



Zombies

A HUNTER'S GUIDE

JOSEPH A. McCULLOUGH

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Introduction

This book is dedicated to the men and women who have lost their lives defending our right to rest in peace.

In 2004, the United States Army granted me a rare privilege, a tour of the barracks and training grounds of the 34th Specialist Regiment at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. I visited the base on a quiet Sunday morning, when most of the soldiers were absent on leave. My guide was a young lieutenant, a two-year veteran of the unit. He answered my questions with a laugh and a smile as he showed me around. Midway through the tour, we entered the motor pool where the “Nightmen” stored their Humvees and trucks. As I touched the armored sides of the vehicles, I realized that they were covered in scratches and claw marks.

Artwork by Ana Milinar



Standing in that garage, my whole perception of the war against the undead changed. Up to that point, my study of zombies had always been a dry, if somewhat rare, academic pursuit. In dusty libraries it is easy to forget that zombies are creatures of rotting flesh and congealed blood. While I had battled for the pride of publication, the men and women of the 34th had stood on the frontlines protecting us all from the worst nightmares of our childhood.

Since that day, I have devoted my time and energy to aiding the professional zombie hunter through both academic research and potentially dangerous field work. I have traveled to several “hot zones,” escorted by the containment teams of different nations, in an effort to obtain useful

information. Despite owning an expensive 9mm pistol, I have never fired a shot at a zombie. I have run away from many.

I've come to realize that unlike those battered vehicles in the 34th motor pool, the scars on professional zombie hunters run deep, and the worst cannot be seen. The Zombie Wars have claimed many victims, and not all of them have died on a battlefield. While fiction and film have glorified zombies and zombie hunters, the truth is much grimmer.

I have written this book in an attempt to educate people about the true horrors of the zombie menace. The book opens with an individual analysis of each of the five main zombie varieties, which at the same time providing a short history of the zombie threat. It then covers some of the organizations that battle the undead and the weapons and tactics they employ.

It is my hope that readers will obtain a better understanding of the immense threat posed by the undead and gain a new respect for those who stand on the frontlines of the Zombie Wars.

Necromantic Zombies

The myths and legends of the ancient world are filled with stories of necromancers who could raise the dead and command them to do their bidding. These sorcerers often used their death magic to seize positions of power, becoming lords and kings and terrorizing their subjects with their undead armies. The great cities of Babylon and Nineveh particularly served as capitals of the necromantic arts, and from these centers the knowledge spread to the farthest corners of Europe and Asia. But in the early centuries after Christ, as his new religion began to take root in the Roman Empire, the art of necromancy fell into decline. The Christian faith viewed necromancy as the most vile and heinous of the ungodly magics. The early popes worked tirelessly to destroy all necromantic knowledge and hunt down its practitioners. Still, necromancy survived. It is mentioned by Gildas in the dark days of Britain and in the accounts of numerous crusading knights. However, it was in the wilds of western China and the mountains of the Himalayas that the knowledge found safe haven and slowly started to filter back into Europe.

While Europe remained unified under one church, it remained relatively safe from the terrors of necromancy. True, isolated incidents that challenged the champions of chivalry were not uncommon, but gone were the vast hordes of shambling dead that had formed the armies of many an ancient tyrant. The necromancers of the European Middle Ages proved weak magicians, only able to command a few reanimated zombies or skeletons. Unfortunately, a major revival came with the dawn of the modern world.

In the sixteenth century, Christian unity shattered, first with Martin Luther and then with countless successors. In this time of chaos and confusion, the dark arts of necromancy crept back into Europe, thriving amidst a new time of bloodshed. Still, it was not until the vast slaughter of the Thirty Years' War that necromancers once again attempted to employ their death magic on a vast scale. Even a casual reader of the history of this time is likely to stumble across a reference or two. Perhaps the most common, and certainly the most terrifying, are the "sky battles." Found in the manuscripts of both commoners and lords, sky battles often occurred on a battlefield a day or two after the armies had moved on. Different accounts paint wildly different pictures, but all agree that the dead rose up once again and renewed their battle. A few people mention the living generals in these battles, but no one seems to know fully what they meant. It is only now, with 400 years of hindsight that we can understand these sky battles as the first steps in a new age of necromancy. Clearly some of the ancient knowledge had been lost. The new necromancers could raise up armies, but they could not yet control them. The fractured state of Europe proved the perfect testing ground to run their experiments, a landscape covered in corpses and lacking central authority.



