

# The Demons of Austerlitz



A  
24-HOUR  
RPG 2015

Project by  
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Themes: Soldiers, Terror, 19<sup>th</sup> century (1803-1815)  
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## Timeline of Demons of Austerlitz

**1806** The Treaty of Pressburg was a disaster, but no one was aware of how much of a disaster. Things were kept away from our reality by the presence of the Holy Roman Empire; many of the lives lost that were instrumental in keeping the world hidden. There are things of darkness, madness and evil, which feasted on suffering, pain, and the Emperor Napoleon, brought many of these with him. The blood shed at Austerlitz lit the fuse to blow open the portals to our world.

### The Ritual

For centuries, certain priests of the Holy Roman Empire performed a daily ritual to keep our lands safe. However, an errant artillery shell killed them in the middle of this ritual. The sudden brutality of their deaths left it impossible to pass this knowledge on. A week after the death of these priests, the first cracks in the veil began to manifest.

**1808** Austerlitz becomes a nightmare land, those living in the area change. Malformed, demonic shapes, the dead rise to walk once more, other creatures not of our world spew forth in more terrifying forms, the lands became despoiled and changing. This was only the first, they engaged Napoleons armies in battle, and few survived. The sky burned and entire battle groups disappeared in these hellish lands. Many cities of the once great Holy Roman Empire are quickly swallowed up by the blight.

**1809** Emperor Napoleon set aside pride and allied with other powers to drive these demonic forces away. However, many of these factions blamed Napoleon for the current state of affairs. They are not far wrong. Nevertheless, they attacked...and failed. The demon armies grow in strength

**1810** You are a member of one of the mockingly self-named *Hell Companies*. The world has gone mad...and you need to survive, and stay sane. Face to face with demons will test your will and your courage, but first you must reach Rome, find the library at the Quirinal Palace, and locate the tomes needed to seal the rifts. Many have tried, none have returned.



## Introduction

*Demons of Austerlitz* is a role-playing game for 3-5 players of survival and horror during the Napoleonic wars. Players take the roles of soldiers in the Grande Armée after an event sunders the veil between another world and ours, unleashing the forces of Hell on Earth.

## Materials Needed

Paper (index cards will work fine)  
Pencils  
Several 6-sided dice (1 per player will suffice)

## Rolling dice

During the game it will be necessary for players to determine outcomes based upon random probability. In other words – luck. To determine the success or failure of a task, a player rolls a single 6-sided die (henceforth abbreviated as d6) and add certain modifiers (explained later), if the total is greater than a target number the task succeeds. Other times rolls may be called for a d3 (or generating a number between 1-3), to do so, simple take a d6, roll it and halve the result (1-2=1; 3-4=2; 5-6=3). Other times you may see the abbreviation of 2d6, or 3d6 or some other number before the “d” value. This tells you how many 6-sided dice to roll, and add up their values.

## Themes

Horror should be the main themes of the adventures, getting into fights are usually a bad idea, but sometimes it is unavoidable. Being in the Hell Lands messes with a mortal's mind; nightmares, visions, and hallucinations are normal faire. This is about survival in a land that was once fit for human, but is slowly becoming a land of demons. However, if it isn't taken back, and the rifts sealed, the whole Earth will be overrun in time.

## The Player Character

You are a soldier in Europe during the Napoleonic Wars; at least it was the Napoleonic wars until the rifts opened up. Now it's become the Hell Wars.

You first choose your Archetype; note that there can be only 1 officer in the group. Write down the archetype on the index card, along with their associated load-out.

Everyone has the “Kit” load out. It is important to track consumable items, such as ammo, food, bandages and so on. The Hell Lands are scarcity, and the leaders of Europe are desperate to find the knowledge to seal the rifts. So you carry what you can.

## Archetypes

*Officer*-Horse, Sword (+2) and pistol (+0, 10 yard range)  
*Dragoon*-Charger (horse), sabre (+1) and carbine (+1, 40 yard range)  
*Soldier* -Musket (+2, 80 yard range, 3 shots a minute) with Bayonet (+0)  
*Sapper*-Axe (+2), explosives (cumulative +15 damage, may break the explosives into smaller parts – grenades, explosive charges, etc., reduce the desired damage output from the main total. Once 15 points of damage are used up, the sapper is out of explosive material, needs to make a successful skill check to use)

*Sniper Kit* (Requires Sniper Skill) rifled musket (+2 ranged attack, 25 rifle rounds, 300 yards, scope),

*Kit* Rations (14 days' worth), personal effects, extra ammo (50 loads worth of shot + powder), bottle of cognac (4 rations worth), collapsing telescope. See the note below!

