

ACHTUNG! Cthulhu™

Skirmish



ACHTUNG! Cthulhu™

Join the Investigators of Section M and Majestic in the Secret War against the Nazi Black Sun and their rivals *Nachtwölfe*.

Powered with ancient secrets and terrible mythos allies, Black Sun and *Nachtwölfe* are unleashing unspeakable horrors upon the Allied forces!



The Secret War Has Begun!

Explore the *Achtung! Cthulhu* universe through exciting roleplaying games, wargames and boardgames!

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Introduction

Welcome to *Secret War Operations*, the tutorial campaign book for **Achtung! Cthulhu Skirmish**. Are you ready to fight some of the Secret War's greatest battles?

The first part of this tome contains seven missions from **Secret War Operations**, a series of training and tutorial missions designed to help acquaint you with the mechanics of the game. Herein you'll learn the basics of moving and shooting before grasping more advanced concepts like command, morale and magic.

The second part tells the story of **The Forest of Fear**, an ancient woodland in the heart of Europe which covers a long lost Elder Thing city, has played host to some of history's darkest events, and now forms the backdrop to one of the Secret War's most pivotal battles. Once you've mastered these scenarios, including the epic climax of the Battle of Monastero Verde, you'll be ready to tackle **Achtung! Cthulhu Skirmish's** first major expansion, **Rise of the Black Sun**.

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MODIPHIOUS
ENTERTAINMENT



SPARTAN
GAMES



MISSION 1

Operation Turkey Shoot

“After fighting for every single inch of French soil, we had made our camp near a river, set a watch, and simply collapsed there on the bank, worn out from the fray. Nothing could have prepared us for the terror that came howling out of the dusk. With a desperation born of necessity, we pulled ourselves together and formed our line, hoping to pick them off before they could engage us at close quarters.”

– Sergeant Bill Mohain,
4th Infantry Division, 1944, Normandy

Briefing

A horde of Servants of Nyarlathotep are rapidly approaching a US Army rifle section. The GIs must pick them off at long distance before they can wreak havoc in melee. The Black Sun player must wipe out the GIs by assaulting and overwhelming them in close quarters combat.

Rules Used

- Movement
- Shooting
- Melee Combat

Forces

ALLIES

American GIs (Regular, 150 Points)

- » 6 Infantrymen

BLACK SUN

Servitors of Nyarlathotep (150 Points)

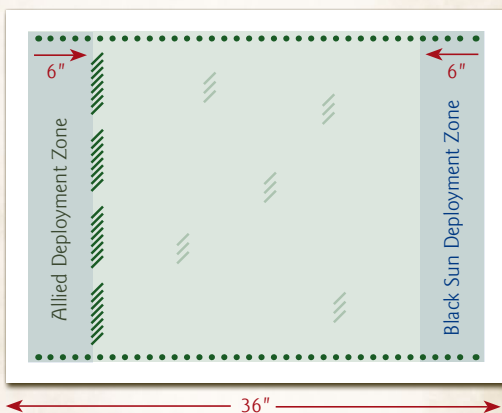
- » 10 Servitors

Scenario Notes

- The Black Sun player goes first.

Victory Conditions

- The Black Sun player must eliminate all Allied models within 6 turns. If any Allied models remain on the battlefield after turn 6, the Allied player wins.



Battlefield Setup

- » The GIs deploy within 6" of a short table edge.
- » The Servitors deploy in contact with the opposite short table edge.
- » Linear Terrain, such as a light hedge, is placed 6" away from the GIs' table edge.
- » Only sparse terrain should be placed between the two Deployment Zones.



MISSION 2

Operation Arm's Length

“After storming the beaches and the whole shebang of D-Day, it was bitter fighting out there in the hedgerows of Normandy. Ambush, counter ambush, tanks blowing up, men dying. Sometimes we were so close to the enemy that only the width of a small country road separated us. You could practically smell the Germans on the other side.”

– Sergeant Albert Epstein

1st Infantry Division, 1944, Normandy

Scenario Notes

- None

Victory Conditions

- Each side must eliminate or rout all enemy models from the battlefield within 8 turns. If both sides have models remaining at the end of turn 8, the game is a draw.

Briefing

In this ranged versus ranged scenario, both Allied and Black Sun forces have command of an Infantry squad, which they are able to place in cover.

Rules Used

- Movement
- Shooting
- Melee Combat
- Morale

Forces

ALLIES

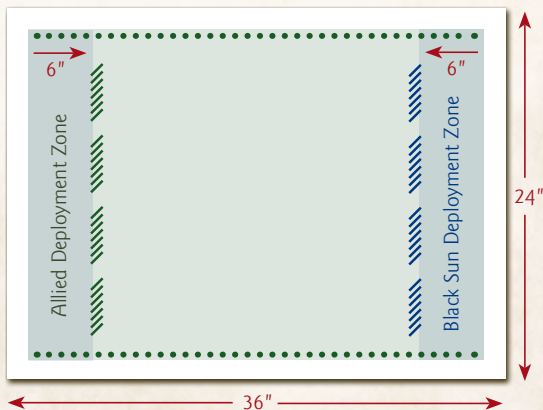
American GIs (Regular, 265 Points)

- » 8 Infantrymen
- » NCO
- » BAR

BLACK SUN

Black Sun Troopers (270 Points)

- » 6 Troopers



Battlefield Setup

- » The Allied forces are deployed within 6" of a short table edge.
- » The Black Sun forces are deployed within 6" of the opposite table edge.
- » Linear Terrain, such as a light hedge, is placed 6" away from both short table edges.
- » Little to no terrain is placed between the two Deployment Zones.



MISSION 3

Operation Close Quarters

“Those GIs are stubborn as pack mules. Even faced with overwhelming forces and superior firepower, they refuse to surrender. Despite the inconvenience and irritation this causes, I must admit, I rather admire their unwillingness to compromise. Oh, and tell me, Feldwebel: ‘swivel’ – vos ist ‘swivel’?”

– Lieutenant Hans Blick,
26th Volksgrenadier Division,
December 1944, Bastogne

Briefing

In this assault versus ranged scenario, two units of attackers must overwhelm a single unit of defenders dug into an entrenched position, using cover, movement and suppressing fire to press home their assault.

Rules Used

- Movement
- Shooting
- Melee Combat
- Morale

Forces

ALLIES

American Heavy Weapon Section
(Veteran, 355 Points)

- » 3 Infantrymen
- » NCO
- » Gun Team: M1919 Machine Gun
- » Gun Team: M1A1 Bazooka
- » Gun Team: M2 Mortar

BLACK SUN

Black Sun Troopers (270 Points)

- » 6 Troopers

Servitors of Nyarlathotep (90 Points)

- » 6 Servitors

Scenario Notes

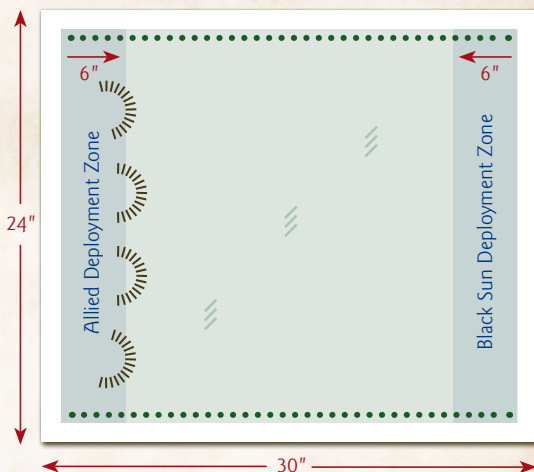
- The American Heavy Weapon Section can divide into Fire Teams (see Page 41 of the Core Rulebook).

