

**SAVAGE WORLDS: WEIRD
WAR TWO PLAYTEST
2005**



THE BAND OF BROTHERS

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You guys helped me out immensely with the playtest of Weird War Two. This "companion" is my way of saying, "Thanks!"

I really enjoyed running these sessions, and in a way that I haven't enjoyed running RPGs for a long time. I haven't done any WWII roleplaying since I ran FASA's old *Behind Enemy Lines* over 20 years ago. To be honest, I really wondered if I could run a WW2 game and do the genre (and history) any justice. Well, I'm not wondering anymore!

I loved the atmosphere of the games, in large part due to how you roleplayed your characters. Each adventure felt like a gritty war movie, or a two-fisted comic book story, which is exactly the tone I was going for. I really appreciated the effort you put into creating some great stories and memorable moments!

As I write this, Weird War Two is starting its official "beta" playtest with other groups fielded by Great White Games, and in December we expect to be into the editing process. The final draft is due February '06 and the plan is to have it ready to print by April, for a release at GAMA (the big game publisher trade show). There's *a lot* more interest and support being marshaled for this project by the publisher than I originally expected, and during the long laborious process of writing the thing throughout 2004 and the beginning of this year, I often felt it had been forgotten. Boy was I wrong!

There's going to be some incredible stuff kicked out for this game when it is published! I'll certainly be sure to try and get a hardcopy for everyone that you can show your gaming buds and proudly say, "I helped make this!"

Thanks again for being part of it!

Mike

MISSION 1 - THE DOGS OF WAR

THE TIME: DECEMBER 18, 1944.

THE PLACE: THE ARDENNES FOREST, BELGIUM.

THE HEROES:

S.Sgt. Vinny Piscopo (Tony Dolan) Charlie Co., 501st PIR, 101st Airborne. “You mugs ‘re cold? Well, this forced march we’re about to make’ll warm ya up.”

Pvt. Jacob Fletcher (Cameron Eeles), Charlie Co., 501st PIR, 101st Airborne. “Airborne all the way!”

Cpl. Jay “Big Jay” McNeely (Peter Melville), HQ Company, 3rd Battalion, 28th Infantry Division. “I’m a cook!”

THE MISSION:

Two days after the start of the German offensive, survivors of the initial German attacks have regrouped in Bastogne, now held by the 101st Airborne and the 10th Armored. The defenders of the city are surrounded as the Germans advance, and are scraping together everyone they can find to man the perimeter. The heroes are part of one of these ad hoc units, designated Team Foxtrot, and assigned to hold a blocking position on the road south of Noville for as long as they can. But the sudden winter assault is not the only surprise the Germans have in store.



The heroes get their mission and make their way up to the line. They have about 18 men, a 57mm AT gun and a jeep to pull it, two .30cal MGs, and one bazooka.

They dig in, set up the AT gun, and wait. During the night they catch glimpses of something moving in the tree line, and a strange smell is on the wind. The night passes with the troops shivering in the cold, but things are about to get hot.

At the crack of dawn a mortar barrage lands on them, tree bursts killing one man and injuring two others. The sound of a tank engine can be heard across the clearing.



A company of SS Panzergrenadiers, backed by a Panther tank, steps out of the tree line across the clearing and advances through the low morning mist. The battle is on.

The American line opens up and Sarge calls in the artillery barrage.

The AT gun manages to bounce a round off the Panther's hull before getting hit with an HE round from the German tank. The explosion kills the crew and nearby machine gunner. Pvt. Fletcher crawls over to it, sets it right, and continues firing.

U.S. artillery damages the tank and oncoming German infantry, but it's too little too late. The heroes give it all they've got, but their anti-tank weapons are not enough to stop a Panther, and there are too many Germans.

As the German line reaches the crossroads, most of the U.S. troops are dead. The survivors break for the rear as the Germans take the position.

Six men including the heroes pile into the jeep and race back up toward Noville, bypassing the small inn they passed earlier. Upon reaching the crossroads, they find a German armored platoon sitting there blocking the road to Bastogne.

Sarge decides to go cross-country. The squad sets off through the woods to the south in the dark. After a while, they are lost in the dark forest. Sarge sees something coming at him and he fires a burst. Suddenly, a huge shape leaps onto Bowen (in the middle of the line). The two men closest to him panic, running into the woods (and are never seen again).

The heroes shoot back at the coal-black, 8-foot tall wolf (?) dressed in an SS uniform! They hit it (doing no apparent damage) and their comrade, who is killed by the Sarge's fire (guilt trip, guilt trip)! The monster leaps away into the dark. The creature(s) seem to be lurking in the woods, waiting for another chance to strike. Bowen expires, but not before passing on a letter for his father to the Sarge (and driving the guilt home).

The survivors return to the inn. They're exhausted and freezing. The owners, Francois and his wife Lille are

frightened, but allow the heroes to hole up in their attic. During the night, a German artillery battalion goes by outside, headed for the Noville crossroads.

Francois invites them down for some soup the next morning. As they are eating, a German truck pulls up and an enemy squad gets out. The heroes bolt out the back door and hide behind the woodpile. They hear Francois' wife yelling at the Germans, then they hear a gunshot. Fletcher tries hard to control himself and not go charging back in there just yet.

When the Germans leave, the heroes rush back inside. Lille was shot and is lying on the floor bleeding badly. Big Jay manages to stop the bleeding.

Francois is grateful, but wants to take his wife to the doctor in Houffalize. The heroes think the roads are too dangerous, and a panzer will probably blow away the old man's car if he goes motoring down the road. They persuade Francois to stay.

Sarge gets on the radio to contact HQ. Bastogne is getting hit pretty hard; the Germans have some artillery out there somewhere; can the heroes spot it for some counter-battery fire? Sarge agrees and the three survivors of team Foxtrot head up toward the Noville crossroads.

Along the way they find their abandoned jeep half covered in snow. The battery is totally dead and the engine won't start.

They get into position and can see the German guns and rocket launchers in front of them. Sarge calls in an artillery barrage and they get the

satisfaction of seeing the German guns getting hammered.

As they pull back, they see two dark shapes come down the road after them and then break into the woods. The heroes do an 8-minute mile back to the chateaux.

They gather up Francois and his wife and retreat into the attic, nervously awaiting the Nazi wolfmen (which they still haven't seen clearly yet). They don't have to wait long. The creatures break into the inn and start smashing the place up. The heroes can hear them down below. One looks into the attic window, drawing a burst of fire from Big Jay and Sarge. Its partner tries to break the trapdoor up into the attic. Fletcher dissuades it by dropping two grenades on its head. The monsters retreat, but they'll be back.

Figuring the Nazi creatures are after them, they decide to leave the chateau and try to head south again toward Bastogne. The heroes bid *bon chance* to Francois and head into the woods at a run.

They dig into hasty positions in the forest after collapsing with cold and exhaustion. The wolves are out there but they somehow survive the night.

At daybreak they set off again. They struggle toward their lines and reach the besieged perimeter of Bastogne. They must now get through the German lines, across a no-man's and, and through their own lines.

Sarge manages to radio that they are coming in before his radio battery finally goes dead.

Finding a thin section on the German line they attempt to go through but are spotted. Sarge leaps into a foxhole with two very surprised machine gunners. Vicious hand-to-hand combat ensues. Big Jay and Fletcher rush to aid the Sarge.

They make short work of the MG42 machinegun crew then turn the weapon on another nearby German position, taking it out.

The two Wehrwolves that have been pursuing them leap out of the forest. The heroes pour machinegun fire and grenades on them, but can't stop them. The Germans are in confusion and the U.S. troops across the way start firing.

Seeing that bullets aren't working, Sarge leaps out of the German foxhole, draws his trench knife and charges the Wehrwolves! "Go! Get out of here!" he yells back. Fletcher opens up with his captured machinegun and yells for Big Jay to run for the U.S.



lines; "You go! I'm not leaving him behind!" Big Jay can't see anything else for it, so he gets up and starts running for the U.S. line, managing to somehow avoid all the hot steel being thrown around at the moment.

Sarge stabs the Wehrwolf, only making it angrier. The other monster leaps into the trench with Fletcher.

Big Jay reaches the U.S. line and dives into the listening post foxhole. Seizing the radio-telephone from one of the two gaping soldiers manning the hole, he calls for an artillery strike on the German line where the Wehrwolves are.

