

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Flying Coffins



by Adam Gauntlett



Pelgrane Press

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Hook

It is early winter, 1918. The protagonists are RFC pilots stationed near the Front, and rumour has it the next big push is about to begin. The squadron's being worked to death, and its champion ace is on the verge of cracking up. Meanwhile the new Hun Circus is racking up kill after kill – but is it the enemy or something else that's to blame?

AWFUL TRUTH

The protagonists have unknowingly strayed into a different kind of air war. Man has only just learned to make flying machines, and the War is man's first large-scale incursion of the planet's air space. There they found the forces of the Mythos, which were long used to treating the skies as their domain. In particular Byakhee, beloved of Hastur, are fond of travelling from the stratosphere to the troposphere, possibly in search of bacterial food. Though Byakhee have no Earthly habitation there is a long history of them being summoned to Earth by sorcerers, and once they arrive they often find reasons to stay long after their initial summons is concluded. Small colonies of them migrate between the Earth's upper atmosphere and the Moon on missions of their own, and until now they have been accustomed to treating the troposphere as their personal domain. Man's new warbirds can climb as high as 20,000 feet, directly challenging the Byakhee. They resent this mortal interference in their activities, and attack both sides equally.

This problem is exacerbated by the new squadron, Jasta 32, recently relocated to the protagonists' sector. Their leader,

Ernst Becker, is the favourite nephew of Eva Agathe von Plon, a society occultist of some small notoriety who, in a rare case of accidental wisdom, advised her nephew to put a 'good luck charm' on his personal aircraft. This symbol, the Yellow Sign, is of particular interest to the Byakhee, and they assume that Becker is therefore associated with Hastur. His enemies are their enemies. Becker, at the start of the scenario, refuses to accept the evidence his eyes are giving him; towards the end, he may have no choice.

SPINE

A sortie into Hunland to tackle an observation balloon ends in a fierce scrap with Jasta 32. Byakhee are glimpsed flying in and out of the clouds. On the ground again, ace MacMurdo can shed some light, but he's on the edge of cracking up himself. Reporting it to Command won't do any good, but talking to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, military journalist, might. Combat takes its toll, and the date of the Push draws near. Military gossip is rife, but the Intelligence Officer has some solid gen for the protagonists. Duelling Becker may be the only way to put the Byakhee menace down for good, for it's the Yellow Sign that's the real problem. On the day of the Push it's sortie after sortie; Becker makes his final appearance, if he hasn't already been dealt with, and the protagonists will have to fight hard or go down in flames.

SAGITTARIUS RISING

This section discusses the mechanics of air combat.

RFC veteran Major L.W.B Rees, VC, described aerial engagement in four succinct principles:

- Open fire before the enemy.
- Open fire at the shortest possible range.
- Open fire under the most favourable conditions.
- Try to disable the enemy at once.

It was combat by ambush; the pilot who could shoot his target without the target firing back was most likely to win the fight. **Piloting** is going to be of primary importance, and **Stealth**, **Sense Trouble** are also useful abilities. **Military Talk**, an investigative ability, may also be useful. The **Firearms** ability is used to operate the forward-mounted machine gun. All of these abilities are doing double duty; that is, they are used in air combat, and also as normal abilities when the pilot is not in air combat.

All air combat follows this pattern:

- The initial set up (who is the aggressor, who the defender) is decided.
- The aggressor may attempt to surprise the defender. Mechanically this is resolved by the player making either a **Stealth** or **Sense Trouble** check; see *Stealth, Sense Trouble and Military Talk*, opposite.
- If the aggressor successfully surprised the defender – hereafter described as keeping the **Stealth** advantage – then the aggressor gets a free shot before the dogfight begins, and the defender can neither stunt nor shoot back. See *Dogfight*.

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- Once the **Stealth** advantage has been dealt with and the free shot (if any) resolved, the dogfight begins. It concludes when one side successfully **Flees**, or is victorious.
- The dogfight is a bid contest, **Piloting** versus **Piloting**. The one who wins gets to shoot (**Firearms**) at the one who loses. See *Dogfight*, for further information. *Exception*: a plane with a rear-mounted observer operated machine gun can always shoot at an aggressor, even if the pilot loses the bid contest.
- All damage is assessed against the crate's **Structure** rating. When a plane loses all its **Structure** it can no longer fly. A PC has the option of crash landing, but an NPC bursts into flames, explodes, or otherwise suffers a picturesque death.

Given that **Piloting** will be used quite often during a dogfight, the protagonists may be tempted to blow their pools quickly to guarantee a result. This tactic is perilous! If the protagonist gets into more than one dogfight in a scene, they could easily run out of **Piloting** before the scene ends.

Piloting and Stunting

Much may depend on whether the PCs are aggressors or defenders. In some scenes this is deliberately mentioned in the text, but in others this is up to chance. Compare the Flight Leader's **Piloting** to the NPC Flight Leader's **Piloting**. Whichever flight's Leader has the highest pool is the aggressor. In the opening scene, MacMurdo is the protagonists' Flight Leader, but afterwards a PC should be given that position.

Piloting in the Great War determines the Hit Threshold. Those with **Piloting** of 8 or more have a Hit Threshold of 4; those with less than 8 have Hit Threshold 3. Hit Threshold can also be modified by aircraft type, see further *Crates*.

Piloting permits **Stunting**, a new speciality. In combat, the player may wish either to reduce his target's Hit Threshold or increase his own. He does this by **Stunting** (jink, barrel roll, loop, Immelman Turn are examples), which is a simple **Piloting** test at **Difficulty 4**. This can be done after the dogfight bid contest has completed, but must be done before **Firearms** rolls. Both aggressor and defender usually have the option to **Stunt** before shooting. This means a defender who lost the bid contest can still try to keep from getting shot, and an attacker who won the contest can try to further increase his chance of hitting the target.

A **Stunt** can be attempted once per bid contest. Once the bid contest is resolved and the **Firearms** test made, the **Stunt** bonus (if any) expires; **Stunt** bonuses are not cumulative.

The combat may involve multiple bid contests, with new **Stunts** for each contest. Each new **Stunt** is a separate roll.

A successful **Stunt** allows the pilot either to increase his own Hit Threshold by 1 (making him more difficult to shoot) or decrease his opponent's by 1. Some aircraft cannot **Stunt**, while others give bonuses or penalties to **Stunting**.

The only time the defender can't **Stunt** is when he was unaware of the impending attack: the aggressor kept the **Stealth** advantage (see *Dogfight*).

Stealth, Sense Trouble and Military Talk

In each instance, the player is the active party, and is making a **simple Difficulty 4 test** to determine either if he successfully sneaked up on an opponent or if the opponent sneaked up on him. This can only happen before the dogfight begins; once combat is joined the situation is resolved as described in *Dogfight*.

The Difficulty of the test may be modified by NPC bonuses.

The pilot who has the **Stealth** advantage gets a free shot. If the **Stealth** advantage is lost, then there is no free shot and combat starts immediately. See also *Dogfight*.

Stealth is used when the PC is the aggressor. Success means that the PC sneaked up behind the NPC and therefore has the **Stealth** advantage. When a PC attacks an NPC, the NPC has an **Alertness** modifier that increases the difficulty of the protagonist's **Stealth** check.

Sense Trouble is used when the PC is the defender, and an NPC is sneaking towards his tail. Success means that the PC spotted the NPC before combat began. Otherwise the NPC has the **Stealth** advantage. NPCs have a **Stealth** modifier that increases the difficulty of the PC's **Sense Trouble** check.

Military Talk can be used during the combat. Each aircraft had its quirks; some manoeuvred differently at different altitudes, some were better at turning to the left than the right, some had different blind spots, and so on. **Military Talk** represents the protagonist's knowledge of enemy aircraft types. Dramatically, perhaps the PC remembers a useful bit of advice given while swapping war stories at the bar, something his instructor back in Flying School told him, or a special briefing he attended. A spend of **1 point Military Talk** grants either **1 temporary Piloting pool** for use in bid contests only, or **+1 to all Firearms** damage, player's choice. The **Piloting pool** or the **Firearms** bonus lasts only as long as the scene does. This **Military Talk** spend can only be made once per scene, unlike **Stunting** which can be used once per dogfight bid contest. In a scene where more than one kinds of target are available then the PC must specify which particular target type he

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gets the bonus against. So if there's a Roland, two Fokker DR.1 and a Pfaltz in the scene, the player must specify whether the bonus is against the Roland, the Fokkers or the Pfaltz.

NPC pilots do not use **Military Talk**.

Military Talk does not normally work against Byakhee. However the Keeper may rule that if a protagonist has diligently gathered information about the Byakhee, has met them at least once in combat and survived the experience, then the protagonist is entitled to a **Military Talk** spend against Byakhee. A PC with **Cthulhu Mythos** can spend a point to gain the same benefit as a **Military Talk** spend, without needing to make a test. In the narrative, the only source of **Cthulhu Mythos** is the book *Dictionnaire Infernal* found in the scene *Local Flavour*.

NPC Pilots

NPC pilots and observers are ranked as **novice**, **experienced** or **ace**. Novices are at -1 to all rolls in combat, including **Piloting**, and novice observers are at -1 to all **Firearms** rolls. Experienced pilots fly and shoot at no penalty. Aces are at +1 to all rolls in combat. The only exception to this is the bid contest (*Dogfight*); novice or ace bonuses and penalties are not added to the bid contest die roll. This ranking system does not apply to PCs, who are assumed to fly and shoot at no penalty. PCs who want to call themselves aces need to shoot down at least five NPC aircraft first. For a PC, the ace ranking is an honorific, and confers no bonus.

This ranking is in addition to other modifiers. If an NPC would normally have a +1 **Stunting** modifier thanks to his crate (eg. is flying an Albatross), but is a novice, then the +1 and -1 cancel each other out, and the effective modifier is +0. An ace, on the other hand, would have a **total +2 Stunting** modifier, including his ace bonus.

The Flying Coffin: Damage and Structure

Most aircraft are armed with machine guns, which do +2 **damage**. This may increase to +3 damage with a **Military Talk** spend, see also *Stealth, Sense Trouble and Military Talk*.

The pilot may choose to load incendiary ammunition (the British called it Buckingham) for increased damage. This requires a **Mechanical Repair** test **Difficulty 4**, with failure meaning the gun hopelessly jams the first time it is used and will not be repairable mid-flight. Incendiary ammunition does +4 **damage** (potentially +5 with the **Military Talk** bonus), and is the only kind of ammunition that can damage spotter balloons. While not outlawed, many Great War aviators refused to use incendiary, because they didn't like burning their enemies to death. It was too forceful a reminder that they might burn themselves, one day. Keepers may want to impose **Stability 3 tests** the first time they see a pilot go down in a burning wreck, and possibly a further **Stability 1 test** every subsequent time they see it happen.

The Keeper may also choose to impose a social stigma on PCs who use incendiary. Their mess mates won't speak to them, and enemy pilots may go out of their way to attack them.