Victory Conditions

- The Allies must survive 6 turns. If, at the end of Turn 6, there are any Allied models remaining on the battlefield (or at any point if the Black Sun forces have been fully destroyed), the Allies win.

Battlefield Setup

- » The Allied forces are deployed within 6" of a short table edge.
- » The Black Sun forces are deployed within 6" of the opposite table edge.
- » Linear Terrain, such as sandbags, are placed surrounding the Allied models.
- » Minimal terrain is placed between the two Deployment Zones.





MISSION 4

Operation Murky Waters

“They come from under the sea and only pal up with the Nazis for their own twisted ends, that's what the Prof said. What I can tell you is they're ugly as sin, smell like rotten haddock and I bet they don't go too well with a plate of fries either.”

– Private Arthur ‘Trom’ Bone,
1944, Black Forest

Briefing

In this clash of heroes and villains, one brave Allied hero leads two squads against a Deep One War Party led by a Shaman. In this scenario, you'll learn how to use Command Points, magic and the sanity/horror rules.

Rules Used

- Movement
- Shooting
- Melee Combat
- Morale
- Tactical Action Cards
- Command/Orders/Spellcasting
- Mythos Influence

Scenario Notes

- The Black Sun player receives the following TACs: *Garbled Communications*, *Hit Them Again!*
- The Allied player receives the following TACs: *A Life of Its Own*, *Look Out Sir!*, *Resolute*.

Forces

ALLIES

Sergeant Brandon Carter (300 Points)

- » 5 Infantrymen

American GIs (Regular, 200 Points)

- » 3 Infantrymen
- » Gun Team: M1919 Machine Gun
- » BAR
- » NCO

BLACK SUN DEEP ONES

Deep One Shaman (260 Points)

- » Spellbook (Rating 3):
Augur, *Implant Fear*, *Hands of Colubra*
- » 3 Deep One Warriors

Deep One Hunting Party (Regular, 230 Points)

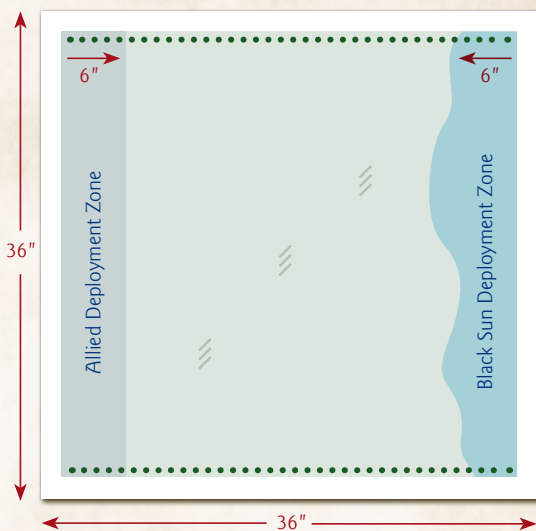
- » 5 Warriors
- » Reef Breaker

Victory Conditions

- Both sides are trying to eliminate the opposing commander. If the Allied player can eliminate the Deep One Shaman, they win. If the Black Sun Deep One player can eliminate Sergeant Carter, they win.

Battlefield Setup

- » The Allied forces are deployed within 6" of a table edge.
- » The Black Sun Deep One forces are deployed within 6" of the opposite table edge.
- » Aquatic Area Terrain, such as Shallow Water, is placed along the Black Sun table edge.
- » Minimal terrain is placed between the two Deployment Zones.





MISSION 5

Operation Bookworm

“Bullets? Tanks? Air superiority? Conventional weapons, even the new Wunderwaffe are distinctly constrained in their application. The power of ancient knowledge, forbidden learning, the secrets of the old gods – now that is where true power lies.”

– Oberst Hans Vogel,
Black Sun acolyte, 1943, Italy

Briefing

It is July 1943 and following the Allied invasion, a bitter battle rages over a monastery in southern Italy. Prolonged shelling has blown down the monastery walls and reduced much of the rest to rubble. Intelligence has reached both Allied and Black Sun forces of a forgotten library, newly uncovered in the ruins, that contains two important Mythos spell books. Both Black Sun and Majestic immediately dispatch teams to secure these important artefacts.

Forces

ALLIES

Sergeant Brandon Carter (300 Points)

- » 5 Infantrymen

Pathfinder Demon Hunters

(Regular, 200 Points)

- » 5 Pathfinders

American Heavy Weapon Section

(Veteran, 355 Points)

- » 2 Infantrymen
- » NCO
- » Gun Team: M1919 Machine Gun
- » Gun Team: M1A1 Bazooka
- » Gun Team: M2 Mortar

BLACK SUN

Deep One Shaman (230 Points)

- » Spellbook (Rating 3):

Augur, Implant Fear, Hands of Colubra

- » 2 Deep One Warriors

Black Sun Troopers (270 Points)

- » 6 Troopers

Servitors of Nyarlathotep (150 Points)

- » 10 Servitors

Black Sun Canon (205 Points)

- » Spellbook (Rating 3):

Implant Fear, Shrivelling, Slip Through Angles

- » 2 Die Toten

Rules Used

- Movement
- Shooting
- Melee Combat
- Morale
- Tactical Action Cards
- Command/Orders/Spellcasting
- Mythos Influence
- Battle Log Points

Scenario Notes

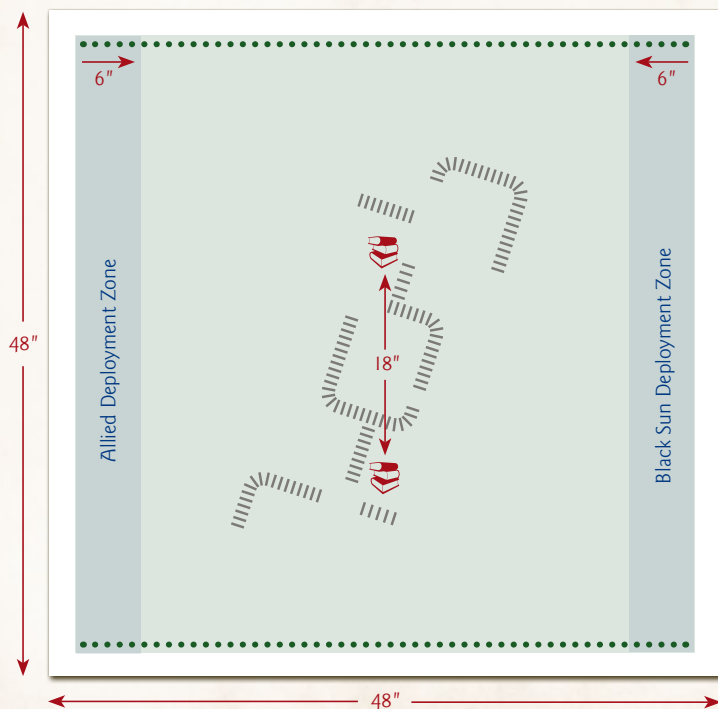
- The American Heavy Weapon Section can divide into Fire Teams (see Page 43 of the Core Rulebook).
- The Black Sun player receives the following TACs: *Garbled Communications*, *Hit Them Again!*, *Sun in Their Eyes*.
- The Allied player receives the following TACs: *A Life of Its Own*, *Look Out Sir!*, *Resolute*, *Spray and Pray*.

Victory Conditions

- Players gain Battle Log Points by holding the objectives (see Chapter 18, **End Phase** in the Core Rulebook). Each objective grants 3 Battle Log Points for every turn it is held.
- Players also gain Battle Log Points for wiping out enemy sections (see Chapter 18, **End Phase** in the Core Rulebook).
- The first player to reach 10 Battle Log Points wins the game.