The Wehrwolf lays Sarge open. Bullets aren't working so Sarge pulls the pin on his last grenade. With an angry curse, he jams it into the Wehrwolf's gut and holds it there! It goes off doing 34 points of damage (!), blowing the Wehrwolf in half and killing the Sarge as well.

In the other hole Fletcher hears the incoming rounds, and can see the fire reflected in the monster's eyes.

Big Jay watches as the artillery rounds pulverize the German position. Fletcher and his lycanthrope adversary disappear in a flurry of blinding explosions.

Two intelligence officers walk out of an aid station tent, sadly shaking their heads. Inside the tent, Big Jay sits alone, his hands trembling, trying to forget the nightmare he's just lived through.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆



For the first adventure, I wanted to start with something iconic, and the Wehrwolves from the original D20 Weird Wars fit the bill. The battle at the beginning was a good test of the system. I particularly liked the atmosphere of this adventure; cold and creepy. It was a good action/horror story with some good characters.

MISSION 2 – THE EVIL HAS LANDED

THE TIME: SEPTEMBER 5, 1940

THE PLACE: THE SKIES OVER ENGLAND

THE HEROES:

Flight Lieutenant Roger Sterling (Peter Melville), Fox Flight Leader, No.17 Sqdn. “Same enemy, different war.”

Pilot Officer Reginald Smith (Tony Dolan), Fox Flight, No.17 Sqdn. “12 hours in Hurricanes, sir!”

Flight Lieutenant Andre Barvoski (Selby Thorpe), Fox Flight, No.17 Sqdn. “For Poland!”

Pilot Officer Joshua Epstein (Stan Ward), Fox Flight, No.17 Sqdn. “The best way to kill Germans is to go right at them!”

THE MISSION:

Near the end of the summer of 1940, the German Luftwaffe has the RAF on the ropes after heavy attacks on British airfields and radar installations. Soon however, the Germans would make a fatal strategic error when they began to bomb London and other British cities. For the pilots of No. 17 Squadron based at Watersham in Sussex, the mission was the same; shoot down enemy planes!



After heavy losses, two new pilots fresh from flying school join No. 17 Squadron, Pilot Officers Epstein and Smith. Assigned to Fox flight, they are given the evening off to go to the pub near the airfield with the two veteran pilots, Flight Lieutenants Sterling (who flew in the Great War) and Barvoski (a Polish pilot now flying for the RAF).

As a few pints are hoisted, it appears Epstein is red hot to get at the Germans. Barvoski extols the virtues of good vodka. More drinks are served as the pilots get into an aircraft identification drinking game. Barvoski ID's three out of four and the other pilots end up doing all the drinking.

The following morning, the flight assignments are made. Sterling is the Fox flight leader, and Smith is his wingman. Barvoski is also in Fox flight with Epstein on his wing. Squadron Leader Gray finishes the assignments and the pilots sit down in lawn chairs, tatty old easy chairs, and benches on the grass near the



dispersal shack.

An hour passes, then two. Finally the quiet is broken when the shout comes from the dispersal shack. "Incoming raid! Scramble! Scramble!" The pilots leap out of their chairs and rush to their planes in the revetments. The crew chiefs are already starting the engines.

The Hurricane fighters race down the runway (a flat grassy field) and take to the air. Ground control gives them the heads up. "Bandits, 30 plus. Take angels 15, heading 048." No.17 Squadron climbs into action as they cross over the coast and fly out over the Channel.

Smith spots the incoming He-111 bomber flight. No escorts in sight. Sqdn Leader Gray tells Fox flight to stay on station as top cover while the rest of the squadron goes after the bombers. Epstein is eager, too eager in fact, to get into combat. Barvoski tells (but not orders) him not to break formation.

"Tally ho! 109's coming in, 10 o'clock!" says Sterling as he spots the bombers' escorts. Before anyone can say anything, Epstein peels off after the enemy fighters. The rest of Fox flight pushes their throttles forward.

Fox flight engages the Me109's. Epstein quickly gets onto an enemy's tail a flames him. Epstein is tailed in turn by another 109. Sterling, miffed at the brash young pilot's actions, nevertheless manages to scissors with the trailing 109 and force it off Epstein's tail.

Barvoski finds himself tailed by a German ace. Throwing his plane into a high-speed yo-yo, shakes his pursuer and proceeds to shoot the 109 to pieces with an amazing high deflection shot.

Smith, scissoring back and forth with another 109, manages to get the better of his opponent and flames his engine. Smith watches in grim satisfaction as the German pilot bails out, only to be smashed against the tail of his aircraft.

Epstein latches on to another 109 and with a few quick bursts, sends the enemy plane down. The rest of the enemy fighters break off and the bombers are scattered. No. 17 Squadron shoots down a few stragglers before reforming and heading for home.

Back at the base, Squadron Leader Gray congratulates Sterling for a job well done. His flight saw off the enemy escorts and allowed the squadron to break up the attack. However, something had better be done about Epstein; such lapses of discipline cannot be tolerated.

Sterling and Barvoski dress down Epstein. "You're my wingman, Barvoski says. "That means you keep the enemy off of me!" Epstein knows he was wrong but it is plain to see his hatred of the Germans pushed him out of line.

Later that night, Smith is up going to the latrine when he spots some movement by the aircraft revetments. He goes over to one of the anti-aircraft guns guarding the field and gets a sergeant to come with him to investigate.

As they approach the revetments, Smith sees the unmistakable outline of German helmets. There are several men around the planes. Smith thinks they are paratroopers, but there are no planes overhead. One of them sees Smith and the sergeant.

Suddenly there is a burst of gunfire and bullets snap past Smith as he hits the deck. Smith can see the Germans more clearly now, but can't believe his eyes. Do these soldiers have...wings? Bat wings? (Yes, they're Scaratroopers!)

The gunfire jolts everyone awake. The other Heroes jump out of their cots. Exiting their tents, they see another group of German soldiers dart behind some tents nearby. Barvoski follows and comes face to face with a bat-winged German soldier with burning red eyes. In shock, Barvoski staggers back and stumbles as a burst from the creature's submachine gun whizzes past his head.

Out by the revetments, the flying stormtroopers lay down machinegun fire at Smith, pinning him. The sergeant shoots one of the creatures and drops it.

The scaratroopers have completed their task (which the heroes will find out about shortly) and begin to withdraw. Half their number lay down suppressive fire as the other half take flight. Any wounded or dead are picked by their comrades.

The explosive charges the scaratroopers wired to No. 17 Squadron's aircraft now go off. Nine out of eleven planes go up in big fireballs inside the revetments as the creatures make their retreat,

skimming low over the field and away into the darkness. The heroes spend the rest of the night putting out fires and clearing up the mess.

In the morning, Fox flight makes its report to the CO. Squadron Leader Gray thinks they've all gone mad. There's no way he's going to report to Air Vice Marshal Park that his squadron was destroyed by "flying stormtroopers" and "bat wings" and "flying monkey men." The attack is reported as "commandos and infiltrators, probably parachuted in." The fact that there were no aircraft overhead is ignored.

Even if the attackers flew in, could they have come all the way from France?

The day is spent tidying up while new aircraft are located for No.17 Squadron. The pilots watch helplessly as a large flight of bombers passes overhead.

The next morning, the pilots of the squadron pile into trucks and head for another airfield. They have been given new planes; Supermarine Spitfire MkII's. Although not familiar with these aircraft, the pilots quickly get them in the air and learn how to push the envelope in their new machines. They return to base and the night passes without further incident.

The next day, the pilots are once again waiting outside the dispersal shack for the alarm that will send them into the air. London has been bombed and not being able to defend their capital is grating on the pilots' nerves and pride, particularly Epstein's, as his family lives there.



The alarm is sounded. "Scramble! Scramble!" As the pilots dash for their planes, the ground crew are already turning over the Merlin engines. The pilots leap into the cockpits and strap themselves in. Soon, the Spitfires of No. 17 Squadron are hurtling into the sky.

As they form up they are vectored onto their target, along with several other squadrons. Ground control reports 200 plus bogeys incoming, heading for London. 70 RAF fighters are winging their way to meet them.

