

A WARGAME BY
FREDERICK SILBURN-SLATER



SALE A WAR TRANSFORMED

WWI ON THE DOGGERLAND FRONT

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OSPREY GAMES

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
Kemp House, Chawley Lane, Cumnor Hill, Oxford, OX2 9PH, UK
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland
1385 Broadway, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10018, USA
E-mail: info@ospreygames.co.uk
www.ospreygames.co.uk

OSPREY GAMES is a trademark of Osprey Publishing Ltd

First published in Great Britain in 2023

This electronic edition published in 2023 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: HB 9781472856258; eBook 9781472856265; ePDF 9781472856234; XML 9781472856241

Osprey Games supports the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity. Between 2014 and 2018 our donations are being spent on their Centenary Woods project in the UK.

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Chapter One

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

A War Transformed is a fast-paced, skirmish wargame set in an alternate reality where the First World War is changed utterly by forces far beyond human understanding. The game takes place in the Doggerland Front, a newly opened frontier in a war that already threatens to consume a weary world. Setting their small band of men against that of their opponent, players struggle to claim control over one small portion of this savage place – at least for a short time!

The game allows for two Patrols of around 30 to 50 models, controlled by opposing players, who will move, shoot, and make strategic decisions for their troops. From last stands to running skirmishes, stalwart defences of strategic resources and lighting raids on enemy installations, this book contains multiple scenarios for small-scale platoon combat. Rules are given for how your models can perform powerful magical interventions and special actions, known as Rituals and Commands, as well as how they move, shoot, and interact, with both each other and the terrain that surrounds them. Within these pages you will also find out how to deal with casualties and morale, key elements in maintaining the resolve of your own troops whilst breaking the will of your opponent's.

This book introduces the different factions vying for control of the Doggerland Front, with information on their relative strengths, their histories, and troops available to them. *A War Transformed* is a broad narrative; the mythologies and histories described herein should not be thought of as set in stone. Wargaming rewards imagination and players are encouraged to see the contents of this book not as a rigid set of constraints, but as a framework through which to explore their own dark visions of this harsh frontier.



A War Transformed takes place in a parallel universe where the natural course of the First World War is interrupted by a completely unforeseen cosmic event – an asteroid, dubbed Summerisle for its discoverer, struck the moon and tore a huge piece from it. This impact, called The Shattering, awakened the long-forgotten spirits of nature and old gods of the earth, irrevocably changing the course of history.

In ancient times, these gods had a compact with mortals. Sacrifice was exchanged for the promise of fertility; a life or two was offered and crops flourished. However, long ago, something changed. The gods retreated from this world, falling into a deep slumber. In time, man forgot his covenant and believed himself the master of nature.

Now, with the Summerisle incident, the old gods have returned to reclaim their rightful dominion. Devastated by the cataclysm caused by the Summerisle's impact, much of the world lies barren. Though nature reclaims the world with preternatural speed, nothing planted by human hands will grow. It is only the intercession of the ancient gods that feeds the world; wherever they are appeased with sacrifice and worship the earth gives up its bounty, but life must be bought with death.

Chief among these old gods is the moon goddess herself; her three aspects, Maiden, Mother, and Crone, are collectively known as the Triune Goddess. Her masculine counterpart, the Horned God, is the master of wild places. A host of other smaller gods and nature spirits abound, and all exact a

tribute of human souls to sustain them. Driven to a frenzy akin to madness by both the wounding of the moon and the desecration of nature caused by the war, they command a far greater tithe in blood than seen in ages past.

But the tale grows stranger still. The Shattering provided new opportunities to prosecute the war. As the ground shook and the waters receded, the ancient ground that once connected the British Isles with mainland Europe, Doggerland, was revealed once more by the ebbing tide. Lost for 8,000 years beneath the roiling North Sea, this new and vast frontier, stretching from the Isle of Wight to Jutland, now lies open and unguarded.

An army can now march from London to Berlin dry shod. The trenches of the Western Front stretch far across what was once the bed of the sea, littered with the wrecks of ships and detritus long thought lost forever under the dark waves.

Be Warned!

Players expecting an accurate simulation of First World War combat, or even those opposed to the occasional anachronism, will find themselves disappointed!



Chapter Two

MAGIC IN A GILDED AGE

Throughout this book, there are many references to occult beliefs and practices prevalent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries of our own reality. It was a time when magical and occult societies such as The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn sprang up across the west and spiritualists, mediums, and mystics plied their trade in fashionable drawing rooms.

Magic, folk tradition, and national identity were closely linked in this period, with the brutal reality of the war only deepening people's desire to connect with the other world in search of identity, respite, or connection with lost loved ones. As people reached out into the world of spirits, many also rejected the march of industrialisation, seeking to reclaim rural traditions and ways of life. For some, this meant looking back into the pre-Christian past or embracing the superstitious beliefs of the mediaeval world. It is around this time that anthropologists first looked at the beliefs of the ancient past and saw parallels in contemporary folklore, traditions, and beliefs.