Battlefield Setup

- » The Allied forces are deployed within 6" of a table edge.
- » The Black Sun forces are deployed within 6" of the opposite table edge.
- » Two objectives are placed in the centre of the table, 18" apart, to represent the Artefacts (📖).
- » A mixture of open and ruined terrain is placed across the battlefield to represent the monastery.





MISSION 6

Operation Closed Casket

“We had held out for a day and a night of unrelenting horror, fending off those Black Sun goons, and worse, far worse, those gibbering horrors that accompanied them. Then, just as they gathered for the final assault which must mean our doom, salvation arrived, parachuting in, falling from the skies like the angels themselves.”

– Corporal Matt ‘Rock’ Hammer,
1943, Italy

Briefing

After successfully capturing the monastery's Spellbooks, the Allies' much-depleted forces face a massive counterattack from the Black Sun, who are desperate to recapture these invaluable treasures and enhance their sorcerous knowledge. Fortunately for the defenders, help is on its way in the form of Ariane Dubois and a couple of units of elite reinforcements who are parachuted in to help secure the Artefacts and help fend off the massive Black Sun counter assault.

Forces

ALLIES

Sergeant Brandon Carter (300 Points)

- » 5 Infantrymen

American GIs (Regular, 200 Points)

- » 3 Infantrymen
- » Gun Team: M1919 Machine Gun
- » BAR
- » NCO

American Heavy Weapon Section
(Veteran, 345 Points)

- » 3 Infantrymen
- » Gun Team: M1919 Machine Gun
- » Gun Team: M1A1 Bazooka
- » Gun Team: M2 Mortar

Reinforcements

Ariane Dubois (105 Points)

- » Panzerfaust

Pathfinder Demon Hunters (Regular, 200 Points)

- » 5 Pathfinders

Commandos (330 Points)

- » 7 Commandos
- » NCO

BLACK SUN

Black Sun Canon (205 Points)

- » Spellbook (Rating 3):
*Implant Fear, Shrivelling,
Slip Through Angles*

- » 2 Die Toten

Servitors of Nyarlathotep (225 Points)

- » 15 Servitors

Servitors of Nyarlathotep (150 Points)

- » 10 Servitors

Black Sun Troopers (270 Points)

- » 6 Troopers

Reinforcements

Sheehad (300 Points)

- » 2 Sheehad

Nightgaunts (175 Points)

- » 5 Nightgaunts

Die Teufelshunde (150 Points)

- » 3 Die Teufelshunde

Rules Used

- Movement
- Shooting
- Melee Combat
- Morale
- Tactical Action Cards
- Command/Orders/Spellcasting
- Mythos Influence
- Battle Log Points
- Reserves

Scenario Rules

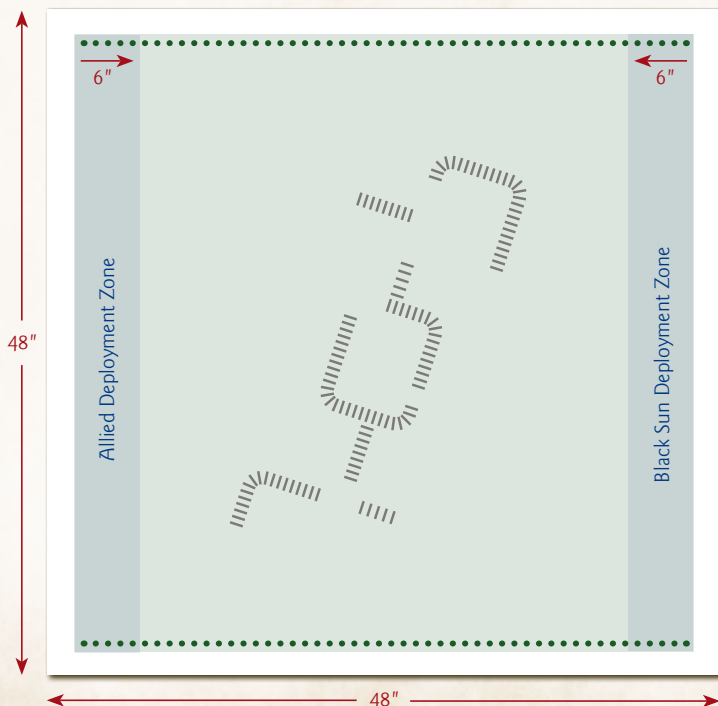
- The American Heavy Weapon and Commandos Sections can divide into Fire Teams (see Page 43 of the Core Rulebook).
- The Black Sun player receives the following TACs: *Garbled Communications*, *Hit Them Again!*, *Sun in Their Eyes*.
- The Allied player receives the following TACs: *A Life of Its Own*, *Look Out Sir!*, *Resolute*, *Spray and Pray*.
- Roll for Reserves (see Page 38 of the Core Rulebook) except players roll $d3+1$ for each reinforcement Section.

Victory Conditions

- Players gain Battle Log Points for wiping out enemy sections (see Chapter 18, **End Phase** in the Core Rulebook).
- The Allied player is hoping to wipe out the Black Sun forces, thus they are using the **Annihilate** Mission Objective (see Page 37 of the Core Rulebook).
- The Black Sun player is attempting to take control of the battlefield and recover the Artefacts, thus they are using the **Break Through** Mission Objective (see Page 37 of the Core Rulebook).
- The first player to reach 15 Battle Log Points wins the game.

Battlefield Setup

- » The Allied forces are deployed within 6" of a table edge.
- » The Black Sun forces are deployed within 6" of the opposite table edge.
- » A mixture of open and ruined terrain is placed across the battlefield to represent the monastery.





MISSION 7

Op. Dead Man Walking

“I’ve seen some things in this war, but nothing like this, bullets flying, machine gun fire ripping through the night, shells exploding, spells and sorcery bouncing in every direction, tanks being ripped apart like they were paper. The Black Sun brought their pet demons of course and many unclean creatures stalked that battlefield, taking lives, harvesting souls. It was like the end of times.”

– Private Benjamin Brookes,
Italy, 1943

Briefing

As the battle around the ruined monastery intensifies, both Majestic and Black Sun fully commit, pouring in troops, reinforcements and fighting vehicles, as the initial skirmish develops along a wider front. The subsequent engagement, which becomes known as the Battle of Monastero Verde, is a bitter, hard-fought battle to the finish, which both sides intend to win.

