Front Page

I heard once this land was fair and green,

Before the man, before machine.

Before he stole her heart and claimed his prize,

And burnt the coal that claimed her skies.

I heard once this land was kissed by sun,

Before the man, before his gun.

Before the power he longed to test,

And the fires raged from East to West.

I heard once this land was just and fair,

Before his lust outweighed his care.

Before he made his pact, and span the wheel,

And was cast strong and cold by blood & steel.

Concept

Welcome to Blood & Steel. We are aiming to build a table top strategy and skirmish game, with an emphasis on easy to understand, competitive play – as opposed to hefty tomes of rules to lug round with you! We also want to ensure that the game is as cheap as possible to get involved with. As such all necessary resources will be available to download free of charge; enabling players to “print & play” the entire game using their own materials.

The game is set in a steampunk inspired, alternative post-WW1 England; after decades of war cities are in ruins – controlled by ruthless gangs. With the arrival home of many who served in the conflict the balance of power is shifting. Players take control of one of four factions (more on those later) and battle with one another to secure their dominance over the city. The gameplay is separated over two maps – the campaign map and the skirmish map. On the campaign map players engage in the strategic element; managing their faction’s resources and vying with one another for territory. The events on the campaign map lead to skirmishes being fought between players, which take place on a hex map. At this micro level players engage in gang warfare across the ruined terrain of the city – with a focus on small squad tactics. Victories and defeats influence control of the city in the overall campaign.

Our primary focus is on making the rules fairly instinctual. This is not to say that we’re trying to dumb-down the genre, it’s just we think a fast paced, fluid game can take the onus off skill tables, and put it back onto the battlefield – immersing players more in the tactical element of the game. The first step here is using a hex based map as the battlefield – we want movement to be more natural and quick. Secondly, we are aiming to simplify dice roll outcomes. Rather than using complex outcome tables, we use simple hit and miss / save and wound dice rolls. A characters skill is instead represented through the amount of dice they have available to roll (in effect a skilled marksman with a master crafted rifle has more chances to hit than a thug with a popgun).

The game is still in development, and we hope to release a full rulebook along with sample game boards and pieces in the near future. But in the meantime we are very happy that you have made your way to our homepage – any input we could have from players and potential players would be welcomed so feel free to get in contact with us.

Lore

The year is 1925. It has been seven years since the major world powers declared ceasefire. Over the skies of Moscow nobody was sure who had won. From where we stood all had lost.

At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 the bombs stopped falling, and the guns fell silent. The Empire of Britannia stood in ruins slightly less ruinous than all her neighbours and a pyrrhic victory was declared. Her citizens were reassured that the mighty phoenix would re-emerge from the ashes of Europa.

Instead we returned slowly to our homes. Seven years. Seven years to cross the Balkans and Gaul, slowly licking our wounds. We had won the day, but at what cost? Friends had died, drowning in mud, amidst the stench of war. And for what? For colonies we had never seen? For lands we would never own. For years we had dreamt of our loved ones and our homes, we were young when we arrived at the line but older than we could imagine when we left it. We thought we would be home any day. Any day this madness would stop. Any day the ships would arrive to carry us back home. But they never came, instead word was passed down the line that it was over, that it was done, that we didn’t have to fight anymore. And so the slow march began. And again friends lost their lives – not to the guns of the enemy, not to an explosive blast in the night, but to starvation, to thirst and to the cold.

I arrived home, and set my first foot back on the docks at Liverpool. My first taste of England, of Britannia, for twenty years. And what I saw I did not recognise. I thought maybe I was still on the front, not a building stood untouched by the fires of war, and the sky choked on the black black smoke. I headed south, catching an iron train across a land I scarcely remembered. I could have sworn I remembered green, rolling hills – maybe it was always this scarred, pockmarked, wasteland. The cries of the conductor rang out for Birmingham and I alighted from the train, making my way down streets that I knew only as if I had been there in another life.

Welcome to the dark city traveller. Once this was a proud place, bustling with life, standing at the peak of technology. But now, in the aftermath of The War, the city has fallen. For years all that mattered was victory. Total War. The city churned out bullet after bullet, bomb after bomb, to feed the war effort. Then it all just ended. The ceasefire was called and all was done.

The government was completely bankrupt, bailed out only at the behest of the great industrialists, the profiteers of war who had built entire empires out of the constant grind and churn of battle. Gradually the elites of society retreated further away from their subjects. The streets became. The threat of zeppelins, bombs and missiles were replaced by the roving gangs of street thugs. No police to run to, no government to complain to. It was the new normal.