No Notice rolls are necessary! The huge German formation is dead ahead; 100 or more Hell's, Do17's and Ju-88's with 100+ Me109's and Me110's flying escort. The group commander tells No. 17 Squadron to pick their targets. Fox flight decides to go for the bombers this time. The Spitfires and Hurricanes begin to roll into the attack. As the two forces engage, the sky becomes a swirling mass of aircraft; it's the biggest furball the heroes have ever been in!

Fox flight dives on a flight of bombers. The heroes roll and spin through the

escort screen making their attack runs on the He-111's head on into the bombers' 20mm defensive cannon, Barvoski and Epstein pour fire into a bomber, damaging it. Barvoski's plane is hit but still flying. Epstein's plane is also shot up.

Sterling and Smith are next, maneuvering past the fighter screen. Sterling lines up a shot and hits with all guns. The rounds march up the fuselage and savage the bomb bay. The He-111 explodes!

As the heroes' planes slash through the enemy bomber formation they are also dodging falling debris from the battle. Don't want to suck an empty shell casing into the radiator!

An enemy fighter gets onto Smith's tail. Other fighters take high angle deflection shots at the heroes as they line up for another go at the bombers. Barvoski takes a cannon shell in the cockpit, shrapnel slashing the tops of his legs. The courageous Pole grits his teeth and keeps flying. Smith shakes his pursuer and sets up on the bombers.

Sterling spots something in the distance; a huge 6-engined German aircraft (WW2 aviation buffs can look up the Daimler Benz projects A thru C), easily three times as big as the He-111s, heading for London along with fighter escorts. Sterling calls it in and orders Fox flight to pursue.

Barvoski works Fox flight into a tactically advantageous position above and behind the unidentified aircraft. The heroes have jumped the enemy formation!

Barvoski dives in pouring fire into the

huge German plane and manages to score a damaging hit! But this thing is very tough and looks like it won't go down easily. Now it looks like paratroopers...no, bat-winged soldiers are dropping from the gigantic plane.

Barvoski pulls out of his attack but German bullets find his plane. The engine starts pouring smoke and flame. Barvoski pulls the canopy back, levers himself up out of the seat, kicks the stick and bails out.

As Barvoski's chute opens, Epstein peels off to protect his leader.

Sterling maneuvers in for an attack. He scores several hits but does no visible damage. Return fire shakes him up but he's all right.

Three scaratroopers begin coming after Barvoski in his parachute! It looks like the others appear to be headed for Buckingham Palace. Whatever they are up to, it can't be good. 'Ski frantically goes for his pistol and drops it. Fortunately, it is attached to a lanyard...

Smith goes in for his attack but a Mello cuts him off. Smith deftly vertical rolls past the enemy fighter and the scaratroop carrier floats into his sights. Streams of tracers flay into the German plane. Smith is rewarded with a stream of fuel from one wing, which his tracers ignite into flame (rolled a 12 on the Critical Hit table!). The fire spreads quickly, engulfing the aircraft's right wing, which then disintegrates! This beast is going down in flames (taking the other scaratroopers on board with it)! They watch as the huge aircraft spirals in, trailing a huge column of black smoke.

One of the flying Jerries shoots at Barvoski but misses. Epstein blasts the offending German, and the other heroes make short work of the remaining enemy.

The bigger battle has gone well for the RAF. Over the last few turns, they have given better than they got (a loss of 3 mass battle tokens, to 6 mass battle tokens lost for the Germans). With the added shock of losing their special “secret weapon” the bomber

formations are broken up, and the fighters break off. The RAF is victorious!

Barvoski lands safely. Hopefully, the locals won't mistake his Polish accent for German!

Fox flight returns to base, the three heroes pulling up and into victory rolls as they fly past overhead!

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆



The primary purpose of this adventure was to test my air combat rules and aircraft stats, and to prove to myself that an adventure based on pilots would work. A lot of people (including the publisher) seem to feel that infantry action is the only area of conflict that the Weird Wars line should focus on. I couldn't disagree more. If I wanted ground action only, I might as well be writing Weird Wars: Napoleon (hey, that sounds interesting!) Some great scenes in this adventure, and a good test of the mass battles rules applied to air combat as well. I really wanted this one to have a glorious, heroic tone, like one of those old war movie epics, and I think it did.

MISSION 3 – FOR THE RODINA!

THE TIME: JULY 9, 1943

**THE PLACE: ON THE EASTERN FRONT, NEAR
PROKHOROVKA, THE UKRAINE**

THE HEROES:

Kapitan Sascha Vladimir (Selby Thorpe), 1st Company, 3rd Guards Bn, 5th Guards Tank Army. “We fight for the Motherland and the Party.”

Starshina Sergo Sakashvilli (Tony Dolan), 1st Company, 3rd Guards Bn, 5th Guards Tank Army. “Move you maggots!”

Serzhant Andrei Bisnov (Cameeron Eeles), 1st Company, 3rd Guards Bn, 5th Guards Tank Army. “Forward! Go! Go! Go!”

Serzhant Slobodan Zinovich (Peter Melville), 1st Company, 3rd Guards Bn, 5th Guards Tank Army. “Strictly by the book.”

Serzhant Vadim Petrov (Stan Ward), 1st Company, 3rd Guards Bn, 5th Guards Tank Army. “What would Comrade Stalin say?”

THE MISSION:

In the Ukraine, the Germans have recovered ground lost in the Soviet counteroffensive after Stalingrad. However, a large salient exists around Kursk. Hitler and the OKW launch Operation Zitadelle, an attack on the northern and southern shoulders of the salient. For the hard fighting tankers of the Red Army, the upcoming battle will push them to the limits of their endurance and beyond. The enemy is to the front, but sometimes the devil is also within...



On July 9, the 5th Tank Army is gathering its forces. The Germans are moving north toward Prokhorovka with several of their best units, including the dreaded II SS Panzer Corps. The Army is moving out and 2nd platoon will be in the vanguard acting as reconnaissance for the 18th Corps.

Kapitan Vladimir receives his orders and is introduced to the new unit Commissar, Comrade Kripotkin and his NKVD adjutant, Lt. Golokov. Vladimir impresses Kripotkin with his revolutionary fervor so much that the Commissar asks him to address the men.

Sakashvilli rousts everyone into formation in front of their tanks. The Commissar and Lt. Golokov are introduced. The NKVD have a platoon of security troops that will be accompanying the tank platoon.

Bisnov and Petrov dislike the look of the NKVD troops and their leader. They've all seen the work of the NKVD before; roadside executions of Red Army troops, and personnel in other units "disappearing" under NKVD guard.

The Red Army tankers are battle hardened and experienced. Despite their worn out and filthy appearance, they still have a soldierly bearing that the NKVD killers, in their clean and pressed uniforms lack. There is definite enmity between the two groups.

Commissar Kripotkin asks the men, "What is it that makes the Soviet

system so superior to all others?" Again, Kapitan Vladimir again provides a satisfying answer to Kripotkin.

Kripotkin adds, "Comrade Stalin reminds us all that the Red Army is a bastion of internationalism. It has been trained to recognize the equality of all peoples and races, and respect the rights of others." Bisnov sneers at this; are the Nazis included?

The tank crews mount up and move out, with 2nd platoon taking the lead.

On the 10th, 2nd platoon is driving ahead of the division as part of a mobile screen into an area that was recently contested. In the lead tank, Bisnov spots a village up ahead. The platoon deploys off the road, and advances into the village accompanied by the infantry.

The village is empty save for a half dozen old men and about 40 women and children. They are Ukrainian and because of persecution by Stalin, gaze warily at the tankers from behind the doorframes of their huts.

Somehow this village has miraculously survived the war almost untouched. Commissar Kripotkin rolls up in his armored car. He doesn't believe the village could have survived German occupation if they hadn't been in league with the Germans. "Obviously they are in collusion with the fascists, trading on their greed and antipathy for the State and Party!" Kripotkin looks at Kapitan Vladimir. "Round everyone up."

Lt. Golokov's NKVD men have already started going through the village. The screams of the women attest to their brutality. The tankers look on with distaste.

Vladimir orders his men to round up the villagers. Reluctantly the men obey. Sakashvilli enters a hut to find an old woman sheltering three children. The sergeant is reminded of his own grandmother. "Go little mother," he says quietly to her. "You must leave." The old woman collects her grandchildren and goes out the back door, only to be caught by the NKVD men.



In another hut, Bisnov walks in to find a teenage girl hiding in a closet. He too, tries to help the girl escape but the NKVD nab her before she can get away.