Forces

ALLIES

Sergeant Brandon Carter (275 Points)

» 4 Infantrymen

American GIs (Regular, 200 Points)

» 3 Infantrymen

» Gun Team: M1919 Machine Gun

» BAR

» NCO

Badger's Commandos (330 Points)

» 7 Commandos

» NCO

American Heavy Weapon Section

(Veteran, 345 Points)

» 3 Infantrymen

» Gun Team: M1919 Machine Gun

» Gun Team: M1A1 Bazooka

» Gun Team: M2 Mortar

M4 Sherman Tank (Regular, 590 Points)

» 1 M4 Tank

» M2 Machine Gun

» Jumbo

BLACK SUN

Black Sun Master (370 Points)

» Spellbook (Rating 3)

» 4 Troopers

Servitors of Nyarlathotep (225 Points)

» 15 Servitors

Black Sun Troopers (610 Points)

» 9 Troopers

» NCO

» Panzerfausts

» Transport

Sheehad (300 Points)

» 2 Sheehad

Die Teufelshunde (250 Points)

» 5 Die Teufelshunde

Rules Used

- All

Scenario Notes

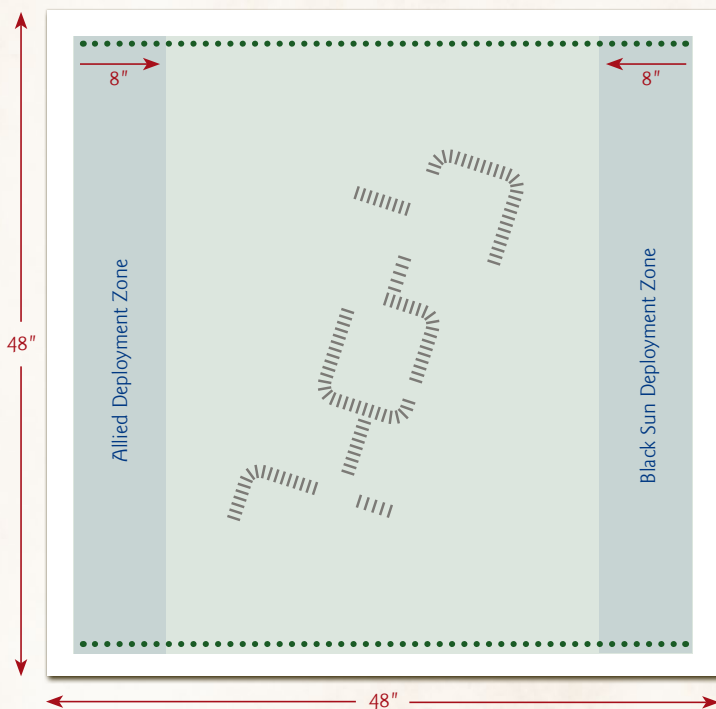
- Players select their own spells and TACs according to the rules.
- Alternatively, players can choose to build their own forces each with a Maximum Force Value of 1750 (see Chapter 8, **Building Your Force** for full set up rules).

Victory Conditions

- Both players are using the **Annihilate** Mission Objective (see Page 37 of the Core Rulebook).
- The first player to reach 20 **Battle Log Points** wins the game.

Battlefield Set Up

- » Players use the **Meeting Engagement** Deployment Type (see Page 36 of the Core Rulebook).
- » A mixture of open and ruined terrain is placed across the battlefield to represent the monastery.





The Forest of Fear

by John Houlihan

PRE-HISTORY

Deep in the heart of Europe lies an ancient woodland which has brooded beneath a shroud of mist for untold millenia. It is a remote and almost forgotten part of the modern Ardennes, the Romans knew it as *Arduenna Silva*—the forest of Arduinna—the home of a mysterious Celtic goddess, but it existed long before that. In the time before time itself was recorded, its dominion stretched from the shores of the North Sea to the banks of the Rhine.

Now it has shrunk to a mere remnant of its former size, a forgotten enclosure which straddles the borders of France, Belgium and Luxemburg. Yet birds and woodland creatures still shun this fragment of the ancient Ardennes and few hunters dare to walk beneath that dark canopy, as much for its strange and malign reputation, as for the impenetrable groves and ancient twisted trees where sunlight rarely ventures. It is said a man may walk twenty paces into that dense foliage and lose himself for ever.

It is an old place, it was ancient before man first descended from the trees, old before he knew fire or tools, venerable before his first grunts and squawks became recognisable as intelligible speech. A northern corner of the primordial continent of Pangaea, before the coming of intelligent life, it was much like any other prehistoric forest of that era, teeming with flora and fauna and free of the great shadow which would eventually engulf it.

It was here far from the ocean's embrace, that the race known as the Elder Things came after the great schism, the rebellion of their servants, the Shoggoth. They chose this isolated woodland far from the prying gaze of their enemies: the star spawn of Cthulhu, the Mi-Go and The Great Race of Yith, establishing an outpost amongst the secluded trees.

Karvarteeli was both prison and
laboratory for those creatures,
the ones that had achieved
sentience and mutinied
against their creators.

Small by their great cities' standards, it still sprawled larger than the modern capitals of man, its strange vistas and cyclopean arcades adorned with great statues, monuments and motifs featuring the Elder Things' characteristic five-sided architecture. Massive five-pointed portals were built on the surface, the fallen remnants of which may still be seen today, though they, like most of the buildings, have long fallen into ruin, felled by the spasmodic movements of the earth and the decay of aeons.

Its true name has no analogue in human speech, though it may be crudely rendered by the syllables *Kar-var-tee-li*. The Elder Things

used their arts to bring a legion of their loyal Shoggoth servants there, where they first granted them the ability to live outside of the oceans' waters. Those mindless automatons bit deep into the earth's surface, tunnelling to hollow out an immense dwelling, far larger than the surface domain, a place where the Elder Things might experiment on their rebellious former servants, the mutant Shoggoths.

Karvarteeli was both prison and laboratory for those creatures, the ones that had achieved sentience and mutinied against their creators and the Elder Things confined them there, isolating them from their ocean-going brethren, quarantining and containing those newly conscious Shoggoths as they attempted to quell their spark of rebellion.

For millennia, for the Elder Things were nigh on indestructible and do not count time in mere human terms, they bred and cross bred, manipulated and spliced the Shoggoth's genetic code, produced great chimeras, beasts and monsters, employing all their arts and science in an

attempt to breed out the rebellious strain and bring their servants to heel.

Yet the array of wave forms and particles which constantly bombard this earth can never totally be blocked, whether by barriers of atmosphere or stone, the only constancy is change, evolution is inevitable and built into the very building blocks of life itself. Furthermore, the very nature of the Shoggoths themselves, being changeable, mutable, engineered to adapt to every task and environment meant that despite the Elder Things great knowledge and formidable intelligence, no strain they produced was ever stable enough that it would not eventually mutate. Mutation led to sentience, with sentience came will and with will, ultimately, came rebellion.

The story of their failure is recorded in the friezes and five pointed pictograms the Elder Things left behind in those vast halls and in other forgotten places on this Earth, for those with the academic ability or arcane knowledge to read them. But it is only in the later



cycles, which lie in those lower vaults of their forgotten archive, that the great doom that overcame Karvarteeli is written, the catastrophe that engulfed this cyclopean laboratory and research centre.

It began as the world entered one its cooling cycles and the ice sheets descended once again, gradually causing the Elder Things to retreat from the surface, back into the heart of their subterranean lair. It was then that their formidable enemies the Mi-Go, the fungoid crustaceans from blasted Yuggoth, chose to renew their ancient conflict, launching an attack upon the Elder Things' hidden crucible.

Perhaps they sensed a weakness in their foe, or were determined to bring a halt to the Elder Things' work, for the Mi-Go's motives are inscrutable, unknowable, and alien. Yet what is certain is that they came in a great swarm, a mass exodus from their hidden nests in the Himalayas and they caught the Elder Things by surprise, penetrating deep into their base, freeing many mutant Shoggoths from their captivity and using a mixture of persuasion and hypnosis to co-opt some of them as allies in their great battle.

War raged deep underground, shaking the very earth itself, as Elder Thing fought Mi-Go and mutant Shoggoth warred with loyalist. The conflict lasted many years, decades, laying waste to the outpost, causing much of it to collapse and destroying the Elder Things' carefully nurtured plans. When all the Mi-Go were finally expelled or slaughtered and the last remaining rebel Shoggoths recaptured, the lifeless bodies from both sides littered the fallen halls and galleries. Many Elder scientists lay dead or missing and centuries of work was in ruins.

