

The Buy-In

Never Going Home is a party-focused role-playing game set in horror-haunted trenches during the First World War. If that sounds good to you, skip this page, and get ready to deploy. If you aren't sure, read on to see if *Never Going Home* is for you.

- **Role Playing Game (RPG):** "Table top" or "pen and paper" role-playing games involve some people sitting together, with one person serving as the Narrator, who directs the adventure, and everyone else portraying characters in the story. The Narrator needs to know the rules and use them to give the other players challenges to overcome while crafting an engaging story. Together the player characters (PCs) form the Unit, who are friends, allies, or at least willing to work together. The Unit moves together from event to event, solving problems, defeating enemies, and gaining rewards as they go. Ideally, a role-playing session should be an enjoyable experience for everyone involved, even if terrible things happen to their characters.
- **Party-Focused:** *Never Going Home* uses the +One System to focus play and growth on what an individual character can do as part of the larger story that follows a group of soldiers called a Unit. Individual characters may depart regularly as they die from injuries or collapse into madness due to forces from beyond the Veil. Characters are quick to create, so players should expect to re-join the story portraying a new member of the Unit. Each character can have their own heroic moments, but the story of the Unit is the focus.
- **Horror-Haunted:** The Veil between worlds has been opened by the slaughter from the war; and the monstrous Whispers of beings wholly alien to humanity can now be heard. Some people have listened to the Whispers enough to gain arcane powers and now struggle to maintain control as their minds and bodies begin to change. Others are too far gone, mutated into barely-recognizable versions of their former selves. War consumes the days and monsters stalk the nights. Not even dreams are safe. Players manage their characters' mental and emotional resources with a dwindling hand of cards.
- **The First World War:** The setting is the real Earth and the characters are all humans. A terrible new element has been added to the war, but the true horrors of the real war are part of the story as well. The game is set in the years between when the Veil was torn in 1916 and when the war really ended in 1918. The focus is on the front-line soldiers who are fighting and experiencing the worst of the magic and monsters. There is some mention made of, but little exploration of, the "home fronts" of any of the belligerents and civilians only appear in passing.

Thank you for reading. Hopefully, now you know if this game is for you or not. We hope it is. Your first mission is waiting.

THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE
TO TURN BACK!!!

October 18, 1917

To His Royal Highness, King George V
London, England

Enclosed is the report I am required to submit regarding my involvement in and knowledge of the events that occurred on the Somme battlefield beginning July 1, 1916. The following documents have been collected from various sources, but the primary content of the manuscript is a replica of the journal of Alfred Warbeck, an English soldier who served during the Great War. The discovery of his journal in Delville Wood in the spring of this year, it gave us a window into the early days of the Catastrophe. It is a shame that we don't know what happened to him—but that's a fate that has befallen many an Englishman (among other nations' soldiers for certain) since the outbreak of war in 1914. Had he lived through the attack at a Longueval in 1916, he would be a valuable resource to us now. Yet, despite his absence in this world, he has provided us valuable information about how these beasts and their masters are conjured, what they want now that they are here, and how to interact with them without becoming corrupted by their vile magics.

Amazingly, through his journal, we have tracked down a few other of the key players in those early days and conducted interviews with them; the main ones being a former soldier in the German army, Reiner Kauffman, and the First Mutineer, as he has come to be known, John Hampton. The army has also included select telegrams and letters from our military archives, and contacted the sister of Alfred Warbeck, Mary, to fill in the gaps in the story for Your Majesty. Some of the information here comes from telegrams sent to and from myself and others before John Hampton first deserted his post. Others come after it became apparent that our war of attrition was fast becoming a war against the occult. In leaving us this information, Alfred Warbeck continues to serve this great nation, even from beyond the grave. I trust that you will use discretion when sharing the information in these pages. I regret that I am unable to come to England at the moment to deliver this in person, as I am here settling matters in Africa. This matter nevertheless requires haste. If Lloyd George, Lord Stanley, and Robertson can come to an agreement on what to do in France, may it please you to send word to me as soon as you can. I, for one, am at a loss.

Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief,
British Expeditionary Force



Playing the Game

Skill Rolls

When a character wants to do something, they may be asked to make a skill roll against a Target Number (TN). Some Target Numbers are set by Missions, the Narrator sets all other Target Numbers. Players roll D6 dice (called Skill Dice) equal to their training in the skill. Dice showing 5 or 6 are successes. The number of successes on the roll must meet or exceed the Target Number to accomplish the action. On each roll, the player may use as many +One manipulations equal to their current score of the governing attribute of the skill being rolled. Attributes do not decrease through use.

Failure simply means what the character was attempting doesn't happen. All skill rolls take the form "roll [skill name]: TN #" which means "roll dice equal to skill training, manipulate dice equal to attribute rank, meet at least the required number of successes."

Skill Manipulation (The +One System)

The attributes are linked to specific skills which dictate which ones they can manipulate. A character's score (rank) in a skill's governing attribute dictates how many times a skill roll can be manipulated. A roll can be manipulated in the following ways:

Before a Roll:

- Temporarily gain an untrained skill (dice are bought separately).
- Add a die to the roll (ex: roll 4 dice on a skill with 3 training).

After a Roll:

- Add a pip to a die (ex: change a 4 to a 5).
- Reroll any number of dice. Keep the result (once per skill roll).

Simpson has 2 training in Ranged and 3 ranks of Guts. To hit an injured Trenchstalker requires 4 successes. His player buys two extra dice with 2 points of Guts and rolls: 5, 4, 3, 1. He keeps the 5 and rolls the remaining three dice again: 6, 5, 2. A total of only 3 successes, the shot misses.

Roth has no training in Communication but 4 Smarts. Trying to get useful information from a raving soldier is TN 2. Her player buys the Communication skill for the roll and two dice then rolls: 5, 4. She spends her last point of Smarts to add a pip to the 4, giving her the two successes she needs.

Durand is severely injured. He has Athletics 2, but currently only 1 rank of Brawn. Crossing the stream requires 3 successes. His player buys an extra die with one point of Brawn and rolls: 4, 1, 1. There is nothing else he can do, and the stream washes him away.

Challenges

Throughout the game, there are touchpoints that represent significant barriers to the characters. These are things that *will* happen if encountered, no bypassing or talking their way out of them. The Narrator may sometimes insert other Challenges as needed.

Challenges are too big to overcome alone and require the characters to work together. A Challenge may require multiple skill rolls that must be accomplished by the group, one skill roll that every person must succeed at, or even one skill roll with such a high Target Number that multiple players must make the roll and combine their successes. Challenges take the form "Challenge [skill name(s)]: TN #" which means "each character participating in the Challenge makes the appropriate skill roll individually then pool total successes, meet at least the required number of successes."

Unlike skill rolls, failure of a Challenge can have a penalty associated with failure.

