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# ACHTUNG! Cthulhu

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...COMING OUT THE WATER  
REPEAT, COMING OUT THE WATER!

## Foreword by Sarah Newton

World War Two is amazing. By turns terrifying, exciting, tragic, filled with courage and desperation, the appalling spectacle of a civilisation tearing itself apart. And yet it created the world we live in today—the borders between our nations, the memories and stories our families tell one another, photographs and medals on walls. We owe our lives, directly or indirectly, to the terrible sacrifice made by an entire generation in the middle of the twentieth century.

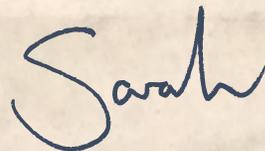
Here in Normandy we dig up bullet casings when we turn over the garden. Our chickens peck at an old wooden shell crate, whose US Army stencilling is only visible when it rains. We go for days out in a pretty seaside town where my grandfather desperately unloaded fuel in the days after D-Day, not an hour away. It's hard to believe sometimes how close it still is—scratch the surface, and the War is there, everywhere you look.

Three years ago Chris Birch and I got talking about roleplaying in World War Two. How could we do it—how could we draw on its awesome tales of heroism, tragedy, and sacrifice, without trivializing a profound and historical event? Those who know me will know I've always loved conspiracy theories—and World War Two is filled with them. Together Chris and I talked about how we could draw out the sinister pulp elements of these conspiracy tales, and use them to create action-packed roleplaying adventures worthy of the greatest war films. This adventure, and the rest of the *Zero Point* campaign for **Achtung! Cthulhu**, are the result...

*Heroes of the Sea* takes place during the evacuation at Dunkirk. Like many of us, I knew the broad brushstrokes of the Dunkirk story—but in researching those terrible days in May and June 1940, I've been amazed and humbled. Maybe it's a feature of war that its events are so terrible you can never imagine they could ever happen—until they do.

The evacuation of over three hundred thousand soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk, under constant attack from land and air, by naval vessels and ragtag flotillas of "little ships" which themselves were often torpedoed and sank even as they fished soldiers from the sea, the eyewitness accounts of those who fought—on both sides—and the sheer *scale* of the devastation, are breathtaking. I hope in some small way I've been able to convey the magnitude of Dunkirk's events as the backdrop to this adventure.

Lovecraftian roleplaying thrives off mystery, and the dread that unimaginable inhuman powers hold sway over our cosmos, before which mere human concerns pale into insignificance. *Zero Point* brings those themes directly into World War Two, as our intrepid investigators unveil a terrible conspiracy alongside, between, and beneath its world-shattering events. During this series of linked adventures, your players will fight a secret war which threatens the future of the world itself. How they do so—and whether they succeed—may lead your campaign down some very dark and twisted avenues. Can they thwart this dreadful menace, even as humanity tears itself apart? What is the true history of that secret war? Play on... this story only you can tell...



Sarah Newton  
Normandy, September 2012

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# Introduction - What is Achtung! Cthulhu?

*Heroes of the Sea* is the second scenario in the *Zero Point* campaign, an epic series of adventures for the **Achtung! Cthulhu** setting—Lovecraftian roleplaying in World War Two. **Achtung! Cthulhu** allows you to play investigators uncovering the terrible secrets of the Lovecraftian Mythos which threaten the world at a time when humankind is already poised to tear itself apart.

This version of *Heroes of the Sea* is intended for use with the **Call of Cthulhu** roleplaying game, published by Chaosium, Inc. Additional rules specific to the World War Two era can be found in the appendices, including pre-generated characters, created using the 6th edition **Call of Cthulhu** rules, to get you playing straight away. You can also create your own investigator characters using the **Call of Cthulhu** rules.

## Overview

This adventure contains material for several sessions of play. It incorporates historical and geographical background; an extensive encounters section; and five complete plot episodes with maps and non-player characters. Extensive appendices provide pre-generated characters, new rules for **Call of Cthulhu** adventuring in World War Two, new vehicles, an operational briefing for the players, and a handouts section.

