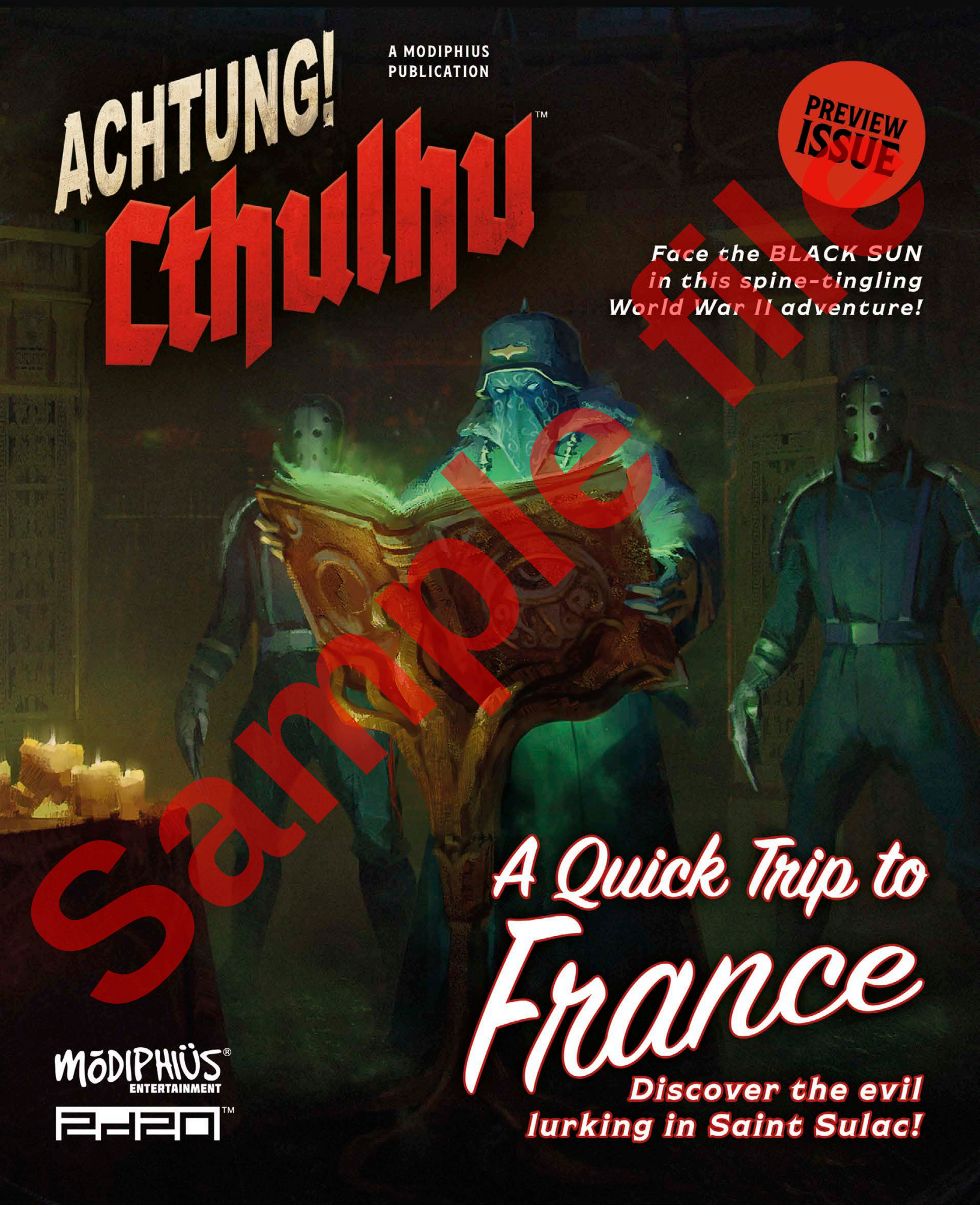
QUICKSTART RULES AND ADVENTURE!



A MODIPHIUS PUBLICATION

ACHTUNG! Cthulhu™

PREVIEW ISSUE

Face the BLACK SUN in this spine-tingling World War II adventure!

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A Quick Trip to France

Discover the evil lurking in Saint Sulac!

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2D20™

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Massive thanks to the ***Achtung! Cthulhu*** Kickstarter backers from 2013, the playtesters for the new 2d20 edition and everyone who's been part of the Modiphius family

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What is Achtung! Cthulhu?

Growing up as a British kid on a diet of ***Weird War*** and ***Sgt. Rock*** comics fuelled a thousand 'weird' battles with my *Airfix* soldiers and tanks. It wasn't until I read H.P. Lovecraft's *At The Mountains of Madness* that things clicked. What if the Nazis reached the ancient city in Antartica first, what if there was a 'secret war' taking place, behind the scenes, to ensure the Nazis didn't awaken a greater evil? This went beyond the usual staple of mere vampires, zombies and werewolves in World War Two, it was a much deeper storyline.

Achtung! Cthulhu was born in 2012 as the first fledgling ideas came to life in our first releases, Three Kings and Heroes of the Sea by Sarah Newton, as Section D agents learned of a new menace growing behind enemy lines. We followed that up with the ***Achtung! Cthulhu*** Kickstarter in early 2013, which was only supposed to launch a couple of books, but thanks to over 1700 amazing backers, 11 books, a load of miniatures, merchandise, and more were funded. The books were developed with rules for both ***Savage Worlds*** and ***Call of Cthulhu*** 6th edition to reach as wide an audience as possible and went on to win many awards.





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Achtung! Cthulhu drops you into an epic age old secret war, which started with the conflict between the old gods that saw the fall of Hyperborea, Atlantis, the Roman Empire, Napoleonic Wars, World War Two, and will be fought through many aeons to come.

The age old terror represented by the Cthulhu Mythos promises destruction and chaos on such an epic scale that our heroes can only delay the end by a few more years. ***Achtung! Cthulhu*** promises a tiny sliver of hope. The real heroes of World War II, normal people who became resistance fighters or soldiers, feared that the Nazi war machine was just as undefeatable as we imagine Cthulhu, yet they still fought on. They fought often without hope for themselves, but that someone else might get the chance to end the war. This hope was well founded: the vast machinery of the Third Reich was finally defeated though by terrible sacrifices by the allied nations.