Artwork by Charlie Adlard from *The Walking Dead*



From the darkness of the Thirty Years' War, it is easy to follow the progression of this new necromancy. The English Civil War saw the first controlled use of a zombie army in Europe since before Christ.¹ Soon thereafter it spread to the New World and established a permanent foothold. Napoleon, to his credit, seems to have understood the dangers of necromancy and for a while managed to nearly push it back out of Europe. Unfortunately, many of his enemies fled to Russia, and during Napoleon's invasion and subsequent retreat from Moscow, they exacted a terrible revenge. To this day it is unknown how many Frenchmen or their allies were killed by the dead hands of one of their own army.

With the allied victory at Waterloo, Europe settled into a period of outward expansion, and thus unwittingly spread necromancy to all corners of the globe. In America, the necromancers for the first time showed a sense of patriotism and waged their own war under the cover of their Civil War. While the number of necromantic incidents in this conflict are far too numerous to mention, it is perhaps worth noting that the "Second Battle of Gettysburg" remains the single most recorded and studied clash of necromantic forces in history.

The twentieth century actually witnessed a reversal of fortune for students of necromancy. Perhaps the death wizards had overplayed their hand in the Civil War, for governments around the world began to recognize the threat and the first government-backed zombie-hunter teams were formed. Also, numerous private and religious organizations joined in the fight. By World War I, the necromancers were on the run, and they played only a limited role in the Great War. In World War II, their services were shunned by the Allies, and many took refuge in the welcoming arms of Nazi Germany (see [Chapter 3](#)).

Since World War II, necromancy has remained a constant low-level threat the world over. Free governments have worked together to fight against these dark wizards, and Communism also proved a bitter opponent of magic in all its forms. Today it is estimated that there are between 200 and 1,000 practicing necromancers in the world, with Africa having a greater number than anywhere else. For many reasons discussed below, necromantic zombies do not pose the same level of threat as the new

varieties, but they are still a dangerous force that has been driven to the brink of extinction before on to find new life in a new era.

CENTERS FOR NECROMANTIC AND ANIMATE NECROLOGY STUDIES

Miskatonic University, Arkham, Massachusetts

Despite its sinister reputation as “Suicide University,” Miskatonic remains the world’s foremost place of study for alternate theology, prehistoric philosophy, and animate necrology. Its 10,000 volumes on animate necrology comprise the single greatest collection in the world and helped greatly in the production of this work. While access to the library has become more restricted in recent years, it is still possible for those who are working in the field to gain passes without too much trouble.

The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Under the leadership of Special Collections Administrator Douglas Hudson, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) has quietly accumulated one of the most impressive collections of necromantic texts in the western hemisphere. Among the documents that can be found in the third subbasement of Davis Library are a copy of *De Vermis Mysteriis*, the Pnokotic Manuscripts, and several leafs of an original Arabic version of the *Necronomicon*. Thankfully, the university has realized both the value and danger of this collection and has greatly increased the security staff for its library system. Passes to see the collection are incredibly difficult to obtain, and even those with a legitimate need should expect to wait at least two years before gaining admittance.

The Vatican Archive, Vatican City

Most of what is contained in the Vatican’s legendary *Corpus Mortuambulanticum* is pure conjecture, but there are few who doubt it to be the single greatest repository of necromantic knowledge in the world. Virtually inaccessible and guarded by some of the world’s best soldiers, it remains the private domain of the Catholic Church, the Swiss Guard, and the Vatican Containment Soldiers, “The Bringers of Peace.” Constant demands by a few individuals in the animate necrology community to open up the archives have fallen on deaf ears. In point of fact, there are many, this author included, who believe the world is a safer place if those archives remain closed.

The Bodleian Library, Oxford

The world-famous Bodleian Library has made no special effort to acquire or catalog material relating to the undead, but nevertheless, it contains the most extensive and varied selection of works pertaining to revenants available. Many, if not most, of these accounts live only in manuscript form, and there are probably dozens that remain undiscovered along the endless miles of dusty shelves. The Bodleian is not open to the general public, but passes are not hard to obtain. Please note that because many of the manuscripts remain uncataloged, it is important to have a clear idea of the manuscript you need before you enter the library.

CREATION

Like all forms of magic, necromancy is an art, not a science. It has few hard and fast rules, and it is often the variation and individual flair that gives it strength. Even if I were so inclined, it would not be possible to give the basics of even a single spell to reanimate the dead in the space I have available. The famous grimoires, the great treasures of necromancy, are all vast tomes running for thousands of pages, often only covering a few spells. But even these should be seen as only rough guides and not zombie cookbooks. Their danger lies in their power of suggestion, their hints of greater and greater power. Most necromantic knowledge is passed directly from wizard to wizard or garnered through individual research.

