

WEIRD WAR I

HELLFIGHTERS



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Hellfighters

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Hellfighters

Hellfighters is a Plot Point Campaign that follows the exploits of the American 369th Infantry Regiment from the time the unit is attached to the French army until shortly after the Second Battle of the Marne. The campaign covers a period of five months and covers a wide geographic area of the Western Front.

The Second Battle of the Marne was part of the great German “Peace Offensives” designed to smash the British army and force the Allies to sue for peace. Unfortunately for the Kaiser’s troops, the French successfully deduced where the attack would fall and 52 German divisions smashed themselves against prepared defenses. Adding to their misery, the weirdness of the war reared its ugly head and the attack foundered right where the initial German attacks were stopped four years earlier.

After a period of acclimation on a quiet sector of the front, the heroes find themselves in the midst of this furious battle. They not only confront German troops and the mind-blasting encounters of the weird wars, but an evil hundreds of years old that threatens the Allied efforts. At the end of this campaign they will have truly earned the name “Harlem Hellfighters.”

Heroes from Harlem

The 369th Infantry Regiment

The player characters are all members of the U.S. Army’s 369th Infantry Regiment, also known as the “Rattlers” after the rattlesnake on their unit crest. The unit began life as the 15th New York National Guard Regiment. African-Americans from Harlem in New York City fill the ranks of this unit, though all but seven of its officers are white. As a National Guard unit, all the enlisted men are drawn from a fairly small geographic area and most have known each other for quite some time, but many of the officers are newly assigned. The

players should determine their backgrounds, what they did back in Harlem, existing friendships, and any other subplots that might have followed them into combat in France.

Most of the 369th’s soldiers experienced significant racial discrimination in their pre-deployment training in South Carolina, and this shared adversity helped the soldiers in the unit bond together.

Now the soldiers are all members of the same 8-man rifle squad. Their company commander, Captain Ronald Hawthorne, is a white officer from New York, while their platoon leader, Second Lieutenant Richard Williams, is an African — American, as are all the NCOs.

The unit arrived in France on January 1st, 1918 and was initially assigned to labor duties building a logistics infrastructure for the tide of American troops following along behind them. The 369th was then assigned to the French 16th Division on the front line in

Suggested Sequence of Events

Sessions	Adventure
1	The Afrique Sector
2–3	Mission Generator
1	The Old North Church
1–2	Mission Generator
1	Reminder of Home
2–3	Mission Generator
1	Cry Wolf
1–2	Mission Generator
1	Bad Blood
1	Chateau de Loup
11–12	Weirdness

mid-March. The men wear the blue helmets and leather equipment of the *poilu* (French soldier) but retain their American khaki uniforms. They use French Lebel rifles and bayonets, with Chauchat light machine guns and Hotchkiss heavy machine guns rounding out the unit's arsenal. See the *Weird War One Player's Guide* for equipment statistics.

The Afrique Sector

Read the following as the heroes head to the front:

After a trans-Atlantic voyage and a couple of months laying railroad track and building warehouses and barracks for the soon to arrive American Expeditionary Force, the old 15th New York began advanced training with the French Army. Several weeks of intense combat training and weapons familiarization followed. You and your friends now finds yourselves assigned to the French 16th Army at a sector of the Champagne-Ardenne front fittingly called Afrique. A French liaison officer, Capitaine d'Apcher, is assigned to your unit and quickly becomes a favorite due to his fair nature and good humor, despite the foul smelling herbal tea he drinks every morning like clockwork.

The heroes have time to settle into the trenches. The 369th, integrated into the French 16th Division, assigns a sector to each of the three battalions, placing two companies in the front trenches, with a third in reserve. This assignment lasts for 30 days, followed by ten days in the rear area to rest, clean up, and get hot chow.

First Blood

Several days after arriving at the front, the heroes' squad is alerted for action by Capitaine d'Apcher:

"Mes amis, tonight you become real soldiers. We will move across No Man's Land and visit the Boche in their homes. I have read your training reports, and have full confidence in your ability to carry out this simple mission. We will raid the German trenches and hopefully bag a prisoner or important documents. Be prepared at midnight."

The heroes have a few hours before they set off with Capitaine d'Apcher, who wants the soldiers to use only melee weapons to avoid drawing attention to their attack. Once they go over the top, each soldier should make three Stealth rolls. Those who fail draw the attention of a German machine-gun nest, subjecting them to a burst of Heavy Fire.

Unfortunately, someone on the other side had the same bright idea, and halfway across No Man's Land the heroes encounter a Boche raiding party heading toward American lines. The Americans should make an opposed Notice roll versus the Germans' Stealth. If they win, they spot the Boche and can begin the combat normally, otherwise the Germans ambush the American patrol. Capitaine d'Apcher once again reminds the troops to use melee weapons only, and the fight is joined. If anyone uses firearms, the area is treated to Heavy Fire that affects all combatants. It is overcast with little moonlight, so illumination levels are Dark.