I HOPE YOU ARE INSPIRED TO LEARN ABOUT THE REAL PEOPLE THAT INSPIRE THESE TALES OF HEROISM.

Achtung! Cthulhu throws you in to this epic struggle ready to go guns blazing against the forces of the Cthulhu Mythos as they jostle for control of Earth. However, guns won't win every battle, you'll need to dig deep into forbidden tomes, ancient spells, esoteric knowledge, forge uneasy alliances and mix that with a healthy dose of experimental weapons, or "funnies" as us Brits like to call them!

Our very own ***Achtung! Cthulhu*** characters walk a fine line between light and dark. Natalya the Belarussian tank commander possessed by the raw fury of the deep forests and Arianne the French resistance agent bound to an ancient demon, are just two examples. What sacrifices will you make to defeat the Cthulhu Mythos in this world?

Now this new edition of ***Achtung! Cthulhu***, built using our own cinematic ***2d20*** game system dials up the 'weird' to expand on the original game with more secret bases, more ancient mysteries, more terrifying creatures, fantastic technology, and some exciting hints of what's to come. It is a secret war that isn't just limited to the 20th Century, but spans millenia. We've got your six, so get ready because the Secret War has begun!

Until next time, Keep calm and carry on, soldier!

Chris

— **Chris Birch**, Section M HQ.



sample file

Secret Forces of the Secret War

Section M

"We've not got much time. Or much hope. But, we do have a stiff-upper lip. So that'll just have to do."

— Viscount Alexander 'Alec' Towton Head of Section M

Section M's mission is to oppose and foil Black Sun and *Nachtwölfe*'s worst machinations and serve as Britain's front line occult force in the Secret War. It's always playing catch up, as it was not officially brought into being until 1939, but 'better late than never', say Section M's operatives, that's just the nature of war.

Despite its initial over reliance on a forgotten archive of Victoriana and a talent for improvisation and making do — Section M survives and eventually thrives. Its success is due to a combination of those great British virtues — indomitability and luck — while leaning on the cosmopolitan diversity of its former Empire to fill in any gaps. By war's end it has matured into a formidable fighting force.

The strength of Section M lies in its unorthodoxy, its faintly amateur ethos and its adaptability, reacting directly to situations without the burden of endless bureaucracy. Its chief, Sir Alec Towton is a brave and indefatigable leader, adept at spotting an array of talent and harnessing it for Section M's exacting needs. Its most notable operatives include Corporal Akhee "the Eye" Singh, Captain "Badger" Harris, Natalya Petrova, and "Mad" Jack McMasters.

Majestic

"The Nazis are meddling with forces they shouldn't and that means we have to get our hands dirty too. The only way to survive is to fight fire with fire."

— Sally Armitage, Commander of Majestic

Majestic, the United States' special occult force in the Secret War, shares Section M's mandate of opposing Black Sun and *Nachtwölfe* and their Mythos allies. Although certain agents actively assist their British counterparts prior to the United States' entry into the war, it is not until late 1942 that "the Office of Mumbo-Jumbo", as J Edgar Hoover disparagingly terms it, comes into its own. Although late to the party, Majestic is well funded and resourced and uses American ingenuity to fuse together a powerful combination of firepower and technology, mixed with raw courage and tenacity, to create a flexible fighting force which serves across many fronts with distinction.

Majestic's foremost goal is to defend American interests and it often finds itself as the tip of the spear, going toe-to-toe with Axis and Mythos foes and strong-arming them into submission, albeit at a high cost in lives and material. Majestic runs a huge variety of missions and operations, ranging from small team reconnaissance teams to battalion-sized airborne combat drops. Given the loose and distributed nature of Majestic's network, agents in the field often find themselves improvising to address the unexpected and its heroes include the formidable Professor Richard Deadman and Sergeant Brandon Carter.

KNOWLEDGE, POWER, AND MADNESS ABOUND HERE,
WHERE THE HYPERBOREANS IMPRISONED AN ASPECT
OF THE OUTER GOD YOG-SOTHOTH.

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Black Sun

"Yog-Sothoth is the gate, the key and the guardian. When the black sun is released and its solar rays wash over the Earth, then all men will know his dominion, and despair."

— Exarch Reinhardt Weissler

Through Hyperborean magic and dark pacts with the ancient gods of the Mythos, the Nazi Order of the Black Sun practices foul sorcery and summons evil creatures from other dimensions to rule the battlefields of men. Even though their warrior-sorcerers, trooper foot soldiers and captive horrors become a terror to the allies, Black Sun's practical work for Hitler's brutal regime is not its true aim.

In the strange, alien place between wakefulness and sleep, one finds the Dreamlands, a realm beyond the veil of consciousness. There, on the fabled Plateau of Leng under the inky, sombre gaze of its dark star, lies the valley of the black sun. Knowledge, power, and madness abound here, where the Hyperboreans imprisoned an aspect of the Outer God Yog-Sothoth in an unnatural solar orb aeons ago.

Based at the sinister forbidden fortress at Wewelsburg castle and driven by its ruthless leader, Reinhardt Weissler and his four Priors, the Order of the Black Sun works inexorably toward its primary goal, acquiring the magic and artefacts necessary to free Yog-Sothoth from its solar prison in the Dreamlands, and unleash it upon this dimension. There it will shine its unholy light on Earth and rain destruction and terror on mankind forever more.



Nachtwölfe

"Science, technology, an indomitable will to power, and the Blauer Kristall*, these are the tools we will use to prevail against all our enemies, both foreign and domestic."*

— Mina Wolff, head of *Nachtwölfe*.

Nachtwölfe, the Night Wolves, were originally part of Black Sun, until Mina Wolf's great betrayal when she split from Exarch Reinhardt Weissler, splintering off to form her own occult organisation with the tacit backing of the Fuhrer. *Nachtwölfe*'s primary focuses are science, technology, progress, biological enhancements and wonder weapons (wunderwaffen) powered by *Blauer Kristall* (Blue Crystal) to help win the war for Nazi Germany. They scour the world for rare Atlantean technology, looking to learn its secrets while harvesting the rare *Blauer Kristall* which powers it.

