

UNDERGROUND

A Call of Cthulhu scenario for 3-6 characters, set in Britain in 1942, with some notes on adventures in wartime Britain.

by Marcus L Rowland

PLAYER'S INFORMATION

The investigators are on two weeks leave from their wartime duties in the Allied Forces, and are staying with Julian Hammond, an English historian and former colleague.

On the second day of their stay he goes out, leaving the team with his family. During the afternoon his wife Mary approaches the team with a curious request.

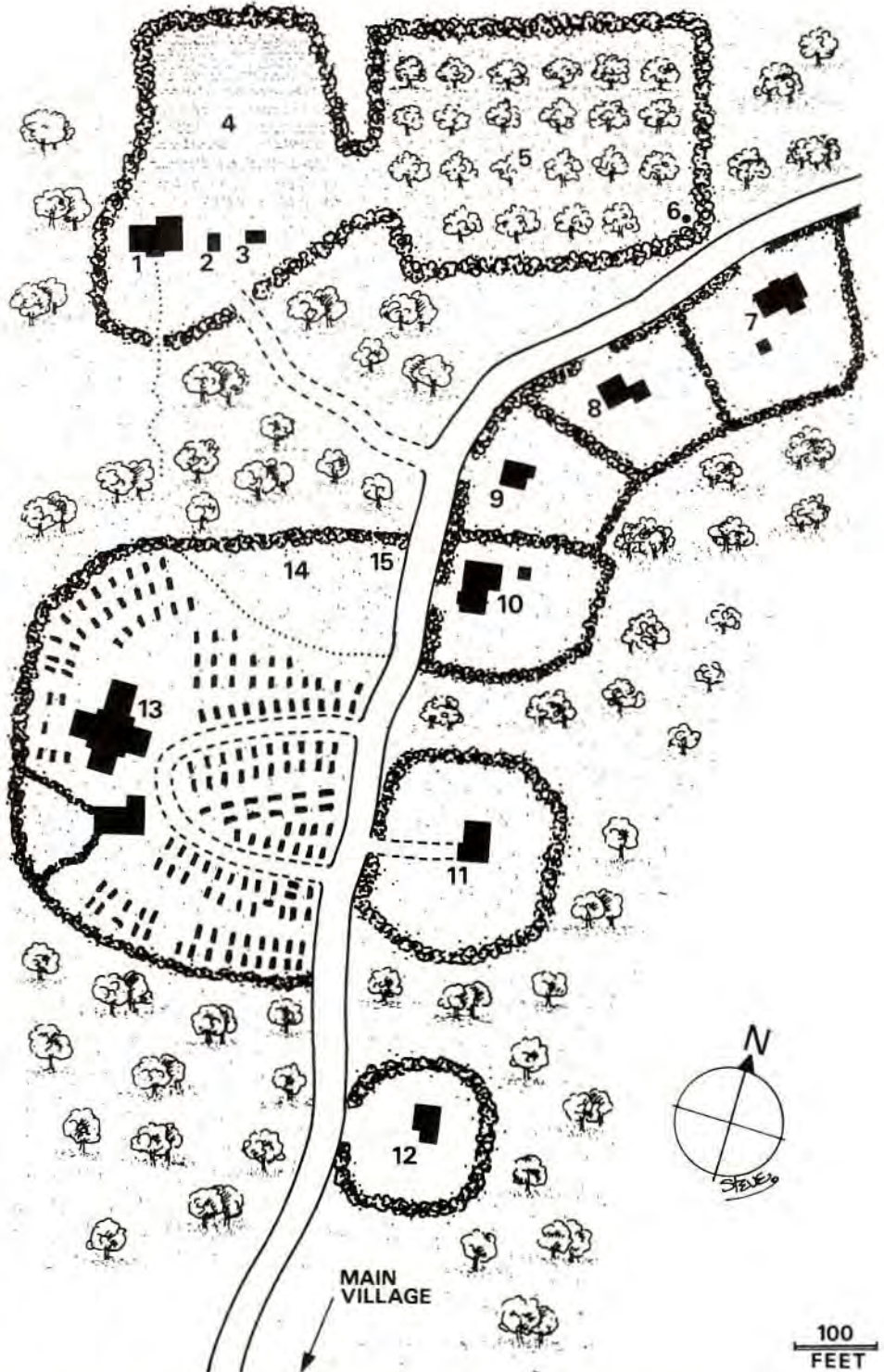
She tells them that when the war began Hammond made strenuous efforts to enlist, but colour blindness and a mild heart murmur made him ineligible for service. At first Hammond reacted by concentrating his attention on his work and the LDV (Local Defence Volunteers, later called the Home Guard) and virtually ignoring his family; but in the last few months a subtle change has occurred. He still devotes very little attention to Mary and his family, but has almost stopped working – often spending much of the day asleep. He resigned from the Home Guard, pleading illness, but Mary is convinced his physical health has not deteriorated. He often goes out in the evening, sometimes failing to return until the early hours of the morning.