Hellfighters head for France

RACISM

The tale of the Hellfighters is also a tale of racism, the ignorant individuals who embraced or allowed it, and brave men and women of many colors who fought against it. It's an integral part of this tale and of course the real heroes, the men of the Harlem Hellfighters' themselves. Shying away from that issue would not serve the story or their valiant record.

This is a highly sensitive issue, however, and players should have a frank conversation with the War Master before starting this campaign about what kinds of language and actions are acceptable. While games can be an excellent and immersive tool to explore deep and tragic issues like racism, this is still a social activity that should be as enjoyable as it is thought-provoking.

So speak frankly about boundaries, dive into a heroic but flawed episode in world history, and be especially sensitive to those friends of yours who may still wrestle with the ignorance and fear of racism.

- **German Infantry (equal to heroes' squad):** Use German Infantryman from *Weird War One Player's Handbook*. They are armed with various melee weapons (Str+d4) and slung Gewehr 98 rifles (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, AP 2).

Aftermath

After the fight, Capitaine d'Apcher orders the Germans searched for documents. A successful Notice roll nets one piece of intel, with a raise finding a map of German defenses that was supposed to be left back in the command post. Any wounded Boche are treated and brought back to the Allied lines for interrogation.

Once back in friendly lines, a French advisor praises the men for their skill and courage. If they retrieved any intelligence or prisoners, he returns the next day with several bottles of wine and champagne for the heroes.

The Daily Grind

The soldiers of the 369th continue to gain experience fighting along the Ardennes and neighboring Champagne sectors. As shown on the **Suggested Sequence of Events**, this is represented by 2–4 randomly generated missions. Each mission should be separated by 10–14 days, and Capitaine d'Apcher accompanies the heroes on many of their missions as a military liaison and advisor. He acts as a source of

information on the conditions and dangers of the front, and can pass on any information the War Master desires.

The men get time to rotate to the rear for a few days every two weeks or so until July 12, 1918. Remember, though, there is nowhere that is safe from the strangeness of the *Weird Wars*, and even in the rear the troops may encounter things awoken by the bloodshed and terror of four years of carnage and violence.

At the end of this time, the regiment shifts sectors in preparation for the Second Battle of the Marne. Allied intelligence has pinpointed the next big German attack, which kicks off July 15, 1918 as the 369th moves to the threatened area. Reinforcements are added to bring the heroes' squad up to strength, although no officers are available to replace any losses in that category.

This Unhallowed Ground

Shortly after the heroes' unit arrives in its new sector, the French Army counterattacks the Germans to destroy what little gains the Kaiser's troops made in the opening stages of the Second Battle of the Marne.

As the 369th prepares for its part of the great counterattack, Capitaine d'Apcher arrives early in the morning at the squad's dugout with a steaming mug of his disgusting smelling herbal tea and a French civilian in tow. He introduces the man to the heroes as Monsieur Berthet.

"Mes amis, Monsieur Berthet was the Mayor of the town whose ruins you can just make out on the horizon. He has asked the command that we send a party to the remains of the town's church to retrieve some holy artifacts left behind when the fighting swept over this area. With your Captain's permission, tonight we will venture forth to save these relics before the tide of battle has a chance to destroy them. I have arranged for a bombardment to strike the Boche lines at midnight to distract them from our nocturnal activities, so we must reach the church by then."

It takes the patrol four sprints (see *Heavy Fire* in the *Weird War One Player's Guide*) to reach the ruins of the church. Once they reach the crumbling building, an artillery barrage begins to land on the German lines, allowing the squad to use hooded lanterns or flashlights to begin their search.

Each soldier should make a Notice roll. Those who succeed find a few smashed religious items in the altar area. A soldier getting a raise finds a trapdoor behind the altar — just before it and other hidden holes burst open and a flood of murderous tunnel brood pour out to attack the squad.

Once the lurkers are dealt with, the heroes can head down into the catacombs beneath the church. It quickly becomes evident that the tunnel brood originally were the townsfolk of this village, who sought refuge

from the war underground and slowly, horrifically transformed in their new home.

Another half hour of searching and a successful Notice roll finds no artifacts. The mayor was simply arranging for a "grocery delivery" for his warped constituents.

- **Tunnel Brood (3 per Hero):** Use Tunnel Brood from *Weird War One War Master's Handbook*. They are armed with clubs (Str+d4), axes (Str+d6), and trench knives (Str+d4+1).

Reminder of Home

One day while the squad is resting in the forward trenches with Capitaine d'Apcher during a quiet spell, they are approached by a group of public affairs officers from AEF headquarters. Among this group is a well-known Southern newspaper reporter, Saxton Bigby. The officer in charge of the group, Major Arnold Whitman, introduces the heroes and recounts some of their exploits. Bigby then interviews the soldiers.