With all of that in mind, it is possible to present some of the more common elements of magic and zombie creation in order that the process can be better understood and countered. Long ago, there may have been necromancers who could raise the dead with no more than a few words and a wave of their hand, but if so, those days are long gone. Even for today’s most powerful sorcerers, reanimation is a slow, messy process requiring a van-load of materials. First and foremost, the process requires a “cauldron.” Anything that can hold liquid can serve as a cauldron, but the nature of the vessel will

have subtle influences on the zombies created, and metal is still the preferred cauldron material. Also, it is best if the cauldron is big enough to hold a human body. Many bargain-basement necromancers have taken to using oil drums, which seems to produce a slightly more bad-tempered zombie.

Into the cauldron goes a classic witch's brew. The list of possible ingredients is never-ending, and each can have subtle effects on the zombie produced. However, one component that is central to all undead concoctions is fresh blood, the fresher the better. It might be possible to use animal blood, but considering the other main component is a corpse, human blood is the norm. All of the ingredients are added in a precise order over a number of days, usually accompanied by incantations and/or ritualized dancing. The entire process can take anywhere from three days to three months, and more often than not, it fails.

It is perhaps this high rate of failure that has saved us all from becoming the slaves (or ingredients) of the necromancers. Professor Katherine de Rowe of Oxford University, in her ground-breaking paper *The Spread of Death Magic*,² stated that "One highly skilled necromancer is more dangerous than one hundred novices..." and this is mainly due to their success rate in creating the undead. She also goes on to point out that nearly 80 percent of novice necromancers are killed in their first year of dabbling in the dark arts, although this statistic is highly debated.

In the instances where the sorcery succeeds and a viable brew is concocted, the necromancer proceeds to either dunk a corpse into the cauldron or pour the contents onto the ground where a corpse is buried. This is generally accompanied by more incantations. Several necromantic texts state that dunking is preferable to pouring, but no official studies have ever been conducted. It takes a newly created zombie only minutes to wake up, although if it has to claw its way out of a casket or up out of the ground, it may take a while before it appears.

Although there is no exact liquid-to-zombie ratio, the bigger the cauldron the more zombies it can produce. It is also possible to store the liquid in sealed containers for later use. With stored brew, a necromancer can quickly create zombies; however, zombies created in this fashion are generally weaker than those created from fresh stock.

IDENTIFICATION AND THREAT

Even at a great distance, the undead nature of a necromantic zombie is pretty obvious, although distinguishing it from other types of horde zombie might prove difficult.³ Like their atomic cousin, necromantic zombies are slow, shambling creatures. Their gait appears unnatural and unbalanced, often made worse by missing or broken limbs. An overwhelming stench of death and decay accompanies these zombies. In the case of large hordes, this smell has been known to hit living beings with an almost physical force that can cause nausea, vomiting, and even fainting. Unlike other zombie types, necromantic zombies never speak, moan, or produce any other sound with their throats. Long-time zombie hunters who have faced multiple types of undead often claim that this silence is actually more terrifying than the horrific moans of atomic zombies.

In appearance, there is one significant difference between zombies raised by magic and those created by other means. Chemical and viral zombification only affects the recently deceased, whereas magic can reanimate a corpse hundreds, even thousands of years old. For most of its short history, the science of animate necrology classified walking skeletons as a unique family of undead; however, current thought places them as a subtype of the necromantic zombie. In fact, the only major difference between skeletons and other zombies is that the skeletons are a bit more fragile but also slightly quicker. (Apparently all that flesh was just slowing them down.) In a couple of instances, necromancers have also used zombification to reanimate an ancient mummy, but these too are just a peculiar brand of zombie and not a true living mummy.

Because of their potential age, necromantic zombies often spawn in an advanced state of decomposition, and it is not uncommon for a shambler to leave a trail of rotting flesh and small body parts. More often than not, these zombies have empty eye sockets, exposed bones, dangling or trailing innards, and missing jawbones. They are almost always accompanied by black clouds of carrion crow or other flesh-eating fowl.

Should a zombie hunter overcome the stench and terror of a horde of magically fueled corpses, another nasty surprise awaits. Necromantic zombies carry guns. Or, to be more accurate, necromantic zombies are capable of using weapons. In most cases these will be simple bludgeoning or cutting weapons, the rusty knife being the most ubiquitous. However, zombies animated from professional soldiers or hunters accustomed to carrying firearms during life will continue to do so in death. True, their aim tends to be wild, but even zombies occasionally get in a lucky shot. Thankfully, these zombies are incapable of most other feats of manual dexterity, including reloading. It is up to the necromancer or his living servants to arm his zombies before he sends them on campaign.

