



The Province of Averland

By Nicodemus Kyme

Sometimes known as the Grand County, Averland is a pastoral province, peopled by hard working farmers for the most part. Not that this makes them weak, by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, quite the opposite; a life of toil has made them hardy and their guardianship of Black Fire Pass has proven their worth in battle many times. The value of their toil is clearly shown by the intercepted letters shown here, written to the master of the great Van de Baarts trading house of Marienburg.

Fighting Battles in Averland

In the open plains of Averland confusion reigns. With three Emperors vying for the hearts and purses of the citizenry, the rule of law strains at the seams. Companies of mercenaries roam the streets of the towns and cities doing much as they please. Running battles between the three Imperial factions spill over the grassy plains of Averland, to be further confused by bandit and Greenskin ambushes. Where once great herds of noble steeds roamed, now there is bloodshed and slaughter.

Fighting battles set in Averland is very much like fighting in Mordheim itself. Players generate their warbands in exactly the same way and fight battles according to the rules in the Mordheim rulebook. However, there are few ruined towers, dilapidated temples and other such sites of urban decay in Averland. Rather, there are two distinct regions around which you can situate your battles: the pastures and the foothills.

Upon the open pastures there are large fields, hedges, stone walls and fenced off lands. Cottages and manor houses distinguish this region and should be represented by suitably ornate buildings to reflect Averland's wealth. A river or stream might also stretch across the battlefield, a tributary of the Aver or Upper Reik, along with a stone bridge across it.

To the east lie the mountains and Black Fire Pass. While the pasturelands are largely flat, the foothills at the base of the mountains are full of crags and sparse woodland. The area is also replete with watchtowers, ruins and barracks as befits, the home of Averland's Mountain Guard.

Wyrdstone

Averland, like Ostermark, is riddled with fragments of the mighty comet of Sigmar, cast in all directions when it smote the ill-fated city of Mordheim. Such fragments are like beacons to the dark creatures of the mountains and are the main cause of the unrest blighting the province. Wyrdstone can be found by warbands fighting in Averland, as described in the Mordheim rulebook.

Averland Warbands

Despite the overt finery of the Averlander, they are not mere fops. As defenders of one of the most dangerous routes into the Empire, the Mountain Guard are veteran warriors. They also understand the value of excellent archers and regularly employ Halflings from the neighbouring Moot as scouts.

Special Rules

Averland warbands follow the rules in the 2002 Mordheim Annual (also available as a free download from www.mordheim.com).

Note: The Empire in Flames rulebook provides some excellent material for fighting battles in an Imperial wilderness setting. It is recommended that if players own a copy of Empire in Flames they use the additional rules in the book.

Painting and Modelling

Averland warbands: The provincial colours of Averland are traditionally black and yellow. Although mercenary warbands are made up of individuals, it looks better on the tabletop if there is some clear visual link between them. By using the provincial colours in a different place on each model you can easily make them look like a group whilst retaining their individuality.

Averlanders (even its mercenaries) are rich, even in times as turbulent as these, and as such their weapons are finely wrought and heavily decorated. It is not uncommon to see gilded hilts on swords, or meticulously wrought filigree and decorative intaglio upon blades or armour trim. Averlanders should look ornate and flamboyant, so bronze and gold breastplates coupled with outlandish feathers and plumes are appropriate. This wealth is also reflected in the motifs and symbols borne upon armour and shields. Averlanders are proud of their warrior heritage and so swords and bows are common emblems. Also popular is a single black flame upon a yellow field to represent Black Fire Pass, a motif commonly worn by the Mountain Guard.

Scenery: Warhammer scenery is ideal for battles set in Averland. Lone cottages, hedgerows, stone walls and fences are perfect for games set in the pastures as are stout stone watchtowers, rivers and bridges. The foothills can be represented by steep hills, scattered rocks and imposing crags.



Dear father,

Upon my arrival in Awerland I was at once struck by the sheer openness of this domain. I am used to the sprawling ports and busy waterways of Marienburg, its streets teeming with traders and entrepreneurial zeal. My first impression of the so-called 'Grand County' was that it was a farming community, its economy supported by a monetarily modest, if abundant, agricultural base. I confess I thought it little better than our dullard and backward cousins of Ostermark and began to question your wisdom in sending me as your secret envoy.