An aircraft's health is expressed in its **Structure** rating. This represents its ability to stay in the air despite damage; lose enough **Structure**, and the plane can no longer fly.

NPC aircraft crash and burn when they reach **0 Structure**. This usually means the death of the pilot and any observers who were aboard, unless there are good story reasons for the Keeper to rule otherwise.

A PCs' aircraft can drop below **0 Structure**. At 0 to -5, the crate is damaged and the **Difficulty** for all tests, including **Hit Thresholds**, is at -1. At -6 to -11, the crate is badly damaged (possibly on fire or about to catch light), can no longer **Stunt** or engage in combat, and all **Piloting** rolls are at -2 penalty. At -11 or greater, the aircraft has been shot down, and **Piloting** is at -3 (crash landings only).

PCs have the option of taking damage directly, rather than letting the plane suffer. The player can let one or more points of damage accrue to the character, not the plane. This decision must be made at the time the damage is suffered, and the player is under no obligation to take the damage; the player may prefer to let the plane suffer the **Structure** loss. The benefit is the plane doesn't lose as much **Structure**, which could help it stay in the air longer. *Example:* a Spad takes **8 points** from the enemy's attack, and the PC pilot knows the crate only had **4 Structure** left. Rather than go into negatives, the player decides to let **5 points** from this attack damage the character instead. This injures the pilot, but leaves the crate with **1 Structure**; he'd better hope things improve in future rounds.

A PC has the option of crash landing. Whether on his home aerodrome or in No-Man's Land, the PC can attempt a simple **Piloting** test **Difficulty 4**. Success means the PC managed to get his aircraft down without further injuring himself. Failure means the PC still crash lands, but takes +1 **damage**. For dramatic purposes the Keeper should assume that a PC can find his way back to his aerodrome the same day as the crash, though if desired there could be a brief scene in which the protagonist has to navigate No-Man's-Land or similar first. See also the optional scene, *Curses! Foiled Again!*

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Dogfight

The aggressor has attacked the defender. The first issue to resolve is the **Stealth** advantage.

If the aggressor kept the **Stealth** advantage, then dramatically speaking he has worked his way into a kill position without the other pilot knowing, and gets one free shot. The aggressor can use **Stunts** or **Military Talk** to improve his chances of success. The defender cannot **Stunt** or shoot back, even if the defender has a rear-firing observer operated gun. This is the only exception to the rear-firing gun rule; in all other circumstances a rear-firing gun can shoot back even if the bid contest is lost.

Resolve the **Firearms** test as per usual. Assuming the defender survives the initial attack, the dogfight begins.

Now it's a duel to the death, with both aircraft twisting all over the sky trying to get a kill shot. This desperate jockeying for advantage is the dogfight bid contest.

All parties involved in the dogfight bid **Piloting**. No contestant can bid more than their remaining **Piloting** pool. The bidding is blind, and the reveal is simultaneous. One playtest group found that using playing cards simplified the bid process; if playing cards are not available, write the bids on pieces of paper.

Each contestant then rolls a d6. Any contestant who rolls an odd number (1, 3, 5) adds that, as a bonus, to their bid. Even numbers don't count and are not added. Remember, this is the only combat roll where novice or ace bonuses or penalties are not added.

Highest bid, including any bonus, wins that contest. The winner then gets to shoot at the loser. In the event of a tie, each gets a shot, simultaneously. Perhaps in the whirlwind of combat the

fighters were face-to-face for a brief moment, and blazed away, or there may be other story solutions that make more sense. It's up to the Keeper to decide, bearing in mind the situation and the demands of the scene.

As a general rule, if a PC and an allied NPC are both potential targets, the allied NPC ought to be shot at first unless there is a compelling story reason not to do so.

Each party involved in the contest can **Stunt** if they wish. They do not have

to **Stunt**, nor are they obligated to spend **Piloting** pool points in order to **Stunt**. Some crates are nimble and get **Stunt** bonuses while others get penalties, and some crates can't **Stunt** at all. Each combatant involved in the bid contest can only **Stunt** once per bid contest, but once the contest is resolved they can **Stunt** again in future contests.

Combatants may wish to **Flee** rather than fight. In a dogfight, **Piloting** replaces **Fleeing** as the operative pool, and if the attempt is resisted then it is



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resolved by bid contest. If the **Fleeing** combatant wins the bid contest then the attempt is successful, and the retreating pilot escapes the combat. It has to be a clear-cut win; a tie won't do. Dramatically, perhaps the **Fleeing** pilot dived into a cloud, or faked a crash so the attacker would think he'd been shot down. The **Fleeing** pilot only needs one bid contest win to succeed.

Example of a bid contest: Algy and Ginger, both in Camels, are fighting von Stalhein in his Albatross. Algy is low on Piloting but Ginger still has a 5 point pool; they don't know how much von Stalhein has to spend. Algy bids 0 and Ginger 3, while von Stalhein bids 4. Now each roll, and Algy gets 5, Ginger 2, and von Stalhein 1. Ginger's 2 is discounted, but Algy's 5 against von Stalhein's 5 means they both get to shoot simultaneously. As von Stalhein is an NPC and there are two possible targets for him to shoot at, the Keeper can decide whether the Albatross has a pop at Algy or Ginger's crate. If Ginger is an NPC the Keeper ought to make Ginger von Stalhein's target. Meanwhile Algy blazes away at von Stalhein. If nobody has **Stunted** yet in this bid contest, now's the time to do so. Otherwise the next roll is a **Firearms** test. Note that as this is a simultaneous shoot, von Stalhein might be shot down and yet still kill his target, all in the same bid contest. Assuming all parties survive, a second bid contest begins immediately. Perhaps von Stalhein would rather **Flee** now – it is two-on-one, after all, and his crate is damaged – but he'll have to win this bid contest in order to do so.

CRATES

This contains statistics for all the aircraft used during the scenario. This is not an exhaustive list of Great War fighters. All planes have a forward-firing machine gun and may have rear-mounted weapons depending on type. This does mean that some aircraft may be able to shoot at two targets at once.

This does not mean they can shoot at the same target twice.

Top speed (in mph) is given for each aircraft; cruising speeds are normally half to two-thirds as fast. In dogfights, if the plane's top speed is lower than its competitors by 10 mph or more, the pilot of the crate with the lower speed has +1 to all Difficulty Numbers in the contest. If it's lower by 30 mph or more, the add is +2. The Keeper may rule that local conditions – an involved multi-combatant dogfight with planes twisting all over the sky, heavy cloud cover ideal for concealment – negate this advantage.

Germans

Fokker DR.I:

Single engine triplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 190 mph. *Structure:* 7. *Bonuses:* +2 Stealth, +2 Stunting, +1 Hit Threshold. *Notes:* Though popularly associated with the Red Baron, he more often flew the Albatross D.III. Werner Voss, considered to be the only pilot to rival von Richthofen, fought his last battle in the DR.I.

Albatross D.III:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 180 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* +2 Stealth, +1 Stunting.

Pfalz D.III:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 200 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* None. *Notes:* Steady, reliable and common; most pilots preferred the Albatross.

Halberstadt:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 200 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* -1 Stunting. *Notes:* Sluggish and unresponsive.

Fokker D.VII:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 220 mph. *Structure:* 9. *Bonuses:* +1 Stealth, +2 Stunting, +1 Hit Threshold. *Notes:* Widely considered to be the best German fighter. The Armistice specifically mentioned the D.VII, demanding that all surviving Fokkers be handed over. Several nations used them militarily post-war, during the 1920s.

Fokker D.VIII:

Single seater monoplane fighter. *Top Speed:* 210 mph. *Structure:* 9. *Bonuses:* +1 Stealth, +3 Stunting. *Notes:* Very nimble, scored the last kill of the war. Early versions were prone to wing failure. Also known as the Flying Razor.

Roland CII:

Two seater biplane observer, swivel mounted machine gun at rear. *Top Speed:* 200 mph. *Structure:* 8. *Bonuses:* -2 Stealth, -2 Stunting, +1 observer Firearms rolls. *Notes:* Sluggish and unresponsive, but a steady gun platform.

Gotha:

Dual engine bomber biplane with two observers and a pilot. *Top Speed:* 150 mph. *Structure:* 14. *Bonuses:* +1 observer Firearms rolls, cannot Stunt, -1 Hit Threshold. *Notes:* though these were more often used to bomb London, the chance to have a crack at one may be too much for the PCs to pass up. Sluggish and unresponsive, relies on observer mounted machine guns fore and aft for protection.

Balloon:

Hydrogen-filled gasbag with observers in basket underneath. *Structure:* 5. *Bonuses:* -1 Hit Threshold. *Notes:* Unarmed and cannot manoeuvre or **Stunt**. Can only be damaged with incendiary.

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Archie:

Anti-aircraft fire, named Archie by the British after a popular music-hall song with the refrain, 'Archibald, certainly not!' (as spoken by a girl to her would-be lover). It wouldn't be the Western Front without Archie, but Keepers are advised to use it as background colour rather than an actual weapon. Archie was notoriously inaccurate, but when it hit it was almost inevitably lethal. If the Keeper chooses to exercise the Archie option, treat hits as per **mortar shell** (main rules p. 67), assume all gunners have **0 pool**, and allow all Archie attacks to be contested rolls vs. **Piloting**.

Ground Fire:

Sometimes the protagonists will fly so close to the ground they risk being shot either by rifle fire or machine guns. Assume all gunners have **0 pool**, and allow all attacks to be contested rolls vs. **Piloting**. Damage is +1.

Ground Target:

The protagonists may decide to strafe other targets on the ground, including trucks, trains, ammo dumps, buildings and so on. The Keeper should assume that some targets (eg ammo dumps, buildings) are protected by *Ground Fire*, while others (eg trucks, trains) are not. Ground Targets have no other defences, and their Structure rating can range from 4 (motorcycle, horses), 7 (trucks), 10 (ammo dump, trains) to 15 (buildings). Ground targets, with the exception of ammo dumps, are not particularly vulnerable to incendiary, and Buckingham does not get its usual +4. Instead all shots at ground targets are considered to be ordinary machine gun fire.

Allies

S.E. 5a:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed*: 220 mph. *Structure*: 8. *Bonuses*: Refreshes 1 Piloting pool point per scene, +1 Stunting. *Notes*: Responsive and capable workhorse, not as popular as the Camel.

Sopwith Camel:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed*: 210 mph. *Structure*: 7. *Bonuses*: Refreshes 2 Piloting pool points per scene, +2 Stunting, +1 Hit Threshold. *Notes*: Nimble, almost too much so; when introduced pilots believed it was prone to crashing, but learned better.

Sopwith Snipe:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed*: 220 mph. *Structure*: 8. *Bonuses*: +1 Stealth, +3 Stunting. *Notes*: Intended as a replacement for the Camel, flown by the Australians and Canadians as well as the British. Canadian Major Barker fought his famous battle against fifteen enemy aircraft in the Snipe.