In hand-to-hand combat, necromantic zombies are the weakest variety of zombie. While strength varies considerably based on the skill of the necromancer, few of these zombies could match the strength of a full-grown man, and some are considerably weaker. One-on-one, most people should be able to defeat, or at least escape from, a necromantic zombie. Unfortunately, they are rarely encountered individually.

The goal of most necromancers is to build a vast army of zombie warriors for the purpose of conquest, but without a necromancer to guide them, magically created zombies have no will or intelligence of their own. Without specific instructions they will stand stock-still, unresponsive to any movement or threat. That does not mean a necromancer must be physically present to guide them. Zombies can be commanded to guard specific items or locations, with orders to kill intruders and would-be thieves. They can also be sent out to attack specific places or people or even to recover objects. They cannot, however, perform any action requiring a particular skill set. In fact, doorknocking appears to be beyond their comprehension, although breaking down a door through weight and numbers does not.

ELIMINATION AND PREVENTION

Ask any professional zombie killer which variety of zombie he least wants to face, and the answer will invariably be necromantic. This is not because they are particularly tough or dangerous, but because their elimination is incredibly messy. Unlike revenants or other horde zombies, necromantic zombies possess no single weakness. Since many lack any kind of brain, and some even lack heads, hunters cannot rely on the classic head shot or decapitation. Instead, the only way to kill a necromantic zombie is to bash it to pieces.⁴ There really is no scientific way to state this. These zombies are bound together by magic, and it is only through mangling and dismembering the corpse that the spell can be physically broken. Exactly how much damage a zombie can take depends on the skill of the necromancer who created it in the first place. If a zombie does possess a head, shattering the skull will normally do the trick. Otherwise, it is probably best to go for the spinal column. More often than not, breaking the zombie in two will also break the spell that animates it. If not, it will at least severely slow it down.

While machetes, *katanas*, and aluminum baseball bats are probably the ideal necromantic zombie killers and one should certainly be carried as backup, it is always best to take zombies out at a distance. The key for eliminating necromantic zombies with gunfire is caliber. While a .22 might be used effectively for sniping the brains out of other horde zombies, its lack of punch makes it mostly useless against magically powered corpses. If you want to kill these zombies, you need something that

can blow off big chunks. At a minimum, hunters will want .45s, which is why so many modern hunters carry a Colt 1911 as their sidearm. However, the king of zombie killers remains the shotgun. Armed with either slugs or shot, at close range, a shotgun blast to the chest or head will generally take a zombie down.

The best solution to a necromantic zombie incursion or threat, and one that is unique to this variety, is killing the necromancer. Although not an easy task, finding and eliminating the necromancer that created the zombies will break the spell, and the corpses will immediately deanimate, crumpling into a pile of flesh and bones.



There are some people out there, even a few within the animate necrology community, who argue the value of “white magic.” There is certainly compelling evidence that some forms of magic can be used to effectively combat the undead. However – and I want to state this as clearly as possible – “white magic” and “death magic” are vague and nearly meaningless terms. At best, they are two sides of the same coin. At worst, “white magic” is just a slightly cleaner form of necromancy. Both are at odds with the natural world. While the temptation to fight fire with fire remains great, it is always better to trust your 12-gauge than some ancient incantation.

LICHES

Put simply, a liche is an undead necromancer, and thankfully, they are incredibly rare. To become a liche, a death wizard commits a form of magical suicide in which the body is killed, but the soul is bound to the reanimated corpse. Whether a liche is a zombie remains a topic of academic debate, but at a minimum they should be considered an extremely dangerous form of magical zombie master. In appearance they resemble their zombie servants, with frail bodies withered by their own magic; however, that is where the similarities end. Liches possess all of the knowledge, skills, and abilities they possessed in life, including their magical abilities. They think, reason, and speak. They also seem to maintain whatever dexterity they had in life.

Since liches remain so rare, there is little that can be said about them with certainty. Liches have no known weakness. Massive amounts of physical damage may be able to destroy the magical bonds that hold them together, but this has never been put to the test. Incineration is probably the best bet. If there are currently any liches in the world, they have remained hidden. Then again, when you are already dead, time is on your side.