But as I delved deeper into this realm I began to see the reason for its apparent and overtly flaunted opulence. Vast acres of pastureland stretch in all directions and it seems the Awerlanders, with uncharacteristic economical cunning, have yoked this land for the breeding of horses - something to which it is ideally suited. Upon further investigation through the surreptitious questioning of local stablemen it seems that this business is flourishing and Awerland has garnered a large and impressive stable of horses. Such concerns are of interest, in particular, to the city-states of our great realm, in the maintenance of standing armies. Indeed, Altdorf, Talabheim and even Middenheim have regular trade orders with Awerland who supply the majority of the horses for their cavalry. Never had I considered that such an overtly decadent and luxuriant province as this would play such a major role in the defence of the Empire. Indeed, it is this enterprise precisely, I believe, that is responsible for the wealth and prosperity that the Awerlanders enjoy.

While the stranglehold our cousins have upon the equine trade to their northerly brethren is impressive, they have yet to reap much benefit from the Dwarfs of Karak Vorn, a hold lying within the World's Edge Mountains to the east. The Dwarfs trade freely with the Awerlanders who allow them to pass through the province via the Old Dwarf Road, an ancient trade route that winds directly into the heart of the Empire, splitting at Middenheim into the Great North Road that leads into our fair city. Metal ore mined from the mountains is the Dwarfs' chief export. They bring the fruits of their labours onto to Hochleben, a major township in this region, and the capital Awerheim. Passage into the Empire is about all the Awerlanders can offer though. Their horses are of little interest to the Dwarfs and I once overheard a market trader recount, with some amusement on my part, of the repeated efforts of the Awerlanders to convince the Dwarfs of the advantages of horses on the battlefield and the benefit they would bring to their society.

For all their enterprise and natural fortuity in the shape of the excellent pastures they hold, these men of Awerland are ignorant of trade diplomacy. Dwarfs are mountain dwellers and have no need of horses, they barely make use of ponies to gather rocks in their dingy mines, the very thought of it! They lack in stature and find the prospect of riding such a beast anathema. Such tenacity will not be won over with the dubious assurances of an Awerland horse trader. My point here being that this is a hitherto unrealised market opportunity, and one which we may exploit, although I have yet to ruminate in detail on how we might establish this trade with the Dwarfs. Perhaps a way in is through their stomachs. Horseflesh is a delicacy in some foreign continents - the Dwarfs yet to be convinced of its virtues.

On the subject of our trade agreements with the Awerlanders themselves, the province is sparsely populated, its noble houses, which are the key to lifting the trade embargoes ordered by Count Leitdorf, Awerland's deluded Elector, punctuated throughout the pasturelands. From what I can gather (for such domains are well protected by hirelings and forbid entry without express invitation) these noblemen control the lion's share of the lucrative pastures which pockmark the provincial landscape.

Largely clement weather conditions have made the pastures perfect for the nurture and breeding of horses. It suffers none of the harsh coastal weather that occasionally blights storms our ports. Its southerly disposition brings warm and gentle breezes whilst the mountainous regions to the south and east provide shelter from high winds and violent. The sheer flatness of the land, seemingly bereft of much in the way of rocky crag or woodland that it usually commonplace amongst rural areas, means that steeds can be shepherded easily and with little fear of accidental death or escape. In fact, as I regarded it from what the local's called Melkiah's Spire, a ruined edifice of dubious repute, I likened it to a vast and verdant ocean.

The equine trade, it seems, runs like a life giving vein throughout the entirety of the county. Awerland's disparate townships, without exception, support generous stable yards, where farriers, stable hands and muleskinners are as ubiquitous as halberds in an Imperial barracks. But I believe our interest lies with the larger stables beyond the townships' walls. Run by overseers with an independently driven mindset they would be the most open to clandestine trade. I refer to those nobles who possess the bulk of the equine trade. Such is the wealth which this fraternity of self-made men has garnered through shrewd bargaining and doubtless fortuity, in these lean times, great manors are built separate from the major cities and towns.