With the civilians rounded up, Commissar Kripotkin addresses the men. "The front in this area is fluid. The Germans may return. Whatever 'comforts' these traitors have welcomed the fascists with they won't be able to do so again. Comrade Stalin wishes to see to it that the counter-revolutionary elements in this area have no fallow to plant their seed."

Kripotkin gestures to Golokov. The NKVD raise their submachine guns and mow down the old men. The tankers look on stunned. Kripotkin then turns to Vladimir and orders him to burn the town, then to have his men execute the women as traitors and enemies of the State. The children will be removed to re-education camps.

Kripotkin and the NKVD roust the children into their truck. The Commissar tells Vladimir he expects to see his orders carried out when he gets back.

Vladimir is trapped. There seemed to be no way out of this that wouldn't result in their own executions. With two squads of NKVD watching and fingering their SMGs, Vladimir swallows hard, and orders his men to step back and do nothing. Then Vladimir levels his submachinegun and carries out the Commissar's order to execute the women rather than force his men to commit such a terrible deed.

His SMG empty, Vladimir drops to his knees and vomits. The tankers look on in shock. Sakashvilli cannot forget the accusing look on the old woman's face. The Commissar returns and is pleased. A detail buries the bodies. The tankers bivouac for the night, and then proceed to get blinding drunk to try to erase the pain and shame they feel.

Bisnov and Petrov join the Kapitan in his cups. Sakashvilli and Zinovich try to keep things calm. Everyone would like nothing more than to gun down the NKVD animals. From the truck comes a cry. It sounds as if the NKVD haven't taken all of the children to the

rear. Everyone can hear this and they all shift in their foxholes uncomfortably.

Petrov walks up on the NKVD and climbs onto their truck. One of the green hats is in the process of abusing a young girl. Petrov smashes the bottle of vodka he's been drinking from over the man's head. Bisnov backs Petrov's play and a brawl breaks out. The Kapitan, stinking drunk, still manages to pull the girl out of the truck and remove her to safety.

Sakashvilli and Zinovich rush to the truck and break up the fight. Then Commissar Kripotkin shows up. He is enraged and orders Sakashvilli to find Kapitan Vladimir. Vladimir is incoherent and Kripotkin berates him, relieves him of command, and orders his arrest.

Word of this has gotten back to HQ. The battalion commander, Colonel Vatutin arrives. The Colonel has no love or respect for bloodthirsty fanatics like Kripotkin or psychopaths like Golokov and his killers, but he can't do anything about it. Tomorrow, they will likely engage the German II SS Panzers. He needs every experienced officer he has so he is reinstating Vladimir for now. However, he says that as much as he hates to see good men destroyed by "those NKVD pigs", Vladimir will have to face trial afterwards for disobeying orders, and dereliction of duty (allowing his men to get out of control).

Throughout the day on the 11th, the platoon rolls along toward the front lines. The signs of battle are

everywhere. Burned out wrecks and scorched farmhouses, bodies burned and crushed beyond recognition lie by the side of the road. Artillery and rockets from the katyushas, "Stalin organs", arc overhead and rain down on the horizon. They get orders to keep moving toward Prokhorovka throughout the night.

Bisnov spots an ambush up ahead. The platoon deploys into battle order and attacks. They destroy an 88mm AT gun, a Tiger and a very unusual tank. This vehicle appears to have no tracks or wheels and looks like some kind of amalgam of different tanks, both German and Russian. It seems to have walked into position (it was a Twisted Hulk).

Kapitan Vladimir's and Bisnov's tanks were damaged in the fight. The crews work through the remaining hours before dawn to repair the damage.

On the morning of July 12th, word comes from battalion HQ. The II SS Panzers comprising the 1st SS Panzer Division, the Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler and the 2nd SS Panzer Division, Das Reich, have broken through and are heading for the railroad station at Prokhorovka. The platoon is ordered forward as the vanguard for the 5th Tank Army. They must hold Prokhorovka or die trying.

The fuel trucks top off the T-34s. The crews mount up and move out. Huge clouds of dust rise in the summer heat as the armies maneuver into contact.

Topping a ridge, 2nd platoon can see the railroad station in front of them. Beyond that there is a line of low hills. German tanks are moving into

position atop the ridge. More tanks and mechanized infantry in halftracks are pouring through the gap toward the railroad station. Vladimir directs the platoon to split around the station and try to force the Germans off the hills. The tankers button up, barking orders to their crew to load and make ready.

The long ranged German guns have the advantage. The T-34s must survive several rounds of fire as they close with the Germans. The two armies engage. Shells slam into the ground near the advancing T-34s. A few find their marks but strike only glancing blows (much spending of bennies here!) Kapitan Vladimir spends a few heart pounding moments with his tank stuck on some twisted railroad tracks.



The heroes keep pressing forward. Occasionally, a non-penetrating hit knocks the crew of a T-34 senseless for a round or two (shaken). Even if the rounds don't penetrate the hits ring the tanks like a bell. Those that can, return fire. They score a few hits, although the Elephant tank destroyer on the ridge seems impervious to their fire. The range closes.

Finally, the two onrushing tank forces close. It's a knife fight. Through their vision slits, the heroes can't see

anything. Dozens of German and Russian tanks whirl around each other, slamming shots home at point blank range. The platoon continues to drive their assault home. Infantry are getting scythed down by MG fire from the tanks.

At this point I made the third mass battle roll of the engagement, with Selby rolling for the overall command of the Russian forces. He nailed the battle roll, with a final result of 27, resulting in a loss of 5 tokens for the Germans!! Even the SS couldn't sustain a loss like that and blew their morale check. With their focus held by the heroes' advance the rest of the 5th Guards were able to flank the Germans and inflict heavy losses.

The Germans begin to pull back. The platoon continues to pursue them back over the ridge.

As they watch the German tanks retreat into the clouds of dust and smoke, two huge shapes loom forward. Two twisted hulks move to engage the heroes.

Bisnov takes a long-range shot and hits. His damage dice explode and take the zombie tank down in one shot! (and there was much rejoicing!)

The others converge on the remaining Twisted Hulk peppering it with shots. Finally, Zinovich takes it down in an explosion of greenish flame and a spray of fluid (Coolant? Blood?) Whatever those things were, they're no threat now.

HQ calls a halt and the platoon stops their advance. Popping their hatches, they crawl out to have a look. The battlefield is littered with burning

wrecks and torn bodies. No one says anything.

Commissar Kripotkin, Golokov, and the Battalion CO (who looks awfully morose) roll up. They've come to arrest Kapitan Vladimir. The tankers shoot killing glares at the Commisar and his men. Vladimir waves his men

back and goes with the Commissar, guarded by the NKVD. The tankers of 2nd platoon watch grimly as their commander is taken away.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆



This adventure turned out a lot differently than I expected. The tone was dark but everyone seemed to enjoy it. Although there were some supernatural “monsters” in it, the real villains of this adventure were all human. That’s something I often wrestled with while writing *Weird Wars*. World War Two was horrible enough, and full of totally human evil, with any need at all for silly monsters, magic, and pulp style villains. Adding those comic book elements in is often risky I think, because it can easily cheapen the fact that real people suffered greatly during the war. This adventure had perhaps the most real “horror” of any of the adventures we ran. Hopefully I can convey this point in the book when it is finally published. War is hell indeed.

MISSION 4 – THE EXPENDABLES

THE TIME: NOVEMBER, 1942

**THE PLACE: THE SOLOMON ISLANDS. PACIFIC
THEATER OF OPERATIONS**

THE HEROES:

Lt. Commander H.P. Marsh, USN (Tony Dolan), Commanding Officer, Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 6 (RON-6), PT-115. “The sound of the sea under the stars is all I need”

Lt. (J.G.) John Smith, USN (Peter Melville), Executive Officer, RON-6, PT-115. “Basically, I just want to make sure we have everything covered.”

Petty Officer 2nd Class Eric Devlin, USN (Stand Ward), RON-6, PT-115. “I’m here to do my part for the Navy!”

Seaman 1st Class (recently demoted from PO2) Bobby Hardacre, USN (Selby Thorpe), RON-6, PT-115. “I’m going to sit here and watch you clean the guns.”

Lieutenant Bruce “The Goose” McGinley (Cameron Eeles), Royal Australian Navy Coastwatchers. “No worries mate.”

