

Legion of the Dead

A 19th Century Deadworld for the **ALL FLESH MUST BE EATEN RPG**

by Dylan Craig

"Faire Camerone, they call it. Means to 'do a Camerone' -- 'sfrom a battle where eight of ours bayonet-charged a few hundred Mexican cavalry in the closing minutes of some uneven battle. Eight against a thousand, know what I mean? That's the Legion for you. Death and glory. But what if it's eight Legionnaires against a thousand Legionnaires -- and the thousand are already dead? That's what me and my seven mates are thinking, here in this trench . . ."

It is the winter of 18___. Europe finds itself under assault by the undead, who are spreading their zones of influence along the Mediterranean coast and up into the heartlands of France, Italy, Greece, and Spain. These beleaguered nations are holding them off, for now, but it cannot be long before their resolve breaks and the undead columns march inexorably into Germany, Russia, and the rest of the continent.

It was eighteen months ago that the French Minister of War began to receive the first desperate communications from the commanders of the larger Algerian garrisons. Entire companies were going missing while on patrol; traces of bloody battle were usually found, most of which indicated that the Legionnaires and their native auxiliaries had been attacked by a superior force and wiped out, but not a single body could ever be recovered. In addition, the desert patrols were discovering more and more abandoned native settlements. The commanders urgently requested reinforcements; all the signs indicated that a fresh offensive against the colonial presence was being prepared, and the commanders wanted the wherewithal to march against the mountain strongholds which they suspected would be used as staging points, to destroy the offensive before it got off the ground. The reinforcements were duly dispatched; large recruitment drives across the continent ensured that a steady stream of volunteers poured into the Foreign Legion's training battalions. If the Algerian rebels were indeed massing for attack, then the preemptive strike envisaged by the Legion commanders could, if successful, finish the rebels as a military force for decades, and the French government intended to provide the generals with all the manpower they needed for such a task.

It took nine months for the preparations to be completed; during this time, patrol losses had become so regular that commanders feared a wide-scale mutiny if they continued to assign patrol duties. However, to everyone's relief, the long-awaited offensive had still not materialized, and with the disembarkation of the reinforcements and the commencement of their march into the interior, most felt that the shoe was about to be transferred, firmly, to the other foot. Fortresses were stripped of all but their essential staff; three massive Legion columns were assembled and prepared to strike deep into rebel territory. It was there that they met their long-lost Legion comrades.

There were no survivors.

Weeks went by, then months. To send out an expeditionary force to determine the fate of the three columns would have required further depletion of the now-tiny Legion garrison; this was being painstakingly debated via telegraph, when all communication from Algeria ceased. Civilian shipping which had fled the Algerian coast spoke of towns falling to an unstoppable assault by armies of Legionnaires! The French government had little chance to react to this news before further reports that coastal towns all along the Mediterranean coast were now under artillery and infantry assault. Reports were patchy, but refugees fleeing north spoke of the renegade Legionnaires as demons or madmen, impervious to damage and with a terrible lust for human flesh.

What the French government didn't know -- in fairness, *could* not know -- was that the Legionnaires currently laying waste to *belle France* were no longer human, or even alive. Raised from the dead by ancient magics, they were now the tools of a vengeful Algerian sorcerer-hermit, whose agenda was nothing less than the complete subjugation and extermination of the Western heathen invaders.

All attempts at diplomacy or interaction of any sort failed. Town after town fell, and as the first shells began to slam into Paris, the French government fled to London. There, in hushed conferences, the heads of the European states have begun their debates on how to counter this seemingly unstoppable invasion.

Several courses of action have already been suggested, but rivalries, suspicion, and hidden agendas have proved to be an insurmountable problem in this regard. For instance; a Prussian suggestion for incendiary attacks on "infested" French cities by air was vetoed by the French as a transparent excuse to cripple the French industrial base, and a French request for gunboats to destroy the Algerian ports which seem to be the resupply nexus for the invasion force was met with unequivocal scorn as the other delegates accused the French representatives of trying to save themselves the expense and effort of pacifying their own rogue colonies. While the delegates bicker, European cities are emptying and entire armies are deserting in the face of the Legion onslaught. If the invasion is to be stopped, something must be done soon.