The noble houses have forged their domains into autonomous republics much to Count Leitdorf's chagrin, who I understand is adamant in keeping a close leash upon his province and its occupants. Yet, despite this, the nobles employ small armies of mercenaries whose unswerving loyalty is paid for with gold. For all intents and purposes they have declared marshal law within their estates. I believe it is fear that drives them to this, fear of the chaos gripping the land as they try to clutch onto their pastures and livelihood with tenuous fingers, their pasturelands the target of bandits and horse thieves. Horseflesh has become food for the Ores, Beastmen and other foul creatures roaming the land, despite the efforts of mercenaries hired to drive them out. These bastions are the preferred residence of the nobles who wish to keep a close eye on their family holdings and livelihood and, given their apparent desperation, I believe they would relish the opportunity to cement their considerable gains in a trade franchise with Marienburg and Your most esteemed house.

When considering our physical route into Averland, there are several options. The slowest and perhaps most dangerous, although least expensive, is by road. I have already mentioned the ancient Dwarf trade route and this highway would have the added benefit of taking us through Averheim and a chance to liaise with the noble lords who are oft visitors there on business matters. We might also consider a waterway by virtue of speed and convenience. The Upper Reik runs by Hochsleben but the Awer would also take us into Averland. I present fair warning however as both rivers are known to be a hunting ground for River Pirates and other bandits. As if this weren't cause enough for consternation our route through the mountains in order to establish trade with the Dwarfs is bleaker still. I'm sure you have heard of Black Fire Pass. A veritable barracks has built up around it as if the fell creatures that hunt there are filled with dark ambitions. Guards at the pass have been redoubled, which bodes well for security but will make open trade difficult, hence my recommendation to approach the nobles. The forces stationed at the pass by the Count are forced into an almost constant vigil, lest his wrath descend upon them for defying his orders. I have seen an inordinate amount of roadwardens on the highways and they are strict in their duty to the point of bloody-mindedness. As a result the roads are barren and ghostlike, few daring to tread upon them unless in the most dire need for fear of violence and persecution. Yet, Black Fire Pass is the clearest route through the World's Edge Mountains, clearly visible from Hochsleben, the closest major settlement to it. I will not dwell on the drawbacks and dangers associated with this route further, but have transcribed a section of local gazetteer for your consideration which describes the region. I thought the aside on siege defence particularly illuminating and a potential avenue for our exports.

Averland can hardly be considered important or influential, yet its wealth is undeniable. It is something that can scarcely be ignored and it was with some incredulity that I first regarded the flamboyant and garish apparel of its noble fellows and standing army. Averheim has an abundance of tailors, to rival that of city-states like Altdorf or Talabheim, and their soldiery is oft given to wearing outrageous and sometimes impractical attire afforded by its gold-gathering equine economy. Armour is finely wrought and ornate, the simplest of weapons carried by a common halberdier or swordsman bear gilt filigree and tempered silver hilts and scabbards. Clearly there is money to be made here, and if my visit here reveals nothing else that much is true.

Averland's situation within this more distant and seldom travelled corner of the Empire would grant us a valuable foothold in establishing trade there and further our ambitions throughout this region. Averland lays to the north and Wissenland to the south and south-west. Both are reachable by the Awer and Upper Reik respectively.

The Three Towers

Nestling in the hilly lands to the south-west of the Moot and south-east of Averheim under the baleful shadow of the mountains lie the Three Towers. In ancient days these mighty sentinels were the site of a tremendous battle between the Elf Lords from across the sea and the Men of the Empire. The reason for such a conflict occurring has been lost amongst the pages of forgotten annuals, but what is known is that the battle was both fierce and bloody. Remaining records are piecemeal in their description but speak of how the mighty dragon Araugnir was slain by a battery of Nuln cannon. To this day the beast's skull remains at the battle site as a warning and remembrance of that day. A day so filled with death that it took the slaying of the Elven Prince and leader of the host at the hands of the Templar Lord Heydrich to break what had become a brutal deadlock and grant victory to the Empire. Alas the Towers have fallen into ruin from centuries of conflict and civil unrest. Now they are merely the hideouts of bandits, rogues and other less salubrious villains. It has been known for Necromancers, Warlocks and other heretics to seek refuge there and as such it is oft the hunting ground of Witch Finders and Bounty Hunters.

- from 'Averland: A history' by Siegfried Shautten.