It's obvious from some of his racially charged questions and remarks that he doesn't think much of black soldiers serving on the front lines.

At the end of the interview, Bigby suggests to the public affairs officer that he be allowed to accompany the squad on a trench raid. The squad leader is ordered to make it happen that night.

- **Saxton Bigby:** Use Reporter from *Weird War One Player's Handbook*. He is armed with a pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 1).

A Dark and Stormy Night

That night a heavy downpour blankets the battlefield, with lightning occasionally providing quick flashes of illumination. The patrol moves out with the reporter, Saxton Bigby, in tow. Each soldier should make three Stealth rolls at +2 due to the storm. Failure results in a Heavy Fire roll.

The patrol soon reaches a huge crater ten yards in diameter and three yards deep, into which they slither for a breather. Unfortunately, the hole is home to several plasmoids, who attack the moment the patrol enters the muck of their lair. Due to the rain and slippery nature of the muddy crater, getting out while in combat requires a Agility roll at -2.

- **Plasmoid (5):** Use the Plasmoid from *Weird War One War Master's Handbook*.

If Bigby survives the encounter he begs the squad leader to call off the mission and return to the Allied lines. If Capitaine d'Apcher is with the patrol, he makes the call and the heroes return to their trenches.

The next day, Bigby, with a new found respect for the soldiers of the 369th, writes a glowing article on the bravery of the "Men of Bronze."

Crying Wolf

The heroes' squad comes under a particularly heavy German barrage (see Barrages in the *Weird War One Players Guide*). It consists of heavy artillery, but since the heroes are in French trenches, a base die of d6 is rolled to determine any casualties.



Once the smoke clears, a German counterattack sweeps across No Man's Land, consisting of a wave of 30 German infantry charging across No Man's Land toward this section of trench. Unfortunately for the heroes' squad, the machine-gun nest covering their sector received a direct hit, so it's up to them to stop this attack.

- **German Infantry (30):** Use German Infantryman from *Weird War One Player's Handbook*. They are armed with Gewehr 98 rifles (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, AP 2) and 2 hand grenades each (Range 5/10/20, Damage 3d6, MBT).

The Kaiser's troops charge out of the smoke and dust 60 yards away, but the broken terrain counts as Difficult Ground and slows their movement by half. When they get within 40 yards, three stop to lob grenades at the Americans. At 20 yards, they stop for a round to struggle through the barbed wire emplacements in front of the heroes' trenches.



Bad Moon Rising

Once the German attack is dealt with the troops can take stock of their situation. Their trenches are heavily damaged, with their command dugout taking a direct hit. Capitaine d'Apcher is unhurt, but all of his personal possessions were destroyed. When one of the troops jokes that they don't have to smell his nasty tea in the mornings, the French officer flies into an uncharacteristic rage. If questioned later, he apologizes and explains that he lost some mementos of great personal value to him among his destroyed possessions.

Several nights later, any Hellfighters on guard duty are startled to wakefulness by a bone chilling howl that reverberates across the battlefield, seemingly amplified by the full moon hanging overhead. If anyone asks what might make such a sound, Capitaine d'Apcher is not in the squad's area, but one of the troops might remember him heading to the rear for a meeting earlier in the evening.

The next day, any hero with Streetwise hears tales of men found torn to pieces. A raise on a Streetwise roll gets a name to go along with this: "The Hound of Mons."

That night it's the player characters' turn to face the horrors of the battlefield. Around midnight the soldiers hear screams and animalistic roars coming from a neighboring section of trench. If they move toward the sound of combat, they find a squad of men under attack by a monstrous, wolf-like creature! Several soldiers are already torn into bloody shreds.

If the characters don't respond to the distress, the beast finishes its bloody business then bounds into *their* trench to continue its rampage.

The creature is, of course, Capitaine d'Apcher, who is one of the terrifying "Beasts" of Gévaudan. The creature attacks until Incapacitated, at which time it regresses back into a seemingly dead Capitaine d'Apcher! How the heroes deal with this is up to them, but shortly after his death is reported, a team of French troops arrives to take his body away.

The neighboring squad was decimated by the Beast, but one of the men, Henry Roberts, is seriously wounded and can be stabilized with a Healing roll. Roberts is a popular man in the company, an excellent musician who all the heroes know and like from back in Harlem. Once stabilized, he's sent to a hospital in the rear for further treatment of his serious wounds.

✘ **Capitaine d'Apcher (Lesser Beast of Gévaudan):**
See page 11.

Men in Black

A few days after the creature's attack, the squad is visited by several American men dressed in dark civilian suits and black overcoats. They flash badges and identify themselves as agents of the U.S. Alien Enemy Bureau. The government men interrogate the heroes about what they experienced during the battle with the beast. The agents then warn the soldiers in no uncertain terms to keep wild tales of monstrous creatures or other weirdness to themselves. Troops who protest or ask questions are warned that their families back home might find themselves the subject of an investigation into socialist leanings or other seditious activities in and around Harlem. The soldiers would be wise to keep their mouths shut, they warn.