**Note** The kit is only “full” if the players are starting from an army encampment! Otherwise roll for each consumable as below:

### Survival Kit

2d6 + 2 for rations  
2d6 x 5 for number of shot and powder  
1d6 – 2 for cognac ration

### Blessed Ammunition

Blessed ammunition are musket balls with holy symbols cast into them during forging, and then dipped in holy water during tempering. Holy ammo conveys an additional +1 attack against **unnatural** enemies, but no additional bonus against mortal foes.

If the Game Master allows, a player with a full kit may start with 6 rounds of blessed ammunition. If the players start with “survival” gear, they start with none.

## Skills

*Skills are what your character is good at, what their specialties are. **Choose 3 for your character**, skills convey a +2 to any roll that they are appropriate for.*

### **Physical Skills**

*Marksmanship* - the skill in proper care and use of firearms

*Tactics* - Gains a bonus to initiative for combat

*Survivalist* - finding shelter, foraging food

*Close Combat Specialist* - forces reroll of a successful attack against the character

*Physically Tough* - +1 bonus to physical defense

*Demolitionist* - bonus to explosives use

*Artillery*-the ability to load, prime, aim and fire artillery pieces

*Scout*-The ability to move unseen through wild terrain and notice details.

*Sniper*-the character has one of the few rifles that Napoleon originally commissioned. See "*Sniper Kit*".

### **Mental Skills**

*Morale* - the ability to keep up the spirits of those around you

*Leadership* - the ability to lead

*Orienteering* - land-based navigation

*Medic* - Health physical wounds

*Religious* - Recovers mental health

*Storyteller* - keeps fear away when camping, allows rest if successful

*Mentally Resilient* - +1 bonus to mental defense

*Scholar* - bonus to research

*Tracker*-The skill in following trails and tracks

## Universal Stats

*Write these on the index card, near the top.*

*Physical health* – healthy, wounded, mortal, dead

--wounded conveys a -1 penalty to all tests

--mortal conveys a -3 penalty to *all* tests, without medical care this character will die within the hour.

--dead is dead, they may come back as a corpse soldier if certain...precautions...are not taken.

*Mental health* – healthy, scared, delusional, mad

--scared conveys a -1 penalty to all mental tests

--delusional conveys a -3 penalty to all mental tests, plus they could become a danger to the party

--mad...the character becomes a GMPC, they will either run away gibbering, or attack their former friends.

## Fear

Each character has a fear, the Hell Lands play up those fears, often forcing mental checks, reducing a character's ability to cope.

Example common fears include

*Fear of heights*

*Fear of enclosed spaces*

*Fear of the dead*

*Fear of snakes*

*Fear of betrayal*

This will be the most difficult concept to come up with, as you want something interesting that the Game Master may use in the adventure.

## How to play

### The Core Mechanic

A basic test formula is thusly:

$D6 + \text{Skill (+2 if trained)} = \text{a total of } 5+ \text{ is successful at the task.}$  Other modifiers may add or subtract from your total. If you see the text of *skill* (-1) then the skill test is made at a -1 to your total.

Conversely, if you see a (+1), then you add a +1 to your total roll.

### Navigating the Hell Lands

Maps are of little use, familiar land-marks are no longer reliable. Mountains have been levelled at a whim, deadly, living forests sprung up in plains. Each day of travel requires one **navigation check** (using *Orienteering*) to successfully head towards the players' objective.

Getting lost in the Hell Lands takes a toll on the characters, so for each day lost make a **mental health** check.

### Camping in the Hell Lands

Foraging is difficult, but possible. Rest is also difficult, but possible. In order for the players to get a full nights rest they must pass an 8+ mental health check. This is normally impossible, but there are modifiers:

**Storyteller** in the party: +1

Successful **Survivalist** check to set up camp: +1

**Praying** (7+ Religion check): +1

Cognac ration used: +1

Negative modifiers are as follows:

Out of food: -1 per day

Failing a camping roll will damage everyone's **mental health** by 1 state.