Artwork by Geneviève Morge

Of course, where necromantic zombies are concerned, the best solution is prevention, as it is easy to put the deceased beyond the clutches of even the most powerful death wizard. A corpse cannot be reanimated if it has been buried or interred with the proper rites and rituals of a monotheistic religion. Some people have argued that this is proof of the power of white magic, but more likely it is a flaw or weakness in the spells of necromancy. Since necromancy developed in societies where monotheism was rare, or nonexistent, it seems the early wizards never factored the idea into their magic. Either way, it works. Christian, Jewish, or Muslim makes no difference; the rites of each will stop necromancers cold. This also helps explain why necromancers are most prevalent during great wars when thousands of corpses are left strewn across the earth, having never received their final rites.

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- ¹ Generally called “The March on Salisbury,” a horde of several hundred zombies was eventually hunted down and exterminated by a group of royalist cavalry.
 - ² *The Journal of Animate Necrology*, Miskatonic University Press, Vol. 39 No. 2
 - ³ The term “horde zombie” is sometimes used to group necromantic, atomic, and viral zombies together as these three types share a similar “herd mentality” and often form together in large groups.
 - ⁴ Linguistics is still searching for words to replace “kill” and “fatal” in discussions of the undead. Since none have yet been found, we will continue to use them.

Voodoo Zombies

When the rise of Christianity drove the necromancers out of Europe, one group disappeared into the wilds of West Africa. Over the centuries, they wormed their way into positions of power and incorporated aspects of their black magic, including the creation of zombies, into the local religion. Records from this time are almost nonexistent, and what little information we have comes from ancient folklore. However, this strain of necromancy slowly re-emerged with the rise of the slave trade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As the European slavers transplanted thousands of native Africans, including many witch doctors, to the islands of the Caribbean, the African religion slowly mixed with Roman Catholicism to create the culture of voodoo. And with this culture came a new variety of zombie.



US Marines stationed in Haiti in the early twentieth century.

Technically, voodoo zombies are a subclassification of necromantic zombies, but since they have been studied in isolation for so long, and because their magical reanimation contains so many unique elements, most animate necrologists continue to view them as a separate category. In fact, the most important contributions to the study of voodoo zombies have been made by anthropologists, most of whom are either unaware or unconcerned with the greater threat of the undead.

Voodoo took strongest root in the nation of Haiti, and it is there that a majority of voodoo zombies are found. Even so, voodoo is practiced by over sixty million people worldwide, including strong concentrations in parts of North, South, and Central America as well as the other islands of the Caribbean. In fact, voodoo had one of its strongest followings among the Creole people of Louisiana, and it is from their language that the word “zombie” originates. After the American Civil War, many of the Creole practitioners of voodoo were rounded up in the general pursuit of necromancers, and today the darker practices of voodoo only survive in America in the back streets of New Orleans and the most isolated parts of the Louisiana bayou.



A rare photograph of a voodoo zombie.

After successfully tackling the zombie problem at home, the United States attempted to strike against the heart of voodoo. After the lynching of Haitian President Jean Virebren Guillaume Sam in 1915, the US Marines led an invasion of Haiti, ostensibly to restore order. Over the next twenty years, the Marines engaged in a systematic attempt to stamp out voodoo across the island.

Despite America's clandestine war against necromancy and voodoo, most of the citizens of the Western world remained blissfully ignorant of the undead threat. This began to change in 1932 with the publication of *The Magic Island* by William B. Seabrook. While many modern ethnologists have labeled the book "sensationalist trash," Seabrook's account of his travels through Haiti includes many details about voodoo, including an encounter with a zombie. The book caught the public imagination, especially the zombie incident, and soon the idea spread to Hollywood. In 1932, *The White Zombie* starring Béla Lugosi, hit theaters across the United States and launched a new genre of horror film that continues to cloud and confuse the true study of zombies to this day.

The United States withdrew its forces from Haiti in 1934. Although the Marines had made a thorough effort to eradicate voodoo, it survived and slowly rebuilt. In 1950, François "Papa Doc" Duvalier came to power in Haiti and fostered the regrowth of voodoo. For twenty years, Duvalier ruled the country through a fear partially inspired by the black magic of voodoo. Some claim that he created his own small army of zombie soldiers, though this has never been confirmed.

Political upheaval eventually forced Papa Doc's son and heir to flee the country, and thus ended the governmental support of voodoo. The practice remains strong, however, and America continues to send agents to the island to monitor the situation.