Nieuport 28:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed*: 200 mph. *Structure*: 7. *Bonuses*: +3 Stunting; Keeper has the option, on a natural 1 Stunt roll, to inflict -1 damage to the plane. *Notes*: Responsive and a joy to stunt, occasionally prone to structural failure.

Hanriot HD.1:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed*: 200 mph. *Structure*: 7. *Bonuses*: +2 Stunting. *Notes*: Responsive and reliable. The French developed it but did not use it, instead giving it to the Belgians, Americans and Italians. Willy Coppens, the Belgian ace, flew a Hanriot.

Spad S.XIII:

Single seater biplane fighter. *Top Speed*: 230 mph. *Structure*: 8. *Bonuses*: None. *Notes*: Steady and reliable, the standby for French and American squadrons.

de Havilland:

Two seater observation aircraft, with forward and rear facing machine guns. *Top Speed*: 200 mph. *Structure*: 10. *Bonuses*: -4 Stunting, -1 Hit Threshold. *Notes*: Sluggish and difficult to handle.

COMBAT EXAMPLES

Algy's Camel is stooging over the Front, looking for business. He spots a lone Roland flying below him, buzzing over the lines. Algy looks for other aircraft, but doesn't spot any.

He knows the Roland is slow and sluggish, with a rear gun. He is 10 mph faster than the Roland, which will give a modifier to his opponent's Difficulty Numbers. He doesn't know anything about the pilot or the observer. They could be experts or rank novices. Still, he has the advantage and he doesn't think it's a trap, so down he goes!

He spends 4 Stealth, (out of a starting pool 8), hoping to gain the advantage. He knows the base difficulty is 4, but of course the pilot could be an ace, or have other bonuses he doesn't know about. He wants to kill this Roland with the first shot, and that means he needs the Stealth advantage. Spending 4 pool ought to guarantee that.

His luck's in, and the Stealth succeeds! He'll get the first shot without having to make a bid contest, and the Roland won't be able to shoot back. Now to pour on the advantages to guarantee a hit; the more bonuses he can add, the better off he'll be.

He can use Military Talk and Stunting. The Stunt test is a simple Difficulty 4, and his Camel's natural nimbleness means he's going to get +2 Stunting even without spending pool points. He spends Military Talk but no Piloting (save that for later, he thinks),

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and makes the Difficulty test. He uses the Military Talk for a +1 Firearms damage bonus, and Stunting to reduce the Roland's Hit Threshold. He power dives upon his prey.

The Roland doesn't know what's about to hit it, and can't Stunt or do anything else to save itself. The Hit Threshold would normally be 3; now it's 2, and Algy's going to get an extra +1 damage if he hits. Algy spends 1 Firearms pool to make absolutely sure of his target. As luck would have it, he rolls a 6; the Roland is well and truly peppered. The damage roll is the final nail in the coffin: a 5, +3 (including Military Talk) for a total of 8. Exit one Roland, blazing like a bonfire. The enemy never got a shot off, and Algy didn't spend too many pool points. Time Algy went to look for other customers.

Unfortunately for Algy his next opponent isn't such a pushover. This Fokker triplane is out for blood, and is the aggressor. Algy makes his Sense Trouble test, so the enemy doesn't get to Stealth him the way he did the Roland. Now it's a dogfight, winner takes all.

Algy's thankful it's a Tripehound, which has a top speed of 190 to his 210 mph. At least the enemy's Difficulty Numbers will be higher.

Algy elects to Stunt, without spending pool points. That saves his Piloting for the dogfight bid contest, but of course his Camel's natural +2 bonus doesn't guarantee success. On the other hand, the enemy crate also has a Stunting bonus, and the pilot may have additional bonuses Algy doesn't know about.

Algy also decides to spend Military Talk out of a rapidly dwindling pool, deciding to add a temporary Piloting pool point against the DR. 1. That might make all the difference.

Unfortunately for Algy, he fails the Stunt test. The enemy successfully Stunts but does not use Military Talk (as an NPC, he cannot), and the Keeper decides to decrease Algy's Hit Threshold by 1.

After a nail-biting bid contest which sees Algy's Piloting pool go down by 4 points, Algy's luck finally runs out. The enemy wins

the bid contest. That means the Fokker gets a shot off. Normally Algy's Hit Threshold would be 4 (thanks to his high Piloting), modified by his Camel to 5, and further increased to 6 by Algy's speed advantage. If the Stunt had worked it would have been 7, but it didn't. The enemy's successful Stunt reduces Algy's Hit Threshold back down to 5, and of course he may have other bonuses Algy doesn't know about. Is he an ace?

Well, on a Firearms roll of 5, he doesn't have to be. Algy's crate shudders under the impact, and suffers 4 Structure damage. It only had 7 to begin with; Algy's in a bad way. He has the option of spending Health to avoid some of that Structure damage, but decides to save that option for future rounds.

Still, he's not dead yet, and with a new bid contest comes another chance to Stunt, though he can't use Military Talk again so if he's already spent that temporary point he has no further Military Talk bonus coming to him. Time to pull out all the stops . . .



Scenes

BALLOON BUSTING

The scenario opens with the protagonists in the air over the Western Front, on a mission to burst an enemy observation balloon. The intent of this scene is to provide a short introductory combat as well as introduce the main story problem, and in theory the protagonists should be victorious without losses. The Keeper may want to have some NPC pilots accompany the protagonists.

See *The Jolly Old Squadron* for important information about the flight.

MacMurdo is Flight Leader. Before the flight he would have discussed tactics with the protagonists; flashback this if necessary. The weather is fine, with some cloud cover, and the protagonists won't spot any enemy aircraft before they get to the balloon.

The gasbag hangs just behind the Front, and is protected by *Archie*. Three enemy *Pfalz* (speed 200, structure 8) are stooing around nearby keeping a watch over the balloon. If they aren't drawn away, then they'll attack anyone coming near it. The most sensible approach would be for some of the flight to watch out for ambush while the rest engage the *Pfalz*, allowing one to slip past and attack the balloon. However it's up to the protagonists as to how they tackle the problem.

Pfalz:

Novice (Alertness +1, Stealth +2, Stunting -2, Piloting 4, Firearms 4), **Experienced** (Piloting Alertness +2, Stealth +2, Stunting +0, Piloting 6, Firearms 6), **Experienced** (Alertness

+2, Stealth +2, Stunting +2, Piloting 7, Firearms 7). Protagonists are the aggressors in this scene. NPC stats include aircraft bonus, if any.

Mid-way through the fight, an aircraft tumbles past the protagonists; whether this is Allied or German is up to the Keeper. The protagonists get one startled look at what seems to be a flying creature, as it hauls the pilot out of the destroyed aircraft and flies upwards with its prize. It casually tears the pilot's head off as it leaves, with a small spatter of arterial spray, which the thing seems to swallow as it flies.

Stability 4, and the event happens so quickly that there's no time to react. The Keeper may choose to rule that this ends the combat, as the *Pfalz* will have seen the creature too and want nothing further to do with it, choosing instead to flee the scene if the protagonists let them.

Let the protagonists deal with the balloon and then fly home.

On their way back, just before they get to the trenches, they run into Jasta 32.

The initial encounter is with a lone *Roland* (speed 200, Structure 8) apparently on a recce mission. In fact the *Roland* is bait; the Jasta aircraft are hiding above, waiting for someone to pounce on the *Roland*. See *Die Beleuchtung Husaren* for Jasta details, and assume that there are at least as many Huns as there are allied aircraft, not including Becker and his wingmen. So a group of four PCs encounter four enemy pilots, plus Becker and his wingmen, for a total of six aircraft. Becker is in command, and will stay above the fray with two wingmen, keeping watch for other

attackers. This is a training mission for his Jasta; Becker wants to see his pilots earn their spurs.

If the protagonists leap on the *Roland* without hesitation, Becker's Jasta will immediately attempt to gain the **Stealth** advantage. On the other hand, if the protagonists state that before they jump the *Roland*, they look to see if there are other attackers, Becker's Jasta automatically loses the Stealth advantage. The *Roland* will only be interested in **Fleeing**, and is quite aware of its role in this ambush.

Roland:

Pilot **ace** (Alertness +3, Stealth +0, Stunting +0, Piloting 9, Firearms 4), Observer **experienced** (Firearms 10). Protagonists are the aggressors. NPC stats include aircraft bonus, if any.

At one point during the combat, the protagonists will glimpse the Yellow Sign on Becker's tailplane. It seems almost to writhe like a snake, and hurts their eyes. Anyone who sees this symbol and later sees the Byakhee move through the air senses a connection between the two, as if one might be an extension of the other. **Stability 2** for seeing the Yellow Sign on Becker's kiste.



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Die Beleuchtung Husaren

Becker's Jasta, nicknamed the Lightning Hussars after Becker's old regiment, are a new flight of German aircraft; top of the range *Fokker D.VIII* (speed 210, Structure 9) with well trained pilots. They have been moved to this part of the Front because the Germans want to seize control of the air in this sector, and are hoping that Becker's new Jasta will tip the balance in their favour.

While they are absolutely loyal to Becker, they don't understand what's going on and are terrified of the Byakhee. Any Byakhee sighting mid-combat is likely to have them Fleeing, as they know full well the Byakhee can't be trusted, even if Becker thinks they're on his side.

Each pilot should be assumed to have Alertness +3, Stealth +4, Stunting +5, Piloting 10, Firearms 10, inclusive of aircraft bonuses. They are eager to rack up kills, and all of them rank as **aces**. Hit Threshold starts at 4, not including other bonuses.

The Jasta have engine cowlings and prop noses of bright green, (the regimental colour of Becker's old unit) but otherwise their markings are very individual. They tend towards multicoloured camouflage patterns, but some have skull and crossbones insignia, others crossed swords or lightning bolts, and so on. The only mark common to all of them is the green engine cowling. The Keeper may wish to design a few of them, perhaps to act as personal nemesis for particular protagonists.

Becker favours a *Fokker D.VII* (speed 220, Structure 9). He has a green cowling too, with a checkerboard pattern of brown and red along the body of his aircraft. The Yellow Sign is painted on his tail. Becker has 16 confirmed kills to his credit, and is an up-and-coming ace, nicknamed The Eagle of Lens, after the section of the Front where he earned his spurs.

Becker is not a very superstitious man, and only agreed to the Yellow Sign to please his aunt. However his encounters with Byakhee are draining his Sanity, and he is beginning to accept the wider truth of the Mythos. He pictures the Byakhee as Valkyrie, come to help him slay the foe.

The Keeper should use Becker's Hussars as floating antagonists in various *Dawn Patrol* scenes. Let their green cowlings be spotted several times, either as combatants or as far-away aircraft. Avoid letting Becker come into direct conflict with them until towards the end of the scenario, as premature deaths on either side could spoil the climax. However just because Becker isn't directly involved doesn't mean the other Hussars can't get into the fight; the Keeper should encourage this.