The day after the AEB agents visit the front, a French officer interviews the heroes as well. He identifies himself as Colonel Lebouc of the *Bureau des Phénomènes Mystérieux Non Expliqués*, passes around chocolate, tobacco and wine, and asks the men about their experiences at the front, steering conversation toward any strange or unusual experiences. If the troops seem reluctant to talk about the strangeness of the war, especially after the threats of the AEB, he appeals to their common humanity and the good that can be accomplished by those willing to fight the darkness. All he asks at this time is that he be kept informed if they happen to encounter any weirdness on the battlefield. If they agree, the next day a wicker basket of carrier pigeons is dropped off in the heroes' trenches with instructions to release one with a message wrapped around its ankle if they have any strange encounters. The pigeons will come directly to him, he assures.

Bad Blood

Roughly a month passes after the death of Capitaine d'Apcher, while the Second Battle of the Marne rages on. Use the **Suggested Sequence of Events** to tell the tale of the huge Allied counterattack following the failure of the German "Peace Offensive." Feel free to add in any adventures of your own as well.

One day the company is cheered to see Henry Roberts return to the front from the hospital. The day is fortunately quiet, and everyone in the platoon gathers around, eager to hear Roberts' tales of the soft sheets, hot food, and pretty nurses in the huge hospitals well to the rear of the combat zone.

That night Privates Roberts and Frank Washington are sent to an observation post (OP) 60 yards in front of the trenches. A cloud covered full moon fitfully illuminates the battlefield. The player characters awake around 3 a.m. by screams, pistol shots and explosions in the vicinity of the OP — obviously a

German trench raid seeking to take prisoners. Since the regiment prides itself on never having had a man taken captive, the platoon leader shouts for the characters' squad to go to the relief of Roberts and Washington.

When the troops arrive at the OP, they find several dead Germans, as well as Washington. All look as if grenade blasts shredded them, and the amount of gore causes everyone viewing it to make a Fear test at -2. It appears Roberts was carried off by the raiders as his body is nowhere to be seen. Two Lebel rifles can be found in the position, along with several German pistols, a Mauser, and melee weapons of German manufacture.

The Honor of the Regiment

Heroes who set off after the raiding party must make three sprints across No Man's Land to reach the German trenches, as the sounds of combat have awoken gunners on both sides. Along the way, a successful Notice roll at -2 reveals freshly bloodied bandaging materials, blood trails, and discarded German equipment, indicating some of the Germans were wounded in the fight with Roberts and Washington. A raise on the Notice roll finds large dog-like paw prints, perhaps from a war dog accompanying the raiders.

After their third sprint, the heroes hear explosions, gunfire, and screams from the German trenches a few yards ahead. More worryingly, the eastern horizon is beginning to lighten with the onset of dawn.

When the Hellfighters reach the German trenches they find two more Germans, mangled as if a shell or grenade landed on them. If the squad searches the trenches, they find a naked Private Roberts curled up in a dugout, just as a squad of Germans rounds a zigzag in the lines and attacks. The Kaiser's troops retreat if they suffer 50% casualties, but another squad attacks from the opposite side six rounds after the first squad is defeated.

- **German Infantry (8):** Use German Infantryman from *Weird War One Player's Handbook*. They are armed with Gewehr 98 rifles (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, AP 2).

Once the initial wave of Germans is defeated the heroes have an opportunity to check out Roberts. He's covered in blood and seems concussed, but a quick Healing roll determines that other than a few superficial cuts and bruises, he is miraculously unscathed.

Whistles and shouts in German can be heard in the nearby trenches moments later. It's obvious to even the densest doughboy that more Germans are on their way. The run back to friendly lines in the early morning light takes four sprints.

Walk on the Wild Side

Private Roberts regains full consciousness when he reaches the 369th's lines. If questioned about the events of the previous night, he remembers German grenades flying into the OP, then nothing afterwards. Captain Hawthorne, the company commander, accompanied by First Sergeant DuBois, arrives shortly after the squad's return, and congratulates the men on their daring rescue.

"Boys, that was damn fine work you did last night. The old 15th New York hasn't lost a man yet to those Germans, and you did the regiment proud rescuing Private Roberts from their clutches. I'll see to it you're rewarded for your heroic deeds. I also looked over the OP, and it appears Roberts handled himself pretty damn well, taking out a slew of the enemy before being overwhelmed. Now get cleaned up and get ready. You know how those Boche are — they'll be readying a counterattack now that we bloodied their noses."

First Sergeant DuBois assigns Roberts to the heroes' squad for the time being, and has the Quartermaster bring him a new uniform, rifle and equipment.

That night, as the squad stands to awaiting the expected German counterattack, a Notice roll reveals Private Roberts in distress. He's shaking, groaning in pain, and any light reveals sweat beading his forehead.

