

# The Crusade Against the Grail

A Gear Krieg Campaign by RG

## Setting

The PCs are members of the British secret service MI-5 B5(b) special unit for the paranormal, an under funded and laughed-at branch which had to keep its true successes secret by the direct order of the Queen. They are recruited from all over the Commonwealth and are specialists in diving, parachuting, history, and combat.

## Rules

- PCs can pick from a list of very genre-specific flaws in order to get genre points (e.g. strikes to stun, overconfidence).
- There are cut scenes, sometimes with players taking over NPCs (after being given two or three lines of info) - this gets them genre points if done properly.

## Required Skills/ Characters

- A tough as nails fighter (paratrooper, SAS from 1941 on)
- A language specialist, most likely a diplomat
- A secret agent à la James Bond
- An archaeologist

All players must have decent weapon skills (a basic military training package) and skills in diving and parachuting.

## Player Resources

The following handouts are given to the PCs during the campaign.

- Fact Files on their enemies, room to add their own info which they get over time.

- A world map where they can fill in the Grail info they get over time. The PCs can travel everywhere they want but places where there is no grail Connection will either lead to a small fight, run-in, or a very short narration by the DM.
- A news compilation before every adventure

## Allies

- **Maxwell Knight** is the head of MI-5 B5(b). Eccentric to the maximum, Knight keeps exotic animals, practices the occult, and adds a general air of craziness to his bureau.
- **Aleister Crowley** is a magician and satanist in the employ of MI-5 B5(b) who often spooks the PCs and gives them bizarre hints for their missions which always turn out to be crazy ramblings.

## Enemies

### Ahnenerbe

The Nazi organisation Ahnenerbe has a branch which looks for the supernatural in order to provide the Führer with secret weapons. The organisation consists mostly of SS members but has some specialists from other branches.

### *Prof. Gustav Haudegen*

Haudegen is an old man with a shaven head, monocle, and a huge scar on his left cheek. The professor likes to wear SS uniform giving him a brutal aura which belies his cultivated manner. Formal and fanatical, Haudegen can be quite charming in a military kind of way but longer discussions reveal his fanatical devotion of Nazism which he presents in a calm, almost lecturing tone. Haudegen is feared by his underlings and has

no qualms about sacrificing them if this seems useful at some point.

### *Wilhelm Zeckinger*

A young man in his early thirties, Zeckinger is the assistant of Prof. Haudegen. The young man is good-looking but in a shy way, feeling awkward in his gaunt body. Zeckinger is obsessed with the Grail and willing to work with the devil to get to it but no real Nazi at heart. He is also quite a coward and will flee battles rapidly.

### *Other German Opponents*

- **Hohepriester Hans von und zu Teutoburg**, a self-styled noble who heavily believes in paganism and is an important member of the SS Black Knights.
- **Sturmbannführer Klaus Hass**, a small stocky man with glasses who commands the military units attached to Ahnenerbe Grail department because he was considered unfit for front line duty. Hass resents his positioning with academics but has great respect for Haudegen.



- **Leutnant Friedwart von Gunitz** is a heavily wounded WW I hero, gentleman, and elite soldier in his forties who is very unhappy to work with criminal goons. He might help the PCs if they are treated unfairly but will always be loyal to Germany.

## **Black Claw Syndicate**

The Black Claw Syndicate is a crime syndicate operating world-wide and making money through spectacular blackmail and

other global scale pulp villain activity, the most famous incident being the failed raid on Fort Knox with a superscience digging device. The syndicate operates from a volcano island in the Pacific and has a world-wide web of operatives.

### *Number One*

The enigmatic leader of the Black Claw Syndicate known as Number One is a tall and incredibly strong man with burn scars all over his body and a face which is horribly mutilated. Number One offsets this dreadful appearance by wearing tailored Asian-style suits. The crime lord is never seen without his razor-sharp throwing disk which he casually holds in his hand. While not the most intelligent person, Number One has a feeling for the right henchmen and thus has a wide array of superscience items at his disposal, the most famous of which is his mind control ray.

### *Other Black Claw Members*

- **Olga Zukhova** is the femme fatale right hand woman of Number One, responsible for many mind ray applications.
- **Manuel Arasaka**, a descendent of exiled Christian samurai, is the professional head assassin of the syndicate and leader of the Black Talons, an elite strike force which makes heavy use of electricity weapons.

## **Jesuits**

The "Soldiers of Christ" have a long-standing interest in the Grail and will do all they can to stop it from falling into other hands than that of the Pope. However, unlike the other enemies here they will only use legal means and are more likely to be met in social interactions than in combat.

## Time Line

1936	Otto Rahn leads expedition to Iceland
1937	

1938	<i>Anschluß Österreich</i> - the annexation of Austria
1939	August - Mysterious disappearance of Grail scholar Otto Rahn Assault on Poland Sept 3rd - Britain and France declare war on Germany
1940	Assault on Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France, Battle of Britain
1941	Rudolf Hess lands in Britain, Assault on Soviet Union Dec - US declares war on Japan
1942	Reinhard Heydrich killed in Prague
1943	Battle for Stalingrad ends, Members of the "Weiße Rose" executed, Allies land in Sicily
1944	June - D-Day Stauffenberg attempts to assassinate Hitler
1945	May - Fall of the 3rd Reich

## Adventures

### Search for Dr. Kluge

Date: June 1939

The PCs are ordered to find Dr. Kluge, a German specialist on the Holy Grail from the University of Heidelberg. Kluge is assumed to be somewhere in Austria looking for his misguided friend Otto Rahn. Kluge is the only living person who knows where the fabled bible of St. Eldritch could possibly be found.