Nachtwölfe specialists stalk the battlefield and are instantly recognisable by the eerie blue glow of their advanced weaponry and technology, fabricated by the scientific staff who pursue Mina Wolff's vision of an advanced Germany. Nonetheless, their methods are still without conscience and ethical or moral considerations and *Nachtwölfe* creates many horrors of its own. The *Cerberus-Gruppe* actively encourage their staff to push the limits of science using highly questionable methods. "The ends justify the means" is their warped thinking in creating this new order for the Third Reich. Senior staff include Gerd Schmidt, commander of the *Nachtwölfe* elite Wolf Guards and Krafft Heimburg, head of the scientific division.

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Achtung! Cthulhu 2d20
Quickstart Rules

Into the Secret War

Amidst the battles of World War II, brave Allied heroes fight a Secret War against the Nazi forces of the occult, the fearsome Black Sun who favour magic and monsters, and their fierce rivals *Nachtwölfe*—the Night Wolves—who use ancient technology and forgotten secrets to make terrifying wonder weapons.

With their terrible Mythos allies, these factions are on the verge of tipping the course of the war in favour of their Nazi masters. Yet opposing them are the Allies' last hope, the brave men and women of Britain's Section M and the US's Majestic, whose task is to take the fight to these foes and foil the Nazi occult threat.

Before You Start

Before you begin to read though this quickstart guide and play ***Achtung! Cthulhu*** it's a good idea to check you have the following materials:

- **Twenty-sided dice** – also known as d20s. These are used for resolving skill tests. You will usually roll two twenty-sided dice, or 2d20, but as many as 5d20 can be rolled at once.
- **Challenge Dice** are special six-sided dice and are primarily used for inflicting stress and determining how much protection your character receives from cover. Challenge Dice are denoted in the text by the symbol. Each die has four possible results—a score of 1, a score of 2, two scores of 0 and two faces with the Effect symbol.
- **Six-sided dice** otherwise referred to as d6 can also be used instead of Challenge Dice, if so you'll need at least six between all the players. You can consult the Challenge Dice Results table for the equivalent Challenge Dice result.
- **Tokens** to keep track of Momentum and Threat (covered later). You will need six tokens for Momentum and a dozen for Threat; it helps if they are two different colours.
- **Paper, pens, and pencils** to make notes and draw maps.

Challenge Dice Result

D6 RESULT	CHALLENGE DICE RESULT
1	1
2	2
3	0
4	0
5	1, plus Effect
6	1, plus Effect

WHAT IS 2D20?

The 2d20 system is designed to create dramatic and narrative action from the roll of 2d20. Players aim to roll under a target number on each of the dice, and score successes to achieve the amount (the "difficulty") of the task. Extra successes over the difficulty create "Momentum". This Momentum can be used to create cinematic action or gain advantageous effects, but other players can also use it gain additional d20s for their own rolls.

Players also have the option to give the gamemaster something called "Threat" points, to purchase additional d20s for their rolls, but this comes at a risk. Threat represents everything that can go wrong in an adventure and is a gamemaster resource to make the character's lives interesting if they push their luck!

Sample file

Characters

Each character in ***Achtung! Cthulhu*** is defined by six **attributes**, which embody the character's physical and mental abilities, and **skills** that define their expertise in certain fields.

ATTRIBUTES

Agility. A mixture of speed and balance, which is responsible for your character's movement and motion.

Brawn. Your character's physical endurance, health and physical conditioning.

Coordination. Your character's fine motor skills, accuracy, and sense of time and rhythm.

Insight. Your character's perception, instincts, and their ability to comprehend the world around them.

Reason. Your character's ability to apply logic, intellect, and learned facts to a situation.

Will. Your character's sense of self, their mental strength, and their sense of self-discipline.

SKILLS

Academia. Your character's ability to study new information, and when trying to recall facts about a subject.

Athletics. Your character's physical conditioning, and their ability to exert force and move their body in a variety of ways.

Engineering. Your character's technical and mechanical expertise as well as their ability to operate complex or untested equipment.

Fighting. Your character's ability to use violence and to defend against it.

Medicine. Your character's ability to alleviate pain, illness, and suffering. It is used to treat both physical and mental injuries.

Observation. Your character's awareness and ability to discern information from their surroundings.

Persuasion. Your character's ability to influence others, through speech, body language, and other methods, and allows a character to spot when others are attempting to do the same.

Resilience. Your character's ability to resist, ignore, endure, and recover from a variety of challenges: from physical injury, to mental distress, magical effects, and similar phenomena.

Stealth. Your character's ability to avoid notice and pass undetected and unhindered through hostile territory.

Survival. Your character's ability to survive in inhospitable conditions and environments.



Tactics. Your character's ability to perceive the overall situation and devise a plan appropriate to it, including military strategy and tactics, team dynamics and leadership in some contexts.

Vehicles. Your character's ability to operate, care, and maintain vehicles of all kinds.

FOCUSES

Focuses allow a character to demonstrate greater specialisation within a skill, and the kind of advanced training that comes from deeper study and practical experience. Focuses increase the chances of the character critically succeeding on a skill test if a focus is applicable to the activity the character is trying to achieve.

Sample file

Tests

Whenever a character attempts to complete an activity where the outcome is in doubt, or where failure would be interesting, the character attempts a test.

ATTEMPTING A TEST

A test involves a single attribute and skill, a focus if one is applicable and is made by rolling two or more d20s.

1. **The gamemaster chooses which attribute and skill are appropriate for the test being attempted, sometimes in conjunction or after a negotiation with a player.** They also consider if the character has any applicable focuses. Add together the attribute and skill chosen, this is the target number for the test.
2. **The gamemaster then sets a difficulty for the test.** This is normally between 0 and 5; with 0 representing an easy task and 5 the most difficult, most common tests have a difficulty of 1. The difficulty is the number of successes the player must roll on their d20s to successfully pass the test.
3. **The player rolls their dice pool.** The player takes two d20s, and may choose to purchase up to three additional d20s by spending Momentum, adding to Threat or using Fortune (see *Improving the Odds*, p.11). Once additional dice have been purchased—if any—the player rolls their dice pool.
4. **Each die that rolls equal to or less than the target number scores a single success.**
   a. If there is an applicable focus, then each die that rolls equal to or less than the skill rating being used scores two successes.
   b. Each die that rolls a natural 1 scores two successes.
   c. Each die that rolls a 20 causes a complication (see *Complications*, p.11)
5. **If the number of successes scored equals or exceeds the difficulty of the test, then you pass the test.** If the number of successes is less than the difficulty of the test, then the test fails. Any successes in excess of the difficulty of the test generate Momentum (see *Momentum*, p.12)
6. **The gamemaster describes the outcome of the test.** If the test is passed, the player may spend Momentum to improve the result further. After this, the effects of any complications are applied.