Ernst Becker The Eagle of Lens

Cthulhu Mythos 1, Drive 10, Firearms 14, Occult 1, Piloting 15

Alertness +4, Stealth +5, Stunting +5 (includes aircraft bonus)

Hit Threshold: 5, not including Stunting bonus.

Special: Becker is a gifted pilot. Where other antagonist aces get a +1 bonus, Becker gets +2.

Physically Becker is a slight but muscular young man, with sandy blonde hair and an infectious grin.



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The Jolly Old Squadron

The nationality of the protagonists' squadron is deliberately left ambiguous. The Keeper should feel free to use whichever best suits, whether French, British, or American. Some names may have to be changed, but that's all.

However the nationality of the group will make a difference to the kind of aircraft used. The French flew *Nieuports* and *Spads*, as did the Americans. The British flew *Camels* and *SE5a*, among others. Therefore the Keeper should make the decision beforehand, so as to match nationality with aircraft.

In playtest, the possibility of playing as the Germans was discussed. Should you prefer, there's nothing stopping the protagonists being German and the antagonists Allies. It would mean changing some names and the Keeper would need to switch out aircraft types; the Fokker D.VIII is a bit too good an aircraft to allow the protagonists to use. If they had a squadron's worth of those, knocking down Allied airmen and Byakhee left and right could be far too easy. Recommended substitutes are the Pfaltz, Albatross or Halberstadt. However switching sides wouldn't make any difference to the Hook or the Spine, with the exception of the scene A Formal Occasion. Naturally Conan Doyle wouldn't be visiting a German aerodrome. A substitute will be needed, possibly someone like Ernst Barlach, Richard Delmel or Walter Flex, although care must be taken to avoid time conflicts (Flex died in October 1917, so the scenario would need to take place before then). The only other significant conflict is the copy of the *Wipers Times* (*One Over the Eight*), and that could be dropped altogether.

- NPC pilots will be attached to the squadron. The Keeper should feel free to design NPCs as needed, bearing in mind the following suggestions:
- No friendly NPC should have an ace ranking other than MacMurdo. In theory Pyke is also an ace, but he no longer flies.
- MacMurdo's combat stats are **Alertness +4, Stealth +3, Stunting +3, Piloting 12, Firearms 8, Hit Threshold 6**, inclusive of aircraft bonuses. MacMurdo flies a Sopwith Camel, speed 210 Structure 7.
- NPCs should not be given Flight Leader status, apart from MacMurdo, and then only in the initial scene.
- Suggested novice: **Alertness +0, Stealth +1, Stunting +1, Piloting 4, Firearms 4**
- Suggested experienced: **Alertness +2, Stealth +2, Stunting +1, Piloting 6, Firearms 6**
- NPC stats are not inclusive of aircraft bonus.

The squadron's exact description is left deliberately vague. This is to allow Keeper and players to play as they wish without being tied down too much by the setting. Given the types of aircraft used (the Fokker D.VIII didn't see service until late in the war, only a few months before the Armistice) the time is assumed to be early winter 1918, but should the Keeper prefer an earlier date then the only change needed would be to drop the Fokker and replace it with another model; the Albatross, perhaps. The following characteristics can be assumed:

- The aerodrome is a stretch of grass, rolled flat as possible. Accident, bombings and crashes mean that it's often pitted with holes and dangerous to use. That doesn't stop pilots trying. Before the war it was probably a farmer's field; orchards and stands of trees may line the edges of the aerodrome.
- Enlisted men have the worst accommodation, but in a squadron even the worst billets are pretty cushy compared to the kind of life they'd have on the Front. Ordinary soldiers and mechanics live in tents, or at best wooden huts. If there is any better housing available – a commandeered cottage, for example – then the officers will have bagged that for themselves.
- The Squadron Leader's Office, Doc Hollis' Office and the Intelligence Officer's Office are all in the same building, which is stone built, and probably was at least a wealthy farmer's cottage before the war. It may have been as grand as a small country manor. If it's big enough, the Mess Bar may be there as well, but this needs to be accounted for in the room's description (see *One Over the Eight*).
- Food, drink and amenities are the best that can be had, which often isn't saying much but is a good deal better than anything the Front can provide. The pilots get hot meals, coffee, and beds to sleep in; beer and music in the evening, either from a phonograph or a battered piano. They're expected to pay for the liquor they drink, but most run a tab on the assumption that they'll never live long enough to pay it.
- The aircraft are kept in hangars or under camouflage as much as possible when not in the air. Ammunition and fuel dumps are kept well away from the planes, and are also camouflaged.
- There are slit trenches and machine guns set up in case of enemy attack. Should enemy aircraft bombard the squadron, protagonists have the option of running for the slit trenches to hide, or trying to get their crates aloft to fight back. Taking off is extremely hazardous, and protagonists who attempt it should endure at least two free attacks before they get a chance to shoot back.
- NPCs are generally assumed to do their work without needing a point spend, so (for example) mechanics repair damaged aircraft in-between scenes without needing to spend from a pool. This may not suit all games; some playtesters preferred the tension of not knowing how many Structure points would be repaired by the next mission. It also doesn't solve questions such as how much **Health** pool Doc Hollis can restore with **First Aid**. For Keepers who need pool points for NPCs, assume that the total **Mechanical Repair** pool available after each combat mission is 6+1d6, and divide that amongst the damaged aircraft. This pool refreshes after each combat mission. Doc Hollis has 8 **First Aid** pool points, but no **Psychoanalysis**, and his **First Aid** pool will not refresh.

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THE COMBAT REPORT

The protagonists return to their airfield, where they are debriefed by Curtis, the Intelligence Officer.

MacMurdo does not mention the creature at all, though it's unlikely he missed seeing it. He's clearly strung out; his face is pale and his hands tremble. **Assess Honesty** or similar shows that he's at the end of his tether and lying about not seeing it. See further [Flamer](#).

Curtis is quiet and interrogative; he's an exacting man who likes to get every detail straight. He'll Interrogate the protagonists closely about their patrol. Any mention of flying monsters will get his attention; he'll recommend the storyteller 'go see the doc for one of his pep tonics; you're clearly a bit under the weather.' However (**Core**) Curtis is rattled by the protagonist's account, almost as though he's heard something similar before. See further [Military Intelligence](#).

They have the rest of the afternoon to themselves. The bar is open, as always, (see [One Over the Eight](#)) or they could make sure their aircraft are repaired for next morning's flight (see [Other Ranks](#)).

FLAMER

This scene discusses MacMurdo.

MacMurdo is the squadron ace, with 12 kills to his credit. He's also one of its oldest hands, having been flying with the squadron for 14 months. He's a Flight Leader and until recently was in line for promotion to Squadron Leader with his own Flight, but Curtis, the Doc and Squadron Leader Pyke ([Military Intelligence](#)) have all noticed the strain MacMurdo's been under. Ideally they'd post him home, but things are so busy right now they need every pilot they can get.



MacMurdo has seen the Byakhee several times, and they are the cause of his failure of nerve. He's convinced they've come to steal his soul, for committing the sin of murder. He's sent so many others down in flames he's developed a horror of burning alive, and dreams about it nightly.

The protagonists can get clues from MacMurdo in the following ways:

- **Core:** (discussion/interrogation) MacMurdo is at the end of his rope. He'll try to keep his mouth shut, but getting him drunk or talking to him after a nightmare will find he can't stop talking. MacMurdo has seen 'the devils' several times. "They've come for me, you know. They're going to get me one day!" He knows they've links with the new German Circus. "I've seen them flapping about with the cursed things, as though they were in league with Satan!"

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- **Core:** (searching personal possessions or similar) MacMurdo has a stack of letters he's written to Algy Cooper, a fellow pilot who died two months ago. He keeps writing to Algy as though he was alive, and in those letters MacMurdo goes into greater detail. *"I saw Them again, you know, just like before. Remember when we first sighted one, that time in the spring? We thought we'd hallucinated, lack of oxygen or something. Well, I've seen the vultures closer up now, Algy, close enough to smell their reek and even to hear them piping to themselves in the clouds. The Huns sometimes fly with them, Algy, for sport ..."*
- **Military Talk, Reassurance:** MacMurdo claims to have seen the flying devils five times. The last two times he's seen them apparently cooperating with the Huns (Becker's Jasta), and has observed that the creatures travel in packs of at least four. They work cooperatively to bring down their prey; he's seen them tackle a de Havilland, and win. However he's also seen them attacking Hun aircraft, and doesn't know what to make of this change in allegiance.
- **Medicine, Pharmacy:** (talking to MacMurdo or searching his quarters) The Doc has him doped with some kind of pep tonic. Difficult to tell what it is, but the smell's pretty potent; juniper or suchlike. It's probably not doing his nerves any good, but it's clearly a powerful stimulant. However checking with the Doc (**Military Intelligence**) reveals that he's prescribed no such tonic. In fact, MacMurdo got it from a local herbalist. The substance is hallucinogenic, and stimulates anxiety and heart rate as well as inhibiting appetite and causing sleeplessness.
- **Occult, History, Anthropology:** The description MacMurdo gives, coupled with the protagonists' own observations, is suggestive. They've seen similar depictions before, as gothic Gargoyles on churches or something out of Bosch. However the

protagonists are convinced they've seen something of the same type very recently, and nearby – perhaps in the local village? The IO might know more; he's a brainy chap.

MacMurdo:

Ace. Health 9, Scuffling 8, Sanity 4, Stability 3, Alertness +4, Stealth +3, Stunting +3, Piloting 12, Firearms 8, Hit Threshold 5, inclusive of aircraft bonuses. MacMurdo flies a Sopwith Camel, speed 210 Structure 7.

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

This section discusses the Doc, Squadron Leader Pyke and IO Curtis.

Doc Hollis is a cheerful, rotund man who'd much rather be fly-fishing, and spends his spare hours making new lures. Major Pyke is spare and tall, rather resembles an undertaker, and is under constant strain. Captain Curtis is a blocky, calm man who looks as though he'd be at home on a rugby field, but professes to despise all sport and is an avid detective novel reader.

The protagonists may talk to any of these to gain clues. Some are general, known to all three, while others are specific to an individual. All three are aware that something strange is going on, but don't understand it, and are anxious to keep a lid on the story for fear of causing what they call 'blue funk' – a general loss of morale. **Military Talk** works best on the Squadron Leader, while **Reassurance** or medical jargon works on the Doc. Curtis is only susceptible to **Flattery**; he likes to think of himself as an unemotional, logical Holmes-type.

General:

- **Core:** The Huns have got some new trick up their sleeve. Some sightings have been reported of odd flying things, but clearly that's just propaganda. The reports are coming in from more than one squadron, so there's something behind it.

