

THE EDGE OF DARKNESS STORYTELLER TEAM PRESENTS

Inferno

All Hell Breaks Loose

"DEATH AND SORROW WILL BE THE COMPANIONS OF OUR JOURNEY;
HARDSHIP OUR GARMENT; CONSTANCY AND VALOUR OUR ONLY
SHIELD."

[WINSTON CHURCHILL, 1940]

The World of Darkness: 1939 – 1945

INFERNO: INTRODUCTION



Recorded history has left us details of about 14,000 conflicts and wars. None were bloodier or more costly to Mankind than World War Two.

Even the most cautious of estimates put the death toll in excess of 46,000,000 soldiers and civilians over the 2,174 days of World War Two. Some estimates guess at 60,000,000 casualties.

For each day the War lasted at least 27,000 people died.

World War Two is simply too vast and complex to cover quickly (or even well in detail!) This handout provides only the vaguest of possible outlines to events.

Nevertheless, despite the vast obstacles to simplicity, this handout aims to cover three main areas:-

- 1) The **Inferno** themes and setting and what it means for the **Edge of Darkness**
- 2) How you, as a Player, can contribute to the **Inferno** setting
- 3) A brief overview of why the Allies fought the Axis Powers; what they fought with and where they did their killing and dying.



"There now follows a broadcast by the Prime Minister..."

"I am speaking to you now from the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street. This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government an official note stating that unless we heard from them by eleven o'clock, that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us."

"I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany."

Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain
(3rd September, 1939 11.15 A.M)

INFERNO: THE SETTING AND THEMES

The **Paradiusm** setting of the early 1900's looked at the Unlife of Kindred as they entered the 20th Century.

It was a time filled with the promise of Utopia and benefits of a glorious future.

The setting for **Inferno** concerns itself with the lives of **Mages** as they struggle to face the outcome of all the failed plans and projects; all the broken promises and lies that were told by 1939.

War...avarice...treachery...hatred...fear...deception: these all led to the invasion of Poland in 1939.

With **Inferno** ~ the world reaps a bitter whirlwind.

So, what does this mean for me as a Player?

Well, you get to join the good fight!

Battle against the brutal Nazi enemy and their sinister Japanese allies.

As a player you can join one of the secret Allied Units.

The intention is for the setting to look at the work of both Mages and their Mortal allies and look at their role in World War Two.

THE SETTING ~ RECRUITMENT

MILITARY CARTOGRAPHIC RESEARCH – A QUICK HISTORY

Working under the motto: **Quaerendo Invenietis** (seek and you shall find) the **Military Cartographic Research Unit (MCR)** was founded during the **Peninsular Campaign** (1808 - 1814) by a far-sighted Major of the Royal Engineers.

The original intention of the unit was to survey areas under enemy control, gather geographic intelligence on French supply routes, the strength of garrison and fortresses, etc. But over time the role of this small unit grew in importance and its skill-set came to be seen as most useful in gathering a wider range of intelligence and, borrowing the lessons from the Spanish guerilla, the general conduct of clandestine and harassing activities.

The role may have changed over time, but the primary mission of MCR has remained to tackle jobs more conservative and orthodox elements of British Imperial military structure and law enforcement finds difficult to deal with ~ or even sometimes acknowledge.

Defence of the Realm is MCR's primary objective: though MCR has tackled spies, saboteurs...and all manner of dangerous cranks, deviant crackpots and nefarious criminals!

YOUR CHARACTER'S ROLE AND PROBABLE BACKGROUND

Military personnel are likely to be posted to MCR as a deflection from their existing careers with the Royal Navy, the Army or the Royal Marines – though, by tradition, MCR is led by an Officer of Engineers. The character maybe from anywhere in the UK or wider Empire.

Those posted to MCR usually have demonstrated accomplishment in at least one of several primary characteristics:-

- To be a known man of courage, patriotism and loyalty
- To be known to exhibit grace under pressure
- To have seen at least one military action
- To possess 'skill at arms'
- To have had an encounter with...well...with something your Commanding Officer probably found difficult to explain...which is code for: this chap is probably a Mage.

It is worth noting that if a civilian exhibits skills or knowledge vital to the accomplishment of a mission for MCR, then he or she could very easily find themselves assigned 'temporary officer, temporary gentleman/gentlewoman' status for the duration of their time with MCR by commission and warrant of the Crown.

MCR enjoys a perverse reputation for radical activity and forward thinking. The Unit will improvise to get the job done.

As a result, MCR welcomes females to its strength.

*When the storm arrives
Would you be seen with me
By the merciless eyes I've deceived?
I've seen angels fall from blinding heights.
But you yourself are nothing so divine:
Just next in line.*

*Arm yourself: because no one else here will save you.
The odds will betray you.
And they will replace you...*

*Are you willing to die?
The coldest blood runs through my veins ...
...If you come inside things will not be the same...*

(Chris Cornell – You Know My Name)

THE MCR CHAIN OF COMMAND

MCR overtly operates under the Order of Battle of the **Officer Commanding the Corps of Royal Engineers** alongside the **Telegraph Battalion**.

However, in practice, this relationship with the Telegraph Battalion is mostly an illusion designed as a 'cover' and MCR receives its instructions from the highest levels of High Command and government.

This essential independence of operation is jealously guarded, but is never taken for granted. MCR relies heavily upon practical support from all areas of government to function, receive pay, etc. – the unit cannot afford to think itself so elite that it is indispensable!

Nevertheless, those who survive a posting to MCR attain a mystique and glory amongst their peers.

Each of the existing **16** MCR units led by a captain.

