

TRUE BELIEVER

You are a soldier — a True Believer — caught in a millennia-long endless war of attrition, far from the warmth of your Birth-Star. None of you know the Enemy, though they are shaped like you, and some of your comrades claim they hear them speak in tongues not unlike yours through the trench walls, late at night.

Your chaplains have told you that this is impossible: your foe is faithless, ignorant, and inhuman.

They do not worship the Birth-Star in chants to rouse the day, though the markings they leave in their trenches are not unlike those you carve at night. That is impossible.

They do not know the names of your Blood shouted when you go over the top, though they call to one another with sounds not unlike your mother's name. That is impossible.

They do not love, though they seem to spend as much time tending their wounded, and mourning their lost, as you do, every time the shells fall. That is impossible.

That is all impossible: they are the Enemy, and they must be eradicated by you, the True Believers.

ATTENTION, SOLDIER

TRUE BELIEVER is a roleplaying game about empathy, connection, and loss. You play as a soldier caught in a ceaseless war perpetrated by religious fanatics against an enemy you know nothing about. Through their abandoned trenches, their charred wargear, and their desperate charges, we learn who they are and how we are not so different. Through our own desperate acts, we learn what — who — we are forced to give up to dance to the lies of our masters.

GATHER YOUR WARGEAR

TRUE BELIEVER can be played by any number of people, including solo, but the more players there are the longer it will be between turns. 1-6 is a good amount. There is no Game Master.

Each Player needs a **SOLDIER RECORD**, and at least one 10-sided die (more is better). A pencil is also required.

Place a **THEATRE OF WAR** sheet, landscape, in the middle of play. Draw a line in pencil down the middle as the front line.

YOU ARE NO-ONE, SOLDIER

Roll 6d10, and record the number from left to right. This is your **SERIAL NUMBER (SN)**. Each number in your **SN** is called a **DIGIT**.

Ask one of your fellow Players to give you a **NICKNAME**, based on your **SERIAL NUMBER**.

Decide on a **TRUE NAME**, but tell no-one.

INCH BY BLOODY INCH

Decide on an order of play — perhaps clockwise around the table. When it is your turn, describe the current situation in the war. Think locally rather than globally: how does the war affect your soldier, and the immediate area. Allow the other Players to add details.

Your description, with the help of the other Players, should prompt action that must be done. When you wish to do something in the face of the Enemy — go over the top, capture a bunker, resist a hail of artillery — you roll one-or-more d10s. The amount of d10s you roll is up to you.

If **ANY OF YOUR d10s ARE GREATER THAN OR EQUAL** to any of the **DIGITS** in your **SN**, you **SUCCEED**.

Describe how your actions help push the line of battle forward. Place your finger tip over the line anywhere on the **THEATRE OF WAR**, and redraw the front line, going up the page. Allow the other Players to describe what it was you took from the Enemy. Have them describe what the Enemy left behind in their wake. How does it remind you of home? Draw a symbol on the **THEATRE OF WAR** to represent this in that bulge.

If **NONE OF YOUR d10 ARE GREATER THAN OR EQUAL** to any of the **DIGITS** in your **SN**, you **FAIL**.

Describe how you were unsuccessful, and how your comrades are pushed back. Place your finger tip over the line anywhere on the **THEATRE OF WAR**, and redraw the front line, going down the page. Allow the other Players to describe what you lost to the Enemy. Have them describe how the True Believers mourn. Draw a symbol on the **THEATRE OF WAR** to represent this in that bulge.

BORN TO DIE

If at any time you roll a d10 that matches one or more **DIGITS** in your **SN**, cross it off. Only cross off a single **DIGIT**, even if multiple **DIGITS** match.

During the course of your action, your luck ran out... almost. A bullet whizzed past your ear, a shell exploded in the foxhole you just emerged from, the Enemy spotted you just as you ducked your head behind the trench wall. You were lucky... but your comrade wasn't.

Roll 6d10, and write down the **SERIAL NUMBER** as before, except this time strike a line through the whole thing. Give the fallen comrade a **NICKNAME**, and tell a short story about them. Do not give them a **TRUE NAME**: that is lost, and no one will ever remember it.

LUCK RUNS OUT

If at any time you cross off the last **DIGIT** of your **SN**, your soldier's luck has run out. They die during their final action, whether it was successful or not. After a soldier dies, wordlessly hand your **SOLDIER RECORD** to the other Players, and have them tell a short story about your soldier, using your **TRUE NAME**. Have them eulogise your soldier, weaving in as many of your comrades as they can.

DEDICATION, THANKS & CREDITS

Written on the land of the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples of the Kulin Nation, with all possible respect to their Elders, past and present. This land was never ceded.

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Inspired by **TRUE BELIEVER** by **CLIPPING**.

THEATRE OF WAR — THE ENEMY

THEATRE OF WAR — TRUE BELIEVERS