Mary feels that he is hiding something, but is afraid to question him in case their marriage deteriorates still further. She knows a little about the team's pre-war activities, and would like them to try to discover what is happening.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

Shortly after Dunkirk, Hammond was asked to set up and run a cell of a British resistance organisation, which would go underground (literally) if Germany invaded. All members were told to sever ties with the overt defence organisations, and thus avoid arrest after an invasion. Hammond and his friends have converted a disused crypt into an underground bunker and headquarters. Each member takes a guard turn at the bunker every few nights, and they meet occasionally to practise with weapons and explosives. Unfortunately Hammond has made a serious mistake: the bunker adjoins a forgotten crypt occupied by cultists, and he and his men have been under psychic attack for some time.

If the investigators start to look into the situation they will probably realise that Hammond is disappearing somewhere near a graveyard, and may reach erroneous conclusions. If they do nothing, or realise that Hammond is involved in resistance operations, and take no further action, Hammond will eventually go insane, become possessed by the spirit of one of the cultists, and use magic to bind the other members of the resistance group to his will. They will then go to his house, kidnap Hammond's wife and children, and take them back to the churchyard, sacrificing them in an elaborate ritual to raise the dead cultists. This will occur shortly

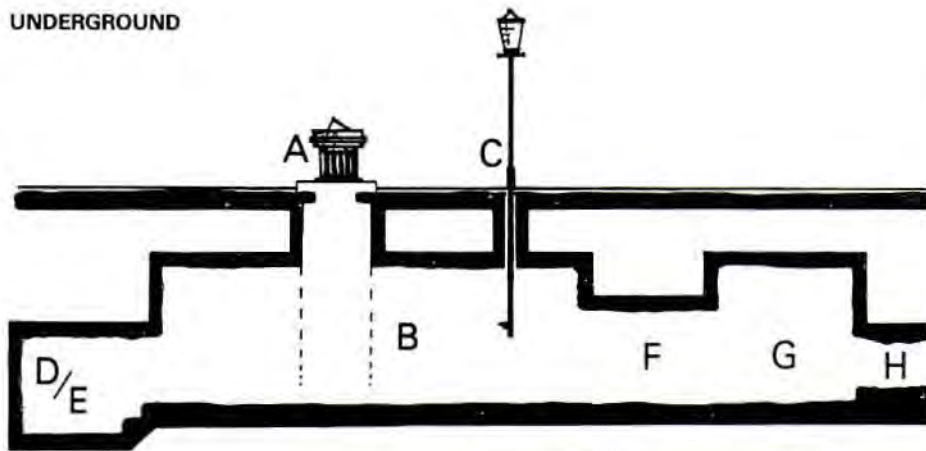


before the investigators are due to leave the village. Since Hammond and his men will be equipped with Sten guns and grenades during this ritual it is likely to be somewhat dangerous for investigators.

As the scenario opens Hammond has gone out in his car to collect spare valves for the group's radio transmitter, and will return in the late afternoon. There is no urgent need to install the valves, and

Hammond will wait two days for his next guard turn, rather than sneaking out to the bunker that night.

Julian Hammond: Archaeologist and historian, former lecturer at Oxford, now author. Age 55, British, Christian: STR:12; DEX:11; INT:19; CON:9; APP:8; POW:14; SIZ:10; SAN:21; EDU:17; HIT POINTS:9



Skills: Archaeology 45%, Camouflage 24%, Cthulhu Mythos 44%, Drive Auto 30%, History 75%, Library Use 70%, Linguist 45%, Listen 50%, Read French 55%, Read Latin 70%, Read Greek 45%, Speak French 40%, Knife 25%, Automatic Pistol 40%, Sten Gun 30%, Punch 45%, Butt 40%, Kick 40%