Difficulty Zero Tests

Some tests may be reduced to difficulty 0. Difficulty 0 tests do not require a dice roll: they are automatically successful with no risk of complications. However, because no roll is made, they cannot generate Momentum—even bonus Momentum from talents, even for particularly advantageous situations—and the character cannot spend any Momentum on the test's outcome either.

At the gamemaster's discretion, a character can roll the dice on a test with a difficulty of 0 and can generate Momentum as normal (because zero successes are required, every success generates Momentum), but this comes with the normal risk of complications as well. This sort of difficulty 0 test can be useful if it's important how successful a character is, but there's no real chance of failure.

OPPOSED TESTS

At times, a character may find themselves trying to beat an opponent. These situations call for an opposed test. Here an active character attempts to perform an action, while the reactive character is trying to resist them. Both characters usually attempt a skill test with a base difficulty of 1. The outcome of the opposed test depends on each character's results.

- **Active Character Succeeds, Reactive Character Fails:** The active character achieves their goal, and their test is successful.
- **Active Character Fails, Reactive Character Succeeds:** The active character fails to achieve their goal, and the reactive character's test is resolved. Some opposed tests have a specific additional outcome for the reactive character's test.
- **Both Characters Fail:** The active character fails to achieve their goal, but the reactive character gains no additional benefit.
- **Both Characters Succeed:** Compare the total Momentum generated on each character's skill test. The character with the higher Momentum wins, and achieves their goal, but loses one Momentum for each Momentum their opponent scored. The loser then loses all the Momentum they generated, and they cannot spend any. In the case of a tie, the active character wins, but loses all the Momentum they generated.

TRUTHS

A truth is a single word or short phrase, which describes a significant fact or aspect about its subject. Truths define what is and what isn't possible, and whether skill tests are easier or harder to attempt. If a truth stops being important, or ceases to be true, it is no longer a truth.

Sample file

In rules terms, if the truth applies, it does one of the following:

- The truth makes an action easier, reducing the difficulty of the skill test by 1.
- The truth makes something more difficult, increasing the difficulty of the skill test by 1.
- The truth makes an action possible, or impossible.
- If a truth should have a particularly intense effect the gamemaster can add a number after the name of the truth, increasing the modifier of the difficulty. For example, *Smoke* could be made more intense by calling it *Smoke 2*, making the difficulty to shoot through the smoke increase by 2, rather than 1.

COMPLICATIONS

Sometimes unforeseen problems crop up or there are inescapable consequences for acting, these come in the form of complications; a truth that has a uniquely negative impact on the characters they affect. Complications make skill tests harder or impossible after they are introduced.

Complications can occur in one of a few ways:

- **Rolling a 20:** When attempting a skill test, each d20 that rolls 20 causes a complication, which comes into effect once the test has been resolved.
- **Gamemaster Introduction:** The GM can introduce complications by spending Threat.

SUCCESS AT A COST

Some skill tests can't really be failed outright; rather, it's uncertain whether the test can be completed without problems. In this situation, the gamemaster may allow you to **succeed at a cost**. With this option, a failed roll still means you pass the skill test, but you also suffer one automatic complication in addition to any that occur because of the dice rolled.

Although the failed test has produced a successful outcome, you cannot spend Momentum to improve the outcome of a skill test. Momentum can only be spent on the test if it was successful due to the dice roll.

Dark magic, hideous creatures from beyond this world? A very rum lot, those Black Sun fellows!

– Captain Eric "Badger" Harris

TEST DIFFICULTY

Unless otherwise noted, most tests have a base difficulty of 1. Routine or straightforward tests might have a base difficulty of 0, while harder more challenging tests will have higher difficulties. After this the gamemaster considers if there are any additional factors in the current scene, or affecting the characters involved, that would affect the base difficulty of the test.

Example Difficulties

DIFFICULTY	EXAMPLE
0	Researching a widely known subject
1	Overcoming a simple lock
2	Driving across challenging terrain
3	Does your disguise pass muster under intense scrutiny?
4	Deciphering an unknown alien language
5	Retaining your sanity as you stare into the face of an elder god!

IMPROVING THE ODDS

Achtung! Cthulhu provides several ways for players to improve their chances of success by buying additional d20s to roll on a test:

- **Assistance:** One or more characters can assist with the test. Each character attempting to assist rolls 1d20, using a target number of their own **attribute** + **skill** combination. Any successes they score are added to the test's successes, providing the main character attempting the test scores 1 success. Assisting characters never roll more than 1d20.
- **Momentum:** Momentum can be spent to buy up to 3 additional dice.
- **Threat:** Players may add to Threat to buy up to 3 additional dice.
- **Fortune:** Spending a single point of Fortune allows a player to take one of their d20s, and change it so that it shows a 1 instead of rolling it, giving them two successes automatically before rolling.
- **Talents:** Some talents can grant bonus d20s in specific circumstances but this will depend on context and they still count towards the number of bonus d20s that can be purchased.

For the gamemaster, buying bonus d20s for non-player characters has fewer options. The gamemaster may spend points of Threat to add dice to a non-player character's test. Non-player characters do not have Fortune.

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Momentum

Each success above and beyond the difficulty of a test becomes one point of Momentum, which the character may use immediately, or save for later. Momentum is a valuable pooled resource that allows characters to improve upon their successes or gain additional benefits.

The Momentum pool cannot contain more than 6 Momentum at any time.

Bonus Momentum

Some situations, items, and talents grant a character **bonus Momentum**. This is added to the amount of Momentum you generate from a successful skill test. Sometimes it is specified that bonus Momentum can only be used in a specific way, such as buying dice, or obtaining information.

Bonus Momentum cannot be saved to a Momentum pool: if it is not used when it is generated, it is lost forever.

Example Uses for Momentum

The most common ways to use Momentum are listed below.