In the aftermath, as the great glaciers inched their way across this proto-Europe, a deep winter chill descended on the forest and the city below. The remaining Elder Things resolved to abandon the base, sealing or concealing many of its entrances, guarding it with unseen wards and sentinels and placing what remained of their underground city into a kind of quarantine, before retreating to their safer fastnesses under the sea. A small cadre of Elder Thing scientists remained behind, placing both loyal and mutant Shoggoths into hibernation, before undergoing

the same fate themselves, always believing that one day they would awake, their work would be continued and a final solution to the Shoggoth problem would be found.

So, countless millennia passed and while the earth warmed again, the hibernating Elder lay dreaming in their vaults, Karvarteeli was forgotten and the ascent of man began.

Arduinna wore many aspects,
but the Celts knew her best
in her fiercest guise,
that of the huntress.

THE COMING OF THE CELTS

Little is known of the Bronze Age people who first occupied that part of Europe, for they left little behind but their sacred stone cairns, the mounds where they interred their dead and strange and unsettling paintings on the walls of their caves and stone dwellings. These showed scenes of the hunt, the timeless whirl of the stars overhead yet they also revealed that they had congress with the ancient race known as the Deep Ones—the spawn of Father Dagon and Mother Hydra—who had moved inland from the seas to occupy the low lying swamps and lakes, which swirled around the forest's outer fringes.

These late Neolithic peoples wandered the forest for untold ages and lived and died beneath its boughs, but they were supplanted in their turn by a bloody wave from the east, the Celts, who came with iron and fire, absorbing or extinguishing the last flickers of those Bronze Age people. The Celtic tide washed over the forest and its hidden city and settled there, but the Celts lived in harmony with nature and perhaps instinctively sensing the lost city beneath their feet, walked with reverence beneath the trees, wary of its many wards and sentinels, careful not to disturb its slumbering power.

The Celts brought their own deities with them and Arduinna, goddess of the woods,



mistress of the moon and lady of the hunt, rose to claim dominion over the whole Ardennes and by extension lost Karvarteeli buried beneath it. Arduinna wore many aspects, the gentle maiden of the trees, the ethereal lover underneath the pale moon, but the Celts knew her best in her fiercest guise, that of the huntress, as savage and merciless as the tusked boar she rode, which served as both her mount and her symbol.

For a thousand years and half as much again the Celts worshipped her there, naming themselves the Ardui and making sacrifices of sword, cauldron and spear in her holy groves and living in tribes ruled by two kings who would go into the earth when their term was ended. Sometimes, different tribes warred amongst themselves and took each others' heads to display as trophies in their halls. Yet they also came together to hunt and kill the Deep Ones who still lurked in swamp and lake and the Celts slew and were slain by many other foul monsters and blasphemies, which had crept in to make their homes beneath that sinister canopy. All the time Karvarteeli lay dreaming, undisturbed by the plethora of life which now teemed above it.

THE HAND OF ROME

The world turned, a new age dawned and an expanding Mediterranean city state began its inexorable rise to imperial power, conquering the known world beneath the iron tread and eagle standards of its legions. Consul Gaius Julius Caesar, fresh from the first phase of his Gallic Wars where he had defeated the tribes of the Helvetii, the Suebi and the Belgae in successive bloody battles, had, through war or treaty, subjugated the better part of Gaul.

In late 54 BC, the wintering Roman legions demanding food, shelter and supplies were quartered by their reluctant hosts and discontent stirred amongst the proud Celts. Revolt broke out and the Ardui answered the call of their allies, the kings Ambiorix and Catuvolcus of the Eburones. Fifteen Roman cohorts were put to the sword at the battle of Atuatuca Tungrorum by the Celts, Gaul was in flames and the Ardui joined the revolt, keen to play their part.

Striking from the protection of the forest, the Ardui provoked their Roman occupiers with a series of daring raids on their grain and corn supplies, culminating in an audacious

attack where they stormed and torched the military camp at Veranium, massacring another cohort in the process. Soon the XV auxiliary Gaulish legion under the command of Quintus Flavius Maximus was dispatched to quell this unruly horde.

Maximus was a seasoned commander, but a series of ambushes and feigned withdrawals prodded his Roman pride and in the end the XV were lured beneath the dark canopy of the forest. Once inside, the Romans were chasing wisps, harassed and harried from the shadows, enduring flaming arrow and stabbing spear from the dark. Misdirected down fell paths and blind alleys by the goddess's earth magic, they were led, though they did not know it, like cattle to the slaughter.

...the auguries foretold death
to any Romans who walked beneath
that enchanted canopy.

After two days chasing shadows, the XV finally broke out from under the haunted canopy to a great clearing, where yew trees mingled with standing stones and menhirs, create the vast natural temple which was Arduinna's most sacred grove. Opposite, an Ardui battle line awaited them and Maximus quickly drew his battered legion into order, eager at last to get to grips with his elusive foe. Roman trumpets blared the advance and the XV hastened to the fray, Maximus was now certain of victory, for nothing could withstand his legion's mail-clad charge.

The two lines clashed in a great shock of iron and blood, men screaming and dying, yet the Ardui did not melt away this time, but held their line. The close quarters fighting was intense and brutal and Maximus committed his entire reserves to outflank and crush the hard pressed Celts. Yet as the Ardui wavered and the moment of Roman victory drew nigh, a new call rang across the battlefield, dozens of hunting horns sounding in unison to herald thousands more Ardui appearing from the flanks and rear, surrounding the men of the XV, drawing

tight the noose of the goddess's carefully planned snare.

The doomed XV was now assailed on all sides, and amongst their attackers' ranks were many wild beasts, strange and magical creatures and spirits of wood, earth and lake, summoned by the goddess's earth magic, to tear great holes in the Roman ranks. The Romans were pushed back to the central stone circle and there slaughtered to a man, a fitting sacrifice on the goddess's most holy high altar.

Maximus was one of the last to die, the XV's standard clutched in his hand. The eagle fell and it is said the goddess herself rode with the Ardui that day, manifesting as a supernatural huntress on her great wild boar, using earth magic and spear to shatter and break the Roman ranks and taking Maximus' head herself. This grisly trophy alongside his five thousand legionaries' heads decorated the halls of the Ardui and the rites, sacrifices and revelry lasted three days, as both Ardui and the horde of fabulous creatures and beasts celebrated their great victory together.

But to the north and east the wider rebellion did not fare so well. After defeating and massacring the Roman generals Cotta and Sabinus, Ambiorix tried to spread further revolt by recruiting the tribes of the Aduatuci and the Nervi to attack the IV legion under Quintus Tullius Cicero. But the wily Caesar marched to the beleaguered IV's aid, then one by one turned on Ambiorix's allies, effectively isolating the Eburones. The flames of rebellion began to dim and merciless, Caesar vowed to wipe the Eburones from the face of the earth, burning their villages, sowing salt in their fields and killing any and all survivors wherever he found them.

Five veteran legions eventually crushed the Celtic revolt and the Eburones king Catuvolcus, old and weak, took poison to avoid being paraded in chains during Caesar's triumphant return to Rome. Ambiorix and his nobles fled the Consul's wrath, but instead of escaping to Germania as history retells, they fled south and west to the home of their allies, the Ardui. Arduinna, as a sign of her favour and for their bravery in resisting Roman rule, granted them shelter beneath her canopy, transforming



Ambiorix and his retinue into her attendants and they came to know a new life as members of her wild hunt.

Caesar wrote much of the Gallic campaign, yet he chose to omit much of this final chapter. No legions were dispatched to revenge the lost XV, for when the oracle was consulted and the auguries taken, they foretold death to any Romans who walked beneath that enchanted canopy. Caesar, well satisfied with suppressing the wider revolt and sensing what a fresh campaign in the *Arduenna Silva* might cost him, chose to draw a veil over this dark chapter in Roman history, leaving the story of the doomed XV unwritten, but amongst his legionaries the forest earned itself a new name, *silva gravis metus*—the forest of fear.