Veterans of the front might recognize the early signs of shell shock, until Roberts' bones crack, limbs extend, and face elongates into a horrific muzzle. Soldiers gathered around him must make Fear tests as he transforms into a lesser Beast of Gévaudan, tearing out of his uniform and attacking his platoon mates!

Roberts fights until Incapacitated, at which point he transforms back into human form. The heroes now face a decision. If they tell the truth about Roberts' transformation see **You Can't Handle the Truth**, below. If the Hellfighters heed the AEB agents' warning and concoct a story about a more mundane form of death, go to **You're in the (French) Army Now**.

✠ **Henry Roberts (Lesser Beast of Gévaudan):** See page 11.

You Can't Handle the Truth

If the soldiers tell command the truth about what happened with Private Roberts, they are pulled off the front lines and sent to the regimental area in the rear. Five agents of the AEB arrive early the next day in the company of the regimental provost marshal. The squad is disarmed and told to accompany the men in black to a nearby woods.

Once they arrive at a secluded area, the agents pull pistols on the heroes and say the following:

"You dumb, thick-skulled fools. We told you what would happen if you spread wild tales around like this."

"Are you trying to wreck the whole war effort? Lucky thing for us is no one will ask questions when a bunch of you go AWOL."

Before anyone can do anything, several French troops led by Colonel Lebouc step out from the underbrush, weapons drawn. The AEB men are disarmed and led away, and the Colonel congratulates the Americans on a job well done, telling them the following:

"Such a terrible tragedy that those poor men were lost in the woods. Can't be too careful these days. What those agents really wanted to tell you was that you are being detached for a special mission to the Vosges Mountains. We'll talk about it later. For now, we'd best go. It's dangerous here, don't you know?"

The characters quickly return to camp in the company of Colonel Lebouc and gather their possessions before loading on a truck and heading to a nearby rail station.

You're in the (French) Army Now

Nothing moves quicker than rumors in the military, no matter the nationality or time period. Although the heroes keep quiet about Robert's transformation into some sort of wolf-like creature, word of the weirdness reaches Colonel Lebouc within four days. Of course, if the squad sent a message to him via carrier pigeon, he shows up within two days. When he arrives he greets the heroes effusively. Read the following:

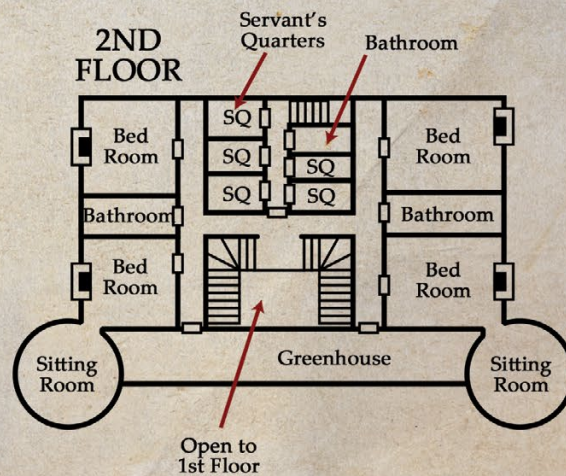
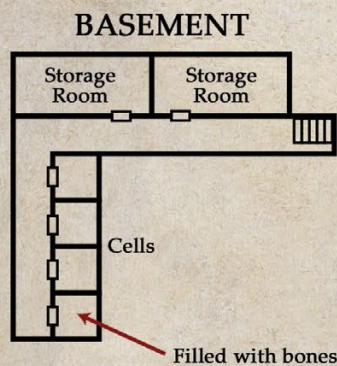
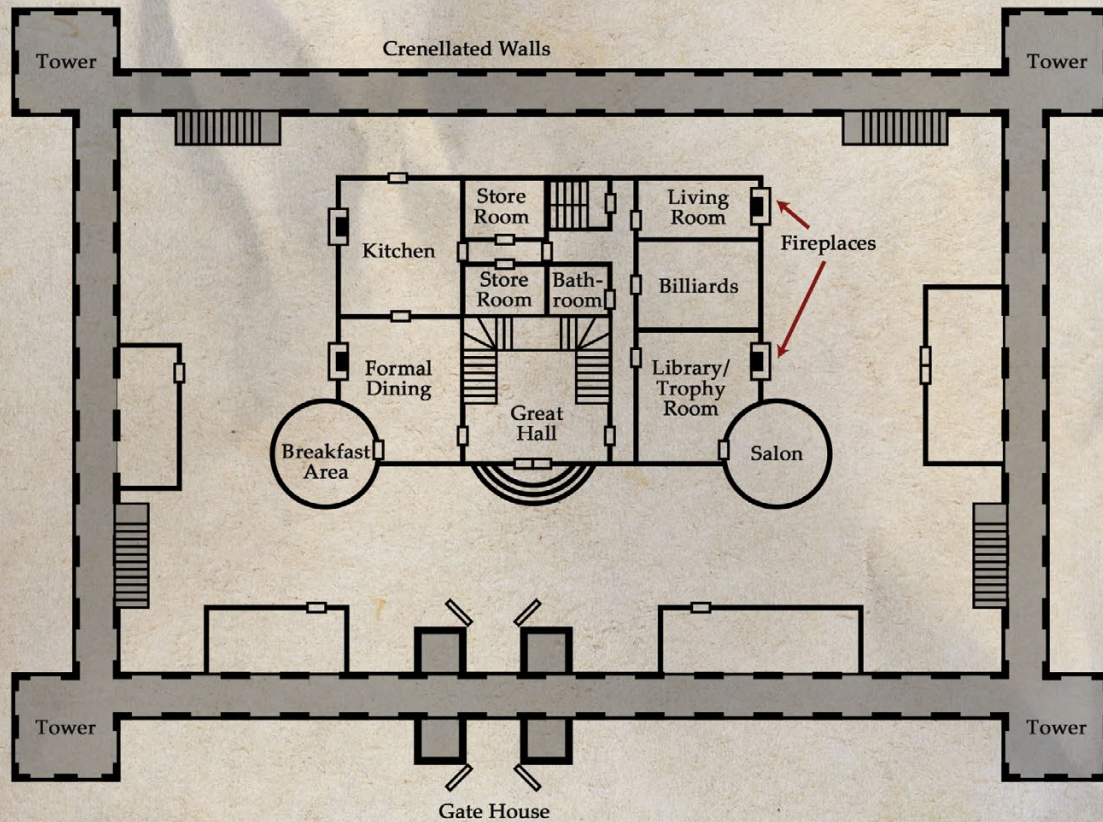
"My friends, I am so happy you survived this horrid encounter. I have requested you be seconded to the French Army on a special mission. As those who knew him the best in his last months on earth, I have requested you accompany me to Capitaine d'Apcher's ancestral home in the Vosges Mountains to inform his family of his untimely death. All the paperwork is in order, and we leave tonight."