- **Buy d20s:** The character gains bonus d20s on their next skill test. The first die purchased costs 1 Momentum, the second 2, and the third 3.
- **Create Truth:** For 2 points of Momentum, create a truth for a character or the target of an action.
- **Obtain Information:** For each Momentum spent the character's player asks the gamemaster a single question about the situation, environment, or the characters present, which is not immediately obvious depending on the skill test attempted. The GM must answer truthfully, but can be as detailed or vague as they wish. This spend can be repeated.
- **Reduce Time:** You can spend Momentum to reduce the time it took to complete your test. The reduction in time is down to the gamemaster, and you can vary the amount of Momentum you spend depending on how quickly you want to complete the test.

THREAT

As player characters generate and spend Momentum, the gamemaster generates their own currency, called Threat. The GM spends Threat to alter scenes, empower non-player characters, and generally make things more challenging, perilous, or unpredictable for the player characters. Players can also add to the Threat pool instead of spending Momentum.

The GM typically begins each adventure with 2 Threat for each player present at the start of the session. They gain Threat in the following ways:

- **Threatening Circumstances:** The environment or circumstances of a new scene may be perilous enough to warrant adding one or two Threat to the pool automatically. Some important NPCs may generate Threat simply by arriving in a scene, in response to changes in the situation, or by taking certain actions. This also includes activities that escalate the tension of the scene, such as NPCs raising an alarm.
- **Non-Player Character Momentum:** NPCs with unspent Momentum from their skill tests cannot save it like player characters can: NPCs don't have a group Momentum pool. Instead, an NPC may add to Threat, adding one Threat for every Momentum they have remaining.
- **Complications:** When a player character suffers one or more complications on a skill test, they can choose to avoid them by adding 2 Threat to the Threat pool.
- **Momentum Spends:** Momentum spends can be paid for by the players by adding Threat to the pool instead of spending Momentum.

The gamemaster can spend Threat in a number of ways, here are some common examples:

- **Non-Player Character Momentum:** NPCs can spend Threat in all the ways that player characters use Momentum.
- **Non-Player Character Threat Spends:** When a player character's action would normally add points to Threat, an NPC performing that same action, or making that same choice, must spend an equivalent number of points of Threat.
- **Non-Player Character Complications:** If an NPC suffers a complication, the gamemaster may buy off that complication by spending two Threat.
- **Truth:** The gamemaster may change or create a truth by spending two Threat. This must come naturally from some part of the current situation.
- **Reinforcements:** The gamemaster may summon additional NPCs during a scene. Minor NPCs cost one Threat each, while Notable NPCs cost two and Major NPCs three.
- **Environmental Effects and Narrative Changes:** The gamemaster may trigger or cause problems with the scene or environment by spending Threat.

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FORTUNE

Fortune can be used to pull off extraordinary actions, perform exciting stunts, make one-in-a-million shots or provide an edge during life-or-death situations.

Each player character begins each adventure with three Fortune points, and they may not have more than five Fortune points at any time. Any excess points are immediately discarded. Each player may only spend one Fortune point per scene.

Here are some common ways players can benefit when spending Fortune:

- **Critical Success:** A Fortune point may be spent before a skill test to set a single d20 so that it automatically rolls a 1 (generating two successes automatically). This option must be selected before any dice are rolled on that skill test, and you must roll the remaining dice in the pool.
- **Reroll:** A Fortune point may be spent to reroll any number of dice in the character's dice pool (d20s or Challenge Dice). This option may be selected after the dice have been rolled.
- **Additional Major Action:** In conflict you immediately take an additional major action this turn, as soon as the first one has been resolved. Outside of a conflict, you can perform another skill test or other significant action immediately, before anyone else has an opportunity to respond.
- **Avoid Defeat:** The character may spend a Fortune point when they are defeated to return from defeat, either immediately, or at some point later in that scene.
- **Make It Happen:** The player introduces a new fact or detail about the current scene, which takes the form of a truth. It must relate to the character creating it, though it may represent something happening in a flashback, or it may be assumed to have always been true but only now becomes relevant. This must be used before rolling the dice on a skill test, and it can only affect the skill test it has been created for.

Action and Conflict

Embracing its heroic, pulp-flavoured nature, action scenes in ***Achtung! Cthulhu*** are fast-paced and enthralling, requiring quick decision-making and decisive action on the part of its players.

ZONES AND DISTANCES

To visualize your place in an action scene, it's important to keep track of which zone your character is in. Zones are defined by the terrain around them and tracking a character can simple be a matter of description—an enemy might be 'behind the control panel' or 'in the corridor'. This has the advantage of relying on natural language and intuitive concepts.

The gamemaster may also use a map or sketch to mark out the zones of a location, using markers to show your position in the scene.

In combat, movement and ranges are measured in four categories, and one state:

- The state of **reach** is when an object or character is within arm's length or melee weapon range. Reach isn't a specific range, but rather is a state that you can enter when you move. When you move into or within a zone, you can move into or out of reach of an object or character. Being within reach of an enemy increases the difficulty of any skill test that isn't a melee or mental attack by 2.

Commanding Non-player Characters

Sometimes the players will be given control of an allied non-player character. An NPC under the command of a player character does not receive a turn in a conflict; instead their actions are resolved as part of the actions of the PCs commanding them.

- **Minor Actions:** A commanded NPC will perform minor actions as needed to keep up with the PCs and to follow their orders. They do not spend Momentum to perform an extra minor action.
- **Major Actions:** Commanded NPCs cannot make skill tests as a major action, unless a player character uses the Command major action, or if the NPC performs the Assist major action. A number of commanded NPCs may perform a major action equal to the character's Tactics skill.

- **Close** range is defined as the zone you are in, or a distance of 0 zones.
- **Medium** range is defined as an adjacent zone, or a distance of 1 zone.
- **Long** range is defined as two zones away, or a distance of 2 zones.
- **Extreme** range is any zone beyond long range, or a distance of 3 or more zones.

ROUNDS AND TURNS

An action scene is a sequence divided into rounds and turns. During a round, each character takes a single turn.

The gamemaster chooses a single character to start the action scene. This is usually a player character unless there is a good reason for an NPC to start first.

Order of play goes back and forth between PCs and the NPCs until everyone has had a turn. Once all characters on both sides have taken a turn, one point of Momentum is lost from the PCs' group Momentum pool. The action passes to a character on whichever side did not take the last turn, and the whole process begins again for the next round.

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

Each turn, a character can attempt a single **major action**, and a single **minor action**.

Minor Actions

You can take one minor action on your turn. You can spend 1 Momentum to take one additional minor action (once per turn), and each minor action can only be taken once per turn.