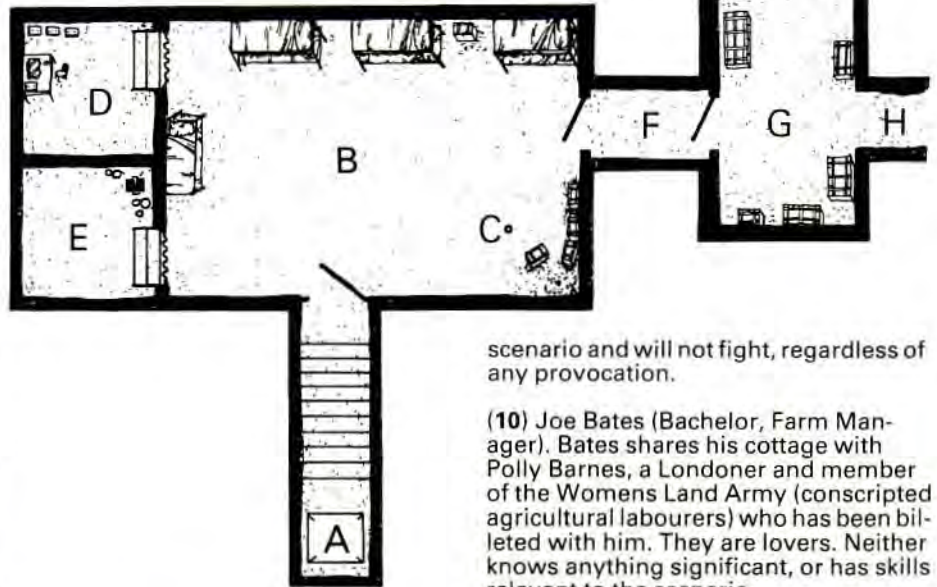
Spells: *Elder sign.*

Equipment: .45 Automatic pistol, 4 clips ammunition, flick knife.

Hammond's house (1) is in woods off a quiet village lane. Nothing significant will be found in a search, except several books on local history and archaeology in Hammond's study and an old van (purchased just after Dunkirk) in the garage (2). Hammond used the van to move weapons into the area. Spot Hidden will reveal four drums of petrol, disguised as weedkiller, in the garden shed (3). The lawn (4) has been ploughed to raise vegetables, as has the ground under the orchard (5). Digging in the orchard will eventually reveal a sealed metal chest (6), buried 4' deep, containing six Sten guns (see below), twenty-four clips of ammunition, and a dozen fragmentation grenades. There are no clues to its presence and random digging will take 3-18 hours to find it. Mary was in London the day Hammond buried it and saw nothing. A Spot Hidden roll to the South of the house will reveal Hammond's tracks in the ploughed earth, leading East. The trail peters out in the woods. His two adopted children (boys, aged 5 and 7) will pester the investigators with questions about their activities and threats to 'tell daddy' about the search. They can be bribed into silence, with presents from Mary's hoarded stock of sweets. There are six cottages and a church nearby. Some local cottagers are members of the cell, and will report any questions to Hammond, others are ignorant but may be a source of rumours.

(7) Castle Family. Ted Castle is a cell member. His wife and children think that he is in the Home Guard and goes out on night patrols.

Ted Castle: Joiner and Plumber, Army sergeant until 1936 when injured in training accident. Now deferred from military service due to blind left eye and injured left hand. (Only two fingers remain, cannot hold or fire weapons with left hand). Age 38, British, Church of England:



STR:16; DEX:15; INT:12; CON:15; APP:12; POW:10; SIZ:15; SAN:26; EDU:7; HIT POINTS:15

Skills: Camouflage 70%, Climb 65%, Cthulhu Mythos 24%, Dodge 80%, Drive Auto 30%, Drive Motorcycle 20%, Electrical Repair 30%, Mechanical Repair 55%, Hide 35%, Jump 55%, Linguist 20%, Listen 70%, Speak French 30%, Speak Egyptian 25%, Spot Hidden 30%, Throw 70%, Track 20%, Shotgun 45%, Knife 45%, Automatic 50%, Sten Gun 40%, Boyes Rifle 40%, Punch 75%, Butt 65%, Kick 40%, Garrotte 10%.

Equipment: Pocket knife, 12-gauge Shotgun (in house), Motorcycle. Castle is not consciously aware of his Mythos knowledge.

(8) Eric Maggs (Bachelor). Maggs is the village drunkard, a pensioner with a small private income. He has seen lights in the churchyard several times, but thinks the drink is causing his hallucinations. Maggs has no skills relevant to this scenario, except an ability to absorb phenomenal quantities of alcohol if investigators happen to buy him drinks.