## THE MISSION

Following the bizarre events of *Three Kings*, the first adventure in the *Zero Point* campaign, the British Secret Intelligence Service has been operating undercover in occupied Europe gathering information on unusual activities in the Third Reich. In recent weeks, a fe-

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“WOTAN had uncovered a secret German operation named FALL NADEL (‘Operation Needle’), and had information vital to the fate of the Allied forces.”

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male undercover agent, Agatha Marcham (codename WOTAN) has gone missing in northern Europe after attempting to contact Section D with critical information.

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## The Real Heroes of World War Two

**Achtung! Cthulhu** presents a fictionalised version of the Second World War, where the Lovecraftian Mythos is real and its agents work to bring humankind to its doom. However, many of the figures behind the larger events of the war which form the background to these adventures were real people, and in many cases national heroes.

In *Heroes of the Sea*, the historical figures of the Dunkirk campaign are not intended to play major roles. They include: General Lord Gort, commander of the British Expeditionary Force; General Blanchard, commander of the French First Army; and many more.

We dedicate this book to the many forgotten heroes who fought and died across the world, and particularly to the “Little Ships”, which saved so many lives at Dunkirk.

Agent WOTAN had been operating in northern Germany and Belgium. While travelling to British Expeditionary Force territory, she was overtaken by the sudden Blitzkrieg advance of German forces in May 1940. Contact has been lost, and the worst is feared. All that is known is that WOTAN had uncovered a secret German operation named FALL NADEL (“Operation Needle”), and had information vital to the fate of the Allied forces.

The investigators are members of Section D, an arm of the British Secret Intelligence Service. Ferried to the besieged port of Dunkirk by *H.M.S. Durant*, their mission is to make their way into the warzone of what is being called the Battle of France, contact Agent WOTAN, and take appropriate action based on the nature of FALL NADEL.

## THE REAL DEAL

Agent WOTAN has happened upon a bizarre secret German operation in the Dunkirk region. Operation Needle will require all of the investigators’ resourcefulness to defeat.

During the last glaciation, millennia ago, global sea levels were much lower than today. As late as 6000BC, large stretches of what is now the North Sea were dry land, populated by Stone Age hunter-gatherers of the Maglemosian culture.

The Maglemosians found their coastal lands dotted with ancient, forbidding stones, which seemed to have been shaped by no human hand—temples and carvings

## The Intelligence Service in May 1940

Since *Three Kings*, the British Secret Intelligence Service has improved its intelligence efforts in Occupied Europe, and a shake-up is imminent. For now, however, the investigators are still considered members of Section D, tasked with clandestine operations in enemy territory.

United States intelligence efforts have picked up since the British and French declarations of war on Nazi Germany in 1939, but are still relatively small scale and unfocused. Members of G-2, the US War Department's Military Intelligence Division, may work with Section D on an informal basis.

of terrifying age. The men and women who set themselves as priests of these "temples" spoke of clammy, antediluvian horrors which still dwelled in the deeps, waiting for the day the sea would rise and claim their lost lands again.

Eight thousand years ago, a catastrophic inundation swamped the low-lying northern European coasts, sweeping away all traces of Maglemosian people. In the early twentieth century, fishing trawlers began to dredge up remains of these rich forests and hunting lands from the seabed, and people became aware of the great flood

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"Himmler's sorcerer is obsessed with the 'lost lands' beneath the sea, believing they hold the key to a great prehistoric power..."

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which had sunk these lands. And yet, no one could guess at the awful truth of what had caused the ancient waters to rise... or that it might happen again.

A member of Heinrich Himmler's personal staff and expert in the occult, Karl Friedrich Walpurgen (sometimes known as "Himmler's Sorcerer"), has become obsessed with the "lost lands" beneath the North Sea, believing they hold the secret to a great prehistoric power which can be harnessed by the Third Reich. Walpurgen has been assigned command of an SS "special group"—SS Sondergruppe KFW2—which he has dispatched to the area with his trusted minion, Frau Edeltraud Wassermeister.