THE MISSION:

The Japanese are running supply and troop convoys down the Slot to Guadalcanal. The U.S. Navy is fighting tooth and nail to keep the American troops on the island from being cut off. Japanese convoys run the “Tokyo Express” almost nightly to keep their troops supplied as well. The men of RON-6 are going deep into enemy territory on a mission they may not come back from, but the PT-boat squadrons are expendable after all.



RON-6 is refitting for its next assignment at the U.S. Naval base on Espiritu Santo Island in the New Hebrides. The crew discusses Hardacre's recent demotion (for trashing a bar in a brawl with some Marines). Commander Marsh and his XO Smith are called into Admiral Warren's office.

Marsh is a pre-war regular officer with long service, and reputation throughout the fleet as an excellent seaman and commander, with a hint of mystery about him (something concerning a classified record in his file about a New England coastal town called Innsmouth). Most people wonder why he isn't in command of a battlewagon (PT boats being the red-headed stepchild of the surface fleet).

Adm. Warren welcomes them and introduces Lt. McGinley, one of the famed Australian Coastwatchers.

RON-6 is to establish a forward operating base deep in Japanese controlled territory, on a small island off the coast Choiseul. From there they are to intercept Japanese supply convoys bound for Guadalcanal. Lt. McGinley will accompany them to handle relations with the natives, and set up lookouts on the island to report Japanese movements.

RON-6 prepares to leave. Marsh dresses down a quartermaster chief for holding out needed equipment (and trying to bargain for it). PT-115's crew takes the equipment they need (camo netting, tents, etc). Hardacre makes sure to abscond with most of the quartermaster's stock of Scotch, silk stockings, and cigarettes.

The squadron casts off as night falls. The boats knife through the water under the starry night sky. By morning they reach the waters off Guadalcanal, to refuel from a Navy PT boat tender, and set out again in the evening.

As they move northwest into the New Georgia Sound (aka 'the Slot') they can see the flashes of a tremendous naval battle on the horizon, from the area near Savo Island off Guadalcanal. The big-gun ships are really slugging it out.

At sunrise they reach their destination. The island, twenty minutes by PT boat from Japanese held Choiseul, is not even 5 miles long, and only a mile and half wide. A small native village rests on the south side of the island near the cove where the squadron plans to dock. They pull into a cove sheltered by coral reefs offshore, and concealed by the foliage that extends out over the water.



The village headman comes to talk to them. McGinley, Marsh, and Smith go to meet him while the squadron unloads and begins to set up camp. McGinley is good with the locals and talks to the headman. The native chief is not unfriendly, but he wants the heroes to leave. "Boats damage coral. Anger sea spirits." McGinley and Marsh don't know what he's talking about, but they aren't leaving.

A camp is established. McGinley sets up his radio and goes out to have a look around, and set up lookout posts on the other side of the island.

The chief and villagers are still not too happy about the heroes being there. "If you stay, the angry yellow ghosts will come." The chief says, using their term for the Japanese (the Allies are the 'white ghosts'). One of McGinley's New Guinean guides suggests having a feast and inviting the chief. They capture a wild pig for the feast.

The chief joins the squadron for the pig roast. Other natives trade with the boat crews while the officers talk to the headman. They finally convince the headman to agree to let them stay. The natives couldn't force them to leave of course, but they want the

natives on their side. The headman is quite concerned the sea spirits will be angered about the coral being damaged by the boats, so Marsh agrees to sacrifice another pig to the "spirits".

While on watch, Devlin finds a ripped up ration box outside the area where the feast was held. The squadron wakes up to find that every ham and lime bean ration is gone from the boat stores (in every boat). No one saw anything.

No one is too upset about the ham and limas being gone, but all are concerned about someone walking into their camp unseen and getting onto their boats. Was it the natives? McGinley and his men go to the village and find a pile of ripped up rations. The tops of the cans of the ham and limas have been ripped off. The villagers deny any wrongdoing.

Marsh figures one of the men must have traded the rations away. They must have too much time on their hands. He holds an inspection, and later takes the squadron out on a patrol in the waters around the island (they come up dry). The watch is doubled that night.

The next morning, they awaken to find all of the guns on all of the boats pointed into the camp. Again, no one saw anything. If this is a prank by one of the crew it's not funny.

Later in the afternoon, one of McGinley's men reports an incoming Zero. The squadron goes to battle stations.

The Zero appears to be lost. It passes low overhead. RON-6 holds fire not

wanting to give away their position. The Zero comes back, having spotted them, and strafes the boats, shooting up the crew on PT-118 badly. RON-6 throws up a wall of AA fire and they shoot the Zero down. It crashes in the jungle, and McGinley and his men go out to have a look.

As they approach the wreckage of the Zero, they hear a scream. McGinley sees the body of the Japanese pilot being dragged into the bush. There is another scream and more shots. One of McGinley's men is dead, with a huge chunk bitten out of his side. A shore party led by Marsh and McGinley follow the trail to a cliff. Whoever grabbed the Japanese pilot must have gone over it into the sea below.

It's all very weird. Whatever is going on, it's got to be stopped. But before any measures can be taken, the heroes see a Japanese convoy heading for the Slot, and Guadalcanal. There are 10 troop barges escorted by three destroyers and a light cruiser, exactly the kind of game RON-6 is supposed to intercept. The shore party dashes back to the boats.

RON-6 winds up its engines and pulls out. Everyone readies their boats for battle as the PT-boats make for open ocean, the tropical sunset silhouetting them as they race away.

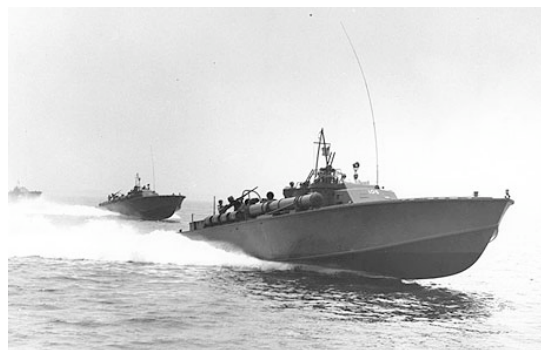
The Japanese convoy is sighted. Marsh decides to fall on them from behind, moving up in the Japanese ships' wake. It works, and the squadron manages to close to about four miles before being seen.

The Japanese destroyer at the back of the convoy spots them and begins to

turn and bring its guns to bear. Marsh gives the signal to attack. The twelve boats of the squadron leap forward as their skippers push the throttles to the stops. Squadron 6 charges ahead.

RON-6 endures several turns of fire from the destroyer. The other Japanese destroyers are doubling back to help. RON-6 loses two boats to 5" gunfire on the way in, but there's no time to stop and pick up survivors. The shells exploding nearby drench the crews of the boats. A near miss almost knocks Marsh out of the cockpit but the sea wolf hangs on.

PT-115 sets up a torpedo run on the Japanese destroyer. "Fire one! Fire two!" Marsh shouts. Devlin shoots. Knowing that the torpedoes have faulty detonators, Devlin tried to fix them before they left Espiritu Santo. He crosses his fingers that they will go off. The fish streak towards the destroyer, and hit amidships. The destroyer erupts in a huge ball of flame and smoke, then begins to sink!



Now the squadron is at close range and in among the transport barges. The other two destroyers close for action. The PT boats rake the troop barges with 37mm and 40mm cannon fire, topped off with the arcing tracers from their .50cal MGs. Hardacre, on the 37mm, destroys one transport

with a long burst of cannon rounds. A 5" shell shatters another PT boat. The night sky is lit up like the 4th of July. McGinley, who came along to replace one of the gunner son the 118 boat is stunned by the display of firepower.

The PT boats charge the destroyers, salvoing more torpedoes. The first spread misses but the second salvo strikes home. The destroyer's bow actually lifts into the air before coming back down and breaking off. The Japanese tin-can goes down. The squadron cuts through the transport barges, their shattered hulls are flaming wreckage in the water. As they reach the head of the column, they come within range of the light cruiser.

The Japanese warship throws everything it has at the oncoming American PT boats. Another PT boat is hit, disintegrating as it cartwheels out of control. PT-115 takes another near miss and the crew ride out the blast wave. 25mm rounds from the cruiser riddle the PT boats but they keep coming. Finally within range Marsh orders the squadron to salvo all their remaining torpedoes at the



cruiser. The fish drop into the water and streak toward their target.