THE DARK AGES

So the forest slipped from the minds of civilised men for long ages, but as Christianity spread through the Roman empire and Europe itself, the Ardui and their descendants retreated further into the remote woodland. Yet the

goddess's tradition remained strong in the wider Ardennes and as late as 565AD, Saint Walfroy admonished local peasants who still honoured her and her woodland followers alongside their new Christian god.

The passage of time changes many things and as the pagan ways slowly began to wane, Arduinna and her attendants faded from men's memories and the remnants of the Ardui became less and less human and more like spirits of the wood, transforming into great horned satyrs and fawns, fey princes who were rarely seen and only then, in her most sacred places. Thus began the Ardui's retreat to the hollow hills, faery halls and the lands beyond sleep, as they merged into myths and memories, lays and legends, echoes of the forest.

Yet on certain nights throughout the year, when the stars aligned, Arduinna and her retinue would take up their horns again as the Wild Hunt began. Dancing a strange and terrible dance through the heavens, hunting evil souls, and especially those who dared to desecrate the sacred woodland. It is said the Hunt was most exuberant on Walpurgis Night,



when they would seek out and slay the monsters and demons who loved to cavort on that most unholy of eves.

During the age of Charlemagne, the forest was still renowned as a haunt of the fey, witches, fabulous creatures and as a seat of the old magic. Many of the great king's knights quested there, the errant Roland earning his spurs by defeating a terrible faery knight of the Ardennes who was said to possess a magical jewel in his shield.

Smaller castles were built on the forest's borders to keep a wary eye on the fey and it was said many lost pagan treasures and artefacts were smuggled and concealed within its ancient boundaries, far from the reach of priest and pope. The forest's seclusion and unexplored depths, also meant it became a sanctuary for many fantastic creatures and beasts who sought refuge from the new age of Christianity, creatures such as the magical horse Bayard, a faery steed who roved the woods and was able to understand human speech, leap mighty distances and even talk.

THE MIDDLE AGES

The forest's borders gradually began to shrink as a new world encroached, but unlike the so-called Dark Ages that preceded them, the medieval era was an altogether more unenlightened time. In that previous era, ancient traditions and beliefs co-existed alongside modern doctrine and men incorporated both into their world view. But the middle ages brought a new era of intolerance and persecution.

Many innocent followers of the old ways, healers and herbalists, wise men and women were burned as witches and warlocks, great crusades were launched to recapture holy lands still in the hands of the 'infidel', the papacy split asunder and dissenters such as Jan of Hus were condemned as heretics and purged in the flames.

Mother Church, in the guise of Charles, Bishop of Reims, known as Hammer of the Heretics, was determined to drive out the lingering paganism in the midst of the Christian heartland and decided to found the monastery of Saint Berendarcus nearby, to weaken the forest's malign influence. Trees were cut

down, ground was cleared and the foundations laid, but each day the masons raised the walls, the next morning they would return to find them in ruin again. The locals blamed the displeasure of the goddess and it was only when Charles personally consecrated the ground by crawling on his hands and knees around its boundaries sprinkling holy water as he went, that the walls at last stood firm and building could finally progress.

In time, the monastery became a great centre of learning, its influence a beacon which seemed set to banish the old ways and diminish the power of the Ardui. Abèlard, the first Abbot, brother to Charles and a former member of the Knights Templar, founded a chapter house there, which many knights of the order frequented on their way out to the crusades. On their return, these knights brought back with them many forbidden texts, rare books and ancient artefacts from their travels in the Holy Land and beyond. Abèlard, a great scholar, took to studying them intensely, ostensibly to learn more of the nature of the old ways in order to banish the spell of the goddess and combat her pagan influence, which still ran strong beneath the canopy.

Power corrupts, but knowledge even more so and even the most pious of minds may be turned in time by exposure to malign influences. Abèlard's intensive reading began to slowly fascinate, then poison and consume his mind. He made his lair deep underground, creating a great complex in the catacombs and beyond, and there he kept a secret library of his own, filled with rare tomes, spell books and grimoires, ancient illicit knowledge that human minds were not meant to know.

Timid at first, he soon began to practice this magic, firstly to lengthen his own life, so that he might better serve the church and banish this great evil—or that is what he told himself. Yet in time he fell even deeper into the poisoned well, and began to experiment with darker more potent spells, summoning demons and creatures from the outer spheres, enlarging his underground lair and making hideous pacts with dark forces to gain the knowledge he sought.

One by one, his brother monks were also corrupted; he fouled their minds as he had his own and soon they willingly followed their

abbot into dissolution. As the years passed, the monastery of St. Berendarcus acquired an evil reputation, as black as its friars' robes, the wearers of whom were rumoured to practice all kinds of degeneracy behind its cloistered walls, under the tutelage of their *éminence grise*. Abèlard's studies prolonged his life far beyond the span of a normal man and for 50 long years he sought the dark knowledge which would enable him to conquer the goddess and banish her influence from the forest.

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In 1487, the same year that the *Malleus Maleficarum* was published, Abbot Abèlard, following an intense period of mortification and study of the darkest, most forbidden tomes, finally acquired what he believed he needed. On unhallowed Walpurgis Eve, Abèlard began the ritual which he thought would banish the Ardui and their goddess once and for all. He attempted to summon a hideous abomination from beyond the hidden spheres, Chartotharkis, the Slumbering Horror, a slaving foulness which he would bind and command to further his obsessive intent, calling on a foul god to slay the pagan goddess.

No-one truly knows what happened within the confines of St. Berendarcus that night, for none survived to tell the tale, but unholy chanting and strange discordant hymns were heard from the monastery in the run up to midnight. Nearby villagers huddled together in their homes, praying to both Christian and pagan gods to protect them from whatever foul evil was abroad.

An unnatural storm sprang up, lightning and torrential rain lashing both monastery and forest alike and near the stroke of midnight, all St. Berendarcus's bells tolled, pealing in jangling disharmony. When the bells died together, a single, unearthly blood-curdling howl echoed

through the night. Then a great explosion rent the monastery, tearing down its walls, levelling half its buildings and consuming the black friars within. A wave of foul creatures and unholy blasphemies, Chartotharkis' spawn and their attendants, came howling and screaming from the ruins, freed by the unwise abbot's spell, escaping into the night to terrorise both noble and commoner alike.

Arduinna's Wild Hunt rode again that night, glinting with spectral fire as it pursued and slew the monsters released by Abèlard's unholy experiment. The Hunt inflicted a fearful slaughter on its foes, but earned the eternal gratitude of the people of the region, cementing its place in their hearts. When dawn broke on a new May Day, the peasants piled up the corpses of many foul beasts and demons, before burning them all in a great pyre. As the Hunt rode back to its faery stables in the lands beyond our world, it is said the goddess' laughter echoed from beneath the hollow hills to the dreamlands at the demise of her foes, both monstrous, spiritual and temporal.

After the fall of St. Berendarcus, a closed papal court was convened to investigate, but its findings were never made known and its verdict sealed away in the Vatican archives bound in iron bands, where they reside to this day. No more attempts were ever made to banish the Ardui and their goddess from the forest and the church was content to let them rule their domain in peace, undisturbed by the attentions of man.