Chateau de Loup

Whichever way they get there, the Hellfighters find themselves on a southbound train heading into the Vosges Mountains. During the two-day train ride, Colonel Lebouc briefly outlines the history and purpose of the Twilight Legion and welcomes the troops into its ranks. He passes out new identity disks with the half-set sun symbol engraved on the reverse. He also fills them in on the legend of the Beast of Gévaudan (see sidebar), and afterwards hands out five silver bullets to each soldier.

"The BPMNE discovered that Capitaine d'Apcher's ancestors were credited with the destruction of this creature. Unfortunately, something obviously caused him to transform into what appears to fit the description of this mythical creature. The incident with Private Roberts' makes us fear that this condition is contagious. Who knows if Roberts passed it on to any

Chateau D'Apcher



THE BEAST OF GEVAUDAN

Beginning in 1764, the people of the French province of Gévaudan suffered a series of attacks by a wolf-like creature. Over the course of three years, over 200 people were reported killed and partially eaten, most of them attacked while they worked or traveled alone. Despite large bounties and renowned wolf hunters sent from the King, the attacks continued.

Several trackers thought they bagged the beast when they killed extraordinarily large wolves, only to have the attacks continue days or weeks later. Finally, in July 1767, a hunting party led by the Marquis d'Apcher killed a large, wolf-like creature with a silver bullet blessed by the local bishop. With this creature's death, the attacks finally came to an end.

Germans or other Allied troops during his rampage? Maybe we can find out some clue in the d'Apcher family chateau. From what we can gather, his family moved here from the province of Gévaudan in the 1780s, just before the evolution."

The trip requires the squad to transfer to French army trucks for the final 50 miles of their journey. There they wind their way up primitive roads into the wilds of the Vosges Mountains. Soon they arrive at a remote farming village surrounded by thickly forested ridges and overlooked by a brooding castle.

The Village

The village consists of a number of buildings that double as homes and livestock barns, a bakery, a butcher, a small café, and a small general store that carries various necessities.

Troops looking for information can ask around the village, but none of the locals speak English. Streetwise or Persuasion checks (at -2 for English-only speakers and -2 because the men are such stark outsiders) reveals the following rumors:

- The last heir to the d'Apcher family, Jacques, is in the French army fighting the hated Boche. There is a grandfather living in the chateau, but no one has seen him in ages.
- The family's majordomo, Pierre, is the only long-term servant in the castle, and it is he who comes into the village to order supplies and foodstuffs. It seems no servants stay there long since they've had a succession of cooks and chambermaids employed at the castle. With a raise, the heroes also discover the d'Apchers don't hire locals as servants.

- The family has always liked to hunt. In fact, in the last couple of years they must have quite a kennel of hunting dogs up there, for on nights of the full moon howls ring out across the valley like a chorus of the damned.

