-chef)

Non-commissioned officers:

- Sergeant (Sergent, Sergent-chef)
- Adjutant (Adjutant, Adjutant-chef; performs the duties of a Lieutenant without the opportunities for advancement)
- Chief Quartermaster (Maréchal des logis-major)

Junior officers:

- Second Lieutenant (Sous-lieutenant)
- Lieutenant

- Capitaine (commands a company)

Senior Officers:

- Commandant
- Lieutenant-Colonel
- Colonel (commands a regiment)
- Generals
 - Brigadier General (Général de brigade; commands a brigade)
 - Division General (Général de division; commands a division)
 - Corps General (Général de corps d'armée; commands a corps)
 - Army General (Général d'armée; runs the whole shebang)

Investigative Ability Worksheet

Player name					
Character name					
Accounting (A)					
Assess Honesty (I)					
Blueblood (I)					
Chemistry (T)					
Farming (T)					
Humanities (A)					
Hunting (T)					
Inspiration (I)					
Interrogation (I)					
Intimidation (I)					
Intuition (I)					
Law (A)					
Lowlife (I)					
Medicine (T)					
Military Logistics (A)					
Military Science (A)					
Negotiation (I)					
Occultism (A)					
Photography (T)					
Political Science (A)					
Reassurance (I)					
Salt of the Earth (I)					
Science (A)					
Terrain (T)					

Group Matrix

Player	Character	Civilian Occupation	Drive	That Damn Peculiar Thing	Connection

Relative Challenge Table

Relative Challenge	Difficulty (Escape)	Difficulty (Other)	Difficulty (Kill)	Toll
Weak	2	3	3	0
Tough but Outmatched	2	4	3	0
Evenly Matched	3	5	4	1
Superior	4	5	4	1
Vastly Superior	3	6	7	2
Overwhelming	5	7	7	2
Too Awful to Contemplate	5	8	8	3

War Hazard Table

Danger	Difficulty	Ability	Minor	Major
Inside a Structure When Bombers Take It Out	3	Battlefield	Beside Yourself	Pinned by Debris
Strafed	3	Battlefield	Your Lucky Charm Caught a Bullet	Perforated
Aerial Bombardment	4	Battlefield	Caked in Ash	Three Inches to The Left and You'd Be Dust
An Aircraft Crash Lands on You	3	Battlefield	Flying Leap	Flaming Debris
Cholera	4	Health	Muscle Cramps	Rapid Dehydration
Exposure to Earthly Parasites	4	Health	Unwell	Dysentery
Hunger	4	Health	Hunger	Respiratory Failure
Hypothermia	4	Health	Confusion	Gangrene
Influenza	4	Health	Sore Throat	Influenza
Land Mine	4	Battlefield	Shredded Flesh	"Am I Still in One Piece?"
Machine Gun Fire	4	Battlefield	Bruised While Taking Cover	Sprayed
Marched Past Endurance	4	Health	Winded	Exhausted
Mortar Fire	4	Battlefield	Ringing Ears	Hurled and Scorched
Poison Gas	4	Battlefield	Light-Headed	Lung Damage

Danger	Difficulty	Ability	Minor	Major
Sharks Feed on Drifting Sailors	4	Battlefield	Those Telltale Fins	Shark Bite
Sleep Deprivation	4	Battlefield	Bleary	Dead on Your Feet
Small Arms Fire	4	Battlefield	Bruised While Taking Cover	Through and Through
Small Arms Fire (Discourager Round)	4	Battlefield	Discourager Graze	Discourager Hit
Small Arms Fire (Quisling Round)	4	Battlefield	Quisling Graze	Quisling Hit
Small Arms Fire (Suppurator Round)	4	Battlefield	Suppurator Graze	Suppurator Hit
Small Arms Fire (White-Sky Round)	4	Battlefield	White-Sky Graze	White-Sky Hit
Sub-Sonic Barrage	4	Health	Sub-Sonic Thrum	Sub-Sonic Disruption
Sunstroke	4	Health	Light-Headed	Rapid Heartbeat
Tetanus	4	Health	Tetanic Fever	Lockjaw
Thirst	4	Health	Agony of Thirst	Kidney Failure
Trenchfoot	4	Health	Necrotic Tissue	Gangrene
Tumble Down a Hillside (Exposed to Enemy)	4	Battlefield	Scuffed Up	Torn Ligament
Tumble Down a Hillside (No Enemy Present)	4	Athletics	Scuffed Up	Torn Ligament
Artillery Fire	5	Battlefield	Shell-Shocked	Hit Bad
Giant Squid Attack the Lifeboats	5	Battlefield	Tentacle Lash	Squid Bite
In a Forest as Artillery Explodes the Trees	5	Battlefield	Splinter	Struck by Wood Debris

Danger	Difficulty	Ability	Minor	Major
Nerve Gas	5	Battlefield	Blurred Vision	Circulatory Damage
On a Torpedoed Boat	5	Battlefield	Shrapnel's Sharp, Water's Hard	Into the Drink
Radiation Poisoning (Earthly)	5	Health	Convulsions	Internal Bleeding
Rifle Fire	5	Battlefield	Bruised While Taking Cover	Rifle Hit
Stalker Fire: Flame Thrower	5	Battlefield	Burned	Roasted
Trapped on a Ship as It Sinks	5	Battlefield	Slammed Against the Hull	Into the Depths
Exposure to Carcosan Parasites	6	Health	Soul Decay	Black Blood
Radiation Poisoning (Carcosan)	6	Health	Susceptible	Black Tears
Stalker Fire: Machine Gun	6	Battlefield	Worse Than It Looks	Thoroughly Perforated
Stink Grenade	8	Health	Stink Grenade	Drenched in Stink
Grenade	special	Battlefield	Light Shrapnel	Grenade
Stalker Fire (Cannon)	special	Battlefield	Struck by Debris	Cannon Fodder

Shell Shocks Table

Situation	Difficulty	Minor	Major
You See a Weapon Do Something Eerie or Impossible	3	Disbelief	Weird Weapon Trauma
You Think Too Hard About the Causes of the War	3	Dulled Thinking	Throbbing Migraine
A Leader Falls	4	Bereft	Rudderless
You are Targeted for the First Time by a Particular Weird Weapon	4	What th—?	World Gone Mad
You Meet a Creature Posing as a Dead PC	4	Haunted	Profaned Memories
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* -1 Difficulty for each previous time you’ve seen someone killed with this particular weapon
 **+3 Difficulty if victims are innocent civilians

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