- **Core:** Becker's Jasta, the Lightning Hussars, have been posted to their sector. The Hussars are red-hot pilots and an absolute menace. They shouldn't be tackled carelessly, but they have to be beaten back; it wouldn't do for the Huns to get air supremacy in this sector.

Specific:

- **Military Talk (Pyke):** Three missing aircraft have been attributed to this new weapon, including a de Havilland spotter plane. When sighted, the things have usually attacked in groups of four or more. Command has kept it hush-hush, but apparently one of them was brought down by ack-ack a few weeks ago. *'Nothing left of it but a bit of what looked like leather and tendons, like some huge bat. Probably part of its wing structure.'*
- **Reassurance (Hollis):** Hollis is very worried about MacMurdo, and has said more than once that he ought to be posted home for a rest. A few weeks ago Hollis, along with some of the other medicos, was called in to an autopsy on an observer who'd been killed by one of the things. *"He was cut apart, as though he'd been swiped with a fistful of razors, but there was very little blood. Surprising, given the quantity that must have been spilt."* If asked about MacMurdo's tonic, Hollis identifies it as *"pure witchcraft, old boy. Probably brewed by some quack in the village."* Producing this is enough to get MacMurdo sent home; exhaustion is one thing, drug abuse quite another. That may save MacMurdo's life, if not his reputation.
- **Flattery (Curtis):** Curtis blames local rumours for the scare. He quotes Holmes: *"This agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply."* (*The Sussex Vampire*. The writer acknowledges that this quote is out of time, in that although the story is set in 1896 it was published in 1924. If this fact is liable to be caught by the players, or

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causes the Keeper concern, the quote could easily be dropped). He knows that some of the locals 'are practically pagan; look at the estaminet, for one. In fact, I wouldn't be at all surprised if mine saturnine host isn't the source of these rumours.' However he does know, from conversations with other IOs in other squadrons, that the sightings have been reported by several different pilots and have increased in the last ten months. [Keeper's note: as more pilots survived Byakhee encounters, the number of reports increased.] Curtis thinks the enemy may have a new war weapon; at any rate, he's under orders to forward all reports, including physical evidence if any, to HQ. [Keeper's note: where it will vanish courtesy of the Defence of the Realm Act, and never be seen again.]

ONE OVER THE EIGHT

The protagonists may choose to spend some time in the Squadron bar.

This is a one-room converted barn, with a high ceiling that makes the place seem like a cavern. There are bits of enemy aircraft — propellers, tail sections, scraps of fabric, machine guns — hung from the walls as trophies. The place is heated by a wood-burning stove, which makes one corner of the room warm while the rest remains chilly. One whole wall is dominated by a plank laid over several beer kegs, acting as the bar. Liquor on offer includes local wines, bottled beer, a small selection of spirits and (if anyone's feeling daring) the Squadron Leader's personal bottle of Highland whiskey, kept by the barman under lock and key. Hanging from the wall are the Squadron's mugs, each engraved with the owner's name. Dead pilot's beer mugs are retired; it's bad form to drink from a dead man's glass. This is also where the Squadron's Victrola and collection of records — cakewalk and classical — are kept.

Skills of use here are **Military Talk, Credit Rating, Flattery, Oral History, Reassurance, Evidence Collection, Library Use.**

- **Military Talk:** Becker's new squadron was recently posted to this sector, and are to be feared. Each pilot is an experienced man, often with one or more kills to his credit. Becker's reputation as a killer is well founded; he's known to have shot down over a dozen, and rumour has it he's been sent specially to collect his Blue Max, a medal which wants sixteen confirmed victories to win.
- **Flattery/Credit Rating:** Pilots wanting 'a little pick-me-up' or interested in knowing more about flying devils are directed to Hector, who runs the estaminet in the village. *'I won't say he's on the side of the angels, but he knows, and that's the important thing.' The informant tells the protagonist to say to Henri, 'de Plancy sent me', which will get the protagonist access to his 'special stuff.'*
- **Oral History/Reassurance:** Several of the pilots claim to have had encounters with the flying devils. *'I saw three of them tackle a Roland. Just like vultures on prey, they were, cleverly keeping clear of the rear gunner while two of them chivvied the pilot into a kill position. Then one of them ripped the tail section off, which finished the job, but not before they grabbed hold of the observer, poor sod. Drank him down like a bottle of brown ale, they did.'*
- **Evidence Collection:** The barman keeps a jam jar filled with a cloudy liquid behind the bar. He doesn't know what's in it; one of the pilots, now dead, gave it to him for safe keeping, and he's forgotten about it. There is a label on the jar that reads (in French) *'spécimen recherché le seizième Juin'* (specimen retrieved sixteenth June). If opened, the jar contains a small fragment of claw and foot, pickled in alcohol. Even now, the thing stinks like an open drain, and though the claw superficially resembles that of

a natural creature, its size and shape belie that impression. **Stability 1.**

- **Library Use:** The bar keeps a collection of the Wipers Times, a satirical periodical published by the Sherwood Foresters. Most of it is fairly strong gallows humour, (eg. weather report: 5 to 1 Mist, 11 to 2 East Wind or Frost, 8 to 1 Chlorine) but one of the serials features the recurring character, Herlock Shomes, currently embroiled in an investigation about stolen rum. At one point the famous detective states *'Even our friends in the air are not immune, for lack of the essential vitae has sent them all doolally. Why, so parched are they that they've begun seeing flying pigs! Truly an unfortunate state of affairs.'* The piece has an illustration of a German triplane, including the Yellow Sign insignia, flying in company with two winged pigs.

OTHER RANKS

The protagonists may choose to talk with the NCOs and ground staff.

In addition to the mechanics and orderlies, each pilot has a batman who cleans his clothes and generally makes sure the officer's basic needs are met. Some are more reliable than others, and a batman who knows how to iron a shirt without burning a hole in it is something to be prized. More to be prized is one who knows where to get good cigars and liquor.

Military Talk, Oral History, Reassurance or **Bueaurocracy** will be helpful.

- **Military Talk:** Gossip is frowned on by the Squadron Leader, but everyone knows there's something odd going on. Few people know exactly what, and rumour is rife. However no one doubts that the Eagle of Lens is behind it all. *'We won't know a moment's peace until he's been put away.'* MacMurdo's fitters say they've been ordered to

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dip his Buckingham in holy water; a request they've not tried to carry out. *'Wouldn't do the ammo much good, now would it sir?'*

- **Oral History/Reassurance:**

According to the batman gossip line, the first pilot to see the flying devils was MacMurdo's old mucker, Algy Cooper. He claimed to have shot at one and hit it, and thought he'd brought it down. Shortly before Cooper was killed, he said he'd found 'a Froggie medico' who'd recovered a portion of the creature, and Algy was going to buy it from him.

- **Bureaucracy:** Curtis keeps all the After Action reports, and won't let anyone else see them. However his clerk can be fozzled with Bureaucracy, or possibly bribed, to show the protagonists the reports for the last six months. Flying devils are mentioned five times in all, twice by Cooper, once by MacMurdo, and twice by other (dead) pilots. One report dated 16th June reads: *'saw Unknown take on E.A. [enemy aircraft] but when 2/Lt Cooper engaged, Unknown went for 2/Lt Cooper instead. 2/Lt Cooper put a burst of 30 Buckingham into it, at which point it fell out of the sky. I lost sight of it, being engaged by an E.A., and did not see it crash.'*

A FORMAL OCCASION

This scene is to be played at a point of the Keeper's choosing, preferably at a stage when the protagonists are running out of other leads.

The protagonists will be warned that there will be a special guest in the Mess that evening. The guest is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, novelist and (for the duration) military correspondent, who is a friend of Curtis' family and was invited by Curtis to attend.

Sir Arthur is an incisive, intelligent man who is undergoing a great deal of psychological strain. His wife died

shortly before the war, his son Kingsley is serving (and will die in October 1918), and he is about to lose several more family and friends. Though he has been interested in the occult for some time, (a member of the Ghost Club since the 1880s), these deaths really spark off his interest in spiritualism.

Before the War Sir Arthur attended the Prince Henry Tour, an automobile competition between England and Germany, and what he saw then convinced him that war was inevitable. Since then Sir Arthur has made a study of German newspapers and political literature, and has become convinced that the air war and submarines will win this conflict. Currently he is a military correspondent with a roving commission, and is collecting information for his soon-to-be-published history of the Great War.

Naturally as such a special guest is in attendance the cook does his best, and rustles up some foie gras, roast goose with trimmings, and plenty of wine and cheese to follow. Sir Arthur does his best to be entertaining, (it's not the first time he's been the centre of attention) and will happily talk to the protagonists.

Assess Honesty shows that Sir Arthur is convinced that what he says is true, and he has some interesting things to say.

- **Core:** He knows Becker from the Prince Henry Tour, when the pilot was a racing driver. *'Excellent nerve and a gifted driver, I thought at the time, and not a hostile fanatic as so many of them were. He likes to win, but he's a sportsman, on the whole. Not like some others of his family, I can tell you!'*
- **Oral History, Reassurance:** *'Becker's aunt, now, Agathe – we used to call her Toad von Plon, you know – she's a different kettle of fish. Worships the Kaiser, thinks the sun rose and set on Bismark, and has an unshakable faith in Germany's destiny.'*

Also a ghost hunter and medium, if you like, and supposedly an intimate of Alastair Crowley, among others. A thoroughly unlikeable woman, but not without a kind of magnetism. She really believes, you see; the kind of faith that moves mountains, or so they say.'

- **Occult (Yellow Sign):** *'Yes, I've seen that before. Toad von Plon used to say it represented Thor. The old pagan thought almost anything was connected with Thor and the Vanir, used to claim they'd discovered America, and the Americans were destined to join Germany in a kind of Brotherhood of Conquerors thanks to this Vanir link. She said it brought her luck. If Becker's using that as his personal device, no doubt she persuaded him to it.'*
- If shown the jar from *One Over the Eight*: Sir Arthur goes quiet, and his face drains of blood. *'I've seen something like it once before. Toad von Plon claimed she had a familiar spirit. I never saw the thing, but there was one near miss, when I thought I glimpsed. . . It had these terrible, clutching hands, with fingers very like that . . .'*

LOCAL FLAVOUR

The protagonists may choose to investigate the nearby village.

They will need permission to leave the base, which can be granted by the Squadron Leader. He's reluctant, but can be persuaded either by Curtis or Doc Hollis, and they can be persuaded by **Reassurance, Military Talk** or similar. Once the protagonists have their permit, they can go to the village, Haumont-près-Samogneux.

[Keeper's note: this is the name of an existing village in the Zone Rouge, but its characteristics are invented for this scenario.]

The village struggles to exist, despite the destruction of half its buildings, and not all of the inhabitants have fled. Some stay because they cannot leave; the elderly, or those who refuse to abandon

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their homes. Some stay because there is money to be made, and the proprietor of the estaminet, Hector Delmas, is one. His restaurant, which lost most of its windows in a bombing raid and now has boards over the gaps, serves jugged hare, cured ham, potatoes and such vegetables and fruits as he can scrounge, as well as some reasonable champagne. Hector is a beefy man with luxuriant moustaches. He has a volatile and morose temper.