Lineage of the Wolf

When the troops have explored the village, they are free to check out the chateau.

The castle consists of a crumbling exterior wall topped by crenelations and pierced by a gatehouse whose gates are open. As the squad passes through the gatehouse read the following:

The gates stand open but are well maintained. Marks in the dirt show they are opened and closed frequently, with a heavy bar and brackets to lock them tight. The sharpened teeth of a portcullis gleam in the shadows of the roof of the entry tunnel.

Inside are various buildings lining the crenelated wall, such as stables, storage sheds, etc. Several staircases go up to walkways from which ancient archers could hold off attackers.

In the center of the compound is a two story manor house. On the second floor the glass of an arboretum shines in the sunlight, and a riot of foliage and plants are visible within the humidity-fogged windows. The courtyard is silent, and no sign of life can be seen. Huge bronze knockers in the shape of snarling wolves glare out from the double doors to the manor house.

Knocking at the door brings the elderly majordomo, who fetches the master of the house if requested. Read the following when he arrives:

Striding from the shadows of the great hall is a well-muscled figure with long, lustrous hair flowing down past his shoulders. He wears a silk robe with fur slippers on his feet. He looks at each of you keenly, his piercing yellowish eyes seeming to bore right into you.

"May I present the Marquis d'Apcher?" wheezes the ancient majordomo in French.

"What are you doing here?" asks the Marquis in accented English.

He invites the squad into the dining room, and offers them drinks as allies of France. If the heroes (or Colonel Lebouc) question the Marquis about the Beast of Gévaudan, he stares off into space, then tells the tale of the Beast (see sidebar).

If accused of being the Beast, or told of the death of Capitaine d'Apcher, he flies into a rage, cursing the soldiers and the war. Suddenly he stops, gasping for breath and clutching his chest. Before the heroes' eyes, the Marquis transforms into the Beast of Gévaudan. Sharp-eyed troops who pass a Notice roll see a belt made from a hairy pelt encircling the Marquis' waist just before he turns into the creature and attacks. Pierre

flees into an adjoining room, returning in two rounds with an ancient pistol which he uses to attack the intruders. They both fight to the death.

✠ **Marquis d'Apcher, the Beast of Gévaudan:** See page 12.

- **Pierre the Majordomo:** Use Cultists from *Weird War One War Master's Handbook*, armed with a revolver (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 1). He fights to the death in the defense of his master.

Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad Wolf?

If the heroes manage to kill the Marquis d'Apcher, he transforms into a normal man. His body rapidly ages, crumbling to dust within minutes, but leaving behind the fur belt, closed with a buckle in the shape of a snarling wolf-like creature's head. Colonel Lebouc, if still alive, takes charge of the belt, and places it in a satchel.

If the heroes search the chateau they find room after room of dust-cloth shrouded furniture. The arboretum on the second floor contains a variety of exotic plants as well as an area for the preparation and compounding of botanical and herbal powders. A successful Notice roll finds a mixture that smells like the tea Capitaine d'Apcher drank each morning.

Troops who search the basement find several cells secured by heavy iron doors. The inside walls of the rooms are scored with deep gouges, possibly made by some sort of claws. One room contains a jumble of human bones which appear to have been gnawed on by a large carnivore.

Aftermath

With the death of the Marquis d'Apcher, any troops who were infected by his progeny are cured, and no longer turn into beasts when the light of the full moon shines upon them.

The BPMNE takes possession of the Beast's belt where it disappears into their secret archives. A week after the defeat of the marquis, the French government takes possession of the chateau as a forward headquarters to direct the fighting to the east in the Vosges, although for a headquarters few troops are seen moving about the area.

During the trip back to their unit the heroes are fully inducted into the Twilight Legion and returned to the front just in time to participate in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Their experiences with the war's weirdness prepare them for the madness encountered during the regiment's drive in that series of battles.

Characters and Creatures

✠ Capitaine Jacques d'Apcher

Capitaine d'Apcher is the only remaining son of an ancient noble family whose ancestral home is in the Vosges Mountains. Cursed by the pelt that the original Marquis d'Apcher wears, each member of his bloodline is fated to turn into a lesser version of the Beast of Gévaudan during the nights of the full moon.

Fortunately for the Capitaine, his transformation is kept in check through the ingestion of a mix of esoteric and exotic herbs each day. If the consumption of this mix is interrupted, however, the beast breaks free and wreaks havoc on those around him regardless of past association.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d4, Shooting d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Tough:** 5; **Sanity:** 7

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Loyal

Edges: Academy Graduate, Arcane Exposure, Command, Command Presence, Rank (Officer)

Gear: Uniform, canteen, steel helmet (+1), Ruby pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6-1) with 36 rounds, gas mask.

Lesser Beast of Gévaudan

Deprived of the herbal mixture that keeps his curse in check, Capitaine d'Apcher turns into this creature on the nights of the full moon. Those who suffer a wound from the horror and survive are thereafter cursed as well.