The Japanese cruiser dodges the first salvo but turns into the second. The ship is obliterated in a tremendous explosion as its magazines blow it sky high. RON-6 reforms and surveys the wreckage. The sea is littered with debris and bodies. That's one less Japanese infantry brigade that will make it to reinforce the Japanese on Guadalcanal.

RON-6 picks up survivors from the PT boats that were hit and head back to base. They have about a dozen serious casualties and twice as many with less serious wounds. Most of the surviving boats have taken some damage but are still seaworthy. They are low on ammo and have no more torpedoes. They radio for instructions, a PT boat tender will come to them, and they are to send the wounded back to the rear, but otherwise maintain their position.

The boat with the seriously wounded leaves, and the squadron secures from battle and tends to itself. But in the morning, they awaken to find all of the wounded men who weren't shipped out, missing from the medical tent. This causes quite a stir. The heroes go to the native village to find out what is going on, but find the entire village empty.

The natives have holed up in some caves above the village. McGinley demands that the headman tell them what is going on. The headman shakes his head. "You have angered the sea spirits. They will come. You cannot stop them."

"Cannot stop what?" McGinley says.

Suddenly there is a gunshot from the cove where the boats are, then another. "Adaro," says the headman.



The heroes start running back for their boats. As they run up the beach, they hear more firing and screaming. They can see that five out six remaining

boats are listing, sunk, or burning. Strange humanoid shapes appear through the smoke fighting with the crew. One boat frantically backs out into the cove, its crew struggling with a huge man-like thing on deck.

Three shark-like humanoids loom out of the smoke on the beach. The heroes charge forward or drop and take firing positions, though some are momentarily shaken by the bizarre and unbelievable sight. They shoot the sharkmen down. When they reach the cove, only Chief Beckinsdale's boat is still afloat but it is damaged and taking on water - the Adaro attacked the boats from below, knocking holes in the hulls. The surviving crew members are on the verge of panic, but Marsh calms them down. Smith gets to work repairing the 119 boat.

Night falls. Smith is working hard to fix the boat. Hardacre and some other men salvage the depth charges from the other boats. McGinley and his New Guineans, along with some Navy men form a perimeter on the beach. Then a strange sound, like a conch shell battle horn, keens over the jungle.

Marsh fires up a flare. The flickering light casts eerie shadows into the jungle. Then suddenly, all of the noise of the jungle stops - no squawking birds, no screeching, monkeys, no buzzing insects. Marsh fires another flare. This time the flickering shadows reveal a horde of adaro stepping out of the treeline, and dozens of shark-like fins closing in on the boat.

The heroes open up with everything they've got. Some adaro heave themselves over the gunwales onto the boat. On shore, the others charge.

Some of the men panic and run into the water to get to the boat, but get quickly ripped apart by the adaro in the lagoon. McGinley is screaming, "Get back to back! Form a circle!" They shoot down several adaro, but the creatures keep coming. Hardacre cranks the 37mm around and blasts several of them into chum. On the boat, Devlin charges one of the adaro and stabs it with his bayonet, knocking it off the boat. Another adaro gets right up on Marsh in the cockpit. Marsh sticks his .45 in the thing's mouth and blows out whatever it has for brains.

More adaro climb onto the boat and the crew is fighting hand to hand with the things. On shore, McGinley and his men keep shooting, keep taking them down, but its not stopping them. Marsh, guns the engines and tries to knock the adaro off their feet, then turns the boat for the sea. It looks like the men on shore are finished; there are dozens of adaro attacking them.

Hardacre continues suppressing the adaro on shore, chewing some of them into tiny pieces with his 37mm cannon, but it doesn't stem the tide.

The remaining adaro on the boat gets finished off by Devlin and Smith (with much spending of bennies).

Marsh notices some adaro standing on the reef offshore. The gunners on the boat blast them off their feet as Marsh pulls the boat alongside. The coral is shaped into a ring about 5 meters across, and it seems to be a tube of some kind. In the moonlight, the water inside the ring is dark and deep in contrast to the shallows around it. The crew kick two depth charges over the side and into the hole.

Two huge fountains of water erupt into the air when the charges go off, shattering the coral ring. The crew spots another ring and dump two more charges down it.

Back on shore, the adaro have overwhelmed McGinley and his men. They bravely make their stand, fighting with bayonets and machetes, until McGinley goes down "battered and bruised". His last remaining New Guinean, Ranu, fights on and tries to drag McGinley away, but the adaro take him down too.

Marsh and the surviving crew members on the 119 boat spot more coral rings. Each gets another depth charge. The adaro won't be coming up out of these offshore entrances anymore.

McGinley comes to, battered and bleeding, and sees the adaro just standing there silently in the dark looking out to sea. Then the conch

shell horn sounds again, and the adaro walk out into the surf and disappear.

PT-119 returns to the cove and surveys the carnage. Unbelievably, McGinley is still alive.

PT-119 motors slowly away from the island, heading for home.

Later, back on Espiritu Santo, Marsh and Smith walk out of the intel shack with grim looks on their faces, having just made their report.

Inside, two officers look at their notes. "Well what do you think Bill?"

"I think it was Japanese commandos, is what I think. I'm not buying any of that 'sharkman' malarkey. Yes, Marsh and his XO are headed for a little R&R in the psychiatric wing at Bethesda."

"Yeah. What a shame. Marsh was a fine officer. What do we do with the crew?"

"Split 'em up, send 'em home. Can't have them spreading wild rumors around. On their own, no one will believe them."

"What about the Australian?"

"I heard he's headed back out there. Crazy, those coast watchers." The officer closes his file, and the two men leave, switching off the light.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆



Like the Battle of Britain adventure, this mission was intended to take the rules for naval action out for a spin, and in that regard they succeeded quite well. In contrast to the gritty realism of the previous adventure, I wanted to give this one a more fantastic spin. There were some good “screen” moments I thought; the attack on the destroyer convoy was a very visual and exciting sequence. I also found the discussion you guys had about how many people you killed in that attack rather sobering. The final battle against the shark-men was also very cinematic. I also particularly liked Tony’s subtle nod to H.P. Lovecraft with his character’s name and background! Well done!

MISSION 5 – THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

THE TIME: APRIL, 1945

**THE PLACE: SOUTHERN GERMANY, NEAR THE
AUSTRIAN BORDER.**

THE HEROES:

Lt. Marcus Derringer (USN), (Stan Ward), Naval Intelligence, OSI Adept. “Show me your papers.”

Staff Sergeant William “Bill” Morris, (Selby Thorpe), No. 3 Commando. “Stay focused on the mission.”

Staff Sergeant John Walker, (Tony Dolan), 2nd Ranger Battalion. “Rangers lead the way!”

Sergeant Jeremy Atherton, (Cameron Eeles), No. 3 Commando. “Got a light?”

Father Friedrich von Rupriche, (Peter Melville), the Vatican. “Trust in the lord my son.”

THE MISSION:

The war is almost at an end and the Nazi’s are desperate. It is feared that Hitler and the Nazis will make a desperate last stand in the National Redoubt, a mountainous area on the German - Austrian border. Even more worrying are reports that the Germans are preparing to launch modified V series rockets capable of hitting the U.S. Atlantic seaboard, and that they have armed these rockets with supernaturally powerful warheads. The final countdown has begun.



The heroes arrive at 3rd Army headquarters near Munich. Their unit patches mark them as members of various elite units - the British Commandos, the U.S. Army Rangers - but these men are actually members of the OSI.

Munich is in ruins and the Germans in full retreat. An intelligence officer greets them and shows them inside. They all sit down and a movie projector begins to roll. They see a film of V-2 rockets being fired.

The lights come on. William Thomason, head of the OSI steps in front of them. Information recovered from the V-2 sites in France suggests the Germans have built an extensive underground rocket base in the Obersalzberg area near Berchtesgaden and are preparing to launch, sometime within the next 72 hours. The German operation must be stopped at all costs.

The heroes, wearing SS uniforms and carrying German equipment, are to parachute into the target area, penetrate the base, and destroy the launch control center before it's too late.