- **Aim:** You can reroll 1d20 when you make an attack this turn.
- **Draw Item:** You pick up an item within reach, or draw an item you are carrying. If the item doesn't require a skill test to use, you can use it immediately for free.
- **Movement:** You move to any point within medium range, and can stand, or drop prone, as part of this movement. You can't take this minor action if you have taken the Rush action (see *Major Actions*) or if you are within reach of an enemy.
- **Prepare:** You take a second to set up a major action. Some major actions, such as spellcasting, require this minor action before they can be taken.

Sample file

Conflict Momentum Spends

In addition to the previously mentioned Momentum spends the following are available in combat:

OPTION	COST	EFFECT
Bonus Challenge Dice	1	Increase the stress inflicted by a successful attack. Each Momentum spent adds +1 to the Challenge Dice pool, before the rest are rolled.
Confidence	1	The character gains +1 morale (to a maximum of 4) until the start of their next turn.
Disarm	2 or 3	If within reach, one weapon held by the target is knocked away and falls to the ground. This costs 2 Momentum if the target is holding the weapon in one hand, or 3 Momentum if the weapon is held in two hands.
Knockdown	2	The target is knocked prone.
Minor Action	1	The character may attempt one additional minor action during their turn.
Secondary Target	2	An additional target within reach of the primary target is also affected by the attack, suffering the full effects of the attack.

Major Actions

You can take one major action each turn. You can spend one Fortune point to take a second major action, once per action scene.

- **Assist:** You assist a character with a skill test during their turn. It may be that you assist them before your turn, in which case your major action is taken up by doing so when it comes to your turn. Roll 1d20 using your own **attribute** + **skill** combination. Successes you score are added to the assisted character's, providing they score at least 1 success. Assisting characters never roll more than 1d20
- **Attack:** You attack an enemy or object (see *Making an Attack*, p.16).
- **Cast a Spell:** Spellcasters can cast a spell, but must have taken the Prepare minor action beforehand. The spell may require a skill test, as noted in the spell's effect description.
- **Catch Breath:** You take a moment to remove stress from your track, or remove a weapon effect you are suffering. This is a **Will** + **Resilience** test with a difficulty of 2. Success either removes stress equal to your Resilience score (plus 1 stress per Momentum spent), or removes an ongoing effect, such as the Persistent weapon effect.
- **Command:** You issue a command to another character under your control. That character performs a major action to resolve your command, taking any minor actions required to complete the order.
- **Create Truth:** You alter the circumstances of the battle, to give yourself an advantage or to hinder the enemy. This is a skill test with a difficulty of 2, using an **attribute** + **skill** appropriate to how you are altering the scene. If successful, the character creates a new truth, changes an existing one, or removes a truth from the scene.
- **Pass:** You choose not to or cannot attempt a major action.
- **Ready:** You choose another major action to take as a reaction to something else. When the trigger event occurs, you temporarily interrupt the current character's turn to resolve your readied major action, and then play proceeds as normal. If the triggering event does not occur before your next turn, the action is lost. You can still perform minor actions during your turn as normal.
- **Rush:** You sprint as fast as you can, making an **Agility** + **Athletics** test with a difficulty of 2, to move anywhere within long range. You can't take this action if you've already taken the Move minor action. Location truths may increase the difficulty of this skill test, and this skill test always allows success at cost.
- **Stabilise:** If a character is dying, then you can provide medical attention with a **Coordination** + **Medicine** test with a difficulty of 2. If you succeed, the dying character's condition is stabilised—they are no longer at immediate risk of dying, but they remain defeated.
- **Skill test:** You make a skill test, at the discretion of the gamemaster.

We must fight fire with fire, magic with magic, even at the cost of our immortal souls.

– Professor Richard Deadman

Sample file

ATTACKS, STRESS, AND INJURIES

An attack is any action made with the intention of harming another character, NPC or creature, or inflicting stress upon an object.

There are two forms of attack available to characters: **physical**, and **mental**.

Physical attacks are either **melee** or **ranged**. Here's how a typical attack sequence plays out:

1. **Declare the Attack: Choose a target that you can see, and a weapon to use.** If you want to make a melee attack you must be within reach of the target, if you want to make a ranged attack you must be able to see the target.

2. **Skill Test: You attempt a skill test, determined by the type of attack.** Each type of attack may have further adjustments to difficulty.

   a. **Melee:** Attempt an **Agility** + **Fighting** test with a difficulty of 1, opposed by the target's own **Agility** + **Fighting** test, also difficulty 1.

   b. **Ranged:** Attempt a **Coordination** + **Fighting** Test, with a base difficulty of 1, if you are within range.

   c. **Mental:** Attempt a **Will** + **Academia** test with a difficulty of 1, opposed by the target's own **Will** + **Resilience** test, also difficulty 1. Mental attacks are used to threaten and intimidate opponents.

3. **Inflict Stress: If the skill test succeeds then the attack inflicts stress, as described below.**

   a. **Roll Challenge Dice:** Roll the number of indicated by the weapon, and total the number of stress inflicted and any Effects.

   b. **Roll Cover:** The target rolls any cover they have available, and adds it to any other resistance they have due to armour or mental resistance, and then reduces the attacker's total by the total resistance.

   c. **Inflict Stress:** The target adds any remaining stress to their **stress track** and checks to see if they have sustained any injuries (see below).

   d. With a melee attack, if the target won the opposed test, they may choose to inflict stress to you instead, or move to any point within close range.

Complication Range

Some skill tests might not be more difficult but riskier or more uncertain than normal. With this in mind, the gamemaster might increase the complication range of a test, making it more likely that complications will be generated.

A skill test normally has a complication range of one, meaning that you suffer a complication for each d20 that rolls a 20. Increasing the complication range by one means that complications occur on a result of 19 or 20. The complication range can be increased by up to four.

Injuries

The character will suffer an injury if one or more of the following conditions occur:

- If the character suffers 5 or more stress from a single attack or hazard after reduction for resistance.
- The character's stress track is filled.
- The character already had a full stress track and takes further stress.
- If two or more of these conditions occur at the same time, characters may suffer multiple injuries.

Each injury you suffer increases the complication range of your skill tests by 1 until treated. Once a character has suffered three injuries, in any combination, they are **defeated** and can no longer act in the scene. If a character is defeated and has more physical injuries than mental ones, they are also dying. At the end of each of a dying character's turns, roll 1, plus one additional for each successive turn they have been dying. If the character rolls two or more effects, they die from their injuries.