## Combat

### *Initiative changes from turn to turn*

Roll 1d6 for each group or party. Add +2 if a character has the Initiative skill (if this is the first round of combat only), or +1 if your party had initiative the previous turn. Highest value acts first.

Ranges are expressed in 10 yard increments. If player wishes to **move** as an action, they may move up to 10 yards by sacrificing their entire turn.

Players make an **attack roll** ( $1d6 + \text{weapon value} + \text{skill}$ ); if the attack exceeds the **defense** of the target, it is either *Wounded*, or *Dispatched*. If a creature has 2 wounds, then it would be *wounded* first, and then *Dispatched* with the second successful hit.

However, before a character can attack an unnatural creature, they must make a **mental health** check using the mental attack modifier of the creature. If they pass, they may attack as above, if the test is failed, the character loses 1 step of mental health, and may not attack out of sheer horror.

### Individual Combat Actions

Move (change range by 10 yards)

Take cover (enter into melee combat)

Attack (make an attack against an in range foe)

Charge (run into melee combat, grants a +1 combat roll bonus).

### Additional Factors

Cover grants a +1 defensive bonus

### GM-PC's attack

Players have a physical and mental defense of 6+, if an "attack" would exceed that value their respective Physical or Mental health are reduced by 1 value (Healthy to wounded, or Scared to Delusional)

### Recovering Health and Mental

A successful **Medic/Religion** check will restore 1 level of Physical or Mental health

## The Hell Lands

### Bestiary

*Corpse Soldiers* (Unnatural, Slow)

Mental +0

Attack +0

Defense 4+

*Corpse soldiers are the husks of the dead which have been granted unnatural life by the hostile spirits that pour through the rifts.*

*Demon Dogs* (Unnatural, fast)

Mental +0

Attack +4

Defense 4+

*Demon dogs come in packs of 12-18 (D6 + 12), their warbling baying howl chilling the bones.*

*Demon soldiers* (Unnatural)

Mental +2

Attack +2

Defense 6+

*Demon soldiers are feral, humanoid beasts that fight with the ferocity of Bengal tigers. They are frequently found in packs of 4-6 (D3 + 3)*

*Demon lieutenant* (Unnatural, Tough)

Mental +3

Attack +4

Defense 8+

*Mad soldiers/farmers*

Attack +1

Defense 4+

### Bestiary Keywords

*Fast* – moves up to 20 yards in a turn

*Unnatural* – forces characters to make a mental health check to attack

*Tough* – requires 2 successful attacks to dispatch

*Slow* – moves 10 yards a turn, max.

### Adventures Seeds

*Survival* – your company is lost, either dead, or simply swallowed up by the land. Survive in the mad lands, escape, and get out of here...

*Recon* – the generals need information on a particular area, go find out what you can and report back. Your company is tasked to find the target and bring them back

*Containment* – hold the line, a new rift has opened, and you're sent to contain the demons.

*Rescue missions* – someone of importance was lost in the Hell Lands when the rifts opened, find them.

The libraries of the Holy Roman Empire need to be found, the tomes containing the holy rites to seal the gates are in Vienna, in the Papal Palace.

### Notable locations

#### *Brno*

Once a bustling Czech city, Brno is now an eternal inferno. Its unfortunate location near the battle of Austerlitz made it an ideal feeding ground for the demons of the rifts.

#### *Venice*

In their rage the armies of demons marched south, to take over their hated jailors in Rome. The Quirinal Palace is said to have been razed to the ground by demonic forces. No one knows if there are any survivors left in Rome. It is possible to approach by sea, but rumors of giant creatures roaming the Mediterranean and Tyrrhenian seas keep all but the bravest, or most fool-hardy, of sailors away.

The archives in Rome are said to contain tomes that speak of containing the demons, banishing them, and sealing the rifts.

### Optional Rules

The game assumes a small group of soldiers sent into the Hell Lands. However, most armies in the Napoleonic era broke down into companies. Here are some optional rules to run a company in *The Demons of Austerlitz*.

### The Company

The officer character will need to keep track of how many men are left in the company. Usually a company starts out with 120 soldiers. As time goes on, this will whittle down. When faced with combat, the whole company forms ranks and attacks as a single unit. Player characters are a bit above and beyond the normal rank and file, so they make individual attack rolls.