WADE DAVIS

The foremost researcher into Haitian voodoo zombies, Wade Davis came to prominence in 1985 after the publication of his book, *The Serpent and the Rainbow*. In its pages, Davis first revealed the importance of zombie powder in the creation process. Davis even managed to obtain samples of this powder, which revealed the presence of tetrodotoxin. In response to criticism, Davis followed up his first book with a second, *Passage of Darkness: The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie*, in which he presents further evidence. While it remains unclear whether Wade Davis ever saw a true necromantic voodoo zombie or just a

CREATION

The strain of necromancy that lives within voodoo has a distinct flavor that sets it apart from the dead magic of Europe and Asia. The wielders of this magic are called bokors,⁵ and even within their own culture are usually viewed as pariahs. While these bokors deal in all kinds of black magic, including fetishes and charms, they are most feared for their ability to create zombies. Unlike Western necromantic zombie creation that only deals with corpses, the creation of a voodoo zombie involves capturing a person's soul.

Among ghost hunters and others who study the ethereal undead, it is a well-established fact that an individual's soul lingers near its body for at least a day or two after death, before continuing on to its second existence. During this period of lingering, souls are at their most vulnerable to necromancy. Using their dark arts, bokors can imprison souls in a sealed jar or trap them inside a fetish. The imprisoned souls are known as *zombi astral* and are forced to do the bidding of their captor. A *zombi astral* can be released by shattering the jar or fetish holding it.⁶

Artwork by Michael Maier



Once a bokor has imprisoned a soul, he can command the corresponding body to rise up from death using a substance known as zombie powder. This powder is basically a solid form of the brew used by other necromancers, though it contains several unique elements such as tetrodotoxin, an extremely powerful poison found in some puffer fish and octopi. Bokors sprinkle the powder into the mouth of a corpse while taunting it with its own captured soul. After rising, the zombie remains under the command of whoever controls the vessel in which its soul is imprisoned.

It is worth noting that many bokors use zombie powder as a poison, slipped into food. There is no cure for this poison, and death normally occurs within four to six hours. Afterward, a bokor can quickly trap the soul and raise the zombie without a further application of powder.

Because voodoo zombies require the trapping of the soul, it is only possible to create them from the newly deceased.

IDENTIFICATION AND THREAT

Voodoo zombies are the least immediately recognizable form of zombie. From a distance, they appear to be normal human beings, though perhaps a bit slow and lethargic. Up close, however, it is a different story. Voodoo zombies have empty, soulless eyes, slack-jawed expressions, and very slow movements. They do occasionally speak, responding to direct questions in a nasal voice devoid of emotion. A few bokors sew the mouths of their zombies shut, to prevent them from eating salt. Due to a peculiarity of voodoo necromancy, the ingesting of salt causes a voodoo zombie to go wild, attacking the bokor that created it.

Like all forms of necromantic zombie, voodoo zombies are capable of using weapons and even tools. In fact, it is probably more common for this variety of zombie to be used for manual labor than as a weapon. When they are armed, most zombies carry the traditional Haitian machete, a weapon they wield with lifeless indifference. Otherwise, they will attack with their hands, displaying normal human strength.



François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, President of Haiti from 1957 until his death in 1971.

In comparison to other forms of zombie, voodoo zombies offer little threat to mankind as a whole. The process of creating zombie powder is long, difficult, and expensive, and its use is limited to the newly deceased. Thus bokors are unlikely to assemble the large armies of other necromancers. On the other hand, the threat to the individual of being raised as a zombie is incalculable. With the possible exception of revenants, all other forms of zombie are the product of corpses whose souls have departed this earth. Voodoo zombism is the ultimate threat, the idea of slavery and imprisonment even

after death. It is perhaps the greatest evil that necromancy has to offer and the main reason that the U.S. government and other zombie-hunting agencies have worked so hard to stamp out the black magic voodoo.



PSEUDO-VOODOO ZOMBIES

Research into voodoo zombies has often been confused by the presence of “fake zombies” or “living zombies.” Haiti remains a poorly policed state, and in many areas local gang bosses use the threat of zombification to terrify the populace. But these greedy and dangerous individuals rarely agree to pay for the services of a bokor, even if one can be found. Instead, these men sometimes buy a diluted form of zombie powder, which they use to poison those who attempt to defy them. While not poisonous enough to kill, the powder causes a deep paralysis. The gang then buries their victim in a mock funeral and leaves them trapped underground for half a day. The victim, still suffering from the poison and partial asphyxiation, is then dug up and beaten. The effect of this horrendous treatment can often break the spirit of an individual and reduce him to a highly suggestible, half-comatose state that resembles zombification in many ways.