Fatigue

Some events and environmental effects will affect a character's ability to act.

When a character suffers **fatigue**, it reduces their maximum stress by 1 for each point of fatigue suffered. If a character's maximum stress is reduced to 0, any further fatigue means the character falls unconscious – this is the same as being defeated. If the character suffers any more fatigue while unconscious, they die.

A character can remove fatigue with a **Brawn** + **Resilience** test, or a **Will** + **Resilience** test with a difficulty of 1. Success removes one point of fatigue, plus one more for every point of Momentum spent.

RESISTANCE, COVER, AND MORALE

Resistance comes in two forms: persistent and conditional. Persistent resistance comes in the form of a simple number, while conditional resistance comes in the form of Challenge Dice.

- **Against physical attacks**, a character gets persistent resistance from armour, and conditional resistance from cover. Armour is normally something the character wears like *Nachtwölfe*'s advanced body armour. Cover normally comes from terrain or obstacles.

Sample file

- **Against mental attacks**, a character applies resistance from courage and morale. Courage represents a character's confidence and discipline, while morale is the certainty that comes from being inspired or encouraged by others.

Characters do not start with any resistance. Cover and morale typically come from circumstances – locations and actions – rather than being part of the character, and therefore a character doesn't start with any cover or morale either.

WEAPON EFFECTS

When players roll Effects on Challenge Dice, or a 5 or 6 on conventional dice (See *Challenge Dice Result Table*, p.8), they may generate a weapon effect, which comes into play and deals additional stress. These are usually noted in a weapon's stress statistic. Some weapon effects are listed with an X, which is replaced by a number depending on the weapon, and apply to every effect symbol that is rolled in the dice pool.

- **Area:** The attack or hazard hits one additional target within close range of the initial target for every Effect rolled. Secondary targets suffer the attack's full effects.
- **Backlash X:** The attack is damaging to its source as well as its target. Each Effect inflicts X stress to the attacker. This may be physical or mental stress, at the GM's discretion.
- **Drain:** The attack or hazard is especially debilitating. The character hit suffers one fatigue for each effect rolled.
- **Intense:** The attack has an especially potent effect. If one or more Effects are rolled, and the attack inflicts one or more injuries, the attack inflicts one additional injury.
- **Persistent X:** The attack or hazard has a lingering effect. If one or more Effects are rolled, the target suffers X stress (of the same type as the initial attack or hazard) at the start of the affected character's turn, for rounds equal to the number of Effects rolled.
- **Piercing X:** The attack or hazard is especially good at overcoming resistance. When working out stress, ignore X resistance for each Effect rolled.
- **Snare:** The attack or hazard can entangle and bind the target. The target cannot take any actions of a type determined by the type of attack or hazard (physical actions for physical attacks, etc.) other than to try and break free. It requires a skill test with a difficulty equal to the number of Effects rolled to break free.
- **Stun:** The attack or hazard leaves the target momentarily unable to act. If a number of Effects are rolled that equal or exceeds the target's Resilience skill, the target may not take any actions in their next turn.
- **Vicious:** The attack or hazard is especially potent. Add +1 to the total stress inflicted for each Effect rolled.



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Magic

Both Axis and Allies have their own distinct approaches to the learning and wielding of magic. Magic has been divided into two separate and distinct disciplines:

The first is "battlefield magic", shorter-term enchantments, spells, curses, hexes, charms and blessings, which are primarily used to aid forces involved in combat.

The second is ritualistic magic; more complicated and intricate, but conversely immensely more potent and powerful. It is this kind of magic used to communicate with strange forces and higher darker beings, or effect permanent and lasting change in the mortal plane.

LEARNING MAGIC

A character can learn magic in three ways.

Traditional

The character has spent much of their life studying an occult tradition which is passed down through the generations, and takes many years of study to master. Access to this knowledge is scarce outside of family or tribal traditions, but the rewards are considerable. Traditions commonly have an abundance of taboos and guidelines that shape their use, intended to shield their users from the worst side effects of wielding magic.

Researcher

The character has studied forbidden tomes, occult lore and fragments of precious knowledge to piece together their understanding of the paranormal. This is dangerous, as research-driven occultists are typically self-taught or part of clandestine societies, limiting their knowledge base and making them greedy for more knowledge rather than cautious and reverent. Researchers can learn any spell, but are often led to the Mythos, which is dangerous in its own right.

Dabbler

A character might stumble upon a useful fragment of occult knowledge, perhaps an eldritch tome composed by some maddened scribe, which grants them knowledge of a spell. Coming from such a dubious source, such learnt spells are flawed and extremely dangerous, and the character may find it difficult to expand their knowledge of the occult further.

Power

All spellcasters have a power rating, and this is a crucial element of unleashing spells, performing rituals and turning words and actions into meaningful effects.

A tradition-based or researcher spellcaster has a starting power of 2 and a dabbler has a power of 1, but may push themselves to increase their base Power to 3, at the cost of adding 1 to Threat for every Effect rolled.

All battlefield spells are bound spells meaning they are stored in the sorcerer's **mantle**, a token, fetish, icon or wand, which holds the spell's power until it is ready to be unleashed. Spells may be held in a mantle for as long as the caster remains conscious, after which they dissipate naturally and must be re-stored again.

Sample file

To cast a battlefield spell spellcasters must first prepare their mantle, choosing which spells they wish to hold ready. A spellcaster may have a number of spells in their mantle equal to their power. Preparing these spells requires a difficulty 0 skill test, which takes a number of minutes equal to the difficulty of each spell added together. The attribute and skill used varies – traditional spellcasters use **Insight + Survival**, research spellcasters use **Reason + Academia**, and dabblers use **Will + Resilience**. Once prepared, a spellcaster's mantle contains the chosen spells until they sleep or are otherwise rendered unconscious.

CASTING A BATTLEFIELD MAGIC SPELL

During an action scene, a spellcaster may attempt to cast the spells in their mantle. This requires the use of the Prepare minor action and a major action. Spellcasting can only be attempted once per turn.

The skill used by the spell is determined by the spell's description, as is the difficulty of the skill test to cast the spell. The attribute used for this skill test depends on the type of spellcaster the character is: traditional spellcasters use **Insight**, research spellcasters use **Reason**, and dabblers use **Will**.