(9) Peter Payne (Widower, Farmhand). Payne is a conscientious objector and knows nothing of the cell. If anyone approaches him he will begin a protracted argument against war and all forms of government. He has noticed that Hammond seems to have no difficulty getting petrol despite rationing, and will denounce this as an example of the inequalities brought about by the war. He has no skills relevant to this

scenario and will not fight, regardless of any provocation.

(10) Joe Bates (Bachelor, Farm Manager). Bates shares his cottage with Polly Barnes, a Londoner and member of the Womens Land Army (conscripted agricultural labourers) who has been billeted with him. They are lovers. Neither knows anything significant, or has skills relevant to the scenario.

(11) Dr Wells and family. Wells knows that the cell exists and that Hammond is a member, and will help if anyone is injured, but does not know the location of the bunker. His family know nothing.

Dr Albert Wells: General practitioner, army surgeon in World War 1. Discoverer of an obscure fungal infection related to ringworm, author of two books on military medicine (now considered obsolete) and a volume of autobiography, *Surgeon on the Somme*. Age 58, Welsh, Atheist: STR:14; DEX:15; INT:16; CON:13; APP:12; POW:10; SIZ:8; SAN:50; EDU:16; HIT POINTS:10

Skills: Botany 40%, Chemistry 40%, Diagnose Disease 45%, Drive Auto 25%, First Aid 70%, Library Use 30%, Linguist 10%, Listen 60%, Pharmacy 50%, Psychology 25%, Read/Write Latin 50%, Speak Welsh 40%, Spot Hidden 35%, Treat Disease 45%, Treat Poison 65%, Zoology 35%.
Equipment: Medical kit, saloon car.

(12) Miss Pryor (Spinster, retired shopkeeper). She is terrified of spies and will call the police if any strangers (such as the team) question her. She has no useful information, no relevant skills.

(13) St Christopher's Church and vicarage. An eighteenth century structure of no particular architectural or historic importance. Nothing of interest will be found in the church or in the main graveyard. The vicar is the Reverend Chubb. He knows about the resistance



unit, since he helped to find the crypt, and has been warned to be alert for anyone asking too many questions. He will report any suspicions to Hammond. He has no relevant skills.

A small portion of the graveyard (14) was deconsecrated in the 1890s, when it was intended that a school should be built on the site. Before it could be built, however, a better site became available in the village, and was used instead.

The rest of the village is south of the area shown on the map, and consists of another eighteen houses, two shops, a school and a public house. Several more cell members live in the village, most being agricultural workers, and others live and work on nearby farms. There is a 15% chance that any man encountered (other than the village constable and members of the LDV) will belong to the cell. There are a lot of children in the village, mostly evacuated from the London Blitz.

The bunker is built in a crypt (15) under the deconsecrated old cemetery near the church. Hammond has checked that this location has no recorded link with undead or creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos. All coffins were removed from the crypt in the 1890's, and buried in the new churchyard. The crypt is entered by a trapdoor under a small sun-dial (A), leading to a main chamber (B) holding four bunk beds and several crates of iron rations. A crude periscope runs up through the roof of the crypt into a broken lamp standard (C), and if raised can be seen via a Spot Hidden roll. Two chambers off the main crypt hold a powerful radio transceiver (D) and a sup-

ply of lead-acid batteries, and an earth lavatory (E). An old stone-lined tunnel (F) leads out of the chamber to a second crypt, (G), holding weapons and explosives:

- 8 Sten guns
- 6 .45 automatics
- 4 shotguns (assorted calibres)
- 2 Boyes Anti-Tank rifles (both with rifled barrels)
- 24 'Sticky' bombs
- 72 fragmentation grenades
- 45 sticks dynamite
- 30 time pencils
- 12 electrical detonators.

There is a large supply of ammunition for all these weapons, including two types for the Boyes Rifles (see below). A second tunnel (H), excavated by Hammond's group, runs from this chamber to the surface, emerging beyond the cemetery boundary wall. The mouth is covered by a thick layer of earth and turf, and is reserved for use as an emergency exit.

If the team find the crypt by day it will be unoccupied; at night, however, it will hold 2-4 cell members. If the team attempt to force an entry and Hammond is not present, the occupants will assume that they are German paratroopers or spies, and take appropriate action. All cell members have similar skills to those described above, and have lost 2d6 SAN and gained 2d6 Cthulhu Mythos knowledge.