A planning session follows, maps and aerial photos are discussed, equipment and weapons selected and checked. Major Quincy also gives them a few interesting items; several boxes of silver bullets, Sykes-Fairbairne commando knives made of cold iron, an SS blood mage's baton, and a rune inscribed German helmet. Lt. Dillinger briefs the other six members of the squad.

At the airfield, the heroes prepare to embark. A black Mosquito night fighter is turning over its engines. Out of the evening shadows walks General Eisenhower. He talks with the members of the squad individually, giving them personal encouragement. "Men, the fate of the free world rests on your shoulders. Good luck, and God bless."



They clamber into the cramped interior of the fighter-bomber. The engines roar as it takes off, climbing to about 1,000 feet. For about 30 minutes the flight is smooth, but once the plane nears the German radar net, it's time for evasive action!

The Mosquito dives to treetop level to get under German radar, going flat out, twisting and turning, the landscape below a dark blur. The yellow jump light comes on; two minutes to the drop zone. The heroes check their gear as the bomb bay doors open. The plane pulls up sharply to 500 feet and the green light goes on.

Within seconds the heroes are out of the plane. The static lines snap taut, popping the parachutes. A few more seconds later, the heroes are on the ground.

Father von Rupriche is injured on landing, but with a quick prayer he is up and walking.

The squad is in German uniform and they all speak German. They line up and march straight down the road toward Berchtesgaden like they belong there. The first test of their ruse comes at the checkpoint on the road outside town. Dillinger quickly convinces the sentry that he's taken his squad out for maneuvers and they are returning to barracks. The heroes march through town, contemplating stealing a vehicle, but decide it might draw unwanted attention at this point. They continue to march through the town and up the road toward Oberslazburg.



They round a bend and see Adolf Hitler's Berghof retreat at the foot of the hill, with the Hotel Zum Turken

and SS barracks complex behind it. A guardhouse straddles the road. Rupriche calls the squad to a halt. One of the two SS sentries approaches and asks to see Rupriche's papers. Something doesn't sit right with the sentry and he asks for Derringer's as well, then walks back to the guardhouse to call HQ. It doesn't look good.

Atherton nods to Dillinger and walks up to the second sentry. "Hey, kamerad. Got a cigarette?" The sentry goes in his pouch for a smoke, and then Atherton asks for a light. As he does so, Dillinger concentrates and blinks away into the sentry box, appearing directly behind the man on the phone. Simultaneously, Atherton draws his commando knife and makes short work of the second guard. Dillinger's silenced pistol coughs twice, and the phone drops from the dead man's hand.

The voice on the other end of the phone is not convinced. He's sending a squad down.

The heroes roll the two dead sentries into a ditch, and the squad piles into the truck behind the guardhouse. Morris plants a demo charge on the back wall and sets a timer for two minutes. With Atherton in the driver's seat they speed up the hill, passing the squad sent to investigate on the way down.

They roll up to the SS barracks and move inside, just as the charge on the guardhouse goes off. An alarm begins to ring and the place wakes up. There are SS soldiers jumping out of their bunks, struggling to get their clothes on, it's chaos. The heroes look for

anyone not heading in the direction of the explosion. They spot an officer rounding up some men and heading out the back of the barracks. The heroes follow, and wind up running right into a telephone switching room.

“What are you doing here!?” shouts the officer. “Get to the Berghof with reinforcements!” Dillinger salutes and they all turn tail and leave.

Jumping back into the truck they head for the Berghof, hoping now to find a bunker entrance there. They pull up in the driveway and get out of the truck. The alarm is still ringing and there is quite a commotion at the guardhouse. Other SS troops are milling about the entrance to the Berghof. Then everyone suddenly snaps to attention; someone important is coming out.

Out walks none other than Reichsmarschall Heinrich Himmler. He glares disapprovingly toward the smoke coming from the guardhouse down the road then walks down the steps. Himmler stops in front of the heroes, who are all standing at attention and trying not to make eye contact. Himmler steps right up to Rupriche and Dillinger and looks them carefully up and down. “Jah. Good.



Carry on, “ he says and snaps for his car to be brought up. The heroes breathe a silent sigh of relief.

“What are you doing standing there gawking like tourists!” barks another officer. “Get to the 2nd floor!” “Jah wohl!” replies Dillinger and leads his men into the Berghof.

The heroes are perhaps the only Allied soldiers to have set foot inside this Nazi sanctuary during the war. The Berghof is richly appointed, decorated in the German alpine style. A large portrait of the Fuhrer glares accusingly at them from one wall. The squad quickly fans out, looking for possible bunker entrances. It isn't long before they find one in the back of the house. The door is locked and Rupriche immediately sets to work with a lockpick set.

“Where did you learn to do that?” asks Walker. “I wasn't always a priest!” says Rupriche as the door clicks open. Standing in front of them is an SS trooper in black dress uniform.

“Your papers?” he asks. Walker steps forward, holding his HiStandard behind his back. “Yes, I'll show you my papers.” PFFT! PFFT! The SS guard drops like a sack of bricks with two bullet holes in his head. Walker turns to the squad. “Let's go!”

The commandos advance into the Nazi rocket base. They pass through long corridors filled with manufacturing equipment; lathes, drill presses, etc., the Nazis have a factory in here. They pass dollies with partially assembled rockets on them, engines, and heaps of spare parts.

As they go along they notice clocks on

the walls every so often. It looks as if the Nazis have begun the countdown to launch, and the heroes have less than one hour to stop it. A couple of times, sentries challenge them and they bluff their way past. Finally they reach the end of the passageway.

From doorways to the left and right comes a current of warm and fetid air. Entering one, they see they are in some kind of barracks. The floor here is a metal grating and a bad smell wafts up from underneath. There are dozens and dozens of uncomfortable looking bunks in here. Dillinger and Atherton want to investigate further. The others argue they are wasting time, but Dillinger and Atherton decide to check things out.

Scratched into one of the bunks they find the Hebrew word Behemut - "Behemoth". At the far end of the barracks they find a section of the floor has been removed. Upon closer inspection they find bits of clothes that look like remnants of a prison uniform on the edges of the grating. Whoever was held here, they're gone now. The heroes get creeped out by the implications and quickly move out again.

They go deeper into the complex. The clocks on the walls remind them of how much time they have left - not much. They aren't sure where they are, but continue on. Ahead, a door opens up and two SS men step into the hallway, followed by a man in a lab coat and an SS officer. The scientist appears to be a prisoner - his hands are bound and he is clearly being escorted by the guards. The heroes stand to either side of the passage and quickly make eye contact; they're

going to take down the guards and see if the prisoner can help them. Dillinger stands blocking their way as the SS guards and their officer approach. Dillinger clicks his heels and extends his hand. "May I see your papers?" he asks?

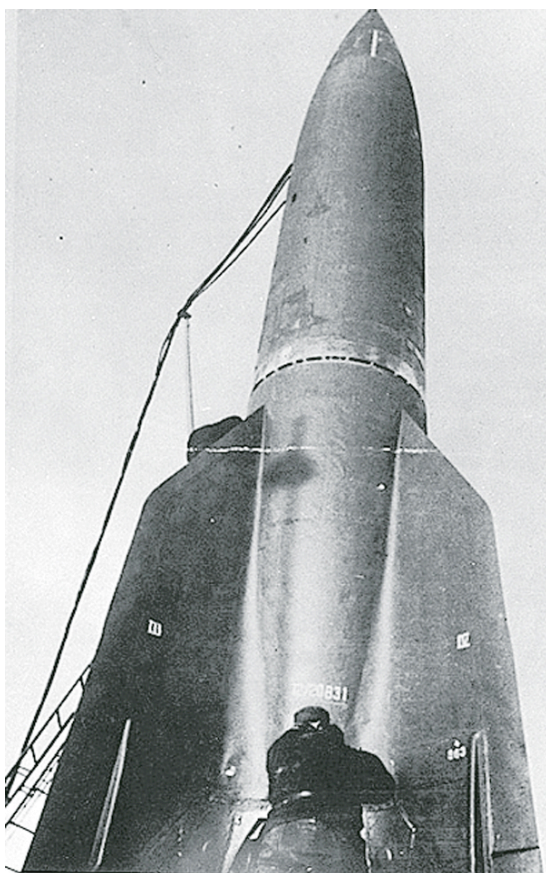
As the officer reaches for his ID, Walker double taps the officer with his pistol, while Atherton and Morris knife the other two SS men. The scientist is shocked. "What? Who are you?"