In darker circles, Frau Wassermeister is known as the "Fishwitch" ("die Fischenhexe"), infamous for

her uncanny affinity with the deep. Her bulbous eyes, clammy pallid skin, and foul stench force all but the hardiest to recoil. The Fishwitch has seen the secrets beneath the waters off Dunkirk in her dreams...

Walpurgen and Wassermeister are united by their researches into what they believe is "astral projection". They believe they have found a way to travel in time and space, and send their "astral selves" back to the prehistory of Earth—to the ancient Maglemosian period. The duo *met there*, and witnessed dreadful rituals propitiating hideous "dwellers beneath the sea" at a temple which now lies beneath the waves.

Since then, Walpurgen and Wassermeister have begun to realise the lands they have named "Maglemosian" are not in the deep past at all, but are in fact strange, dream-like lands, with a mysterious and often tenuous connection to the "waking world". They have established a secret outpost there—the "Black House"—and have constructed an occult "portal" to Maglemosian through which they can travel without using their "astral bodies". At the same time, they have found traces of the prehistoric Maglemosian culture—including the forbidding inhuman temple—off the Dunkirk coast, and evidence that it is still frequented by "dwellers beneath the sea".

Their plan is simple: to forge a deadly alliance with this inhuman power. Using a u-boat assigned to the Sondergruppe, they aim to retrieve a hideous statue to a ghastly marine deity from the sunken temple, and transport it to a location south of Dunkirk, where they will perform a ritual to once again cause the seas to rise. This time, the flood will claim the lives of hundreds of thousands of Allied troops on the beaches at Dunkirk as a "sacrificial offering" to the dwellers beneath the sea, sealing with blood an unholy alliance between these unknown "deep ones" and the nascent occult powerbase within the Third Reich. They have dubbed this operation FALL NADEL—"Operation NEEDLE".

Only the accidental discovery of their plan by an undercover agent of British intelligence stands in their way...

*Needle? Could this be poison gas?  
Or some kind of disease?  
Contact Wehrmacht -  
top priority.*

**FRAU EDELTRAUD WASSERMEISTER, AGE 45, "THE FISHWITCH"**

STR 08    DEX 09    INT 15    CON 11  
 SIZ 15    APP 07    POW 18    EDU 13  
 SAN 00    Hit Points: 13

**Damage bonus:** none

**Skills:** Anthropology 65%, Bargain 26%, Cthulhu Mythos 11%, Dreaming 35%, Dream Lore 15%, Occult 75%, Other Language (English) 30%, Own Language (German) 65%, Swim 92%

**Weapons:** Luger P08 pistol 35%, damage 1D10, atts 2, base range 20 yds

**Spells:** Bind Dreamer\*, Breath of the Deep, Contact Deep One, Gate of Oneirology, Maglemosian Ritual\*, Mesmerise, Nightmare, Raise Night Fog, Snare Dreamer, Wandering Soul, Wave of Oblivion, Wrack

**Appearance:** Wassermeister is a big woman given to massive leather greatcoats and startling hats; her round, pallid face houses bulging eyes and a loathsome sneer. Head of SS Sondergruppe KFW2 under Karl Friedrich Walpurgen, far from being a scientist, she is a deranged occult obsessive with a messianic streak, and a believer in Atlantis, astrology, divination, demon summon-

ing, astral travel, and more. Dimly aware of the great inhuman forces in the universe, her affinity for the sea comforts her that she is part of something greater and more eternal than mere humanity. She believes it is her mission to establish worship of the true "gods" of the cosmos in the Third Reich, and will do anything for her cause—human life and suffering have no value when measured against such immense power. Naturally, Walpurgen thinks she's *great*...

\*The spells "Bind Dreamer" and "Maglemosian Ritual" can be found on page 44.