Sitting on the banks of the Auer and the Blue Reach is the Moot. The Auerlanders have garnered a fruitful relationship with the Halfling realm, employing these diminutive but doughty warriors in their armies as scouts and archers. The outrageous dress sense, and over-blown flamboyance of the men of Auerland seems to appeal to the unassuming nature of the Halflings, wearing garish uniforms and feathered hats, mimicking the ludicrous attire of the Auerlanders with pride and enthusiasm. The Mootlanders seem impressionable and if we are successful in setting trade franchises with the noble houses of Auerland perhaps we can turn our attentions to the Halflings by way of a side business?

Despite its opulence, the region has not been without its trials and tribulations. I enclose a transcription of a lesser known conflict for your edification with this missive, but perhaps the most notable was at the hands of the Ore Warlord Gorbard Ironclaw. In his rampage across the Empire in 1707, the capital, Auerheim, was sacked and virtually razed to the ground. It is a testament that the trade has flourished since those dark times and endures now in our uncertain climate. I have heard rumour of plague and famine to the north, but it seems these disasters have yet to affect the strongest noble houses, the epicentre of our interests here.

I believe we should be prepared for a long and difficult negotiation into Auerland. There is profit to be made here, of that I am certain, but Count Leitdorf has declared a state of provincial alert that any who cross Auerland's borders without just cause be arrested or killed if they resist. Several times have I been in fear of my life were it not for the armed escort I employed upon my arrival. As the Auerlanders have thrown in their lot with the Ottlans of Talabecland, I have removed all insignia that links me to Marienburg. I have heard that so puritanical has the Count been in the application of his decree, that the people fear him, and his growing paranoia and fits of uncontrollable, unexplainable rage are a warning to any who might cross him or his will. Some say he was afflicted when he saw the comet crash down and annihilate Mordheim and has been driven mad by the desire to cling to the wealth and prosperity of his province. It is in this more than anything else, that I am convinced we should press our interests here, however difficult. I leave upon the dawn ferry and follow the Upper Reik. This letter will reach in advance of my arrival. I hope to be upon the Reik proper and in Marienburg in a few days. Haendryk willing.

*Your loving son,
Kaspian Vande Baart*

Black Fire Pass

To the east of our fair province lies Black Fire Pass, an overland route through the hinge of the Worlds Edge Mountains to the east and the Black Mountains to the south. The Old Dwarf Road runs through it and upon its terminus weaves directly through the capital, Auerheim, all the way into the heartland of the Empire. Our people have the dubious honour of protecting this highly dangerous region, a task that we accept with courage and entrust to the Mountain Guard the hardest and most battle-hardened warriors that our province has to offer. It is under constant threat from Orcs and Goblins who ambush traders along the Old Dwarf Road. Historically Black Fire Pass has been the site of many battles, the most notable of which occurred in Imperial year -1. The fledgling Empire was nothing more than a band of disparate tribes. There did Sigmar himself, with the Dwarf High King, Kurgan Ironbeard, challenge the Greenskin hordes menacing the lands of Men and defeat them within the pass, driving them back into the dark lands and beyond. These were the first tentative footsteps towards the formation of the Empire as it is recognised in modern times. It is Auerland then that forms the first line of defence against aggression from the Badlands over the Black Mountains to the east and the belligerent Greenskin hordes. Alas it is the clearest pass for thousands of miles, oft frequented by Dwarf merchants en route into the Empire. Such expeditions are well-guarded affairs, tempered with utter vigilance and trepidation such is dire the reputation of Black Fire Pass. At its entrance to the Empire the pass is well fortified with several stone watch towers and numerous warning beacons, ever ready to give word of the threat of invasion. These years of warfare and alert have made the guardians of the pass adept in the art of siege defence. The pass has many natural hazards too. Its sheer cliff walls are oft blighted by horrendous weather, entire wagon trains and merchant caravans lost to avalanche and blizzard. Still though, it must be endured, for it is the only route across the mountains and, despite the perils, a vital source through which trade can pass into the Empire.

- from 'Auerland: A history' by Siegfried Shautten.



Scenario: Blood on the Pasturelands



The pasturelands are all too easy a temptation for bandits and horse thieves. The noble houses are forced to employ groups of mounted outriders to protect these lands from any would-be predators.

Two rival warbands have arrived at a pasture, hoping to steal the valuable horses there. They must battle each other and overcome the armed outriders to get to the prize within.