This is the reality that the survivors of the front have returned home to. The strong survive and the weak do not. But while they look upon the gangs that rule the city’s streets with disdain, it compares only to the disdain they feel for the people they prey upon. Was this what they fought for? They look out across the city and slowly their anger grows. They fought for these people. They watched good men and women die for these people, for these cowards. These people deserve to be crushed, to be ruled. But not by those savages, not by those youths who have never tasted real battle. No, they deserved to be ruled by those who had been forged in the fires of war, who knew the cost of blood and steel.

Factions

In the game, each player will take control of one of the four new factions to arrive back in the Dark City

**The Redcoats** are what remains of the city’s army regiment. Having initially returned to their barracks the survivors were horrified to find their wounded comrades uncared for, left to beg on the streets. They quickly reasserted control over the barracks district, in a single night of carnage they emerged from their fortress and unleashed all of their hard won skills on the gangs in the streets.

Striding out onto the streets these men and women wear their full dress uniforms onto the new battlefield. Torn and patched redcoats, emblazoned with the gold stripes of ranks that they quickly return to, emboldened by the medals that they wear proudly on their chests.

As they see it, they are the logical replacement for the crumbled police forces that have disappeared from the city. If they enjoy the spoils of the war it will take to re-establish control over the streets, who will complain?

**The Dockers** trace their origins to the five families of the Old City. Irishmen whose sweat poured into the cities birth. They earned their place hauling the loads off the laden down barges that cruise the main artery of the river, and the veins of the canals.

Many sons and daughters left for the war, boarding naval ships instead of trade barges, and have spent decades at sea. During the years that they were gone, the five families grip over the docks weakened and the South docks broke from the North, ruining the monopoly the dockers had held on trade coming in to the city.

With young blood returning to the family ranks the five look to reunite the North and South banks of the docks. But the new lieutenants look further still, out over the rising smoke of the city, they look to the horizon and wonder why the five should not rule the whole river and all around.

**The Red Sky Triad** As the City grew in the time before the war it had attracted mass immigration from the East. Mothers and Fathers sought better lives for their children in the Western land, lured by the promise of plentiful work and opportunities for all.

Their children grew up in the shanty towns of the South East districts, that became known as Chinatown – although it’s populous was made up of every colour and creed of Britannia’s colonies. Their slums overlooked the great Airworks, and they watched with wonder as the first zeppelins launched into the skies.

In time they would come to serve aboard the great airships – flying back East to the lands of their parents. Terrible battles were fought in the skies over Asia, as the Empire desperately held on to their strongholds in Burma. While stationed there the airmen renewed strong family connections and discovered wonderous chemical compounds and narcotics that could ease pain and dissolve fear. As free men, set loose to care for themselves at the end of the war they hatched plans to solidify smuggling routes for their new commodities. They view control of the city as a way to a means, a foothold in Britannia from which to establish a cartel with a monopoly on the narcotics trade in the homeland.

**The Iron Union** is the only faction not made up of those who served at the front. But that is not to say they did not suffer the terrors of war just as those who return now. The Union is made up of those who toiled in the city’s foundries – forging the instruments of war as the bombs rained down upon them. The enemy saw the blazing fires of the major factories as a key target; aiming to disrupt the flow of munitions to the war effort. The workers were held back from fighting. Their skills too important to risk losing.

As the war closed the Union, that had for so long been nothing more than a loose association of workers, supporting one another through the terrors of the bombings, was forced to become more. First they united to defend themselves from scrupulous industrialists who aimed to reduce these men and women to nothing more than slaves, they fought for their rights – wresting control of the factories from the overseers. But as the city dissolved into anarchy around them, the Union was needed to provide protection. Workers who had stood shoulder to shoulder at the furnaces stood shoulder to shoulder against the gangs that sought to extort them, and terrorise their families.

Muscle bound arms, used to swinging the heavy hammers at the smithies, instead raised weapons against those who sought to do harm to them and their loved ones. Now they eye the new arrivals with suspicion. They see the ambition, gleaming in the eyes of those who seek control of the city. But these newcomers do not see that not all in the city are equal, the Union is strong.

Downloads

Coming Soon

* Will Include;
  + Full Bundle
  + Rulebook
  + Maps – Large / Medium / Small
  + Playing Pieces – Redcoats / Red Sky Triad / The Iron Union / Dockers

FAQ

Contacts

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