Languages may help here, as Hector will be friendly to French speakers, and this will cost **0 points**. Alternatively **Oral History, Flattery, Credit Rating** or **Occult** may be useful, but will cost at least **1 point**.

If asked about the flying devils, Hector says, 'But of course! I myself have never seen them, but it is well known that they cavort above us. In my grandfather's time there were two men who swore that they

saw them tumbling and piping in the clouds. It is thought that they first came here many centuries ago, summoned by witches, but that they found the area so attractive that they stayed. At least, so the stories say, and stories have a strength all their own, for look! Above you!'

The ceiling of the estaminet is painted with a huge, colourful mural, in a primitive imitation of Bosch. Terrible demons of all types drag their screaming victims to the centre of the mural, where a gigantic Hellmouth waits to devour them. Several of the demons look exactly like the Byakhee the protagonists saw, and the Yellow Sign is depicted near the Hellmouth. As the windows are blocked, the only light is by candle, casting odd shadows and making the figures seem somehow lifelike. **Stability 2**.

'That too is from my grandfather's time. In fact, he painted it.'

Hector is also the source of MacMurdo's tonic, which he gets from a 'friend of a friend.' Actually he makes it himself from a family recipe, but isn't about to admit it. He may get more, if properly approached. It does no good, and may induce hallucinations; it's pretty strong stuff. **Pharmacy** can tell it's not safe to drink. It induces exceptionally vivid dreams, anxiety attacks, palpitations and can cause heart failure in extreme cases. Anyone who drinks more than three bottles of the tonic in the course of this adventure takes **-2 Damage**. The Keeper may also choose to rule that the imbiber is more prone to **Stability** loss, and therefore tests are made at **+1 Difficulty**.

Extra point spends, or the phrase 'de Plancy sent me,' gets Hector to show the protagonist his prize: a battered, leather-bound 1826 copy of Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*. This is a catalogue of the legions of Hell, as written by a confirmed skeptic. However it does contain information about Byakhee and the Yellow Sign, 'which according to



Flying Coffins

the researches of von Junzt these devil's horsemen obey without question, though woe unto him who uses it without understanding. Woe also unto the land whereto they are summoned, for often it happens that they stay beyond their time, for reasons known only to them.' **Languages** will be needed to read the book, and it confers **1 dedicated pool point Occult** and **1 Cthulhu Mythos**, no spells. De Plancy had no real understanding of the Mythos but he does quote von Junzt extensively, hence the **Mythos** point.

Hector's interest in witchcraft (and library) is the remnant of an old family tradition. If NPCs had Drives, his would be In The Blood. His Abilities include **Athletics 5, Cthulhu Mythos 2, Health 7, Occult 3, Pharmacy 2, Sanity 5, Stability 8, Scuffling 8, Weapons 8; Damage -1 (Knife).**

DAWN PATROL

This section deals with the day to day missions of the squadron. It is a recurring scene, which may be active at various points during the scenario.

The intent is to intersperse on-the-ground investigation with air combat. So, for example, *One Over the Eight* could be followed by a *Dawn Patrol*, then *Local Flavour*, then another *Dawn Patrol*, and so on. The exact dispersal of the *Dawn Patrol* scenes is up to the Keeper. A *Dawn Patrol* may lead directly to *Curses! Foiled Again!*

The protagonists would be expected to fly at least one, and probably more than one, combat mission a day. Some examples are given here; the Keeper is encouraged to invent more.

All NPC stats include aircraft bonus (if any).

- **Deep Offensive Patrol:** The protagonists fly behind enemy lines looking for trouble. They have the opportunity to ambush four *Albatross* (speed 180, Structure 8). Protagonists are aggressors.

- **Experienced Flight Leader** (Alertness +3, Stealth +4, Stunting +3, Piloting 8, Firearms 8), **Experienced** (Alertness +2, Stealth +4, Stunting +3, Piloting 8, Firearms 6), **Novice** (Alertness +1, Stealth +3, Stunting +1, Piloting 4, Firearms 4), **Novice** (Alertness +0, Stealth +3, Stunting +3, Piloting 5, Firearms 5)
- **Trench Strafing:** Flying at low level, the protagonists have to machine gun troops in a trench. **Piloting difficulty 4**, and will be shot at by **ground fire** (see *Crates*). The protagonists need to do at least **10 Damage** for a successful mission.

- **Escort Mission:** Flying escort for a *de Havilland* (speed 200, Structure 9). May be engaged by a formation of four *Pfalz* (speed 200, Structure 8).
 - **Pfalz: Experienced Flight Leader** (Alertness +4, Stealth +3, Stunting +2, Piloting 9, Firearms 8), **Experienced** (Alertness +2, Stealth +2, Stunting +2, Piloting 6, Firearms 8), **Ace** (Alertness +4, Stealth +3, Stunting +2, Piloting 10, Firearms 8), **Novice** (Alertness +1, Stealth +1, Stunting +0, Piloting 5, Firearms 5)
 - **De Havilland: Experienced pilot** (Alertness +2, Stealth +0, Stunting -2, Piloting 7, Firearms 6), **Novice forward observer** (Firearms 4), **Experienced rear observer** (Firearms 8)

Tell Me, Have You Seen the Yellow Sign?

Once the protagonists work out the connection between the Yellow Sign on Becker's kiste and the unusual reaction of the Byakhee, they may attempt to inoculate themselves against Byakhee attack by painting Yellow Signs on their own crates. This is particularly likely once they've read de Plancy, or seen Hector's ceiling, when they'll get a much better idea of what a Yellow Sign looks like.

They are mistaken.

The Yellow Sign is what drew the Byakhee to Becker, but it allows him no control over them. They only stick around because they're puzzled; they expected him to demonstrate some arcane knowledge, and he hasn't. They are not his allies. They're like sharks, following a chum line. So long as there's blood and guts in the water they're willing to play along, but there's no guaranteeing what they'll do. They might even attack Becker given sufficient provocation, or boredom.

So if a protagonist sets out to do the same thing, and paints a Sign on his tail, the Keeper has a few options, but the point to take away is this: it will never work the way the protagonists would like it to, because the Sign on its own isn't enough.

Potential consequences include:

Byakhee circle the protagonists' aircraft, causing Stability losses, and then fly away.

Byakhee circle the protagonists' aircraft, causing Stability losses, make a gesture of displeasure (vomiting on the Yellow Sign aircraft, for instance) that causes more Stability losses, and then fly away.

Byakhee attack anyone not using a Yellow Sign, including allied aircraft.

Byakhee attack anyone using a Yellow Sign, disregarding other potential targets.

Byakhee completely ignore the Yellow Sign aircraft, but then seek out the pilot later on after dark, when he's on the ground and vulnerable.

Byakhee attack all present, indiscriminately.

The last option could provide a dramatic climax to the scenario, if it happens during a scene with Becker.

Flying Coffins

- **Spotting:** One of the protagonists' aircraft is fitted with a camera, and the flight is ordered to fly to a particular map coordinate and take aerial photographs. **Piloting difficulty 4** to find the spot, and either **Photography** or **Piloting difficulty 6** to take the shot. May be engaged by four *Halberstadt* (speed 200, Structure 8)

– **Ace Flight Leader** (Alertness +4, Stealth +3, Stunting +3, Piloting 10, Firearms 9), **Experienced** (Alertness +2, Stealth +2, Stunting +0, Piloting 8, Firearms 5), **Experienced** (Alertness +1, Stealth +2, Stunting +1, Piloting 6, Firearms 6), **Experienced** (Alertness +3, Stealth +2, Stunting +1, Piloting 9, Firearms 6)

- **Bombing Run:** The protagonists are given one hand-held bomb each and told to destroy a munitions dump. **Piloting difficulty 4** to find the spot, and **Piloting or Athletics difficulty 6** to hit the target. Each bomb should be treated as **Bundle of Dynamite** (main rulebook p67) for damage purposes. This will be a low-level flying mission, and the protagonists may be engaged by **ground fire** (see *Crates*).
- **Train Busting:** The protagonists, on a deep offensive patrol, find an enemy train depot with an engine just about to come into the station. **Firearms difficulty 5** to hit the target, **10 Structure**. This will be a low-level flying mission, and the protagonists may be engaged by **ground fire** (see *Crates*).

At any point either Jasta 32 (*Die Beleuchtung Husaren*) or the Byakhee (*The Devil's Horsemen*) may become involved.

CURSES! FOILED AGAIN!

The protagonists may be shot down. This scene describes what happens next.

The Keeper should determine whether the action takes place over No-Man's-Land, behind enemy lines, or behind friendly lines. This is a matter of Keeper preference, although it is possible that the nature of the previous scene will make one result more likely than the others. The main thing to bear in mind is that the further away the downed protagonist is from their aerodrome, the longer it will take them to get back to the main story, if indeed they make it back at all. That could complicate the plot, so if the Keeper would rather avoid complications, then it's better to have the protagonist land closer rather than further from their aerodrome.

Wherever they end up, first they have to crash. It's a **Piloting** test, Difficulty 4, and there may be modifiers depending on the condition of the aircraft and the pilot. Success means they get down without injury, though the plane is wrecked. Failure means the character suffers **+1 Damage** in the crash.

What happens next depends on where they crashed.

Behind Friendly Lines:

The plane comes down near a platoon of allied soldiers. These soldiers are not necessarily the same nationality or speak the same language as the pilot, but they do their best to make sure the pilot is returned safe and sound to his unit. Their Medic has **3 First Aid pool points** to spend on the character, if need be. The pilot is returned to his squadron the day he crashes. Potential soldier types include French West African Tirailleurs Senegalais, Australians, Canadians, Sikhs, South Africans. Potential **Stability** losses include: crashing the plane (2).

In No-Man's-Land. The plane smashes down in the mud and muck between the battle lines. In addition to getting out alive, the protagonist needs to deal with his downed warbird. It has vital equipment (eg the compass, maps) on board, which needs to be retrieved. Once that's done, the protagonist needs to **Stealth** back to friendly territory, which is easier said than done. During the day, **Stealth** rolls increases to Difficulty 7, and failure means that the protagonist is shot at: **Firearms 4, Damage +1**. At night, **Stealth** is Difficulty 4, but failure means that the protagonist gets lost and goes towards enemy lines by accident; see further *Behind Enemy Lines*. If **Stealth** is successful, then the protagonist is *Behind Friendly Lines*. The pilot will either be returned to his squadron the day he crashes, or the day immediately following. Potential **Stability** losses include: crashing the plane (2), hiding in No-Man's-Land for a day (4), shot at (3).