## The Company in Combat

### Company Combat Actions

Move (change range by 10 yards)

Charge (enter into melee combat)

Attack (make an attack against an in range foe)

### Company ranged combat

For every 12 men still alive, roll 1d6, for each 5 or 6 rolled, dispatch 3 "health" worth of an enemy.

### Company melee combat

Make a company combat roll as above, but for every 6 rolled, dispatch only 2 health of enemies.

### Enemy counter attacks

Roll a die for each pack, or group, of enemies using their base attack values. For each 5+ rolled, eliminate D6+exceeded value in soldiers from the company.

### Character Death and "rerolling"

Your characters are part of a company; this may be upwards of 120 men. If your character dies or is driven mad, simply write up another character, one of the faceless masses of the company becomes the new player character.

## Experience Levels

In the Grande Armée the foot soldiers generally feel into several classifications: *fusiliers* and *grenadiers* for the bulk of the army, and the elite light infantry (the *Infanterie Legere*) corps that contained *chasseurs* and *carabiniers-a-Pied* (or *carabiniers*).

If you wish to incorporate these into your game, the *fusiliers* are created as written in this game. *Grenadiers* receive 1 additional skill.

Members of the light infantry start with 4 skills instead of 4, while the *carabiniers* also receive a +1 bonus to their Mental Health.

*Voltiegeurs*, were effectively commandos of the Grand Armée. They are equipped with carbines with bayonets, and receive a +1 bonus to their ranged attack rolls, in addition to the 4 skills.

## Influences

In some ways I cannot rightly say where it all comes from apart from my own mind. However, there are some very distinct touchstones that influenced this work.

*Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell* by Susanne Clarke

Anything H.P. Lovecraft, via the *HP Lovecraft Literary Podcast*.

## Reference Material

Wikipedia

Encyclopedia Britannica

<http://www.napoleonguide.com/>

## Credits

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Painting of soldier (page 2)

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## Character Sheet

Demons of Austerlitz			
Name:_____			
Archetype:_____			
Fear:_____			
Physical Health:	Healthy	Wounded (-1)	Mortal (-3)
Mental Health:	Healthy	Scared (-1)	Delusional (-3)
			Dead
			Mad
Skills:			
Equipment:			
Ammo:		Food:	

# Death in Ulm

Notes: Players begin with survival supplies, they are 5 days away from the headquarters.

You and your company have been marching for days with no sign your quarry, morale was low, and supplies were similarly running low. Your orders were to find a Father Petraeus and bring him back, he may have knowledge of the library in Rome. Two days ago a large rift opened near camp, the company fought bravely, but was overrun and scattered. With the company destroyed, it is only you and your small band, you must find the padre and bring him back to Paris!

## Ulm:

Like most hell-overrun towns there are few living, sane humans here. The town is typical enough, with some residences, a church, a market, and a town square.

## Residents of Ulm:

If the players interrogate the residents roll 1d6 on the following chart for their reactions:

1. They scream in your face in horror, and attack!
2. They stare, wide-eyed in wonder, and reach out to touch you. You recoil in horror as you see the blisters and weeping wounds on their bodies.
3. They begin to weep, and speaking in a language you have never heard before. It's very sound making your ears bleed.
4. They ignore you entirely, they look through you and brush past as if you were not there.
5. The resident falls to the ground wailing in a high pitched warbling noise, this brings 2-3 demons within 2 minutes.
6. They whisper to you to get out, leave, leave now, and glance around furtively.

## The Market

Very little is to be found in Ulm, nothing is for sale, there are no merchants.

A successful **survivalist** check in the **market** may yield one of the following (roll 1d6):

1. 1d3 days of rations
2. A bag containing 2d6 rounds of shot and powder
3. A bottle of cognac! Hallelujah!
4. A well-worn, but serviceable pike (+2 melee)
5. A journal describing the slow takeover of Ulm by Hell
6. A jar of tobacco

## The Church

The church is disused and dusty. Broken pews litter the grounds, you carefully make your way back to the vestibule. On the altar is a tarnished golden cross that has had the image of the Christ removed, a burned copy of the bible, and a cracked wooden chalice. A successful *scholarship* check will bring the bible back to the notice of the characters, written in the margins are notes in a shaky hand. After an hour of piecing things together the characters learn that Father Petraeus left the church to go find the catacombs, where he thinks some artifacts will be found that would help combat the demons. Failing the check, the players find prints that lead out the side of the church. A successful *tracker* check will be necessary to find where the trail leads, see **Finding the Catacombs**.