Terrain

The battle takes place over a 4'x4' area. As it is a pasture, it is largely perhaps with just a few scattered trees and possibly a small cottage. The only real feature of the battlefield is a 12"x12" fenced-off paddock in the centre of the table that represents where the horses have been fenced off to graze.

Warbands

Each player rolls a D6 to determine who places his warriors first with the player rolling the highest given the choice. The warband may be placed within 6" of any table edge and once the player has finished setting up his warriors the second warband is placed within 6" of the opposite edge. After both players have set up their warbands they take it in turns to place one of the mounted Outriders, who must be placed within 2" of the fenced-off paddock, and one horse that must be placed within the paddock itself.

Starting the game

Each player rolls a D6. The highest roll can choose whether to go first or second.

Special rules

Outriders: There are six Outriders in total. After both players have had a turn the Outriders take a turn. The Outriders will never move more than 8" away from the paddock. They will charge the nearest warrior within 8" of the paddock. If unable to charge they will move towards the nearest model and shoot them instead.

The Outriders have the following profile:

Outrider

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
4	4	4	3	3	1	3	1	8	5+

Horse

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
8	0	0	3	3	1	3	0	5	-

Equipment: Sword, bow, light armour and horse (use the rules for mounted models as given on page 163 of the Mordheim rulebook).

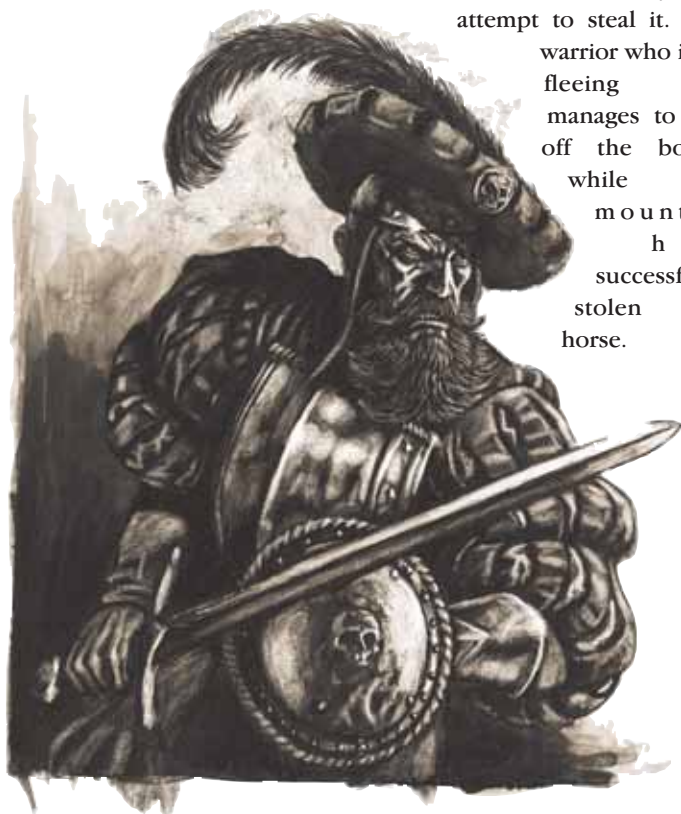
Stealing horses: There are six horses in the paddock. As they are frightened by the commotion around them they will move randomly in the 12" paddock square. Each horse moves D6+2" in a random direction determined by a Scatter dice (if you don't have a Scatter dice number the board edges 1-4 and roll a D6 to determine the direction, with any roll of 5 or 6 allowing the rolling player to choose a direction). If a horse reaches the fence it will stop.





Any man-sized warrior who ends his move next to a horse may try and mount it as the end of the turn. Roll a D6, on a roll of 4+ the warrior is successful and now counts as being mounted on the horse. If you roll a 1-3, the warrior is unable to bring the beast under control and must struggle with it for another turn. Once a player has

mounted a horse they may attempt to steal it. Any warrior who isn't fleeing and manages to get off the board while still mounted has successfully stolen the horse.



Ending the game

The game ends as soon as all the horses have been stolen or when one warband routs. The player that steals the most horses wins the game, or if a warband fails its Rout test then the warband remaining wins the game (and steals all the horses currently in its possession). Any horse successfully stolen by the warbands is added to its roster. Note if a warband failed a Rout test it will lose D3-1 of its stolen horses in the commotion.