Behind Enemy Lines:

The protagonist is lost behind enemy lines. In addition to getting out alive, the protagonist needs to deal with his downed warbird. It has vital equipment (eg the compass, maps) on board, and even the wreck could be a Military Intelligence bonanza. The plane must be burnt if at all possible, and doing so results in a Confidence Stability refresh. Once that's dealt with, the protagonist needs somehow to get back to friendly territory. This will probably involve **Stealth** or **Fleeing**, possibly also **Disguise** and **Languages**. An encounter with enemy soldiers (**Athletics 5, Health 8, Firearms 4, Scuffling 6, Weapons 4; Alertness +0; Stealth +0; Damage -2 fist/kick, +0 rifle-mounted bayonet, +1 rifle**) is likely, and they may even encounter an enemy officer (**Athletics 5, Health 8, Interrogation 2, Languages 1, Military Talk 2, Firearms 6, Scuffling 4, Weapons 6; Alertness +1; Stealth +0; Damage**

Flying Coffins

-2 fist/kick, +0 pistol). Should they successfully negotiate enemy lines, they then have to get across No-Man's-Land before getting back to friendly territory. The pilot probably will not get back to his squadron for two or more days, if ever. If caught in **Disguise** the pilot risks being shot without trial, as a spy. Potential **Stability** losses include: crashing the plane (2), risking being shot as a spy (1), shot at (3).

In addition to the above, the following **non-core clues** can be discovered:

- **Military Talk (anywhere)**. The soldiers you encountered claim to have seen flying devils in the night, that sometimes drain the blood of the living. Their officers deny all knowledge, but the enlisted men are willing to talk, and they have noticed that the devils have some habits, particularly in their flying patterns, which could be exploited by those wanting to fight them. **2 point dedicated Piloting** or **Firearms** pool, to be used only in combats with Byakhee.
- **Occult, Biology (No-Man's-Land)**. While making your way back to your squadron, you find a small scrap of burnt flesh that you think may have come from a downed flying devil. Searching nearby, you discover more remains, and scraps of human flesh. This must be a midden of theirs, a place where they dump waste and scraps, probably dropping them from a great height. Potential **Stability Loss 1**, but it does mean that if the protagonist wants to track down a Byakhee in future scenes, he knows where to go to find them.
- **Languages (Behind Enemy Lines)**. You overhear some of the enemy talking about the new enemy air weapon that they've seen. They're terrified of it, and some of them claim that these unnatural creatures have been drinking human blood like vampires. According to them, the creatures make a kind of

high-pitched whistling noise, right before it attacks, a sound so loud it can even be made out over artillery bombardment. This lowers **Sense Trouble** by **-1 Difficulty**, for one Byakhee antagonist reaction scene only.

THE DEVIL'S HORSEMEN

This scene discusses the Byakhee and their function in the plot.

These creatures view the sky as their territory, and are angry at man's incursion. Their early attacks against aircraft were always successful, which encouraged them, and as they always won there were no witnesses and therefore no reports. The invention of a reliable front-mounted machine gun gave the fighters real teeth. For the first time they began suffering losses, and the survivors of these combats began reporting what they saw. By 1917 the Byakhee were losing about one combat in four, which gave them something to think about. The brass hats on both sides think the enemy has invented some new war weapon, or dismiss the whole story as a fabrication, but some of the pilots are taking it seriously, and fighting back. Before the War is over the Byakhee retreat to the stratosphere, where they exist undisturbed for a while longer.

Becker's insignia complicates things for them. They know they have not been summoned, but the Sign indicates someone of power who has pledged allegiance to Hastur, and that's not something they can ignore. For that reason they look out for Becker, protecting him against attack and attacking his enemies, but his lack of sorcerous understanding puzzles them. He's not trying to issue instructions nor has he used, say, the Vach-Viraj Incantation, the Dread Name of Azathoth or any of several other means of identifying himself as a man of power. In time they will give up on

Becker, but for the moment they are his not-so-loyal allies. They have no great love for his Hussars, but they recognize that Becker doesn't want him to attack them. Other German aircraft are fair game.

The Keeper should use Byakhee incidents to spur the players on. The Byakhee don't just turn up when Becker is around. They're hunting everyone, indiscriminately, because they're extremely angry that man has tried to challenge them in the air. Should the players get complacent then the Keeper should fling Byakhee at them until they learn better or someone dies. The protagonists should constantly be under threat of Byakhee attack, every second of every mission. That threat can be a sighting at a distance, probably draining **Stability** each time, or it can be full-on attack. Every time the players start to think 'we don't need to worry about this Byakhee thing,' that ought to be a cue to throw in more Byakhee.

Byakhee

Winged necrotic horrors from the stars.

Abilities: Athletics 5 (ground) 20 (air), Health 8, Scuffling 6 (ground) 8 (air), Stealth 6, Shadowing 8, Sense Trouble 7

Stealth Modifier: +2 (air)

Alertness Modifier: +2 (air)

Weapon: +1 (claw), +0 (bite); following a successful bite, the Byakhee will drain 2 Health/round from the victim until killed or driven off.

Armour: +2 vs Any (fur, hide and an absence of vitals)

Stability Loss: +1

For purposes of dogfighting bid contests, treat the Athletics score as the equivalent of Piloting. All Hit Thresholds are at +1, due to its acrobatic agility. All Byakhee should be rated as **aces** but naturally have no **Firearms** pool.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Flying Coffins

Tactically they attack in packs of at least four, baiting their target with one Byakhee while sneaking up with the other three. Combat aboard an aircraft (eg. if the pilot has a pistol and is trying to shoot a Byakhee that has latched onto his tail and is climbing towards the cockpit) should be treated as normal combat at an increased difficulty. The Keeper may also require **Piloting** rolls

if the pilot is so distracted, with failure resulting in **+0 damage** to the plane.

There is an optional clue to be had in any Byakhee scene: **Photography**. A picture will be dismissed by the brass as a smudge on the lens, or stylistic trickery. Captain Curtis may confiscate it, if he sees it, and send it back to HQ. However analysing the Byakhee's

tactics and flight formation by using photographic evidence can give the user a dedicated **Piloting** or **Firearms** pool, on a 1-for-1 conversion rate (**Photography** to **Piloting** or **Firearms**). This pool is only to be used when combating Byakhee.

Potential Byakhee scenes include:

- Byakhee spotted at a distance, flying through the clouds. **Stability** check only.
- Byakhee seen attacking another aircraft; the protagonists have the option to intervene, but do not have to. **Stability** at **+1 Difficulty**, if they don't interfere.
- Byakhee ambush protagonists.
- Byakhee seen at a distance flying in company with Becker's kiste.
- MacMurdo's last fight: Byakhee seen engaging MacMurdo's crate, and will kill MacMurdo unless the protagonists intervene. **Stability** at **+2 Difficulty** if the protagonists choose not to get involved.



Flying Coffins

HELL'S ANGELS

Endgame.

By this point the protagonists should have a rough idea of what the Byakhee are, and why they are here. They may have encountered them in combat. Their best bet for getting rid of them isn't shooting down Byakhee, but killing Becker, or at least destroying his Yellow Sign triplane.

Some playtesters found that shooting down Becker was easy, provided that several of them attacked him at once. The solution here is to make sure that Becker is never encountered alone; he should have a number of allies, either Byakhee or squadron mates, roughly equal to the number of attackers.

The protagonists may come up with ideas for shooting Becker down. Challenging Becker to a duel is one, as is dive-bombing his aerodrome. If they come up with ideas of this sort, feel free to let them play out.

However if they don't, then a potential endgame could play out like this:

On the day of the Big Push, the air is alive with aircraft of all kinds, enemy and friend, each side either trying to stem the tide or carry on the assault. The protagonists will be involved in sortie after sortie, spending scant minutes on the ground before taking off again, refuelled, rearmed and repaired. Let them fight through several combat

missions before finally encountering Becker and his Jasta in a huge dogfight. Several other squadrons are involved, and over thirty crates are fighting maniacally, or just trying to survive.

At one point a protagonist (or several of them) fly out of a cloud to see Becker and two Byakhee directly beneath them. Becker's triplane has taken damage (**Structure 6**) and the Byakhee have been peppered as well (**Health 7, 6**). Becker hasn't spotted the protagonists; he's too busy lining up his next kill, a badly damaged *Nieuport* (Alertness +2, Stealth +1, Stunting +3, Piloting 6, Firearms 3, Structure 3). This is the best chance the protagonists will have to get Becker; it's now or never.

Should Becker be shot down, the Byakhee with him will turn and flee, and that will be the last time the protagonists (or anyone else) sees them over the Western Front. However while Becker is still in the air they will defend him, though not to the extent of sacrificing their lives. If reduced to **3 Health** or lower, they will flee the fight.

The protagonists may choose to seek the Byakhee out and destroy them instead. This is a risky proposition, but if they manage to kill at least eight Byakhee, the few remaining will run away. This may happen over the course of more than one dogfight.

Per ardua ad astra; and in the starry skies await the Byakhee.

PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

The Keeper should bear in mind that the number of points allocated are based on the assumption of a six-player game. If the actual number of players is less than four, the Keeper may want to allocate extra Investigative build points to compensate for thi



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold³

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: James Arthur 'Jimmy' Fallon

Drive: Adventure

Occupation:² Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

Academic Abilities

Biology - 1
Medicine - 1

Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 2
Credit Rating - 2
Military Talk - 2
Reassurance - 2

General Abilities

Athletics - 2
First Aid - 7
Health - 7
Firearms - 6
Fleeing - 8
Piloting - 8
Preparedness - 4

Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 2

Sanity - 8
Stability - 9
Scuffling - 10
Shadowing - 4
Sense Trouble - 4
Stealth - 6

¹ In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

² Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a * before assigning points.

³ Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

⁴ These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

⁴ Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

⁵ In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

⁶ Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

⁷ Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

⁸ Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

⁹ You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

Your father is a doctor who works as a coroner for the Cheshire assizes. He was kept very busy when you were a child, and you followed his career in the papers, keeping notes on all his trials. You saw yourself then as a cross between Sherlock Holmes and Arsene Lupin, catching criminals with a combination of science and swashbuckling. You were determined to follow in your father's footsteps one day, but the war interrupted your plans. Your father managed to pull some strings and kept you out of it for a while, against your wishes. It was only when you left school without telling him and joined up that he finally let you do what you wanted to do. You spent a little time with the Cheshires, but you soon became disenchanted with trench warfare and when the chance came for a transfer, you took it. You've had a few months in the air now, and while you know you're not the sort of chap who becomes an ace you like to think of yourself as a dashing knight of the air.