These fake zombies have led to many cases of mistaken identity, and have made both bokors and voodoo zombies appear to be much more common than is actually the case. While the Haitian government has outlawed the use of drugs as a means of threat or intimidation, this does little to stop the practice. Fake zombies have also led to the creation of several “zombie rehabilitation centers,” a concept that would be laughable in the case of true zombies.

ELIMINATION AND PREVENTION

The most fragile of all zombie types, voodoo zombies can be eliminated by either destroying the brain or through large amounts of damage to the body. A single shotgun blast or several shots from an assault rifle usually takes them down. Unlike other necromantic zombie types, killing a bokor does not automatically destroy his zombies, but the zombies will deanimate the second that their *zombi astral* is set free.

Because of their long association with the black magic of voodoo, the inhabitants of Haiti have invented many ways of preventing a loved one from becoming a zombie. Since cremation is generally out of the question, many families elect to rekill a corpse by destroying the brain or cutting the throat. Some even go so far as to sew the mouths shut to make the application of zombie powder more difficult. The most common form of prevention is for the family to stand guard over the body or grave for two days after death, ensuring that the soul safely passes on to the next world.

Bokor with voodoo zombie

While voodoo zombies are rarely employed as weapons, most bokors select a couple of their smartest and toughest creations to act as bodyguards, using them to intimidate their foes and to provide cover if a quick getaway proves necessary.

Note the zombie with the sewn mouth. This may have been done by the family of the deceased individual to try to protect against zombification, or just as likely, by the necromancer himself to try to guard against the dangers of salt.

⁵ “Bokor” can have different meanings depending on where it is used. I am using it only in its most common definition.

⁶ Despite their name, *zombi astral* are an ethereal form of undead, and thus beyond the scope of this investigation.

Nazi Zombies

Hidden beneath the British World War II codebreaking center at Bletchley Park is a vast basement officially called “The Cloak Room.” All access points to the rooms were sealed in 1947, and since then no one, government or civilian, has set eyes on the place. According to the records, the Cloak Room served as an intelligence gathering center, but those records are exceedingly vague as to what information was collected. It is only in recent years, as the generation that worked in those rooms has begun to pass on, that a few whispered voices have spoken about the place as the location of Supreme Allied Command: Shadow Theater (SAC:ST). It was from these rooms that American General E. J. Whately organized a war within a war and led the battle against the Nazi Occult Division. While credit and honor is justly given to the Allied soldiers who fought against the Nazi war machine, the men and women who worked for SAC:ST should also be remembered. If not for their tireless efforts and great sacrifices, Allied victory might have proved impossible and the earth consumed by an endless tide of Nazi undead.

Artwork by James J. Frazier



The story of the Nazi undead program begins in 1917 when a wounded German World War I veteran named Walter Nauhaus founded the Society of Thule.⁷ Based in Munich, the secret order devoted itself to the pursuit of necromantic knowledge. With the end of the Great War, the society expanded, adding new members from across Germany, including Adolf Hitler. Through subtle manipulations, Hitler and his supporters shifted the attention of most of the group away from occult rituals toward the idea of Aryan supremacy and melded the society with the German Workers' Party.



The Nazi expedition to Tibet.

However, with the dissolution of the Society of Thule, Hitler founded a new group called “The Brotherhood of Death,” which included all of the foremost occultists from the old society. As Hitler rose to power in Germany, the brotherhood rose with him. Word leaked across the globe that necromancers everywhere would be safe and welcomed by the Nazis. By the mid-1930s, it is estimated that between thirty and forty practicing necromancers had joined the Nazi ranks, and at least three times that number of acolytes were in training.

Thankfully, European necromancy was still suffering from the governmental offensives since the American Civil War. Huge amounts of knowledge had been lost. While a few sightings of early Nazi zombie experiments occurred in the 1930s, they were few and far between. The senior members of the Brotherhood knew they would have to look beyond the borders of Europe to regain this knowledge and they pressed Hitler to organize an expedition to the Himalayas. Hitler, now busy with other matters, passed the request along to Heinrich Himmler, who in turn found his man in the SS officer Ernst Schäfer. The young and popular Schäfer had already participated in two expeditions into Tibet and he wanted to lead his own. A student of anthropology, Schäfer had no interest in necromancy and originally refused to take any such wizards on his team. However, after the tragic death of his wife in a hunting accident, Schäfer had a change of heart and allowed several members of the Brotherhood to accompany the mission.