When Hammond settled on the churchyard as his base his Mythos knowledge was far from complete. Two cultists, and their children, are buried in a crypt (I)

adjoining the chamber housing the ammunition store, having been missed by the church authorities in the 1890s. Their spirits seek human bodies to control. All those using the bunker have been subjected to subtle telepathic attacks which are slowly lowering their sanity and increasing their Cthulhu Mythos knowledge. As soon as someone in the bunker becomes insane one of the spirits will seize control of his body and mind, and start gathering the ingredients needed to resurrect the four corpses. These ingredients require several human sacrifices. The spirits can impart 1d4 per cent Cthulhu Mythos knowledge per night in the crypt, with a similar loss of sanity, if a SAN roll is failed. There is no defence, and the insanity and possession can only be cured by killing the victim or by destroying the corpse belonging to the attacking spirit. All of the cell members are at dangerously low SAN levels, and might easily become insane at any time.

None of those affected are consciously aware of their new Mythos knowledge—they are simply experiencing bad dreams. Hammond attributes his nightmares to memories of events in his former career, the other cell members have more mundane explanations or ignore them completely.

Anyone making a Spot Hidden roll at -5% will notice cracks surrounding a loose stone slab in the North wall of the chamber (G). The slab is wedged in place (and will fall out if disturbed by a grenade or other explosives). It covers an iron crypt door, inscribed as follows:

†

John Naismith	1725-1768
Eliza Naismith	1733-1768
<i>and their children</i>	
Arthur	1754-1768
Joan	1760-1768
<i>May their bodies and souls</i>	
<i>Rest In Peace</i>	

The door is locked, but the lock has rusted and can easily be opened. The four corpses have no defences, apart from rotten wooden coffins, and can easily be destroyed once found. However, they were not entombed by choice: all four were suffering from Anthrax, and spores of the disease are still present. For every minute anyone is in or near the open tomb there is a cumulative 2% chance that they will succumb, developing the disease after 3 + 1d3 days. The chance of infection is doubled if any coffin is opened. In this period Anthrax is invariably fatal. Nothing else of interest will be found in the tomb, unless the referee particularly wishes to insert clues to future events. Anything removed from the tomb will be infected with Anthrax spores, as above.

If resurrected all four corpses will have average statistics, and will be Anthrax carriers, spreading the disease wherever they go. They are aware of this, and intend to cause as much damage as possible.

John Naismith has 20 POW and 45% Mythos knowledge, and knows the spells *Resurrection*, *Shrivelling*, and *Contact Y'Golonac*. He can also use a form of hypnosis (used by talking to the victim for 2d4 rounds and opposing POW against POW) to cause the loss of

1d6 SAN if a SAN roll is failed, 1 SAN if a roll succeeds. If his spirit takes control of anyone it will be able to use these spells.

Eliza Naismith has 16 POW and 18% Mythos knowledge, and knows the spell *Resurrection*.

The children know no spells, but are murderous and will try to do enough damage to reduce SAN and allow their parents to take control of victims.

Once the tomb door has been found it is easy to learn that there was an Anthrax epidemic in the village in 1768, and that the Naismith family were amongst the victims. Parish records and the books in Hammonds house reveal this information. If Hammond is still sane at this point, and is questioned carefully about the period, or about the Naismith family, he may make a knowledge roll at -20% probability to remember the details of their fate.

In the 18th century, the remarkable longevity of Anthrax spores wasn't appreciated, and bodies were buried, instead of being burned. Investigators who rush in without researching the period, and instead spend hours smashing them and rummaging through the coffins, probably deserve the extremely nasty death that will inevitably follow. The only safe disposal method is to soak the cell and coffins with petrol then burn them. Kind referees may wish to assume that the village LDV unit happen to have a World War 1 vintage flame thrower amongst their equipment; if not, there's a lot of petrol in Hammond's garden shed.

Referees who wish to make the scenario more challenging may like to set it in German-occupied France, not England, with the investigators members of the SOE or other Allied espionage organisations, or escaped POWs. Hammond becomes a French resistance leader, additional complications include Gestapo and Wehrmacht units, the Milice (French collaborators working as secret police), and the players need to escape or accomplish some form of mission.

BRITAIN IN 1942 – ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR PLAYERS AND KEEPERS

Britain has been at war with Germany for nearly three years. Many areas have been subjected to bombing, and there has been a massive evacuation of children from the larger cities, especially London. Country areas are rarely bombed, but raids on towns, airfields and other military and civilian installations frequently result in damage well outside the target areas. As well as major night raids, the Luftwaffe occasionally send small combat groups to attack airfields and other installations by day. These aircraft often fly at low level and will attack cars or trains if they are encountered.