At any one time about a third of the 16 units will be 'in the field'. The others will be on leave; catching up on Rest and Recuperation or training with the latest doctrine and equipment at any of the specialist training establishments, depots or garrisons across the Empire.

MCR RESOURCES

MCR has its headquarters in a discrete building...

To protect the secrecy, a brass name plaque is affixed outside announcing that the building is used by the "Imperial Maritime Shipping Company" - as a result the building is known to all in MCR as "**Maritime House**." The Colonel Commanding has an office of his own, as do many of the Lt Colonels.

MCR is lavishly equipped with a large map room and an extensive library which contains HM Admiralty charts and copies of admiralty charts from several other nations too. The library has several smaller briefing rooms adjacent to it for more private and confidential briefings or work.

The library is well equipped with most standard reference works, academic journals and daily newspapers.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A TIMELINE TO WAR

1933 – Waffen SS founded – Himmler founds this elite para-military force

1934 – Night of the Long Knives

*“They held up a stone.
I said, 'Stone.'
Smiling they said, 'stone.'"*

*They showed me a tree.
I said, 'Tree.'
Smiling, they said, 'Tree.'"*

*They shed a man's blood.
I said, 'Blood.'
Smiling, they said, 'paint.'"*

*They shed a man's blood.
I said, 'Blood.'
Smiling, they said, 'paint.'"*

(Amir Gilboa)

1936 – Spanish Civil War

1936 – Bombing of the Spanish town Guernica by the German 'Kondor Legion' of fearsome Stuka dive-bombers



Picasso's depiction of Franco's relentless bombing of Guernica

1937

1938

1939 – Spanish Civil War ends

Why do we fight?



Junker 87 – STUKA's Sturzkampfflugzeug (Dive bomber) – in formation over Europe

Leaving aside such questions as 'was war inevitable?' and 'was Chamberlain wrong?' we must assume that we are now at war! But why?

The German Army was limited, by terms of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles (that ended World War One in 1918) to 100,000 men. The Germans were denied an air force – though the Luftwaffe was secretly built up. The German navy (Kriegsmarine) was also limited in size and quality of warships. Though the German naval might was also successfully circumvented.

Well – as shown in Chamberlain's speak at Annex A – Hitler invaded Poland in contravention of treaties.

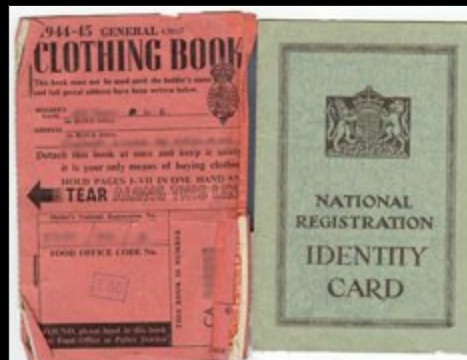
Who was the first to die – and why?

They called them the “Tin Cans.”

On August 3, 1939 the first victim was a prisoner. His name isn't known. He was from a concentration camp.

He died as part of a dastardly scheme hatched by HIMMLER - the dreaded Chief of the SS. The prisoner was dressed in the uniform of a Polish soldier. With several others, this prisoner was marched out to a radio station on the German-Polish

border at the frontier town of Gleiwitz and then they were all shot dead by an elite team of SS Stormtroopers under Himmler's direct orders.



The current strategic background

September, 1939

The European theatre of operations is in chaos.

“Half a century has passed, and the time has come to sweep away the myths and reveal the no less inspiring gleam of that complex and frightening time in which evil was ascendant,
goodness diffident and the British
– impetuous, foolish and brave beyond measure
- the worlds only hope.”

(Len Deighton – Blood, Tears and Folly.)

MISSION NO. 1 : OPERATION NIMBUS

MOST SECRET

To: Capt. ALLEN MC, MCR 12 Det

From: Colonel Commanding, MCR

Date: August, 2 1939

Copied to: WHIRLPOOL, CIGS, HMS KING ALFRED, Station Y

PRIORITY

SUBJECT: TEMPORARY DUTY ORDERS – OPERATION NIBUS

The strategic situation deteriorates...

MISSION OBJECTIVES

- 1) Locate and clandestinely infiltrate a secret meeting of NAZI scientists to be held on September 25 1939 in Berlin
- 2) Report details of this meeting direct only to Commander of MCR
- 3) Maintain ultimate discretion
- 5) Report findings to Maritime House at earliest opportunity.

SITREP

Reliable intelligence has been received indicating that on evening of September 25, 1939, a meeting of senior and specialist scientists will take place in Berlin. This meeting is believed to be part of a series of seminars designed to provide a comprehensive briefing to senior military officers and officials within the Wermatch and Reichstag on secret weapon projects of HITLER'S regime.

ADDITIONAL FACTORS

This mission operates in direct support to wider objectives of the Joint Intelligence Committee (Science Sub-Committee) and at the direct command of the Chief of Imperial General Staff. Should you fail in the above objectives we will disavow knowledge of the operation and leave you to the mercy of opposing intelligence organisations.

You must prepare your own evacuation contingency and prepare appropriate conduct after capture procedures.

Good luck, God Save The King

MOST SECRET

END MESSAGE

ANNEX A MILITARY & MCR JARGON

CID – Committee of imperial Defence

CSDIC – Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre

Camp 020 – Latchmere House, Ham Common – a prison in Surrey

strategy

tactics

plan

Military organisation

Army Group

Army

Corps

Division

Brigade

Regiment

Battalion

Company

Squad

Ranks (Army in descending order)

Field Marshal

General

Lt General

Maj-General

Brigadier

Colonel

Lt Colonel

Major

Captain

Lieutenant

2nd Lieutenant

Other ranks

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