**OPERATION DYNAMO**

*Heroes of the Sea* takes place against the backdrop of Operation Dynamo, one of the biggest (if not the biggest) wartime troop evacuations in history. Following the German *Blitzkrieg* invasion of Belgium and France in May 1940, the combined forces of the British Expeditionary Force (the "BEF") and the French First Army found themselves surrounded on three sides and in danger of being driven into the sea—a potential loss of almost half a million men.

After trying unsuccessfully to break the encirclement, on the evening of Sunday, May the 26th, the British Admiralty gives the signal: "Operation DYNAMO is to

Image: Public Domain. From the 1943 US Army film "Divide and Conquer" ("Why We Fight #3"), directed by Frank Capra.



British troops escaping from Dunkirk (France, 1940)

## Timeline of Operation Dynamo

**10 May – Battle of France begins;** Winston Churchill becomes Prime Minister of Great Britain.

**14 May – Plan Yellow (“FALL GELB”):** the German Wehrmacht begins its western offensive with an attack through the Ardennes forest and a strategic drive for the coast, cutting Allied supply lines—the infamous “Sickle Cut”.

**20 May – German advance reaches the coast,** separating the BEF, the French 1st Army, and the Belgian army from the main body of French troops.

**24 May – the “Halt Order”:** the Germans stop their advance on Dunkirk for 3 days and attack Arras. This gives Sondergruppe KFW2 a short window to carry out FALL NADEL. German armour is kept south of Dunkirk to attack BEF forces retreating before Army Group B. The British begin organising the evacuation of British and Allied troops from Dunkirk.

**26 May – the BEF and the French 1st Army are confined** in a shrinking corridor to the sea, about 60 miles long and 15-25 miles wide. Most of the British are around Lille, 40 miles from Dunkirk; the French are further south. German Army Group B is to the East; Army Group A to the West. Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for war, tells General Lord Gort, commander of the British Expeditionary Force, to prepare to “fight back to the west”, ie. to evacuate.

**27 May – the Germans launch a full-scale attack** with three divisions south of Ypres. In forested and urban terrain, the Germans beat the British back, cutting telephone lines and taking advantage of poor British communications. The Allies fight back to the Dunkirk perimeter, arriving by the 30th of May.

**28 May – British counterattack** by 3rd Grenadier Guards battalion and 2nd North Staffords battalion reaches

the Kortekker River, disrupting the Germans and buying the evacuation time. This allows the investigators to push forwards to the last known position of Agent WOTAN, the village of Mesegen (page 17).

A confused battle rages along the perimeter, with Allied forces being gradually forced back.

**29 May – the Belgians surrender.** General Gort sends British troops to plug the gap created in Dunkirk’s semi-circular perimeter defence, including the docks at Nieupoort.

**30 May – the perimeter holds.** Bad weather hinders airborne operations.

**31 May – the Germans nearly punch through at Nieupoort.** Bad weather continues to hinder airborne operations. General von K uchler assumes command of German forces at Dunkirk and plans an all-out assault for the following day.

**1st June – fine bright weather,** perfect for airborne operations. The French hold the line while the British evacuate, despite concentrated artillery, bombing, and strafing.

**2 June – the last British evacuate,** and French forces slowly fall back. The fortified town of Bergues falls to the Germans.

**3 June – Germans are 2 miles from Dunkirk.** This night is the final night of evacuations, and the last possible night for Wassermeister’s “Searise” ritual (page 36). If successful, tens of thousands of French and BEF troops on the beaches and ships offshore will be lost, and the British capacity to continue the war seriously—perhaps irrevocably—damaged.

**4 June, 10.20am – the Germans hoist the swastika over Dunkirk docks.**

commence”. Over the following week, under heavy attack, British naval vessels and a ragtag flotilla of small private vessels aim to pluck hundreds of thousands of troops from the beaches near the French port of Dunkirk and ferry them to safety in England. In doing so, it is

hoped, the British army can be saved to fight another day, and prevent the British Isles from falling under the Nazi jackboot. The timeline above lists the main events of this extraordinary operation, and the key episodes of *Heroes of the Sea*.