"Where is the launch control room?" the heroes demand. The scientist is puzzled. Why do they want to know? They tell him that the rockets are armed with weapons that could destroy all civilization. The scientist looks downcast and broken. "I know," he says. "I designed them. My name is Von Braun. Werner Von Braun." Von Braun was placed under arrest after living out his usefulness. With the long range rockets completed he was no longer needed, and the Nazis never trusted him anyway.

Von Braun tells the heroes the most direct way to the launch control facility, but says that to get there, they will have to go through the laboratory, a place he seems to fear. Von Braun doesn't want to go that way, but the heroes insist that if he is alone, he'll be recaptured and shot. Von Braun hesitantly agrees to go with them.

Fifteen minutes show on the countdown clocks on the walls. The PA system comes to life as the feed from the control room is broadcast throughout the complex. The countdown has begun. The heroes

enter a huge workbay. A giant V2 A9 "Amerika Bomber" sits on a railcar, ready to be moved to the launchpad. It moves out slowly as other technicians get ready to lower the warhead onto another rocket next in the queue. The heroes pass through the workbay and down the passage on the other side.



Hurrying along, they come to a large vault-like door guarded by two sentries. A couple of silenced pistol shots clear the way and they open the door. The room they enter appears to be a morgue; at least, it's full of sheet-covered bodies on stretchers. Von Braun is visibly upset, and refuses to go any further. No one dares to peek beneath the sheets. Two men are left to guard Von Braun and the others proceed.

Suddenly, they hear the voice of Adolf Hitler making a speech. It sounds like it could be coming in on the PA system speakers, but it is loud and close, and sounds like it is coming from the next room.

In the next room the heroes come upon a chilling sight. The darkened chamber contains 16 cylindrical glass tanks that extend from floor to ceiling. Each is filled with a faintly glowing cobalt blue fluid. Inside are naked bodies, some child-like, some nearly full-grown, connected and fed with tubes and strange globs of matter. On closer inspection, it looks as if the bodies in the tubes are copies of Adolf Hitler!

The speech continues, but it isn't a recording and it isn't coming in over the PA system. From the darkness near one of the tanks, out walks Adolf Hitler, or so it seems. Dillinger notices something even stranger; there appear to be cables or something attached to Hitler's back, so Dillinger moves to investigate.

Hitler rants at the heroes, and there is something unearthly in his eyes. Atherton and Walker raise their weapons and fire. Their rounds stitch Hitler up and down, blowing off an arm, but it isn't blood the sprays out of the body, at least, it isn't red blood anyway. It's fluorescent blue liquid!

Everyone advances carefully up the floor between the columns of growth tanks. "Hitler's" body lies on the metal grating, his eyes still alive but crazed, his shattered mouth working but only gurgling noises coming out.

Suddenly, whatever "Hitler" is

attached to yanks it's meat puppet down through the metal floor grating. At the same time there are screams from the morgue in the next room where they left Von Braun and two men to watch him. Then, rope-like masses of pulsating tendons burst through the floor grating. These tentacles seem made of and adorned with body parts - hands, arms, legs, internal organs, and worse, faces. Some look like prisoners, but most disturbingly, the tentacles are tipped with the mutated and twisted visage of the Fuhrer himself! The faces shriek like steam locomotives and attack. One of their men is grabbed and yanked down to the floor screaming, only to be ripped apart by the tentacles.

After staving off the initial panic (several of them blew their Guts check) the heroes fight for their lives, dodging the whipping tentacles. Bullets don't seem to hurt them, so they go for their cold iron commando knives, and these seem to have a better effect. Dillinger battles two at the same time, while Morris and two other men are cut off from the rest of the group.

Rupriche rolls free and with a burst of frantic strength, lifts a steel floor grating up and away, and tosses a grenade into the darkness below. It goes off with a WHUMP and the faces on the tentacles shriek in pain.

Despite the damage they are doing, the Hitler-thing is slowly getting the better of them. Morris loses his knife as it spins out of his grasp and down into the darkness beneath the floor. He dodges away and rolls to the remains of Harris' equipment,

grabbing Harris' knife from its sheath. Too late. The Hitler-thing seizes Morris, yanks him down and begins tearing him apart!

The heroes take another Guts check but hold firm this time. Atherton runs up the stairs on the opposite side of the room looking for a way out of this nightmare. Another vault-like door, locked from the outside, blocks the way. Atherton grabs his plastic explosive and plants a charge on the door, then jams a timer pencil into it. "Fire in the hole!!" he yells dodging for cover.

Everyone tries to get clear of the doorway, still fighting the tentacles. For each one they slash in two, another seems ready to take its place. They've got to get out of there!

The charge on the door goes off, blasting a hole open (and taking out another tentacle as well). Everyone begins to retreat into the corridor. But the monster is far from defeated and it seems it can still come after them.

Page (one of the Ally commandos, now controlled by Selby), grips a 15-pound satchel charge. "Go!" he yells at the others, and positions himself on the stairs between the Hitler-thing and the rest of the squad. Everyone charges down the corridor away from the room, as Page pulls the fuse on the satchel charge. They last see page fending off the Hitler-thing, as the charge detonates (Selby now moved to his 3rd character of the adventure, Coombs).

The blast wave rockets down the corridor, flattening the squad. Walker is injured but Rupriche administers a

prayer to help Walker get back on his feet. The clock on the wall shows less than 3 minutes remaining before launch. There's no way to go except forward.



The five remaining commandos charge down the hallway. From the door up ahead, two SS men appear and open fire. Walker and Atherton gun them down. The heroes charge through the door.

They have entered the launch control room. It's a hemispherical bunker, filled with control consoles. A large map on the far wall displays the trajectories of the rockets. They are targeted on New York, London, Moscow, and several other major cities around the world. Some also seem to be curiously targeted above the Arctic Circle, but there is no time to ponder this as the weapons of an entire platoon of SS troops are brought to bear on the heroes. SS Obersturmfuhrer Rudolph Krieger stands in the center of the room, flanked by two huge ape-like creatures with MG42 machine guns. Krieger stares angrily at the commandos. "You are too late. Nothing will stop this launch." He says to his men, "Destroy them!"

The heroes know there is no way out,

and no time left. There is no way they can win a firefight with an entire platoon, and a powerful Nazi blood mage. They all exchange a look. Walker yanks the pin on his satchel charge. "RANGERS LEAD THE WAY!!!" he yells and charges forward.

The other commandos do the same, pulling the fuse pins on their charges and rushing toward Krieger in the center of the room. Rupriche, alone, ducks for cover as the SS troops open up. He prays and puts the fear of God on Krieger. The heroes are taking hits, running through a fusillade of fire, but this is a one-way trip. It always was.

Walker, Atherton, Dillinger, and Coombs leap on the master control panel together as Krieger cowers, at last knowing real fear. The charges go off.

Outside the base, the ground above where the launch control room collapses downward. The mountain shakes as the Nazi plan for ultimate destruction is buried.

From a small bunker entrance, a plume of dust spews out. Behind it comes Dr. Werner Von Braun, helped by a lone surviving commando. They stagger down the hillside and down onto the road below.

"Although there was some German military planning for a stand in the Alpine region, it was never fully endorsed by Hitler and no serious attempt was made to put the plan into operation. Without Hitler there was no Nazi Germany, and once Hitler was dead few Germans, even dedicated Nazis, saw any point in fighting on. The intelligence reports supplied to

SHAEF about the Redoubt were some of the worst intelligence reports of all time. When the American armies penetrated Bavaria and western Austria at the end of April, they met little serious resistance, and the National Redoubt was shown to have been a myth.”

General Dwight D. Eisenhower,
Report by the Supreme
Commander to the Combined
Chiefs of Staff on the
Operations in Europe of the
Allied Expeditionary Force 6
June 1944 to 8 May 1944

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆



I wanted this adventure to feel like an action movie, and I think it did. I enjoyed being able to have cameos of famous people (I particularly liked the scene you played with Himmler), and I enjoyed the whole commando schtick, with the silenced pistols, commando knives, and demolition charges. This was the last adventure in a series of “Plot Points” which are provided for the setting as ready-made campaigns and adventures for GMs and players to use as (entirely) optional meta-plot devices. Basically, you guys proved to me that it worked, and I’m totally confident of including it in the book.