## Finding the Catacombs

If the players found the notes about the catacomb it will only take a couple hours to find the entrance, only roll on the encounter table once. If not, following the padre's trail will require a *tracking* check, each one takes 3 hours. It takes 2 *successful* checks to find the entrance, for each check roll on the encounter chart below:

1. The sky darkens, and a tearing is heard near the town square. If you are nearby, you see a dark tear in the middle of space and several (1d3) demon dogs lope out, sniffing the air. The players must pass a *stealth* check, or the hounds find them and attack!
2. Some townsfolk surround you, holding out their hands. Murmuring desperately for succor, for mercy, for the Emperor of

- France to save them. You need to extricate yourself or the demons will take notice!
3. The ground opens up nearby, and a building begins to collapse, sinking below the earth.
  4. A demon patrol (1d6 demons) passes near an ally where you are searching, make a *leadership* check or they find you and attack.
  5. The sky opens up and a burning rain falls, you need to find shelter soon. Make a survivalist check, if you fail lose half your supplies due to the acidic rains.
  6. You lose track of where you were heading, make a successful *morale* check or all progress and search again.

### Finding Father Petraeus

The priest went down into the catacombs below the city, the players will need to find an entrance (scouting check, one per 6 hours, standard difficulty). The catacombs are a maze! Dark and musty, the players find a couple functional oil lamps near the entrance.

Every failed check has a 2 in 6 chance of running into a random encounter (roll 1d6):

1. Tunnel collapse! Make a physical health check, if failed reduce status.
2. You enter a larger antechamber, lit faintly from your lamps. A thudding and crunching sound comes from all around you. Make Mental Health check! If you succeed you notice several corpses freeing themselves from their tombs and attacking! You get the initiative, if you fail, they gain the initiative.
3. Demon hounds have tracked your scent! 1d3 hounds attack from behind!
4. Oil lamps go out! Make a mental health check while you try to relight them!
5. Down a long dark hall you see several sets of glowing eyes, with an earth shaking roar the demons attack! (1d3 demons)
6. The path doubles back on itself, make another orienteering check or lose another half an hour finding your way back.

Players must make an orienteering check to make sure they are heading in the right direction. Each orienteering check brings the players closer to the Father by 30 minutes, if it take the players more than 3 hours to find the father, they find him dead and a demon lieutenant standing over him. Tearing apart a large book. If they find the father in time,

they must fight off the demon lieutenant and 3 other demons. If the players defeat the demons, they find several tomes of ancient script, and an old spear point which glows near the demon bodies. The Father will be able to translate these tomes, if not it will take the scholars of Europe months to unlock them!

### The Escape

With the father (or artifacts) in tow you must now escape Ulm! The demons have your scent, and are approaching from all angles! Escape out into the blasted lands is your only hope!

The characters are besieged on all sides by demon dogs and regular demons, this is a running fight through the streets of Ulm, and requires 4 successful *orienteering* (6+) checks to escape the city. Each failed check brings the demons closer, after 2 failed check, the players are trapped and must fight 1d6 demons and 1d3 demon dogs.

If the players escape Ulm with enough rations, but not the padre (4 days' worth) read the following aloud:

You leave the hell scape of Ulm behind, dodging from hiding place to hiding place eventually you lose your pursuers. The passage back to headquarters is long and nightmarish, using all your skill you avoid demonic patrols. However, with no protection, your minds are scarred (lose 1 rank of Mental Health), the survivors push on. Eventually the hellacious landscape sears your minds, whispers suggesting lewd and unthinkable acts (mental health check or lose another point). Several days pass, and eventually you return to the barricades. You give your report, gibbering, drooling. Officers take the artifacts away, and lead you off to the infirmary.

If the players escape with the priest and enough rations:

You swiftly leave the hell-town of Ulm behind, dogged pursuers eventually give up after a day. Each night Father Petraeus gives mass and a brief rite, you feel better (gain 1 mental health rank). After several days of hard marching you reach the barricades. The padre gives his thanks and praise, and leaves to meet with the leaders of Europe. With luck and hope, maybe the tomes and artifact will give the Grande Armée the edge it needs against the forces of hell.

If the players do not have enough rations, with or without the priest, they die of exposure and hunger. Their bodies are never found.