Most areas of Britain are now accustomed to foreign military personnel, especially Poles, Czechoslovakians, French, Australians, Canadians, and Norwegians. American military units are still fairly rare, though becoming more common. A blackout is enforced from dusk to dawn, extending even to the use of hooded slit covers on vehicle lights. Anyone showing lights at night may be reported or arrested. All adults are required to register for military service or war work, and must carry identity

papers to show their exact status. These papers will be checked in any encounter with the authorities. Military installations, such as army camps or airfields, are found nearly everywhere, and security will be especially strict in their neighbourhood. There is an RAF bomber station 6 miles north of the village, a Navy radio installation 5 miles East, and a factory producing fighter engines 8 miles to the South-West. All have military guards.

At this stage of the war most desirable commodities, including food, are strictly rationed. There is a black market trade in such items as lemons (extremely rare),



eggs, coffee, butter, meat, silk, petrol, and alcohol, but strangers in an area will find it very difficult to make contact with those involved in this activity. Locals may assume that anyone asking too many questions is an officer of the rationing authorities, or even a spy. Prices have risen steeply since the war began, and are generally two to four times those of the 1920s (See **White Dwarf 70** for some typical 1920s British prices).

Virtually all activities in Britain at this stage of the war are hampered by the need to obtain ration coupons, official permits, and numerous forms. It is estimated that there are at least twenty bureaucrats for every person actually fighting in the war.

There is now little fear of an invasion, but the LDV and other defence groups are still active, and it is illegal to ring church bells (since they are reserved for use in signalling an invasion). Other civilian groups of interest are the Observer Corps, who use sonic locators and rangefinding periscopes to spot enemy aircraft (supplementing radar, which was often unreliable) and various air raid precautions (ARP) organisations. These organisations don't have particularly good equipment, but may be helpful in an emergency. The resistance organisations described in this article were considered a final line of defence, the nucleus of a large-scale organisation to be formed in the event of an invasion.

Slogans of the time include 'Dig For Victory' (an appeal for the production of vegetables to reduce the level of food imports), 'Careless Talk Costs Lives', and 'Be Like Dad – Keep Mum' (another appeal for security).

WEAPONS IN 1942

Most military progress between the 1920s and the 1940s concentrated on the development of armoured vehicles and aircraft. Until the war began most infantry weapons were almost identical to their First World War predecessors.

The need to fight a mobile war encouraged the development of lightweight but powerful hand weapons such as the Sten gun and the (relatively) portable Boyes Anti-tank Rifle, and of easily placed explosives such as the 'Sticky' bomb. The table summarises the new weapons mentioned in the scenario:

Historical Notes: The Boyes .55 rifle was supposed to fire its heavy round through a tank's armour, so that it would ricochet inside and kill the crew. In practice German armour was better than anticipated, and the weapon was almost useless against tanks, though it could damage armoured cars. The unrifled version of this gun [10% base chance to hit, range 75 (50) yards] can still occasionally be found at British firearms auctions, and by a fluke of law maybe pur-chased on a shotgun licence. Many thanks to Robert Sneddon for additional information on this weapon.

Weapon Name:	Type:	Damage:	Base Chance:	Breakage Points:	Range (Yards)	Notes
Sten Gun	Projectile	1d10+2	10%	8	75	1,2,3
Boyes Rifle	"	3d6+6 (2d6+4)	15%	10	150 (200)	1,4
Sticky Bomb	Explosive	3d6	as Throw	2	Touch	5
Garrotte	Special	1d6	5%	3	Touch	6

Notes on weapons:

1. Impales.
2. Can be silenced (as factory modification), and chambered to fire German automatic pistol ammunition.
3. Use "Sourcebook" automatic weapons rules.
4. Armour-piercing solid steel projectiles and aluminium practice rounds were available, use bracketed values for aluminium rounds. Weight 13lb, length 5', ammunition weight 3oz (1oz)/round, fired prone, 1 shot per 3 rounds, 3 cartridge magazine with 5 round reloading time. See historical note.
5. Explosive charge coated with adhesive, designed to be touched to a tank and detonated by a time fuse approximately twenty seconds later. 1 yard burst radius.
6. Strangling wire. All attempts at use must be attacks from behind. Any successful roll to hit makes the victim unable to speak or shout for the duration of the attack. The STR of the victim must be successfully opposed to the STR of the attacker to break free, otherwise the victim is automatically hit in subsequent rounds.