The expedition proved a tremendous success, for Nazi propaganda, for European anthropology, and for the necromancers of The Brotherhood of Death. There are no records of exactly what knowledge the Brotherhood obtained, but the expedition marked a turning point in their efforts. From 1933 onward, the Nazi undead program slowly gained strength and confidence. There are at least two recorded incidents of Polish villages being attacked by zombified Polish soldiers. In 1940, the Nazis unleashed a unit of armed and uniformed zombies called the *Todesritter* (or “Death Knights”) during their invasion of Denmark.



The Crusader forces attacking Antioch, where they discovered the Spear of Longinus.

While the *Todesritter* proved effective shock units, even the dozens of necromancers employed by the Nazis could not make a material difference in a war that would eventually involve millions. Hitler demanded a weapon that could sweep his enemies aside, especially the Russians. The Brotherhood, using the knowledge acquired in Tibet, realized the only way to produce such an army would be to overcome the monotheistic burial limitation, and the only hope of that lay in finding some of the ancient artifacts of the great religions. Thus the Nazis launched Operation *Eklipse*.

While *Eklipse* saw many successes and failures, three missions stood far above the rest in importance. The first was the search for the Ark of the Covenant. The Nazis did briefly obtain the Ark, however American agents managed to recapture it before it could do any damage.⁸ The second was the search for *Zulfiqar*, the legendary sword of Muhammad, which ended in disaster when an entire German division fell prey to an ancient curse. The last was the mission to capture the Spear of Destiny, better known to Western readers as the Spear of Longinus – the holy lance that pierced the side of Jesus Christ as he hung on the cross. In 1941 a group of *Fallschirmjäger* (German paratroopers) recovered the lance from its hiding place in Antioch, and removed it back to Germany. With this lance, the necromancers of the Brotherhood believed that they could raise up the millions upon millions of dead who had been buried with Christian rites.

We will likely never know the full story of the grim battle waged by the forces of the SAC:ST to recapture the spear, nor the names of the men and women who died ensuring it could never be used. All we really know is that for the next three years the spear was moved all over Germany, but everywhere the Nazis took it, Allied agents were waiting to pounce. The toll of these suicide missions must have stretched the SAC:ST to the limit, but in the end, it was enough. Hounded at every turn, the Brotherhood never had a chance to make use of the spear or its potential power. In 1945, elements of Patton's armored forces recovered the spear, which was shipped back to the United States. Its current whereabouts are unknown.

Without the Spear of Longinus, the necromancers never played a decisive role in World War I

That said, they still exacted a terrible price on the Allies. On the Eastern Front it is estimated that the Nazis created nearly a million zombies. Most of these were flung at the Russians during the German retreat to Berlin. At first, the *Todesritter* proved extremely effective against the conscripted and poorly motivated Russian troops. However, even for the dead, the laws of warfare still applied. The Nazi zombie hordes could never achieve complete victory without armored support, armor the Nazis just didn't possess by that phase of the war. Despite the damage they inflicted, most of the *Todesritter* ended up ground beneath the treads of T-34 tanks.



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The largest concentration of Nazi zombie forces was deployed during the Kursk offensive in 1943. While primarily remembered as a tank battle, the Germans began their attack by unleashing several divisions of *Todesritter* against the Russian defenses. While these zombies created havoc in the first tier of the Russian fortifications, they soon became isolated and proved easy prey for a Russian armored counterattack. Casualties for these battles are nearly impossible to calculate as it is difficult to determine which soldiers were dead before the battle started.

In the aftermath of the war, members of the Brotherhood were hunted down and executed. Since the

exact composition of the group remains unknown, it is impossible to say whether or not they were captured, but it seems clear that a majority were dead by 1947.

The Nazi zombie program is the closest the earth has come to the dark days of prehistory, when necromantic zombies stalked the earth in vast armies. While the Russians did prove that modern technology has lessened this threat, it should not be ignored. The possibility that one of the ancient artifacts could be recovered and break the bonds of monotheism is a dark and sobering thought. Also, the idea of state-sponsored necromancy should continue to be seen as one of the most dangerous forms of weapons development on the planet.

⁷ Thule was one of the great empires of prehistory. At its peak it contained all of Scandinavia and most of northern Germany. While all of the names of its rulers have been lost, there is an indication that it had only one great emperor, a lich who ruled for over 4000 years.

⁸ The US government has worked hard to keep all information pertaining to the Ark a secret. There is at least one famous account of the Nazi capture of the Ark that only got past the censors because it changed all of the names of those involved, and even moved the date to several years before the war.

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