MIDDLE AGES - 20TH CENTURY - THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE

Evil may sleep, but it never truly dies and although the fall of the blasted monastery brought peace to the forest, ultimately, it was only a temporary respite. Chartotharkis, trapped between this plane and its own by the abbot's spell, slept in confinement in the festering tunnels beneath the ruin, but its malign influence



soon spread, insinuating itself into the boles and branches, emitting foul tendrils into the bed rock, seeping into the very roots of the forest. On certain unholy nights of the year, its hellish dreams and unholy nightmares were made flesh and took flight, stalking the trees, haunting the shadows and preying on the unwary.

Mankind, that most susceptible of all beings was soon drawn by Chartotharkis' malign influence and many loathsome men, practitioners of magic and even foul creatures were glimpsed beneath the forest's branches, coming to venerate the dark god and feed on some small measure of its power. Its reputation also drew many seekers of arcane knowledge, sorcerers and occultists, who were attracted by the promise of forbidden artefacts lost in the tunnels, or access to Abèlard's hidden library, which was rumoured to hold cabalistic treasures beyond measure.

In time, these abhorrent men and their familiars banded together to form the unspeakable Cult of Chartotharkis which spread like a cancer beneath the canopy. In the empty expanses and seldom trodden wastes, new settlements were built and existing ones infiltrated, and even some of the natives fell under its dark spell, abandoning their worship of the goddess. The Cult practiced many foul rites and enacted many dark ceremonies and was led, it is said, by a hideous cowed sorcerer who would never show his true face, yet worked eternally towards the day when the slumbering god would arise and be free. The Cult also found allies in evil in the small pocket of Deep Ones which had brooded in the swamps on the eastern fringes of the forest down the long ages.

Yet the Ardui and their many allies amongst the common folk opposed the Cult of Chartotharkis, stood vigil against the dark and fought to banish its influence. Although Arduinna resided eternally in her hollow hills, when the Cult threatened, the goddess and her Wild Hunt would ride to the common people's aid, hunting down and destroying the foulest abominations, providing light and hope in the darkness. Strive as they might, neither side could win a decisive victory and so a kind of stalemate ensued, though both Ardui and the Cult continued to seek an advantage that would vanquish their foe once and for all.



THE 20TH CENTURY: RISE OF THE NAZI WAR MACHINE

So the forest endured, a self-contained battleground in the heart of Europe, its malign reputation and dense, impenetrable woodland isolating it from most outside contact—a self-contained microcosm of the eternal struggle between light and darkness. Even the advent of the first great war disturbed it little, for the main thrust of offensive and counter-offensive fell elsewhere in the Ardennes.

Yet centuries of seclusion were finally shattered by events on the far side of the world, the Nazi Neuschwabenland expedition of 1939, which followed on the heels of the Pabodie and Starkweather-Moore explorations of Antarctica. Following Kriegsmarine Captain Alfred Ritscher's initial voyage, both Black Sun and *Nachtwölfe* poured into the icy continent in an attempt to exploit the forgotten cities and technology of the Elder Things. A research group headed by Dr Franz Amsel, a Nazi scientist known as 'The Blackbird' (Amsel translates as blackbird in German) discovered and

interpreted a series of icons and motifs in the ice, pointing to the existence of Karvarteeli, the long forgotten Elder outpost in the very heart of Europe and the extensive archive it contained.

Both Reinhardt Weissler, Exarch of the Black Sun, and Mina Wolfe, commander of *Nachtwölfe*, were quick to see the potential of such a find in occupied Europe, though for very different reasons. Weissler was intrigued by the secrets the Elder city might yield. Especially mention of the Hyperborean archive it may still contain, which could provide precisely the occult knowledge and artifacts he needed to realise his obsessive quest to unleash the Black Sun. Wolfe, more practical, foresaw the Shoggoths being tamed and harnessed as devastating new weapons of war, their malleable nature and supreme adaptability ideal material to power a whole new generation of *Wunderwaffe* or wonder weapons. She pictured captive Shoggoths operating Monster P1500 tanks, piloting advanced V3 rockets and even crewing the next generation of V-Boat convoy hunter submarines. It did not hurt that Karvarteeli, like the Elder Antarctic city, contained rich deposits of the *Blauer Kristall*, the blue crystal which *Nachtwölfe* craved to power this advanced technology.

Both Weissler and Wolfe realised a joint operation was necessary to exploit the potential of the lost city, and an uneasy truce was brokered by Heinrich Himmler to further the common aim. Disguised as archaeologists and folklorists, special research teams of Black Sun and *Nachtwölfe Sonderkommando* were dispatched to infiltrate the forest. Progress was slow at first, as the need for secrecy was paramount. Nevertheless, by late 1942 communication lines were established, men and materials procured and initial excavations begun in earnest at several key sites. Weissler placed a veteran Black Sun agent, Standartenführer 'Sweet' Liesel Böhm, in charge of his forces on the ground, while Wolfe nominated Oberst Adawolfa Gabler to marshal *Nachtwölfe's* efforts. Despite their intense rivalry, the first joint mission was an outstanding success: through a combination of Black Sun magic, *Nachtwölfe* technology and the hard lessons learned in Antarctica, Karvarteeli's outer defences were breached and initial examination of the Elder city begun.

Needless to say, the Nazi incursion into the forest and Karvarteeli itself did not go unnoticed. Recognising kindred spirits and possible allies, the Cult of Chartotharkis made overtures to the Black Sun—pledging its help in an unholy bargain, which would see their slumbering god freed. Böhm, devious though pragmatic, readily agreed, intrigued at the prospect of not only harnessing Chartotharkis' power for the cause of the *Schwarze Sonne*, but also excited by the possibility of plundering the arcane treasures and lost books which remained concealed below the monastery's catacombs, thus earning the gratitude of Weissler.

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The Ardui on the other hand, although dimly aware of its existence, had always cared little about the buried city beneath their feet. Yet the coming of the Nazis and their alliance with the Ardui's mortal enemies changed that notion. Angered by the disturbance of their holy groves and believing that 'the ally of my enemy is also my enemy', the goddess and her mortal followers, many of whom were also members of the resistance and naturally resented the German occupation, began to work against the Nazis, sabotaging and disrupting their operations. Böhm ordered fierce reprisals and a covert war against the interlopers broke out underneath the forest's shadows, as the Ardui and their Resistance supporters clashed with both cult, Black Sun and *Nachtwölfe*.

Over the course of the next year (1943) Amsel's teams made further progress, mapping and analysing the Elder city, which yielded many of its secrets, one by one. In the deepest tunnels, they encountered hibernating Elder Things and even remnants of the original Mi-go invasion. The awakened Elder scientists

attempted to fight back against the Nazis, but using knowledge gained in Antarctica, the Nazis crushed them and the Elder retreated into the vast tunnels, enacting guerrilla warfare tactics to try and thwart the Nazi advance. Realising that the Black Sun sought the knowledge of their lost Hyperborean archive, the Elder did their best to fool and misdirect the Nazi hunters and moved or concealed the most powerful artefacts.

When Amsel's teams discovered the main Shoggoth breeding pits, they unwittingly awakened them from their slumbers and there was chaos as both loyal and rebel creatures ran amok and escaped, laying waste to their discoverers in the process. Some Shoggoth specimens were captured and contained but many fled into the under dark, where they roamed free, preying on any who crossed their path. Far from the mindless killing machines many perceived them to be, the Blackbird began to suspect that one of the sentient Shoggoths had assumed control and was directing the others for its own unknowable

purposes. Gaining access to some smaller portions of the Elder Things archive, Amsel began to translate and interpret the ancient work; desperate to discover the genetic secrets and hypnotic commands needed to harness the shoggoths' power. As the war began to turn against the *Reich*, the pressure to deliver results was immense, but men and resources became ever scarcer and the Nazi expedition in the Antarctic always took priority. There was also always low level Black Sun and *Nachtwölfe* infighting to contend with and Amsel grew weary.