All battlefield spells have a cost, which is paid when casting, which takes the form of a number of dice of mental stress inflicted on the character. A character's courage and morale resistance apply against this stress as normal. This cost is applied after resolving the skill test to cast the spell, and it applies whether the spell was successfully cast or not.

MOMENTUM SPENDS IN MAGIC

Skilled practitioners of magic can often wield their spells with deftness and precision, turning their skill and knowledge into greater effects. Some spells have specific ways that they can use Momentum generated when casting, but there are also a number of common uses for Momentum listed here.

- For each Momentum spent, gain +1 morale resistance against the spell's cost.
- For each Momentum spent, add +1 to the stress the spell inflicts.
- For 2 Momentum, double the duration of any spell which lasts for a number of rounds.

RESISTING MAGIC AND MAGICAL DUELS

Although magic is a potent and dangerous force, it is not all-powerful and in some cases, spells may be resisted. Sometimes a spellcaster will have to overcome the innate willpower, resistance and ego of a subject to have a spell take effect.

Some spells may allow their target to resist the effects. This turns the skill test to cast the spell into an opposed test and the attribute and skill combination the resisting character uses will be mentioned in the spell's description. The resisting character's test uses the spell's difficulty.

In addition, spellcasters learn techniques to ward themselves against the supernatural, and the practicalities of war have made those techniques more necessary than ever for countering hostile magic.

Spellcasters of all types gain the following reaction:

- **Counterspell:** This does not count towards the bound spells in your mantle. Once per round, you may use this when an enemy you can see attempts to cast a spell. You roll your power dice; for each Effect rolled, the difficulty of the enemy's spell increases by +1. A spellcaster who uses this reaction may not attempt to cast a spell in their following turn.

This ability is a core element of sorcerous duels—both participants know that they cannot easily cast spells while the other can counterspell, but using a counterspell prevents the caster from using spells of their own, creating a tension between the spellcasters as each waits for an opening.

Battlefield Magic Complications

As might be expected, complications can be troublesome for a spellcaster. Due to the power they wield, even the slightest break in concentration, the tiniest error, or the most trivial of mishaps can cause a spell to spiral out of control.

As with any skill test, a roll of a 20 is a complication when casting a spell. However, due to the delicate, complicated nature of spellcasting, the complication range of a skill test to cast a spell is increased by the spell's difficulty, so a spell with a difficulty of 2 suffers a complication on a 19 or 20, not just a 20.

Further, the effects of a complication when spellcasting can often be more severe and more unpredictable. Magic is a powerful force and when it goes wrong the effects can range from the unexpected, to the hilarious to the downright deadly. A miscast Spear of Lug might accidentally hit the wrong enemy target, or strike an explosive material. A miscast Bounties of Dagda might heal all enemies as well as allies, or even bring defeated enemies back from the dead. Gamemasters should apply their creativity, ingenuity and sense of fun to devise some truly spectacular and devious effects when a spell is miscast. However, if the spell is successfully cast, the spell's effects will still occur – even complications when spellcasting cannot turn success into failure, it can only produce additional effects.

Sample file

Mission: A Quick Trip to France

Introduction

This Quickstart adventure for the ***Achtung! Cthulhu 2d20 system*** begins *in media res*. The team has already received their mission briefing and is getting close to the drop zone in the first scene. But as the gamemaster, you need to know the background for the rest of the adventure before you get them to jump out of the plane! It is recommended that, as the gamemaster, you give this adventure a quick read through before you play it for the first time, paying special attention to *Scene 4: The Summoning*, to give you an idea of how the adventure progresses and the options available to you and the players. The synopsis below summaries the adventure and the events leading up to it. Rules will be introduced throughout the adventure and for ease of reference are clearly marked with page references.

Synopsis

It is June, 1940. The Black Sun, one of the major occult forces within the Nazi regime, has stormed in to take over the French village of Saint Sulac. The Black Sun are led by a Master, Jans Stöller, whose recent discovery of a forgotten tome known as the Azeus Demonicium has revealed that the chateau at the centre of the village is built on a site of supreme occult significance.

Contained within the warren of caves below the chateau is a chamber which holds the Altar of Obeisance, a long forgotten pre-Roman artefact from a dark Gaulish cult who were devoted to the worship of the Mythos God, Nyarlathotep. Anyone who is able to perform certain dark rites on that altar will be able to summon an aspect of Nyarlathotep and receive his direct blessing, growing enormously in power and might.

Stöller's ambition knows no bounds and he seeks to use this rite to elevate himself within Black Sun's ranks to become a Black Sun Canon. He is determined to secure the dark god's blessing before his rivals within the Cult can beat him to it and he has assembled a hand-picked team of loyal Troopers to achieve his aim. Moving swiftly, he has swooped in to secure the village and aims to complete the ritual within a single night before anyone can interfere with his plans.

With the exception of the local resistance leader, Aramis, none of the locals are skilled combatants. This is a rural French village and the sudden Black Sun takeover was a surprise to everyone, including the local German commander whose garrison was summarily ordered out of town. The Black Sun has also begun to remove villagers from their houses as sacrifices for the upcoming ritual, an event which triggered Aramis to make a hasty report to London about this unexpected and bizarre event.

While Aramis was attempting to make his report, his Resistance fighters got caught up in a firefight with the Black Sun, resulting in his handlers in London receiving a garbled and incomplete message.

These events made the upper echelon of Section M, the British occult intelligence agency, very nervous: Stöller is a rising star within the Nazi occult organisation. What could he be doing in this sleepy French village? As a result, Section M have put together a team in a hurry and dispatched them to investigate.

While the players do not know this at first, Aramis and his comrade, Jean-Paul, escaped from the firefight and may be able to provide some assistance. Aramis was shot and injured; however, he managed to escape following the attack and has found refuge in the cellar of a nearby farm.

The players will land in France, make their way to Saint Sulac, and have been ordered to locate Aramis and find out what is going on. He will be able to provide an alternative entrance to the heavily guarded chateau, telling them of the ancient tunnels underneath the village, one of which extends there from his dairy. Armed with this knowledge, the players will be able to bypass the considerable Black Sun defences, confront the diabolical Jans Stöller, and hopefully stop him—before the Dark Pharaoh can be summoned!

You begin this mission with 2 points of Threat for each player.

Sample file