After finding out about the assassination of his friend in the Austrian Alps by SS Black Knights, Kluge flees on the very next plane. While the PCs follow him, they must dodge both Nazi goons and Black Claw operatives before they can get in touch with Kluge and his beautiful daughter in South America.

- **Kluge's hotel room in Innsbruck** has been ransacked and Hotel staff inform the PCs that Kluge has left in haste this morning to the airport in Vienna. Records show that Kluge has gone to India. Also, some uniformed members of the SS and

an Italian have also asked for his travel plans.

- **Cut Scene:** Zhukova tells a group of four assassins (acted by players) that Kluge knows too much and must die and that he was spotted in India.
- Authorities in **India** have arrested Kluge after his arrival, however, he managed to escape with the help of a local friend who in turn was captured. When questioned and convinced that the PCs mean no harm, he tells them that Kluge took a ship to South America and is then killed by an assassin of the Black Claw (1 genre point).
- The PCs are able to trace Kluge to a **camp in the jungle of (currently neutral) Brazil**, where his British friend Lord Goring is currently looking for traces of Egyptian colonies in South America. They must convince him to join them in Britain and manage to leave the country despite the authorities looking for them after being asked to do so by the Catholic Church.

### The Bible of St. Eldritch

Date: January 1940

The PCs must recover the bible of St. Eldritch from a monastery in occupied Poland. Unfortunately, the monastery is currently used by the SS as a supply depot and pagan temple. The PCs must enter through a secret tunnel and steal the book which contains the map to a templars' castle in the holy land (where "the key" was taken for security reasons"). However, the place has been raided by a group of Black Claw agents already.

- The PCs have been dropped off by a plane in **Poland near the monastery** and must investigate the area without being caught by *Einsatzgruppen* of the SS. Eventually, they will find a tunnel into the basement of the monastery, where they can steal the book under the very eyes of a group of Ahnenerbe Black

Knights holding a pagan ritual under Teutoburg.

- **Cut Scene:** Players are South African smugglers who are on a small ship dodging the coast guard in order to meet a Black Claw submarine commanded by Arasaka. They transfer a package given to them a Zhukova who seemed very preoccupied.
- Kluge can analyse the bible to find a secret encoded map which leads to the **templar castle in Jerusalem** where some kind of key is stored (there was already some kind of British dig there, almost getting the Brits killed by enraged locals). Unfortunately, the place was ransacked by Olga Zhukova and some henchmen about a year ago. The Jesuits will instigate local resistance to the PCs (1 genre point)

## Against the Black Claw

Date: February 1942

The PCs have to attack the fortress of the Black Claw either with military help (and not much can be spared), or infiltrate it by posing as the South African criminals who provided the information about the BC headquarters to MI-5 B5(b). The BC occupy a small Pacific island with a flooded crater where the BC subs dock. The place is riddled with super-science traps, always with a means to escape (possibly spawning genre points). Enemies will gloat, reveal plans, and be all overconfident. This adventure is very much site-based and therefore has no acts.

- **Cut Scene:** An American destroyer somewhere in the Pacific is damaged and finds an uncharted island. Four marines are sent to investigate when first the ship is sunk and later on they are hunted by Arasaka and his men.

## Return to Poland

Date: June 1944

The artefact stolen from the fort in the holy land is the head of a statue from the monastery in Poland with crystal eyes. There

are instructions on it how to use it to put a beam of light on the grave of a knight of the grail. Unfortunately, the monastery (now a POW camp for British Soldiers) is currently on the verge of being attacked by Russian raider walkers which have been parachuted behind enemy lines. Also, heavy fighting has devastated the area. Ahnenerbe also has found out that the PCs had visited the monastery and are here to wait for them to return. The tomb of St. Eldritch can be discovered using the head of the statue and a stone tablet leading to Thule will be found.

- **Cut Scene:** Klaus Hass orders the tunnel into the monastery to be mined in order to "greet" the PCs when they arrive. The players take the role of SS goons given these orders. (Taunt them by omitting details.)

## Showdown in Thule

Date: May 1945

The PCs use the map in the grave to find the fabled sunken island of Thule. There they have a final showdown with Nazi goons who were all the time informed by a spy (possibly Kluge's daughter or if she has been identified, some disgruntled British Fascist).

- **Submarine Trip to the Arctic:** The PCs encounter another sub which seems to follow them. They can fight it or try to hide. The other sub also goes to Thule.
- **The Lost Island of Thule:** Heated by volcanic vents, the island of Thule is a small spot of temperate climate in a vast sea of ice. On it there is a small castle in a vast underground cave built in the Templar style holding the tomb of Jaques de Molay (who was allegedly burnt on the stake in France). His life dates seem to indicate that he reached an age of 300 years. The island is filled with treasure but a golden cup is nowhere to be found. Here, there will a final showdown with the Nazis of Ahnenerbe.
- **Cut Scene:** The Jesuits talk about their upcoming expedition to Thule. Their specialist complains that it is too

dangerous to dive in the cold waters but they insist. Finally, the project is deferred to the future.

- **Three month later** Kluge comes up with the song "Es war ein König in Thule" and the PCs set out to Thule again with newly developed superscience diving equipment to finally find the Grail in a block of ice. They will also have the chance to capture any remaining Nazi goons who have gone into hiding there after the fall of the Reich, ill-equipped but determined to win.