Yet he enjoyed some successes too. A small but steady stream of minor Hyperborean artefacts and knowledge was enough to placate Weissler initially, but Amsel made a real breakthrough when he managed to combine Black Sun sorcery and *Nachtwölfe* technology to clone-breed a new, highly aggressive type of Shoggoth which could be given simple commands. By early 1944 Amsel was confident enough to demonstrate his first prototype, a *Landkreuzer P 1000 Ratte* monster tank, a





35metre, 1000 tonne behemoth which dwarfed conventional armour and was 'manned' by a Nazi-bred Shoggoth, its engine and weaponry powered by the *Blauer Kristall*.

Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler was impressed by the demonstration and immediately authorised more resources to be devoted to a full experimental weapons facility, to further explore the vast potential of the new *Wunderwaffe*. A secret railway was built to bring troops, slave workers and supplies, and orders issued for a fully operational manufacturing base to develop further prototypes.

More Nazi-bred Shoggoths were reared but lacked the fine motor skills and intelligence for rocketry or V-boat operations. Their aggression and singular sense of purpose made them admirably suited to panzer warfare, although each monster tank required both much time and many resources to manufacture, so Amsel began to experiment with Shoggoth *Schocksoldat*, smaller immature Shoggoth specimens

who would both support the tanks and act as the ultimate battlefield terror weapon.

However Amsel's work was still constantly hampered by competing demands: above ground the Ardui and Resistance continued to disrupt and raid his supply lines and kill his men, while in the Elder city, freed Shoggoths guided by some malevolent intelligence, ambushed any daring enough to wander the deeper caverns, further hampering his research. Black Sun and *Nachtwölfe* continued to lock horns and even their nominal allies, the Cult of Chartotharkis, were growing impatient, their demands to free their trapped god growing ever more insistent. The cult spoke of a time coming, a great alignment of the stars in late 1944, which would be especially fortuitous for releasing the captive deity. Despite these myriad problems, Amsel pressed on and Böhm was a great help, dedicated and ruthless, absolutely merciless in suppressing all dissent and adept at helping secure the ever greater resources he required.

Operation Watch on the Rhine - the build up to the Battle of the Bulge

Time was running out for the Nazi regime and following the great reverses on the steppes of Russia during the previous year, in June 1944 the Allies launched Operation Overlord, the long anticipated D-Day landings. France and Belgium were liberated relatively quickly as the Allies made rapid gains, but as autumn turned to winter, both sides paused, eyeing each other warily across the border, an uneasy hiatus before the final invasion of German began.

With the vast Soviet armies in the east pressing hard, Nazi Germany was caught in a vice-like grip. Hitler, furious, was determined to launch one last great counter-offensive, a last throw of the dice to split the invading British and US armies. He hoped to exploit divisions in the US and British commands between Generals Bradley and Montgomery, then press forward to capture the deep water port of Antwerp, cutting off the supply lines and forcing the Allies to sue for peace, so that he could turn to deal with the Red hordes bearing down on Berlin.

Operation Watch on the Rhine was conceived to meet this need and the Nazi High Command realised Amsel's facility at Karvarteeli was in a perfect position to supplement the offensive. The Germans would smash through the weakly defended parts of the Allied lines in the Ardennes, reinforcing the main offensive with Shoggoth-powered monster panzers, shoggoth *Schocksoldat*, Black Sun and *Nachtwölfe* troopers and whatever other captive horrors they could summon, to utterly crush the overstretched Allied forces. In utmost secrecy, the Fuhrer himself visited the facility on his *Führersonderzug* (Fuhrer train) and impressed at the Shoggoths' raw savagery, personally charged Amsel with facilitating Operation *Rohe Kraft* (Brute Strength) an assault within the main assault, a terror mission to foment fear and horror in the Allied ranks and send them into headlong retreat.

Throughout late autumn Amsel, Böhm and Gabler worked themselves and their people into the ground to meet the Fuhrer's deadline. On the wider front, the Germans embarked on

a campaign of distraction and misdirection to mask the build-up of their conventional forces. By keeping their radio traffic deliberately quiet and using conventional communications which couldn't be intercepted, Ultra, the invaluable Enigma intelligence slowed to a trickle, leaving the Allies effectively blind. Inside Karvarteeli, the Shoggoth panzer legion began to assemble, the more mature specimens encased in

The Fuhrer himself visited the facility on his *Führersonderzug* and impressed at the Shoggoths' raw savagery, personally charged Amsel with facilitating Operation *Rohe Kraft* (Brute Strength), an assault within the main assault.

the steel of *Ratte* monster panzers, companies of Shoggoth *Schocksoldat* controlled by Black Sun sorcery were readied to be unleashed just as they were, a nightmarish mass of seething teeth and tentacles.

December came and with the main offensive just 16 days away, disaster almost struck when one of the facility's forced labourers, Marta Archambault, got out a garbled message to the resistance about the hidden facility where terrible new experimental weapons were being constructed. However, Böhm discovered the leak and cleverly twisted the information to bait a trap, luring in a small allied airborne battalion who parachuted in to investigate and massacred them almost to a man.

Just one small band of men, Charlie Company, managed to escape the slaughter and fled into the depths of the forest. Discovering the ruins of an ancient monastery by accident they were ambushed once again and were only able to withdraw after suffering heavy casualties. Hunted relentlessly by Black Sun patrols, they eventually holed up in the ruins of a manor house, the Chateau Limoges, which seemed strangely hidden from the sorcerous detection of their pursuers.

December Dawns

It is the first few days of December. The forest is alive with possibilities and intrigue, as if aware of the coming storm. Amsel is putting the finishing touches to the Shoggoths which will power Operation *Rohe Kraft*, while Böhm commands the Black Sun sorcerers to enact the arcane rituals which will summon fog and mists to hide their final troop movements, keeping the Allied planes on the ground and denying them their overwhelming air superiority. Gabler's *Nachtwölfe* prepare their technology and advanced weaponry, under orders from Wolfe to outshine their Black Sun rivals in the coming offensive.

The Cult of Chartotharkis, have been watching the German preparations and it begins to dawn on their cowed leader, that their allies may not be so dedicated to their cause after all—other steps must be taken if they are to resurrect their slumbering god. With the great conjunction of the stars rapidly approaching, the sorcerer and his adepts begin to make plans of their own, to raise the god who is still trapped within this mortal plane. They call on their allies the long forgotten Deep One enclave in the furthest marshes, who also stir, scenting opportunity in the air.

The Ardui and their supporters amongst the resistance are also apprehensive, unable to penetrate the Nazi base due to the Black Sun's enchantments, they are nervous about the rumblings from beneath the earth and whispers of the ascent of a new batch of terror weapons. They also know something stirs within the Cult of Chartotharkis, something which threatens to tip the balance of power that has endured for so long. The goddess and her earthly followers foresee war and death coming to their heartland, and mobilise in a last ditch attempt to prevent the coming terror.

Horrified by the loss of an entire battalion and suspecting that some kind of game is afoot, Section M authorises a small resistance team led by Ariane Dubois to make contact with the local resistance. Dubois is determined to discover why her old school friend and fellow resistance leader, Marta Archambault, has apparently turned traitor and betrayed them, as well as discovering just what is going on beneath that shadowed canopy for herself.

As the first flakes of December snow begin to fall on the forest of fear, the scene is set for one of the most dramatic and climactic episodes in its long and bloody history and one of the major campaigns of the Secret War...