Beasts are huge wolf/bear hybrids who kill and devour any living thing they find.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10



Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d8.
- **Fear:** Beasts are fearful to behold.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fleet-footed:** Lesser Beasts roll a d8 when running instead of a d6.
- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results have no effect.
- **Infection:** Anyone who takes a wound from a beast has a 50% chance of turning into one himself at the next full moon. This infection is cured if the Marquis d'Apcher is killed.
- **Invulnerability:** Normal weapons do half damage.
- **Weakness (Silver):** Silver weapons do normal damage.

✠ Marquis Jean-Joseph d'Apcher (Human Form)

Jean-Joseph d'Apcher was a French nobleman born in 1748. In the mid-1760s his family estates suffered the ravages of a supernatural beast that came to be known as the Beast of Gévaudan. The creature was reported killed in 1769. Unfortunately, during the hunt the Marquis d'Apcher was severely wounded by the monster and, by his own actions, contracted its terrible curse.

Historical texts do not record the exact circumstances of the last hunt, but the beast ambushed the Marquis' hunting party as they traveled through dense woods. In the confusion of plunging horses, yelping hunting dogs and screaming men, the creature killed several hunters and mauled the nobleman before a silver bullet crashed through its skull.

Believing that its unnatural vitality would be imparted to him, the Marquis ordered that the creature be skinned and its pelt made into a belt. When he placed it around his waist, an unnatural vigor coursed through his limbs, healing his wounds. Unfortunately for him, the price of this enhanced vigor was for him to become the Beast, as well as all of his bloodline.

The Marquis considered this a small price to pay, however, for the longevity and vitality it gave him. The d'Apcher family rose to prominence, relocating to the remote Vosges Mountains. Members of the family eventually found a partial remedy in the jungles of Indochina. Various hitherto unknown plants provided the ingredients for an herbal mixture that prevented the monthly transformation, although not the inheritance of the curse.

This mixture did not hold the Marquis' Beast in check, however. When the light of the full moon shone, he consigned himself to the dungeons of the chateau where he would feast on livestock placed there for his bestial hunger.

With the departure of his last living descendant, Jacques, for the war and the increase in negative energy generated by the fighting in the mountains just to the east, a change came over the Marquis. He instructed his faithful majordomo to obtain young servant girls from across France. By the light of the full moon he fed on the poor women, with their remains



dumped in the chateau's catacombs. If anyone inquired, the girls became disillusioned with life in the remote chateau and left to find work in the war industries.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (French History) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d8, Shooting d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Tough:** 7; **Sanity:** 4

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Bloodthirsty

Edges: Dodge, No Mercy

Gear: Fine clothes.

The Beast of Gevaudan

The Beast resembles a horrid cross between a bear and a huge wolf, with a thick ruff of fur around its neck extending down to its shoulders. It lopes along on all fours, but can rear up on its hind legs to attack multiple foes with its razor sharp claws.

Appearing during the nights of the full moon or when the Marquis is unduly stressed, the monster exists only to hunt and kill humans. Livestock sates its appetite if people are unavailable. Those looking closely at this creature (Notice -4) notice what appears to be a belt made of fur around its waist.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d8.
- **Fear (-2):** Anyone seeing this creature must make a Fear test at -2.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results have no effect.
- **Howl:** As an action, the Beast can release a terrifying howl. Anyone within 20 yards (10") must make a Fear test at -4 or be Shaken.
- **Improved Sweep:** The Beast can attack all adjacent targets with one Fighting roll.
- **Infection:** Anyone who takes a wound from the Beast and survives turns into a Lesser Beast at the next full moon. This infection is cured if the Marquis d'Apcher is killed.
- **Invulnerability:** Immune to all non-magical attacks. The Beast takes half damage from silver weapons.
- **Weakness (Beast Belt):** The Marquis' curse originates from the belt he wears made of the pelt of the original Beast. If it is removed (successful Fighting roll at -4, with a successful opposed Strength check) the creature becomes vulnerable to all weapons.

NEW EDGE HELLFIGHTER

Requirements: Novice, Harlem Hellfighter

The hard upbringing of most of the Harlem Hellfighters gave them fortitude for war that shocked their contemporaries.

Those who have this Edge can ignore one point of penalties from Fatigue.

Hellfighter

The Hellfighters proved themselves in combat on multiple occasions. Their eagerness to disprove racist naysayers made them fierce opponents.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d4, Throwing d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Edges & Hindrances: Hellfighter

Gear: Uniform, canteen, steel helmet (+1), Springfield rifle, 2x Mk1 grenades, spade, gas mask.

- **Seasoned:** Spirit d8, Strength d8, Fighting d8, Throwing d8, Brave, Dig In!
- **Veteran:** Stealth d8, Survival d6, Band of Brothers, No Mercy