Weapons: Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold ³			

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Richard 'Black Mac' MacDonald

Drive: In the Blood

Occupation:² Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

Academic Abilities

Library Use - 1
Occult - 1

Interpersonal Abilities

Credit Rating - 3
Intimidation - 2
Military Talk - 2

General Abilities

Athletics - 8
Conceal - 5
Disguise - 5
Firearms - 8
Health - 10
Sanity - 6
Stability - 8
Stealth - 10
Sense Trouble - 6
Piloting - 8
Mechanical Repair - 5

Technical Abilities

Art - 1
Photography - 2
Outdoorsman - 2

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⁶ Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

⁷ Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

⁸ Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

⁹ You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

Your family have been Forfarshire hill farmers since time immemorial. You're distantly related to the Lindsays and your father always claimed that Affleck Castle was your family's property, by rights, but he's told so many tales over the years that untangling them would be a lifetimes' work. As it happens telling tales is something of a hobby of yours; you've sold six ghostly short stories under the pseudonym 'Arthur Lindsay' and are working on a longer piece. You half believe some of the old goblin tales and know that, once, you saw a ghost in Monikie Parish Churchyard. You enjoy the night more than you do the day; there's something about a stark, moonlit landscape that appeals to your soul. Given half a chance you'd chuck it all in and go back to the hills, perhaps to compose something really memorable. The war is something you endure, not enjoy, and you can't see anything glamorous in it.

Weapons: Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold ³			

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: George Albert 'Pinky' Doggart

Drive: Curiosity

Occupation:² Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

Academic Abilities

Biology - 1

Languages - 1

Library Use - 1

Medicine - 1

Interpersonal Abilities

Bureaucracy - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Intimidation - 2

Military Talk - 2

Oral History - 1

Reassurance - 2

Technical Abilities

Pharmacy - 1

General Abilities

Athletics - 8

Firearms - 10

Filch - 6

Health - 6

Piloting - 10

Mechanical Repair - 3

Sanity - 7

Stability - 9

Sense Trouble - 4

Stealth - 4

Scuffling - 8

¹ In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

² Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a * before assigning points.

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⁸ Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

⁹ You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

Your family is German, on your mother's side, and you have cousins in Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt. You like to keep that quiet; you don't want anyone thinking you've got German sympathies. You play the bluff, hearty type in public, always willing to get stuck in the scrum. In private, you're more reserved, and a bit of a sticky-fingered sort. Your previous job, in a pharmacy, gave you the chance to make a small bit of money on the side selling drugs on the black market, and it didn't take long before you were making a good deal more cash than you'd ever seen before. It was spent as quickly as you had it, and the police were sniffing around, so you joined up before you could get put in front of a Judge. Your problem is, you have to know everything. Gossip is meat and drink to you, and you've been collecting enough incriminating stuff over the last few months to blackmail half a dozen chaps – if only they didn't keep getting shot down, you could have made a tidy sum! Still, you're confident there's a glorious future ahead of you, so long as you survive the War.

Weapons: Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold ³			

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Alphonse 'Alfie' Weber

Drive: Bad Luck

Occupation:² Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

Academic Abilities

Anthropology - 1
Biology - 1
History - 1
Languages 2

Occult - 1

Interpersonal Abilities

Bureaucracy - 2
Credit Rating - 2
Flattery - 1
Interrogation - 1
Military Talk - 2

Technical Abilities

Photography - 1

General Abilities

Athletics - 8
Disguise - 3
Firearms - 8
Health - 9
Piloting - 8
Preparedness - 4
Psychoanalysis - 6
Sanity - 6
Stability - 8
Sense Trouble - 8

¹ In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

² Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a * before assigning points.

³ Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

⁴ These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

⁴ Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

⁵ In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

⁶ Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

⁷ Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

⁸ Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

⁹ You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

Your father is German, a professor formerly of the University of Basel, now not-so-happily settled in Cambridge. He came to England eighteen years ago, just before you were born; prior to that he had worked with a promising student, Carl Jung, and the two still correspond, when they can, on matters relating to occult theory and mythology, subjects that are dear to your father's heart. However your father's nationality, coupled with his correspondence with a Swiss national, have made the British authorities suspicious, and, early in 1915, he was almost arrested on espionage charges. The trouble blew over, but it embittered him, and this bitterness has been passed on to you. You're very sensitive about your German heritage, and quarrel easily on the slightest pretext. To compensate for your father's alleged (though you don't believe it for a moment) treason you've become the epitome of a British officer, willing to do and die for King and Country.

Weapons: Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold³

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Eric 'Coney' O'Hare

Drive: Follower

Occupation:² Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

Academic Abilities

History - 1

Languages - 1

Physics - 1

Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty - 2

Bureaucracy - 2

Credit Rating - 2

Military Talk - 4

Oral History - 1

Technical Abilities

Outdoorsman - 2

General Abilities

Athletics - 8

Driving - 8

Firearms - 10

Health - 8

Mechanical Repair - 8

Piloting - 14

Stability - 8

Sanity - 7

Sense Trouble - 3

Stealth - 8

¹ In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

² Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a * before assigning points.

³ Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

⁴ These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

⁴ Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

⁵ In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

⁶ Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

⁷ Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

⁸ Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

⁹ You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

At the grand old age of 27, you're practically a doddering ancient compared to the fresh-faced youngsters being chucked out of flight training every other week. Before the war you were a racing driver and Brooklands champion, and after 1915 you worked for Vickers Aviation. You were a test pilot for two years, but when your younger brother was killed at Arras your family more or less decided for you that your mission was to avenge him. That wasn't how you saw things, but it was easier to go along with them than it was to fight it. You've developed an unsuspected knack for aerial warfare, but an injury earlier in the year set you back a bit, and you taught young pilots during the summer after your recovery. You hope it won't be long before the war's over for good, and when that happens you want to get back to racing where you belong. Things make sense on the track; they don't out here.

Weapons: Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15
Hit Threshold ³			

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Investigator Name: Robert Andrew 'Porgy' Proteron

Drive: Duty

Occupation:² Pilot Officer

Special:

Pillars of Sanity:

Academic Abilities

Library Use - 1
Languages - 1

Occult - 1

Interpersonal Abilities

Bureaucracy - 2
Credit Rating - 2
Flattery - 1
Intimidation - 2
Military Talk - 2
Oral History - 1
Reassurance - 2

Technical Abilities

Evidence Collection - 1
Outdoorsman - 2

General Abilities

Athletics - 6
Disguise - 2
Fleeing - 6
Firearms - 8
Health - 10
Piloting - 12
Stability - 8
Sanity - 8
Sense Trouble - 4
Stealth - 9

¹ In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

² Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a * before assigning points.

³ Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

⁴ These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

⁴ Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

⁵ In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

⁶ Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

⁷ Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

⁸ Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

⁹ You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

Page references refer to the Trail of Cthulhu Core Rulebook

You're an Anglo-Indian; your father was in Colonial service, and you were born in Simla, India. They're still over there and you haven't seen your parents in years. You were sent back for your education six years ago and have been living with a strict, elderly maiden aunt in Bristol. You idolise the Empire and everything it stands for. You see your war service as the first step in a long career. There will be a place in the army, after the war, for people like you. You deliberately chose the RFC because it is a young service, without the stuffy traditions of established regiments. An ambitious man can go far. Of course it would be much easier if you could rack up a distinguished record, some kills and perhaps a medal or two. It's all good for promotion. Later, of course, you'll get yourself transferred back out to India again where doubtless they'll be developing an air arm of their own. It's the new cavalry, after all, and India has always been cavalry country.

Weapons: Fist/Kick (-2), Pistol (+0)

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Sopwith Camel Shot Down



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Sopwith Camel



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

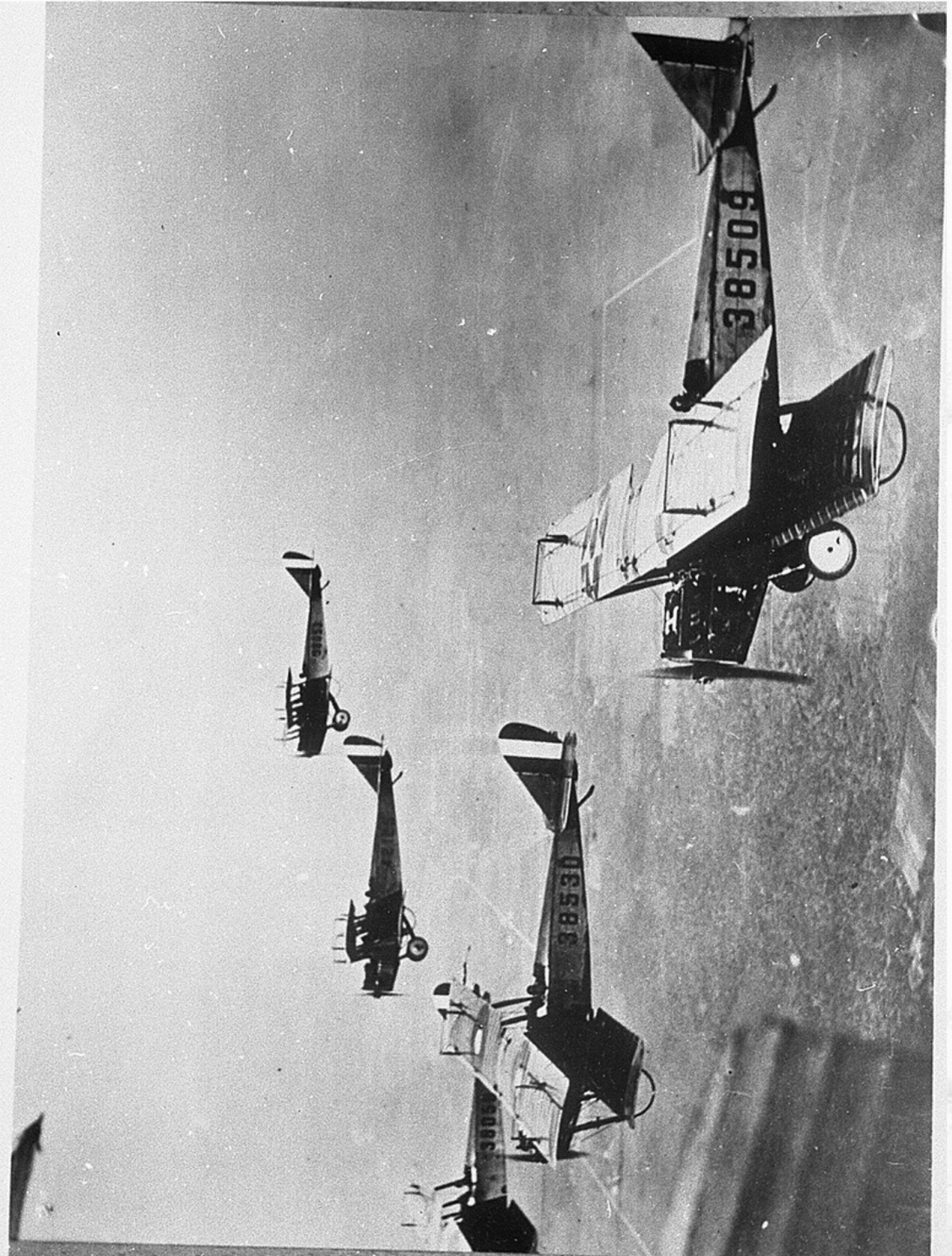
SPAD S XIII



E-3890
C-362

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Squadron in Formation



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Observation Balloon