Experience

+1 Survives: If a Hero or Henchman group survives the battle they gain +1 Experience.

+1 Winning Leader: The leader of the winning warband gains +1 extra Experience.

+1 Per Enemy Out of Action: Any Hero earns +1 Experience for each enemy he puts out of action (this also counts for Outriders too).

+1 Per Horse Stolen: Any Hero or Henchman group that manages to steal a horse earns +1 Experience.

Scenario: Through Black Fire Pass

Black Fire Pass has a dire reputation. The clearest route through the Worlds Edge Mountains is home to all manner of Orcs, Goblins, bandits and unsavoury characters. Travellers and merchants that brave it do so knowing full well they might be the victim of an ambush on the road.

A warband is travelling through Black Fire Pass when it is ambushed by one of its rivals. Little do both warbands realise that the sounds of battle have alerted other creatures to their presence...

Terrain

The battle is played over a 4'x4' area. Down the centre is a strip 6" wide that starts at one board edge and ends at the opposite edge. The rest of the table should be littered with rocks, scattered scree and the occasional copse of trees.

Warbands

Each player rolls a D6. The highest may choose to be the Attacker or the Defender. The Defender is being ambushed is travelling from the east to the west table edge. He places all of his warband first. They may be placed anywhere on the road within 6" of each other and no closer than 18" to the western table edge (the warband's point of escape). The Attacker then places his models anywhere on the table but no closer than 10" to a Defenders model and out of line of sight.

Starting the game

The Attacker springs his ambush and goes first.

Special rules

Hazardous: Black Fire Pass is extremely hazardous and as well as being home to all manner of creatures, it is plagued by hostile weather. At the end of each of the Defender's turns roll a D6. On a roll of 1 both warbands have befallen to a hazard. Roll a D6 on the table below to discover what the hazard is.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1-2 Rockfall | The rapid movement and cries of combat have disturbed some loose rocks high up in the mountains which come crashing down upon the battling warbands. Every model must take an Initiative test to avoid the falling rocks. Any model that fails will suffer a Strength 3 hit from the debris. |
| 3-4 High winds | The warbands are battered by fierce winds. The winds will last until the end of the Defender's next turn. At the start of their turn each warrior must pass a Strength test or be knocked down. |
| 5 Orcs | The warbands have become the attention of a group of Orcs camped in the mountains. Roll a D6. On a roll of 1-3 the Orcs arrive on the north edge of the table, on a roll of 4-6 they arrive on the south edge. There are D3+1 Orcs. They will always move towards the nearest model, charging if they can do so. The Orcs have the same profile as Orc Boyz (as described in the Mordheim Annual 2002, page 11) and carry a sword and a shield but do not suffer from Animosity. |
| 6 Stone Trolls | A Stone Troll has wandered into the battle and becomes enraged, charging at the warriors. See the rules above for placing and attacking with the Stone Troll. The Stone Troll has the same profile as the Troll in the Orc and Goblin warband (as described in the Mordheim Annual 2002, page 11). |





Ending the game

The game ends as soon as the Defender gets half his models off the western edge of the table through the pass (fleeing models do not count) in which case he will be the winner. Otherwise the battle continues until one warband fails a Rout test, then the remaining warband is the winner.

Experience

+1 Survives: If a Hero or Henchman group survives the battle they gain +1 Experience.

+1 Winning Leader: The leader of the winning warband gains +1 extra Experience.

*(Note that due to the direness of their task, the Defender earns **double** Experience Points for surviving or being the winning leader).*

+1 Per Enemy Out of Action: Any Hero earns +1 Experience for each enemy he puts out of action (this also counts for Orcs and Trolls too).

+1 Escapes: Any Hero or Henchman group that manages to escape earns +1 Experience.

Author

Nick Kyme works on White Dwarf right here at GW HQ. He has written for Town Cryer on numerous occasions, and is on the Mordheim Rules Reviews.



Further Information

Averlanders can be created using the Empire Militia plastic sprue and/or the plastic sprues you get in your Mordheim boxed set.

More Mordheim Website

Page 24 for Pit Fighter and page 52. www.Mordheim.com