Only Great Britain, isolated from the threat for the time being, has maintained a cool head; the British training camps and steelyards are busy day and night, preparing the army and navy for the battles to come. It is even rumored that agents of the Foreign Office have penetrated into Legion-held territories to gather intelligence about the invaders, their leaders, and their plans for conquest.

Hungry Ones: These ancient spirits are the motivating force behind the Legion. Pale, glowing shapes devoid of form, they exist partially in our world and partially in the next. They can pass through solid objects, float above the ground, and change their shape (but not their consistency or color) at will. Their presence is indicated by a thin, piping, ceaseless wail.

In game terms, they can be thought of as bundles of pure Essence. Each Hungry One has 20 Essence; these points are used up in the process of raising Legionnaires. The expenditure of a single Essence point raises all dead bodies within **D6x3** yards. When a Hungry One's Essence is depleted, it ceases to exist; in addition, they cannot regain Essence by any means. However, five separate Hungry Ones can 'spawn' a new Hungry One with a full complement of Essence by each expending an Essence Point. This process takes one hour.

Hungry Ones are highly susceptible to the powers of the

Zombie Legionnaire

Str: 2	Dex: 2
Int: 1	Per: 1
Con: 2	Wil: 2
Spd: 4	Ess: 6
DPs: 15	Pow: 25

Skills: Brawling 2, Guns (Rifle) 2, Guns (Machine Gun) 2, Hand Weapon (Bayonet) 2, Stealth 1

Weak Spot: The Heart
Getting Around: Life-like

Strength: Dead Joe Average,

Inspired; an Inspired spending Essence Points to banish a Hungry One only needs to match half their target's remaining Essence, or a third if their attempt takes place while standing in a location particularly significant to their faith. Damage caused by miracles such as **Holy Fire** is applied directly to Essence if used on a Hungry One, and miracles such as **Binding** are also effective against them.

Story Ideas

Last Train out of Nice

The characters are the commanding officers of a ragged French unit whose orders are to hold the railway station of the city of Nice until the civilian population can be evacuated. They have a few hours to prepare their defenses before the Legion arrive in strength. Can they hold their line in the face of artillery, unstoppable wave assaults, and ammunition shortages? When the command center is cut off from the last train as it departs, can they cut their way through a wall of foes to reach safety?

Cloak and Dagger

The characters are agents of the British Foreign Office, on assignment to gather intelligence about conditions behind enemy lines. Expecting a sympathetic local population and counting on the anonymity bestowed by being a "face in a crowd," they are completely unprepared for the utter desolation they encounter. Nothing moves but the Legion Patrols and scavenging animals; Paris is a boneyard piled high with the half-eaten bodies of executed civilians. Several mysterious, robed humans are also in evidence, and appear to display some kind of control over the Legionnaires. The characters must decide which aspects of their mission are still attainable, and then try to survive until their pickup returns in a week's time.

Meat Trap

The information gathered by covert investigations behind enemy lines has revealed the weaknesses and origin of the Zombie Legions to the British government. To replenish its losses and feed its soldiers, the Zombie Legion requires hearts. If the zombie hordes can be trapped somewhere where "food" is low, and then attacked at long range, the armies of the living might just have a chance to strike a telling blow. Trainloads of convicts and "political undesirables" are shipped from all over France, Germany, and Russia to provide the bait; several easily isolatable towns in the path of the Legion advance are cleared and booby-trapped. All the characters have to do is provide token resistance, and then pull back to the trenches and let the artillery and mines do their job. But what if an inopportune riot among the prisoners traps them between the convicts and the advancing undead? Conversely, what if one of the players recognizes a relative, old friend, or lover among the "bait" as they withdraw?

Damage Resistant

Senses: Like the Dead, X-ray Vision

Sustenance: Daily, Sweetbreads (Heart)

Intelligence: Tool Use 2, Teamwork

Spreading the Love: Only the Dead

Gear: Lebel Rifle (use 7.62 bolt-action civilian rifle, but reduce CAP to 8)

Note: Zombie Legionnaires do not Spread the Love. This task is undertaken by the packs of Hungry Ones that follow the Legions. The number of Hungry Ones in existence at any one time may never exceed 144; in general, one Hungry One is encountered per twenty Legionnaires, to a maximum of 15-20 per area, city, or battle.

Zombie Legionnaires do not feed indiscriminately, and will wait until a battle is finished before feasting.

Only a corpse with an intact heart may be raised as a Zombie.

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