These romantic notions fed darker undercurrents. Their focus on national myths and racial identity gave early fascists an evocative vocabulary of symbols, with disastrous consequences.

The first tentative moves towards what would now be recognised as folk-horror were made in this era, with authors like Arthur Machen and M. R. James penning weird tales of witches, unquiet spirits, and ancient, terrible gods. The horror of the unknowable and inscrutable was explored by luminaries like H. P. Lovecraft and Algernon Blackwood, who imagined worlds presided over by cosmic beings of unbelievable power and dark purpose. Artists explored folklore, symbolism, and the intersection of modern life with the spiritual and instinctive, operating at the fringes of human consciousness.

Lunar mythology and folk magic are at the core of *A War Transformed's* rich narrative setting, and this book contains information about the various belief systems of this strange new world, but none of it should be seen as a dogmatic stricture. *A War Transformed* is a fluid framework within which players can give full licence to their creativity, creating an interesting and exciting force that is fun to collect, build, and play.

THE SHATTERING

It had been the talk for weeks, even in the cut-off world of the trenches, where news was scarce and gossip rare. This giant asteroid, named for its discoverer, was hurtling towards the earth at undreamt of speed. Was this to be mankind's end?

But the earth itself was not struck. Instead, Summerisle collided with the moon and was obliterated in an instant, the impact flinging vast quantities of lunar rock into orbit and leaving a gaping scar in the moon's surface.

Reeling from the enormous blow it had been struck, The Shattering caused the moon to teeter in its orbit. As it staggered, the enormous force of its gravity wrought untold destruction upon the war-weary planet that lay prostrate below, tearing at its very shape. As the Earth writhed in the moon's embrace, the seas churned, the ground convulsed, and mountains cracked and were rent asunder.

For many months, the people of the world, kept an uneasy truce, but it could not last. The Great War, held off for a season, was soon resumed with even greater bitterness – no longer a fight for mere imperial glory, but now a terrible struggle for survival.

When the moon was wounded, an ancient force awakened. Primordial gods and ancient spirits, their names lost to history, were roused from their slumber. As these ancient deities revealed themselves, secret societies that had held safe their ways came out of their seclusion. Hidden in the shadows for countless generations, protected by rarefied splendour or rural isolation, covens of immeasurable age stepped out of the shadows to show the desperate people of the world how to appease the gods and renew the fertility of their ravaged world – how to trade blood for an endless summer.

At the front, men who once fought for King and Country, for Kaiser and Fatherland, now fight for renewal, growth, and the promise of Spring. Each drop of blood shed restores life to the dying world.

As magic returns, the world bears witness to a new kind of warfare. Above foxholes, trenches, and dugouts hangs the Sundered Moon, full and impossibly large in the sky. Her mysterious power seeps into tired limbs as masked soldiers chant and stamp, their hair woven with flower garlands.

This is a war transformed.

THE NATURE OF MAGIC

Between our reality and the spirit world is a veil, a barrier between planes of existence, a boundary between the material world that we inhabit and the aethereal one inhabited by ancient spirits and gods. The two planes exist simultaneously, one alongside the other. In some places, the veil is as thin as gossamer, the barrier between the realities considerably weakened. These places have long been known for their spiritual power – ancient groves of trees, stone circles, sacred lakes and rivers. Closer to the spirit realm, these places became sites of pilgrimage and sacrifice in ages long past.

Through magic, those with the gift can intercede with the beings that inhabit that other place, exchanging offerings or worship for power, protection, or the promise of fertility. Those with this power have gone by many names throughout history– seer, priest, even witch.

At these great loci, fertility was secured through sacrifice. A few souls were given in exchange for the harvest, their blood appeasing the spirits of the other realm. Contented with the exchange, the gods blessed the crops to grow, the animals to fatten, and the cycle of birth and death to continue. However, in time, man forgot these ancient compacts, subduing the world by force and bending it to his will. The gods, ever inscrutable in their purpose, acquiesced.

But when the moon was shattered by the impact of Summerisle, something changed. Long known to man as a source of great power, its cycles affect the ebb and flow of magic as surely as the tide. Now, across the face of the world, the veil has been torn to shreds. Powerful energies and ancient spirits are now free to pass through to wreak havoc in the material world once more. Driven to madness by the wounding of the moon, the gods have returned to demand the sacrifice that is their due, though they now ask an impossibly steep price.

There were always some who clung to the old ways. In towns and villages across Europe, the rituals and rites of the old gods were still practised by the poor, even if they were not fully understood. With the return of the old gods, patterns of belief and traditions that had faded away with the industrialisation of the previous century have come flooding back. Now, in those same towns and villages across Europe, ancient songs are sung by young and old alike and the forgotten rituals of yesterday have been reclaimed.